

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**Cultural attitudes and gender inequality in Ethiopia:
The case of “Yeken Kiginit” serial drama**

Haile-Giorgis Mamo

Internal advisor: Dr. Gebre-Medhin Simon

External advisor: Dr. Kristin Skare Orgeret

July 2008

Addis Ababa

**Cultural attitudes and gender inequality in Ethiopia:
The case of “Yeken Kiginit” serial drama**

**By
Haile-Giorgis Mamo**

**A thesis submitted to The School of Graduate studies
Addis Ababa University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
The Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism & Communication**

July 2008

Statement of declaration

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

Name

Haile Giorgis Mamo

Signature

.....Signed.....

Date of submission

July 2008

Place of submission

Addis Ababa University

Advisor

.....

Signature

.....

Acknowledgment

First of all I would like to give praise to almighty God who has made this possible.

I owe a great deal to my external advisor Dr. Kristin Skare Orgeret for her intellectual guidance devoting her time and knowledge. I am most grateful for all her constructive criticisms, patience and encouragement in the process of writing this thesis.

I am very much indebted to my mother Sister Asegedech Tigabu, to my wife Azeb Fantahun, to my children Salem and Nathan, and to my friend Mitike Yeshitela who have been very helpful in providing me the kind of environment I needed to concentrate on the research project. Indeed, they have been a source of inspiration for me to accomplish such an important piece of work in my academic endeavor.

Many thank goes to Dr. Negussie Teferra, PMC Country Representative in Ethiopia, who tirelessly helped me in giving me interviews and providing me with the necessary books and other materials for my research study.

Table of Contents

- i. Acknowledgment
- ii. Table of Contents
- v. List of Appendixes
- vi. Acronyms
- vii. Abstract
- viii. Preface

Chapter One

1. Background and statement of the problem	1
1.1. A brief account about Population Media Center	2
1.2. The serial drama - Yeken Kiginit / Looking Over One's Daily Life	3
1.3. Objective of the study	6
1.4. The scope of the research	6
1.5. The focus of the research	9
1.6. Significance of the study	10
1.7. Limitations of the research	11

Chapter Two

2. Literature Review	12
2.1 Culture/ Cultural values	12
2.2. The issue of gender	16
2.3. Cultural values versus gender issue	19
2. 4. The role of media (radio) in tackling women's burden	22
2.5. The Sabido Methodology and its applications	25
2.5.1. Origin of entertainment-education	26
2.5.2. The Sabido Methodology Vs the three communication theories	28
2.5.3. Major steps in designing Sabido-style drama	30

Chapter Three

3. Research methodology	33
3.1. Introduction	33
3.2. Research design	33
3.3. Qualitative research: philosophical underpinnings	35
3.4. Research procedure	38
3.4.1. Qualitative content analysis	39
3.4.2. Qualitative in-depth interviews	40
3.5. Research sampling	41
3.6. Challenges and limitations	41

Chapter Four

4. Qualitative content analysis of Yeken Kiginit	44
4.1. Introduction	44
4.2. Modifying established cultural values to gender equality	45
4.3. Role models /characters/ in Yeken Kiginit serial drama	58
4.4.1. Positive characters	62
4.4.2. Negative characters	67
4.4.3. Transitional characters	70
4.4. Manifestations of men’s strong attachment to their culture	75
4.5. Opposition of cultural and modern values in seeking the “missing voice” ...	88
4.6. Yeken Kiginit Vs the three communication theories	92
4.6.1. Social Learning Theory	93
4.6.2. Dramatic Theory	94
4.6.3. Theory of Archetypes and Stereotypes and the Collective Consciousness	96

Chapter Five

5. Findings and recommendations	97
5.1. Findings	97
5.1.1. Manifestations of male chauvinistic attitudes	97
5.1.2. Manifestation of men’s strong attachment to their culture.....	98
5.1.3. Modification of established cultural values	98
5.1.4. The drama succeeds in seeking the “missing voices”	99
5.2. Recommendations	100
5.2.1. Avoid exaggeration in character development	100
5.2.2. The boring effect of the serial drama	101
5.2.3. Overshadowing the educational aspect by entertainment	101
5.3. Conclusion	102

- Bibliography
- Additional resources
- Appendix I
- Appendix II

List of Appendixes

I. Interview questions to the producers and a script writer of Yeken Kiginit

II. The ten Amharic scripts of Yeken Kiginit serial drama

Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
PMC	Population Media Center
UNFPA	United Nations Populations fund
WHO	World Health organization

Abstract

This research study examines how women and gender roles are portrayed in the popular serial drama *Yeken Kiginit* by looking at how the manifested cultural attitudes of men in the drama highlight the existing social gender inequality in contemporary Ethiopia. The study also suggests the implications gender portrayal in popular media might have in addressing gender disparities and discrimination. In order to have a clear understanding of this issue, the researcher focused on how the characters in the drama were developed in terms of their personalities and beliefs, as they probably are the major transmitters of the intended message to the audience through their dialogue.

Qualitative research method is employed to analyze some of the main messages of the serial drama. Ten episodes were selected for in-depth analysis in order to ensure diversity in content and message. The qualitative content analysis was combined with qualitative interviews in order to get more knowledge about the production processes and the intended messages of the serial drama. Two journalists transcribed the interviews which were conducted by the researcher with the Country Representative of PMC, the Amharic Serial Drama Coordinator, and the serial script writer.

The results of the study reveal that women may be victims of male chauvinists due to cultural prejudices created by the society. *Yeken Kiginit* radio serial drama has depicted the real problems of women in Ethiopia by exposing how they are disadvantaged in many aspects of life; especially in access to and control of resources, in participation in decision making at all levels including at the household level. The serial focuses on unequal gender relations and how this is problematic in relation to women's role in the development of the nation. The analysis reveals the potential radio entertainment possesses in terms of education with the possibility of bringing social change: Education does not have to be boring – and entertainment can be educational. It concludes that *Yeken Kiginit* largely succeeded in exposing the real problems of women in Ethiopia by illustrating with familiar examples how many women are disadvantaged in many aspects of life.

Preface

It was the last Ethiopian New Year eve. Intimate friends gathered in groups at a small pub situated in Bole area to celebrate the Millennium. On the occasion, one of our friends was telling us his encounters during a visit to South Africa. As he concluded his narration the other friend admired him for his skill in storytelling by saying: “you made it Yeken Kigint”. Indeed, the popular radio serial drama, Yeken Kigint, has become synonymous to a good and suspenseful narrative of any kind. People have also presently become accustomed to hear “Yeken Kigint” used to express such compliments.

Yeken Kigint, (Looking over One's Daily Life), was produced by Population Media Center (PMC), an NGO engaged, among many other objectives, in the production of the Sabido style serial dramas over Radio Ethiopia. These dramas are aimed at bringing change in relation to cultural attitudes and individual behavior mainly with respect to women’s issues. One, among such kinds of dramas, was Yeken Kigint. It was broadcasted in the Amharic language over Radio Ethiopia in 257 episodes between June 2, 2002 and November 27, 2004, addressing issues of women’s status and reproductive health.

It is over three and a half years now since Yeken Kigint came to an end on November 27, 2004. But the story and the different characters in the drama are still fresh in the minds of millions of listeners, including myself. This radio serial drama, which is believed to be the first of its kind in Ethiopia, with its research based format, touched the hearts of millions of listeners with its entertaining and educating messages.

On a personal level, it was indeed quite an unforgettable experience to be familiarized with the story, and the identity and actions of the three kinds of characters, like Fikerte, Damte and Minda. These characters are still lingering in my mind by their good impressions, by their evil deeds and by their patience to learn the truth.

As a boy who grew up in a male dominated and rather chauvinistic society and family, the manner the gender issue was raised by the serial drama writers inspired me. In my family women, even if they were well educated, would likely be harassed by their husbands. The aim of this research project is to make a contribution to the improvement of such kinds of serial dramas which aimed at improving the status of women in the Ethiopian society.

This research thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introductory part which gives a general overview about the need for this research, and also presents background to the Population Media Center, and the drama itself. In chapter two the research deals with the literature review of various scholars' ideas on the research topic and on other related studies done previously. The third chapter focuses on the methodology that this researcher used to apply to its study; and the fourth chapter deals with the analysis part. This research has also findings and recommendations in its final, the fifth chapter.

Chapter One

“The portrayals of gender, race, class, ethnicity, age, and disability (in media) reflect society’s power structure and affect how we see ourselves and others.”

Michael Real, 1996:180

1. BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Gender related problems have remained a serious concern in contemporary Ethiopia. Several studies have indicated that women in Ethiopia are disadvantaged in many aspects of life and that gender inequality is one of the features of Ethiopian society. (Bogaletch, 2005) (Assefa, 2006) According to a report by UNDP (2001), the situation is even more difficult for women in rural areas. One of the mechanisms believed by scholars to tackle such problems is using the media, not only to educate the society, but also to raise the level of public awareness in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. (Singhal & Rogers, 1999) (Real, 1996) A case in point to such an educating-entertaining media programs is Yeken Kiginit, which raised the burning issue of gender disparities and discrimination in the present day Ethiopia.

Yeken Kiginit, (Looking over One’s Daily Life), was broadcast in the Amharic language over Radio Ethiopia and FM Addis 97.1 in 257 episodes between June 2, 2002 and November 27, 2004. Population Media Center (PMC), the producer of the drama, attributed the success of the drama to the fact that the programs were structured and written taking local values and traditions into account, after collecting a large number of proverbs and sayings from local people and used in the drama. (Negussie, 2004:7) In fact, most scholars agree that it would be a futile attempt to produce a story that could evoke compelling needs for change without first studying and understanding the culture of a people.

Therefore, this research study will analyze central messages of Yeken Kiginit, and study how the serial conveyed the gender equality issue and attempted to modify already established cultural values in the male dominated Ethiopian society. The thesis will look into how the program manifested to the cultural upbringing of the public and its strong attachment to it; and also study how the characters were created as role models, and the manners through which they fight the cultural stereotyping.

The researcher has not yet come across any research undertakings that focus on the role of a radio serial drama in entertaining and educating the public on gender issues in Ethiopia. This could be taken as the main reason that initiates the need for this research.

1.1. A brief account about Population Media Center

The Population Media Center (PMC) was started in 1998 by American scholar William N. Ryerson. The Center intended to use media to spread the Sabido Methodology form of communication designed to change behavior developed in the 1970s by Miguel Sabido, then Vice President of the Mexican Network, Televisa. (Ryerson, 2006:5) (I will discuss the Sabido Methodology in the next chapter.)

PMC's first major program was launched in Ethiopia, (Ryerson, 2004:4) and is now in its 8th year of activity. During this period PMC has used entertainment broadcasting in an attempt to change cultural attitudes and individual behavior with regard to the following key issues:

- Population and family planning;
- The problem of HIV/AIDS;
- Gender and related issues;
- Female Genital Mutilation and its consequences;
- Other relevant health information.

PMC has produced and broadcast a total of 257 episodes of the Amharic *Yeken Kignit*, 52 episodes of *Maleda*, 204 episodes of *Menta Menged* and 140 episodes of the Oromiffa *Dhimbiba* over Radio Ethiopia, with repeat broadcasts over FM 97.1 and Ethiopia Radio National Service. (Negussie, 2004: 4) Another Amharic radio serial drama, *Sibirat*, which is also produced by PMC, is currently being transmitted over Radio Ethiopia.

PMC's efforts have been widely recognized in a number of international conferences including the World Bank Global Video Conference on the Use of Entertainment-Education for Addressing HIV/AIDS and at a seminar on Best Practices held in Vermont, in the United States. In the last four years, over 70 feature and news articles about PMC and its projects have appeared in government and private newspapers in Ethiopia.

In addition, over thirty interviews, panel discussions and reports on PMC media work have been transmitted through Radio Ethiopia and TV including FM Radio, and also published in numerous government and privately-owned newspapers. (Negussie, 2006:9) As regards the area of literature, PMC has published four volumes of short stories and numerous other publications which focus on youth, gender and population issues over the past eight years and has distributed these volumes to the public.

Being such an important actor in the field of education-entertainment in Ethiopia, the researcher believes that it is important to critically study how PMC-Ethiopia uses entertainment programming on radio to disseminate specific socio-cultural values among the target audience, especially in relation to a gender perspective.

1.2. The serial drama - Yeken Kignit / Looking Over One's Daily Life

A training guide for journalists and media personnel entitled "Soap Operas for Social Change to Prevent HIV/AIDS" was published by PMC International in cooperation with UNFPA in 2005. In this guide this researcher came across with the following interesting statement under the headline: "Radio is Changing Lives in Ethiopia".

Two radio content radio serial dramas, *Yeken Kiginit* (“Looking Over One’s Daily Life”) and *Dhimbibba* (“Getting the Best out of Life”), are changing behavior in Ethiopia. The dramas are tackling issues such as marriage by abduction, education of daughters and spousal communication. (2005:55)

Indeed, *Yeken Kiginit* serial drama is considered by many as one of the most successful radio drama ever transmitted over Radio Ethiopia as it raised the burning issue of gender disparities and discrimination. In a recently published magazine by John Hopkins International the serial drama was also described the following way:

This radio program grew out of numerous discussions among various stakeholders, including several government agencies, donor governments and foundations, local government organizations (NGOs), business leaders, and reproductive health researchers. These discussions helped to focus the program’s mission and to assure that objectives and messages were specific and appropriate for Ethiopia. (2008:6)

Yeken Kiginit, (Looking over One's Daily Life) addressed issues of reproductive health and women’s status. Because it was based on findings from research, the serial drama coordinator Mesfin Assefa says, *Yeken Kiginit* is different from other radio serial dramas broadcast previously.

Before planning and producing *Yeken Kiginit* drama, a training course was conducted for the scriptwriters of the drama and related personnel with the aim to acquaint them with the Sabido Methodology. (2004:18)

Kriss Barker stressed here why it is important to conduct formative research and train writers of radio serial dramas before starting the transmission work, in order to help them acquire prior knowledge about the culture of the people that they are writing about:

Sabido-style serial dramas rely on extensive formative research to identify the culture – or country-specific versions – of these archetypes and to identify local

archetypes that represent the pro-social values (or the antithesis of these values) that will be addressed in the serial drama. ... The formative research is used to develop a grid of positive and negative cultural “values” which these positive and negative characters will embody. (2004:42)

The drama with its extensive use of formative research is believed to become instrumental in improving communication among family members and assist in developing a new culture of speaking out and of listening to others. The drama producers attempted to prove this by gathering audience feed back through letters and phone calls during the transmission period of the drama. According to PMC’s Country Representative Dr. Negussie Teferra, his organization received over 15,000 letters in response to its programs.

The programs (the radio serial dramas) generated a huge audience response with over 15,000 letters from listeners. More than six thousand questionnaires (feedback) were completed and sent from listeners’ groups to PMC. (2006:8)

Among the many listeners who sent letters to PMC, the majority group was women. It has been shown that among married women who are listeners to Yeken Kiginit, use of family planning method has shown a satisfactory increase compared to that of the previous years. (Assefa, 2006:20)

According to Birhan Research and Development Consultancy, an organization subcontracted by PMC-Ethiopia to evaluate the implementation of the radio serial drama, women’s status and participation in family matters also elevated to a satisfactory level as a result of the serial drama.

The radio serial drama has contributed to an increase in female autonomy. The degree of autonomy exercised by women over their reproductive behavior has shown improvement since baseline. The proportion of women using family planning based solely on their partner’s

decision dropped from 19.2 percent at baseline to 16 percent after the intervention. (Assefa, 2006:20)

In general, PMC claimed that Yeken Kiginit, as an educational and entertaining drama, had a wide appeal in the country. It had aroused the society's interest to be involved in discussions as it reflected the cultures and traditions of both urban centers and the countryside.

1.3. Objective of the study

This research aims at revealing evidence about the role of radio serial drama in entertaining and educating the public in relation to gender issues, as well as studying the potential a one way radio program has communicated to and even in educating its audience on accepted practices and norms affecting women. Therefore the research attempts to look into how a radio serial drama has the potential to promote the gender equality issue and modify already established cultural values in a specific society. How the program actually was received lies however outside the frame of this research project as it does not undertake reception analysis.

Researchers, such as Gaye Tuchman, argue that any research that involves women's issue has a great significance in helping the silent voice and raising the consciousness of the society:

... The portrayal of sex roles in the mass media is a topic of great social, political, and economic importance. (1978:4)

Therefore, the main objective of this research study is to generate insight on how to develop positive cultural values and eradicate the negative ones in Ethiopia's male-dominated culture through the use of radio programs, especially radio serial dramas.

1.4. The scope of the research

In modern societies, the media may play quite a big role in building or representing positive cultural values and, in particular, to help develop gender equality. (Barker, 2005)

Even though, Yeken Kiginit is described by PMC as a story that covers numerous socio-cultural issues through its message, the researcher only focuses in examining how the topic of the role of women in Ethiopian male-dominating culture was transmitted through the drama.

Therefore, the researcher attempts to study this trend of building cultural values linked to gender equality was seen in one of the most popular drama transmitted over Radio Ethiopia. Many believed that the drama played an important role in raising awareness about women's problems. (Assefa, 2006)

From a social responsibility point of view, media should deal with issues relevant to the lives of the society. And this can mainly happen when due emphasis is given to media programs which are aimed at building cultural values of the society in various ways. Micheal Real attempts to elaborate this fact the following way:

We experience culture and we know that we experience it. We know that the media world is a constructed world related to the everyday world. We talk about it and think about it. And that talking and thinking are part of the culture as well. Every time we discuss a newspaper article, a shopping center, a film we have seen, a game we went to, we are engaging in this double hermeneutic that both reflects and builds the culture. (1996:24)

If our daily life is governed by the media world that we live in, because as Real argues we talk and think about it on daily basis, then it can determine our thinking and action towards women too, especially when we find ourselves in a patriarchal society which oppresses them. In a society where male supremacy is accepted and where women face discriminatory practices, media can highlight these issues by reflecting how the society is talking and thinking about it. As Lasswell points out, the mass media transmit the social heritage from one generation to the next (Lasswell, 1948:37-51).

Generations of researchers have also emphasized the fact that culture and the media are interrelated in their role of building a society that cherish the idea of equality among the

public. (Real, 1996) (Hall, 1980, 1994). The media can tell women about themselves, their position in society, and how they should structure their lives. Gaye Tuchman emphasized this fact the following way.

...the mass media can disseminate the same message to all classes at the same time, with authority and universality of reception, in a decidedly one-directional flow of information. But, if the stereotyped portrayal of sex roles is out-of-date, the media may be preparing youngsters – girls, in particular – for a world that no longer exists. (1978:6)

According to Tuchman, the media has quite a big role in influencing our attitude towards accepting the societies' norm and culture. As things are now changing quite considerably in Ethiopia, the media have started to realize that gender disparity should be a thing of the past. Even if gender roles and identities vary across cultures and change over time, women's participation in decision-making, in access to and control of resources and in the power to manage their lives has shown encouraging signs. (Assefa, 2006:148-168)

One of the factors that deny women equal status in Ethiopia however, is the accepted culture or norm of male dominance. In a study paper she presented at a workshop organized for senior media program managers and practitioners in Ethiopia, Bogalech Alemu says the following:

The lower position of women in the Ethiopian society is a result of the deep-rooted socio-cultural norms and attitudes. (2006:6)

One of the solutions to tackle such problems is, according to Bogalech, to use all possible mass media to pass information such as local radio, newspapers, and TV using local languages. (Bogalech, 2006:15)

The Country Representative of PMC also claimed that the message of the drama, directed at youth and young adults, is simply a way of transforming ideas through communication and culture. (Negussie, 2006:8) Based on the above facts, this research will analyze the messages of Yeken Kiginit in the light of the following question: how to work for gender equality by building cultural values among the members of a society.

The study undertakes a content analysis of 10 episodes of the drama and also conducts interviews with the producers and writers about their intended message. Even though audience perception or behavioral change could be highly interesting to study in relation to the serial drama, these are areas that fall outside the scope of this present study.

1.5. The focus of the research

The challenges connected to the role of women in the Ethiopian male-dominated culture were a center of attention in the serial drama. Therefore, this present project attempts to analyze its messages by looking at how the radio serial drama conveys the gender equality issue and whether it may have the potential to modify already established cultural values.

Albert Bandura argues in his Social Learning Theory that people can either learn through the direct experience of trial and error and the rewarding and punishing effects of their actions, or through the power of social modelling. (Bandura, 1977) Therefore, the researcher finds it worthwhile, as a second focal point, to examine the characters in Yeken Kiginit how they were created as role models, and in what manners they fight the cultural stereotyping (especially by the life of Fikerte and Anguach). Thirdly, the researcher looks at how the serial drama manifests the cultural upbringing of the public and its strong attachment to it through the characters fictitious lives,

In critically analysing the message of Yeken Kiginit, the researcher also examines if the drama includes more than one perspective in a story and how it seeks the “missing voices”. This includes the question of whether there were any instances of opposition

between traditional values and modern values in terms of gender issues as they are portrayed in the drama. Because any culture has its own value to those who practice it, as long as it dictates them to think and believe the same way.

The researcher also attempts to show the role and responsibility of the media in building positive cultural values and fighting the negative ones regarding to women's issues, especially in entertainment and educational programs, such as Yeken Kiginit. The researcher will attempt to assess how the Sabido Methodology was implemented particularly from the three adapted communication theories Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, Eric Bentley's Dramatic Theory, Carl Jung's Theory of the Collective Unconscious.

1.6. Significance of the study

The research project attempts to show how the continuing male-domination in our society affects the rights and status of women in the serial drama and focus to show how the radio serial uses that evidence with the aim to bring about attitudinal and behavioral change.

The project is based upon the assumption that to study how women are portrayed in the media is an important matter, and that it is a wise decision to indulge oneself in such a research work. The representation of women proposes suggestions as to who women are or who women can be. It is considered problematic when the representations of women are limited both in terms of numbers and in terms of what roles women may inhabit. The issue of gender has also become a way of exploring the relationship between media, gender and identity.

The renowned communication expert David Gantlett says messages of media programs have an impact on the way we look ourselves and give meaning to life. (Gantlett, 2004:1) And it is worthwhile to look at how the radio serial drama, Yeken Kiginit, has impacted the lives of women through its message based on their culture. As Gantlett says media and communications are central elements of modern life, whilst gender and sexuality

remain at the core of how we think about our identities. With the media containing so many images of women and men, and messages about men, women and sexuality today, it is highly unlikely that these ideas would have no impact on our sense of identity. (Gantlett, 2004:1)

It is this researcher greatest hope that this project study would serve as a benchmark for other researches as it attempts to show the extent how our culture of patriarchy affect the status of women, and also how media can play an important role through entertaining and educating the public in order to solve women's problems and marginalization.

1.7. Limitations of the research

Due to restricted time and resources, this research project analyzes only 10 out of the 257 episodes. Analyzing 10 episodes might not be enough to give a broad, representative picture of the series. The aim of the analysis is however to study in depth how an educating and entertaining media program may promote the cause of women, and hopefully the selected episodes may illustrate this in a valuable manner.

Media scholars stress the fact that in any media research endeavor, media texts, and the production and audience response are vital. They recommend that studying the relationship among the three would make a research undertaking complete. (See for ex. Watson, 2003: 287) Due to time and resource constraints, however, as mentioned above this research focuses on studying the text message and elements of the production side of the serial drama from a gender and culture perspective. And accordingly this could be the other limitation of this research. The production side is analyzed through interviews with the Country Representative of PMC, the Amharic Serial Drama Coordinator, and the serial script writer.

The fact that this researcher has not come across other previous research works ever done on a related topic could be counted as the third limitation. Such research would have provided a fruitful background and could have been of a great help to enrich ideas and

information to my study. However, the limited previous studies within specific area of research hopefully underline the need for the present study.

Chapter 2

2. Literature Review

The literature review part of this research study focuses on different scholars' opinions and explanations about the major ideas to be examined in the messages of the serial drama, Yeken Kiginit. These are culture, gender, the relations between the culture and gender, the role of media (radio) in education and entertainment, and finally the Sabido methodology and its applications. The researcher believes that these issues are crucial elements in analyzing the core messages of Yeken Kiginit from different perspectives.

2.1 Culture/ Cultural values

Contemporary communication scholars believe that in designing any entertainment-educational media program, understanding the role of culture and the values it is given by the society is paramount in order to bring the intended result. (Real, 1996:3-7)

One of the greatest minds of the 16th century, John Locke, once said “Man is a social animal”. That means without society he is nothing but animal. Similarly, a man, born into a particular community, is at the same moment born into a peculiar configuration of meanings, which gives him/her access to and locate within a “culture”. Therefore this social animal experiences its own distinct patterns of life through culture. Scholars in the field argue that studying culture is not only studying society, but also the experiences, believes and values attached with it. For instance, John Clarke says the following on this:

Culture is the way the social relations of a group are structured and shaped: but it is also the way those shapes are experienced, understood and interpreted. (1986:53)

The researcher accepts the fact that defining culture is not a simple task. When we explore the cultural experiences of others – and of ourselves – we sense that “culture” may be defined simply, but it is not a simple concept. Real says the following:

Culture is the shorthand label for everything that sets us apart as humans. Culture is the way we mentally structure our interactions with other people and our environment. At once so close we can hardly see it and so encompassing that we can scarcely imagine it, culture is the way we collectively express ourselves as human beings. Culture is meaning constantly being created. Like sound, culture is observed as it is emerging and disappearing from existence. (1996:2)

If culture is “meaning that is constantly being created,” as Real defines it, then it is worthwhile to look at how meaning is created through popular culture within a given society. Producer of Yeken Kiginit, PMC, also attributed the popularity of the drama to the fact that they were structured and written by taking into account local values and traditions.

Prior to the writing of the dramas a large number of proverbs and sayings from local people were collected. They were used in the dramas. Customs and traditions which appeal to the local audiences were also incorporated in the scenes of the dramas to attract the audience. Drawing upon these resources, the characters played different roles in accordance with predefined goals and have succeeded in leaving an indelible impression on the radio listeners. (PMC Publication, 2004:7)

Contemporary scholars in the field do also strongly agree on using cultural values in media programs in order to achieve positive change in the community. For instance, Sivaram Srikandath defined cultural values as "the governing ideas and guiding principles for thought and action" in a given society (1991:165-75), cultural values conveyed through drama messages are regarded as powerful forces in shaping listeners' motivations, lifestyles, and belief.

A journalist or any media practitioner is expected to have good knowledge about culture in order to produce good story that could evoke compelling needs for change. Aronowitz says the following on this:

The point of cultural studies is to empower ordinary people to take control over their own lives... (1994:180)

That is why it is vital to be well-equipped with the understanding of ones culture before indulging oneself to produce any media program.

It is a fact that any media program producer should also need to have in mind that he/she achieves a certain distance to experience the culture as the public do. In this regard Walter J. Ong says the following.

... Culture is a kind of collective consciousness that characterizes a people at a particular time. (1981:20)

Another cultural communication expert Barbara Sawre also argues that exploring cultural values may involve thinking in terms of cultural assumptions.

Such assumptions are based on core values commonly held by members of the same culture and which condition certain ways of thinking and acting. (1996:355)

Any group of people develops their own way of life by giving values to their culture. This researcher accepts the fact that those commonly held values in our culture are depicted through the serial drama from the gender angle.

People act according to their culture, because it is based on values. Cultural values differ from one nation to another depending on its history, geography, language, religion, etc. The following definition by Real also gives this researcher a clue in framing the subject from gender perspective. This issue is addressed through cultural experiences expressed by the writers of the serial drama and the actors in the drama.

... The case study of media culture should normally examine issues of race, class, and gender, in addition to whatever else it examines. ... There are innumerable explicit and implicit representations of gender, race, and ethnicity, and socioeconomic class embedded in cultural products and practices. (1996:2)

Scholars around the world have also tried to look and investigate the concept culture from different perspectives. Real indicated in his prestigious book that there are about five roots and categories for cultural studies. These are: *Culturalism* who accents that “culture is a whole way of life”; *Structuralism* who are concerned with “signifying practices” from language to movies; *Marxism* who explain economic power in studying culture; *Postmodernism* characterizes the present time as without the intellectual moorings of recent centuries; and *Feminism* who explores domination by gendered, patriarchal culture. (Real, 1996:18-19)

This researcher has studied the value grids outlined by Population Media Center for its radio serial, Yeken Kignit, in 52 socio-cultural issues, before it was broadcasted to the public. (PMC Unpublished Document, 2001:1-3) These values grid are categorized into positive and negative cultural values that affect the women status in the community. (*I present these value grids in Cultural Values Vs Gender Issue topic.*)

The writers of the serial have attempted to reflect these cultural values, i.e, gender based practices and experiences, through the message of this radio serial drama while still keeping the local culture in mind. Hence challenging what is perceived as negative gender perceptions, but still keeps in mind the local cultural values.

There are, of course, other concepts of cultural values that would be included in my analysis, based on socio-cultural values in Ethiopia related to women issues.

For instance, according to Medical Interpreter Services, Massachusetts General Hospital, the main socio-cultural values in Ethiopia are:

- Family members work as a unit where father or eldest son has the leading role
- Men are expected to make decisions especially at time of crisis
- Women are the caregivers
- People are typically reserved, shy, polite and respectful toward authority figures (doctors and nurses). (www.massgeneral.org).

These values are reflected in the serial drama, Yeken Kiginit, especially in the lives of Minda – a mother burdened with taking care of a family, Anguatch – victim of mother-in-law’s interference in her marriage because of Demlew (husband) infidel character, and Lamrot who is shy and polite, as the culture favors it as a desirable attitude of a woman.

William R. Catton further argues that “different mechanisms” can be used to explore these socio-cultural values including analyzing the message of media programs.

... People are influenced in serious ways even when they seek only entertainment (or "respite") by exposure to mass media. This was also found to be true in the case of those who listened to the radio daytime serials, or 'soap operas'. From a study of one hundred intensive interviews, Herzog noted three major types of soap opera listener gratification: (1) emotional release - a "chance to cry," or derivation of comfort from sensing that "other people have troubles, too", (2) opportunities for wishful thinking exposure to happy episodes which offset one's own problems; and (3) a chance to obtain usable advice. (1983:55)

I will attempt to discuss in Chapter Four how the writers creating the different characters of Yeken Kiginit attempted to cause gratification to the audience by applying cultural values.

2.2. The issue of gender

People usually confuse the basic difference between sex and gender. According to the Journalists Guide, a publication by PMC and United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA), sex is “the biological difference between men and women. Sex differences are

concerned with women and men's physiology". (Barker & Sabido, 2005:10) These differences are natural because they are given from birth. **Gender** is the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male. The social definitions of what it means to be female or male vary across cultures and change over time. (Ibid, 2005:10) One of the pioneer feminists, French existentialist Simone de Beauvoir made this point in her revolutionary work *The Other Sex*, where she argued that "one is not born a woman but becomes one". (1949)

The Journalists Guide says that despite a shift toward later marriage in many parts of the world, 82 million girls in developing countries who are now between the ages of 10 and 17 will be married before their 18th birthday. Early marriage jeopardizes the health and limits the opportunities afforded to women, usually disrupts their education and often violates their human rights. (Ibid, 2005:6)

In most developing countries such as Ethiopia women have less access than men, to resources, opportunities, decision-making, and the power they have to manage their lives. For instance numerous studies have shown that, in many parts of Ethiopia, especially in rural regions, the culture and tradition often put pressure on girls to marry and begin bearing children before they are ready. (e.g. Bogaletch, 2004:17-20)

As I already stated in the introductory remark, the Ethiopian culture is a male dominating culture, especially in the Amhara regions where the setting of this particular serial drama, *Yeken Kiginit*, takes place. More than forty years ago Donald N. Levine described the women's role in the Amhara culture:

... His wife or maidservant raise with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels her way across the earth floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *teff*. An hour or two late, one of the women pokes the embers, which spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame, filling the room with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm up left over pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a steep skin spread

over the clay bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured to wash his hands and *Injera* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by himself, slowly, pondering the work for the day. (1965:58)

Still today when government and non-government interventions are hastened to promote the gender roles of women at the national and local level, the woman's daily work schedule is only lightened, not radically altered.

Not only in the Amhara region, but in every parts of the country, women and adolescent girls are exposed to various forms of gender-based violence from harmful traditional practices, such as early marriage and female genital mutilation, to the growing problem of sexual trafficking. Dire poverty may result in young girls being sold to traffickers or being forced into commercial sex to survive. (Bogaletch, 2005)

To witness real change to such a scenario needs commitment and determination on the part of a society as well as the media as it affects the society directly or indirectly.

The portrayals of gender, race, class, ethnicity, age, and disability reflect society's power structure and affect how we see ourselves and others. (Real, 1996:180)

And some of the mechanisms of fighting cultural stereotyping and under representation of women in the media, according to the Journalists Guide, are: including more than one perspective or one voice in a story; seeking the "missing voices"; being conscious of language that reinforces stereotypes; being aware of the "tagging" of women and men according to traditional gender roles; and including the gender perspective in coverage of all issues. (Barker & Sabido, 2005: 9)

In an article published in the PMC Special edition of 2006, Dr. Assefa Hailemariam of the Addis Ababa University asserts that the radio serial drama, *Yeken Kiginit*, has contributed to an increase in female autonomy.

The degree of autonomy exercised by women over their reproductive behavior has shown improvement since baseline. (2006:20)

In general, the role that media can play to gender equality is tantamount, and one of the ways to bring significant change in the society is using the media for educational and entertainment purpose such as this radio serial drama, Yeken Kiginin.

2.3. Cultural values versus gender issue

Every society has a system of values, a set of interrelated ideas, concepts, and practices to which strong sentiments are attached. In this regard Brown noted the following:

The word has the common sense meaning of something important to the individual or group concerned. A value, then, is anything – idea, belief, practice, things – that is important to people for any reason. Further, things can be important to us in a positive or a negative way – we may put it that positive values are the things we are “for”, while negative values are the things we are “against”. (1963:95)

Brown (1963), extending his explanation says there is no society known to us in which the people are concerned exclusively with material ends. But pride, family loyalty, status, religion, love of country are often values of great enough to cause individuals to sacrifice comfort, well-being and even life itself. (Ibid, 1963:95)

There is, of course, no single accepted definition for the concept “value” in the social sciences. For instance, Wilson refers value as preferences that felt to be justified, they are codes or standards that persist through time and that contain an undertone of the desirable, not just the desired. (Wilson, 1979: 1)

Wilson also states one of the best known definitions of a value.

A conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable

which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action. (1972: 2)

Wilson explains that although the concept of values occupies a critical position in analysis of human behavior, it is by no means stands alone, but is surrounded by other concepts of attitude, need, norm, and belief. He pointed out that that people can acquire new values and related behavioral dispositions through trial and error, through personal observation and understanding of a situation, by perception of another's response, by observation of the out come of another's actions, by verbal instruction, or by a combination or sequence of such learned experiences. (Ibid, 1979:4-10)

In short, culture is the way we collectively express ourselves while cultural values are the governing ideas and guiding principles for thought and action upon our culture. (Real, 1996:11) (Srikandath, 1991:165-75),

If we base our conception of culture and cultural values on the above explanations, we would find most of the enumerated facts on acquiring value in the serial drama Yeken Kiginit. One of the basic goals of this serial drama, according to the coordinator, is guaranteeing women's equality by educating and entertaining the public. In order to ensure this, PMC has done prior research studies on how "Yeken Kiginit' can bring the intended result on the community using the values they give to their culture. PMC's Amharic radio serial drama coordinator Mesfin Assefa writes the following on this.

... The efforts exerted to construct the drama on prevailing values, linguistic backgrounds and cultural norms of the society and the ability and faithfulness with which the actors managed to accurately reflect the problems and aspirations of the people have combined to lend glamour and beauty to the drama. (PMC Publication, 2006:12)

In the Journalists Guide publication also the following point was mentioned on how to build cultural values through a radio serial drama.

The moral framework forms the basis for the values grid, which is a listing of the positive and negative values that will be promoted (or negated) in the serial drama. The values grid consists of statements such as: “It is good that parents send their daughters to school,” and “It is bad that husbands beat their wives. (Barker & Sabido, 2005:34)

Having said this on cultural values, I have selected the following value grids of PMC as indicative of how the organization gives attention to building cultural values on gender issue in its serial drama preparation.

Some of the value grids for Ethiopian serial drama by Population Media Center

Positive Value	Negative Value
1. It is good that women should not undermine their power in aspiring to the position of leadership.	1. As a part of culture women should remain submissive to the interests of their husbands.
2. It is good to understand that rape and abduction have negative consequences on females.	2. Boys in shortage of bride-wealth payment have to kidnap girls rather than remaining unmarried.
3. It is good that girls marry after the age of 18 years.	3. Early marriage should be encouraged so that parents can see their grand-children and girls marry before abduction or losing their virginity.
4. It is good that girls marry men of their age.	4. There is no harm for girls in marrying older men if the latter can handle and sustain family.
5. It is good that women participate in all development activities of their communities.	5. It is both natural and cultural that women should always perform household chores and take care of children.
6. It is good that mothers advise their	6. Mothers should advise their daughters at

daughters on issues related with menstruation and about negative consequences of extra marital sex.	marriage only on how to handle their husbands and in-laws.
7. It is good that couples take mutual decisions on the use of family planning methods to limit family size.	7. Only men should decide on the use of family planning methods. Since they are supposed to head household and manage its affairs.
8. It is good to recognize that both men and women can be barren.	8. It is only women that are naturally infertile.
9. It is good that mothers limit number of children they have to bear.	9. The number of children she has measures Mother's value.
10. It is good for people to know that female circumcision may reduce sexual desire and may cause delivery problem.	10. Uncircumcised female is restless, disobedient and has less possibility of marriage.

Source: Values grid for Ethiopian Serial Drama, Population Media Center, 2001

In the message analysis of the radio serial drama, the researcher has attempted to look into how these values are manifested in the lives of the characters and how the drama try to introduce them to the listener with the aim to influence some attitudes on gender perspectives.

2. 4. The role of media (radio) in tackling women's burden

The mass media are the main forms of communication used to reach a large number of people at any time. In contemporary life the media is well-placed to influence society's opinions, beliefs, attitudes and standards, as well as the notion of self, so that "our idea of who we are as male and female is influenced by value-laden messages". (Clarke, 1986: 54)

Micheal Real also says the following to show how media enter into our daily life and shift from mass communication tool into personal experience.

Media invade our living space, shape the taste of those around us, inform and persuade us on products and policies, intrude into our private dreams and public fears, and, in turn, invite us to inhabit them. (1996: xiii-xiv)

Real's explanation shows that media has become a way of life to every individual exist on earth. For instance, studies have shown that in Ethiopia, media, especially the radio, proved to be an effective tool in shaping public attitude by educating as well as entertaining the society at large. (Medial Profile of Ethiopia, 2006)

After the establishment of radio in 1935 in Ethiopia, the radio has played quite a big role in entertaining and educating the public at large.

Radio has been the most effective medium of communications in Ethiopia, as it is in most developing countries. The mountain terrain of most of Ethiopia has always been difficult and expensive in the expansion of printed media and natural barriers to internal communication. (Negussie, 2006:9)

Because radio is the only available mechanism to reach audiences in the more distant parts of Ethiopia, it is no wonder that it today captures a significant portion of the urban and rural population through its transmission. Radio has become a vital instrument in bringing the issue of women into light, and serves as a tool to balance women's voices to men's in every sphere of life. A recently published training guide by PMC & UNFPA says the following in this respect.

Throughout the world, in terms of gender relations, the media, especially the radio, acts as a cultural force, which subtly and indirectly, helps to shape, rather than merely reflect, men's and women's social reality. (Barker & Sabido, 2005:9)

Today the media, especially the radio, is believed to have a paramount role in ensuring the rights and privileges of women in the developing countries, including Ethiopia. This role is expected to be more effective by use of entertainment media as it has proved to be

a better mechanism in influencing public attitude and bring about a meaningful change among a society. This role of entertainment media was also recognized at the landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994 the following way:

Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector should make greater and more effective use of the entertainment media, including radio and television soap operas and drama, folk theatre and other traditional media to encourage public discussion of important but sometimes sensitive topics related to the implementation of the present Program of Action. When the entertainment media – especially dramas – are used for advocacy purposes or to promote particular lifestyles, the public should be so informed, and in each case the identity of sponsors should be indicated in an appropriate manner. (1994: Article 11:23)

It is no wonder why the PMC chose the radio as an effective tool to transmit its serial, as this means of communication is the best way in reaching the mass at large. Even though radio could play a paramount role in sensitizing the public particularly in relation to the gender issue, some journalists and program producers have been criticized to letting their opinions or biases become part of the reportage or the program they produce. That is why PMC claimed to be much concerned in undertaking a formative study in the choice of medium and its program preparation as women in the developing countries are underprivileged in having equal access to air their voice to men. In this respect Real says the following.

The muteness of women in the media, their lack of voice, and the dominance of male gaze have risen from and provided crucial support for men's privilege in the patriarchal culture. (1996:182)

A recently published article in a UNFPA publication also shares the same view with Real with regard to media bias, especially in the affairs of women.

... It has become increasingly clear that the gender biases of journalists and editors creep into the way they gather information, interview sources and report on news and issues. Thus, journalists and media personnel must be trained to be aware of the gender biases inherent in their work and in the final media product, and to work towards the objective of being balanced in their coverage of news and issues. (2005:9)

One way of addressing women's issues using the media is through tackling the existing negative cultural beliefs on women by providing educational-entertainment programs. Tory Higgins explains this in the following manner.

Media shapes people's self-schemas, extending their basis of experience, establishing alternative ideals, and enabling reflection based on situations and ideals they do not meet in everyday life. In this way media affects people's image of themselves' the way they are, the way they would like to be, as well as the way they should be. (1989:57)

At present, the media throughout the world are expected to act as a cultural force in terms of gender relations, rather than merely reflect simple social reality. In this respect, the important role of radio in giving equal chances and opportunities to women and men to address gender disparities and discrimination is currently being witnessed in Ethiopia, especially in its entertaining and educating programs.

2.5. The Sabido Methodology and its applications

In order to be effective in designing and producing any media program, it is first essential to apply some kind of methodology, preferably a methodology proven effective in other countries' media experience. In this case the Sabido Methodology of designing and producing serial dramas proved to be successful in bringing the intended result in many developing countries. Singhal says, many scholars inextricably linked the history of entertainment-education strategy with the work of Miguel Sabido, a writer-producer-director of theatre and television in Mexico. (Singhal, 1999:47)

I have two reasons to discuss this methodology at length. The first one is that this methodology is mainly focusing on building positive values among a targeted community using the characters in the serial, and secondly the drama whose messages I am going to analyze is written based on this methodology.

2.5.1. Origin of entertainment-education

When we discuss the origins of entertainment-education its basic idea was developed by Miguel Sabido. In their prestigious book, *Entertainment-Education*, Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers, two prominent communication scholars say the following.

In the mid-1960s, Miguel Aleman, the executive vice-president of Televisa (later the president), began advocating that mass media play a more active role in spawning social change in Mexico. Aleman, the son of a former president of Mexico, searched for a strategy to use commercial television to serve the public interest without sacrificing commercial objectives. Aleman commissioned Sabido to write and produce a historical-cultural program to educate the Mexican people about their rich history and foster a sense of national unity. Sabido accepted the challenge. Thus begun Sabido's involvement with entertainment-education. (1999:51)

Then Sabido developed a theory on how to write and produce a serial drama by integrating previous theoretical elements of communication from Albert Bandura, Eric Bentley, Carl Jung and Paul MacLean. He tells his personal story in Singhal's book the following way.

When people ask me what I am, I tell them that I am a hands-on communication theoretician. In addition to being a communication theoretician, I produce and direct movies, plays, and radio and television dramas. A practical and theoretical approach to human communication gave birth to various methodologies sustained by a theoretical framework. One methodology, which I originally called "entertainment with proven social benefit," was then translated as "entertainment-education," a concept that is now being used around the world. (Singhal, 2004:61)

I believe the above statement of Sabido gives us a clear image about his contribution in the field. As I have said in the above discussion the objective of a Sabido-style serial drama is to transmit a specific pro-social message based on the targeted communities' culture, norm and belief.

However, the Sabido methodology is more than mere entertainment-education. Kriss Barker outlined the following key points of what makes the Sabido methodology so different from other forms of entertainment-education:

Successful use of the Sabido methodology hinges on two key factors: (1) use of the serial drama format and, (2) rigorous adherence to the theories underlying the methodology. Also, most entertainment-education programs are devoted to sending messages, whereas the Sabido methodology uses characters as vicarious role models, to demonstrate the desired behaviors. The use of these vicarious role models is a critical element of successful application of the Sabido approach. (2005:21)

We can also learn from the above discussion of Barker that a serial drama written using a Sabido style should first need to follow the format and secondly the theories that Sabido uses to apply in its methodology.

Sabido's work in Mexico directly inspired other entertainment-education efforts worldwide, (Singhal, 1999:47) including famous Indian, Tanzanian, Philippines and Nigeria TV and radio soap operas. According to Singhal, Sabido's work also inspired Johns Hopkins University's Population Communication Services (JHU/PCS) to re-invent the entertainment-education strategy in rock music campaigns promoting sexual responsibility among teenagers in Latin America.

Heidi Nariman, a US communication scholar who resides in Mexico City, wrote a book in 1993 that represents the first comprehensive account of Sabido's methodology for designing and producing entertainment-education soap operas. In her book entitled "Soap

Operas for Social Change”, Nariman appreciates Sabido’s ideas as “revolutionary” in applying new and scientific strategy to produce entertainment-education soap operas.

Sabido’s methodology had two components: an integrated, multi-disciplinary theoretical framework, and a well-defined production system, which preserved the qualities of a commercial soap opera while promoting an educational issue. (1993:22)

In short, contemporary communication scholars do take a common position in the great scholarly contribution of Miguel Sabido in producing entertainment-education soap operas. (Singhal, 1999) Having said this, I would like to go to major components of the Sabido Methodology in designing a serial, as they are the basis to this researcher in analyzing the message of Yeken Kiginit serial drama.

2.5.2. The Sabido Methodology versus the three communication theories

As I have said, the Sabido Methodology is an approach used in the development of mass-media serial dramas. Even though his methodology was drawn basically from five theories of communication and behavior change, I would only focus on the first three theories here as they are most relevant in the Ethiopian context. These three theories are: Eric Bentley’s Dramatic Theory, Carl Jung’s Theory of Archetypes and Stereotypes and The Collective Consciousness, and Albert Bandura’s The Social Learning Theory. (Singhal, 2004:64-74)

The MacLean’s Concept of The Triune Brain Theory will not be included in the following analysis as it mainly deals with actors who play in a TV dramas or Hollywood movies and who affects their viewers with their body movements. Shannon and Weaver’s Communication Model will not be included as it focuses on the impact registered on the target audience.

A) Bentley's Dramatic Theory, 1967

The dramatic theory of Bentley describes the structure and effects of five genres of theatre: tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, farce, and melodrama). (Sabido, 2004:68) Among these genres, melodrama presents reality in a slightly exaggerated sense in which the moral universes of good and evil are in discord.

Sabido employed Bentley's structure of the melodrama genre as a basis from which to design plots and characters. "Good" characters in Sabido-style serial dramas accept the proposed social behavior, and "evil" characters reject it. Plots are then constructed around the relationships between good and evil characters as they move closer to or farther away from the proposed social behavior. (Barker, 2004: 41)

This researcher, based on an adoption of Sabido's methodology, in the following analysis in Chapter four will attempt to examine how the good and evil characters in Yeken Kiginit battle in gender relations, and also how this theory is employed in the serial drama.

B) Jung's Theory of the Collective Unconscious, 1970

One of the communication theories adopted by Sabido's methodology was Carl Jung's Theory of the Unconscious. This theory mainly focuses on archetypes and stereotypes. In any serial dramas characters that imitate a myth represent archetypes, while characters that imitate life represent stereotypes. This classification, based on Jung's approach, was important in designing the characters for entertainment-education dramas. (Sabido, 2004:69) Sabido portrayed these archetypes as positive or negative stereotypes, representing the societal norms of the target audience. Barker says the following on Sabido Methodology in relation to Jung's theory.

Sabido-style serial dramas rely on extensive formative research to identify the culture – or country-specific versions – of these archetypes and to identify local archetypes that represent the pro-social values (or the antithesis of these values) that will be addressed in the serial drama. (2004:42)

The following analysis in Chapter four will also look into how the stereotypes were represented in Yeken Kiginit.

C) Bandura's Social Learning Theory, 1977

Sabido incorporated key elements of Social learning Theory of the famous social-psychologist, Dr. Albert Bandura, to develop his methodology now known as entertainment-education. (Sabido, 2004:68) Albert Bandura explains in his theory how people learn new behaviors from vicariously experiencing the actions of others, and according to Barker, a key to the use of Social Learning Theory in Sabido-style serial dramas is use of appropriate models that are visibly rewarded (or punished) in front of the audience, in order to convert the values that are being promoted by the serial into behavior. (Barker, 2004:42)

Sabido applied this theory using three types of characters – the positive, the negative and the transitional characters. How these characters are represented in Yeken Kiginit will also be studied in the analysis part i.e. Chapter four.

In sum, the Sabido-methodology for development of mass media entertainment-education serial dramas is designed according to elements of communication and behavioral theories. The researcher will attempt to analyze the serial's message produced using the Sabido methodology, by mainly dealing on how specific values, attitudes, and behaviors are transmitted to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

2.5.3. Major steps in designing Sabido-style drama

One important aspect that differentiates the Sabido style drama from the many is that the characters are designed based on the values grid, and the story emerges from the likely interactions of the differing characters with regard to those values. This simply means the characters are not determined by the plot but the plot is dictated by the manifested behavior of the characters in each episode.

Designing characters from their likely interactions with regard to those values is the reverse of many other strategies using serial drama, in which the plot is designed first and the characters' profiles are designed based on the plot. (Sabido & Barker, 2005:22)

As I have said the first step in producing a serial drama, according to Sabido, is designing the characters based on the values grid. And one way to explore those values is to think in terms of cultural assumptions (Real, 1996:2) and values, including "... *race, class, and gender*". (Real, 1996:11) The radio serial drama, in which this researcher is attempting to analyze its message, was written based on Sabido's methodology of writing a serial drama, i.e. *bringing to light and familiarizing the values and actions of the characters to the audience.*" (Singhal, 2004:11)

The next step of Sabido-style serial drama is to outline the story line, including the main story and sub-plots. This mainly focuses on understanding how to tie rural and urban people of different cultural back ground, and making the story line further the needs of the educational values. (Barker & Sabido, 2005:51)

Then follow the development of episodes and scripts. A drama produced in Sabido style will create conflicts between the positive and negative characters, and perhaps even within the transitional characters' themselves, while they battle their own doubts and hesitations during the course of this behavior change. (Ibid, 2005:51)

Next to this comes the "cliffhanger" that leaves the listener at the greatest moment of suspense, excitement or unresolved action. The writers, according to Barker and Sabido, strive to end each episode at such a climatic moment, leaving the audience hungry for the next installment.

The last step in producing a Sabido-style serial drama is the epilogues. Epilogues are written as a closing section to each episode of the serial drama aimed to make rational

sense of what has gone in the drama, tie the program with the social message, and encourage communication among family members and friends.

Even though all these steps are vitally important in producing and designing a serial drama, Sabido advised that writers and producers do need training in the application of his methodology to their particular cultural setting and set of issues to be addressed.

Due to the fact that Yeken Kiginit is written using the Sabido's methodology, it is worthwhile to look at how the above steps were applied in this drama, especially from building gender equality among the targeted groups.

CHAPTER 3

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This research study primarily focused on analyzing how women were portrayed in the radio serial drama Yeken Kiginit by examining how the deep-rooted cultural values that affect women's status in Ethiopia are presented through the messages. That means the analysis followed a qualitative research design rooted in the theory developed by Miguel Sabido's methodology on how to write and produce a serial drama. Sabido called his model "entertainment with proven social benefit".

As shown above, Sabido's theory integrates previous theoretical elements of communication mainly from Albert Bandura, Eric Bentley, Carl Jung and other scholars in the field. This research study will analyze how the drama attempted to convey gender equality issue in its message in an attempt to modify the already established cultural values regarding women. In addition, the thesis analyzes how the drama manifested the cultural upbringing of the public, and how the characters were created in order to fight the cultural stereotyping.

3.2. Research design

The theoretical perspective of my study is informed by cultural and media studies, a field of knowledge and an approach to research that is concerned with issues of power and ideology, and the circulation of meaning within specific social contexts. As I already stated in the introductory remark, the Ethiopian culture is a male dominated culture, especially in the Amhara regions where the setting of this particular serial drama, Yeken Kiginit, takes place. Within the broader cultural and media studies framework, I have specifically identified Miguel Sabido's theory of entertainment-education – i.e. a theory

developed to write and produce a serial drama based on a culture of a specific group of people using the media. (Barker, 2004:43)

This theory was also developed by integrating previous theoretical elements of communication mainly from Albert Bandura, Eric Bentley, Carl Jung and other scholars in the field. This researcher also used, in the message analysis of the drama, these three communication theories as secondary tools of study analysis, as they are indirectly applied in the production of Yeken Kiginit serial drama.

The researcher has planned first to examine the serial drama from other cultural and media communication theories formulated to write and produce serial dramas or soap operas, but previous serial dramas and soap operas were written and produced in a conventional way and have no any theoretical foundations.

The most important difference between conventional soap operas and entertainment-education of radio and television is that the former have little or no theoretical foundation, whereas Sabido's *telenovelas* are based on a multi-disciplinary framework of human communication theories. (Singhal, 1999:60-61)

Singhal further points out that there is a huge difference between the conventional soap operas or serial dramas and the Sabido's entertainment-education programs as the former are not purposely educational, promote undesirable values such as excessive sex, violence, greed and materialism, whereas the latter aim to attract large audiences, designed to promote and reinforce particular pro-social beliefs and values, and to convey purposely educational issue. (Singhal, 1999:60) In fact, Singhal admits that there were certain educational elements in the conventional soap operas and serial dramas, but "such learning is largely incidental". (Singhal, 1999:60-61)

Therefore, I have two reasons to use Sabido's theory at length in the message analysis chapter, i.e. Chapter Four. The first one is that this theory mainly focuses on building positive cultural and social values among a targeted community using the characters in

the serial. Secondly the message construction of the Yeken Kiginit was guided by several theories of human communication. Arvind Singhal says the following on the use of the Sabido methodology in a serial drama such as Yeken Kiginit:

The Sabido Methodology is a replicable methodology that, although formularized, is still adaptable to the individual values and cultures of each country where it is used. (1999:68)

The researcher is also used Albert Bandura's, Eric Bentley's, and Carl Jung's communication theories as additional tools of analysis to substantiate the analysis of Yeken Kiginit.

Thus the researcher conducted the collection of the qualitative data from two sources:

1. Ten episodes of written scripts of the serial drama from PMC-Ethiopia. Because the scripts were written in Amharic language, the official language of FDRE government, parts that are relevant to the research study were translated into English.
2. In depth interviews with the producers and writers of the drama. All the data were transcribed from the recording machine.

3.3. Qualitative Research: philosophical underpinnings

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the methodological approach in this study is qualitative. The goal of qualitative research is to access "insider" perspective characteristic of members of a culture (or subculture). (Priest, 1996:106-107) Priest (1996:106-107) further adds that when the aim is to understand the "insider's" perspective, a quantitative design is just not the way to go, one requires a holistic and inductive approach which provides the opportunity to develop a descriptive, rich understanding and insight into the individual's beliefs, concerns, motivations, culture, aspirations, behavior and preferences.

Lindolf also says the following on using qualitative methods:

Any qualitative methods are more suitable than quantitative methods for addressing certain questions about culture, interpretation and power. (1995:10)

Therefore, the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative methodology are typically attributed to phenomenology. The point about the phenomenological position is that it takes the actor's perspective as the empirical point of departure. Given that humans live by interpretations, it is this attempt at recovering the ways persons live by intentions, purposes, and values that qualitative studies are dedicated to. (Christians & Carey, 1989:358-9)

Christians and Carey said the following on the use of Qualitative Research Method in exploring cultural values transmitted through the media the following way:

Qualitative studies start from the assumption that in studying humans we are examining a creative process whereby people produce and maintain forms of life and society and systems of meaning and value. This creative activity is grounded in the ability to build cultural forms from symbols that express this will to live and assert meaning. Humans live by interpretations. They do not merely react or respond but rather live by interpreting experience through the agency of culture.... It is, then, to this attempt at recovering the fact of human agency - the ways persons live by intentions, purposes, and values - that qualitative studies are dedicated. Thus we do not ask: "how do the media affect us", (could we figure that out if we wanted to?), but "what are the interpretations of meaning and value created in the media and what is their relation to the rest of life? (1989:356)

Babbie and Mouton also say the following on use of qualitative study.

The researcher/s has to make a deliberate attempt to put themselves in the shoes of the people they are observing and studying and try to understand their actions, decisions, behavior, practices, ritual and so on, from their perspective. (2002:271)

If qualitative studies are dedicated to the interpretations of meaning and value created in the media, and also to studying the society's actions and practices, rather than assessing

the impact of the media on listeners/viewers, then it would be appropriate to employ this method in analyzing the message of Yeken Kiginit and shed light on the prevailing scenario on the status of women in Ethiopia.

However, there are criticisms from quantitative researchers regarding the validity and objectivity of results achieved by a limited sampling size of qualitative research method, such as this one. The sampling size is remained to be a stumbling block for a student who wants to study within qualitative paradigm. (Smaling, 1989:307) Such kind of questions may be asked by quantitative researchers from being suspicious of the fact that by using limited number of sampling sizes, it can not be possible to generalize the results to the general public. But this researcher, as any researcher interested in qualitative methods, is aimed at providing an understanding of how the *meaning* which the serial drama attribute to the cause of gender equality in Ethiopia, not to generalize it. In other words, the researcher is more interested in how women experience different forms of violence by men, and not interested in the numbers of women being suffered at the hands of men.

As Maxwell argues, there is a place for the issue of validity in qualitative research if one applies the concept primarily to accounts, not to methods:

The applicability of the concept of validity...does not depend on the existence of some absolute truth or reality to which an account can be compared, but only on the fact that there exist ways of assessing accounts itself, but in some way relate to those things that the account claims to be about. (1992:283)

In short, the core issue is whether the researcher is providing a valid description of what the events, utterances, and behaviors MEAN to the people engaged in and with them.

The other weakness mentioned by quantitative researchers to downgrade qualitative methods is the issue of objectivity. They argued that in order to have a reliable outcome in any study, the paradigm factors such as objectivity are important. (Bryman, 1988:274) According to Bryman, the Dutch philosopher Adri Smaling developed a conceptualization of objectivity which is particularly relevant to qualitative research, in

which objectivity and validity should be understood as counterfactual, regulative principles.

Although we should strive with everything in our power to do truly valid, reliable, and objective studies, the reality is that we are never able to attain this completely. Rather, it remains a goal, something striven towards, although never to be fully attained. Hence, no matter how carefully we do our member checks, how much effort we put into obtaining reasoned consensus, how will we test the reliability of our IQ test, we are always going to be slightly less-than-perfect at the outcome. (1988:276)

It is true that different research problems need different research methodologies. Bryman also believes that researchers should attend to the full complexity of the social world and choose methods in relation to the research problems posed.

If some research topics are more suited to a survey, while others would be served by a qualitative approach, still others will be even better served by a marriage of the two traditions, whereas the integrated strategy may not fit some issues. The critical issue is to be aware of the appropriateness of particular methods (or combinations of methods) for particular issues. (1988:273)

Therefore, the researcher chose the qualitative paradigm as it is best suited to answer my research question, i.e. social inequality of women and men's cultural attitudes in Yeken Kiginit serial drama. In fact Lindlof (Lindlof, 1995:21) also stressed the fact that studies using qualitative methods often focus on only some partial set of relationships in group life or on one aspect of a scene. In the next section I will discuss the methods adopted in my qualitative research design.

3.4. Research procedure

The research adopted a two-stage design which allowed inferences or leads drawn from one data source to be corroborated or followed up by another. The sections below discuss the two stages of the research process and the sampling procedures in the following order:

- i. Qualitative content analysis (message analysis)
- ii. Individual in-depth interviews

3.4.1 Qualitative content analysis

As mentioned earlier, the main purpose of this research is to assess how the radio serial drama, Yeken Kiginit's messages conveyed gender issues and attempted to modify already established cultural values.

Therefore, qualitative content analysis is the main instrument applied to carry out the study. By definition content analysis is a technique used for gathering and analyzing the content of texts and how they are combined. Content refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message that can be communicated. (Deacon et al. 1999) Qualitative content analysis, in this research study, is adopted as an interpretative approach that seeks to explore the ways in which messages are presented in the drama and the meanings that are embedded as opposed to looking at the frequency of particular themes as a reflection of phenomena which is characteristic of quantitative content analysis.

Because the analysis of texts is concerned with their meanings, the ten episodes were analyzed in terms of their representations and contextualization of women in the serial drama, and in terms of the producers and writers ideas – what the stories highlight or ignore. Morley said that:

When analyzing texts or programs we also have to look at the assumptions that lie behind the content. There will be assumptions made about the audience and these assumptions need to be made visible if we are to understand the implicit messages which a program/text may transmit over and above what is explicitly said in it. (1992:84)

Qualitative content analysis is not only enough to depict fully at how the messages were portrayed in a media program, as Fairclough (1995:103) argues, the analysis should also

identify what is included and what is excluded, what is thematicised, and what processes and types are drawn upon to represent events. Therefore the researcher employed other method of investigation. It is in this light that qualitative in-depth interviews were used.

3.4.2. Qualitative in-depth interviews

The interview conducted with the producers and the writers of the serial drama were unstructured. That means the interviewees' view points are more likely to be expressed in a relatively openly designed interview situation than in a standardized interview or questionnaire. This is why Lindolf (1995) suggests that these sorts of interviews are better described as 'conversations with a purpose'.

Fontana and Frey also write the following about unstructured interview, which is "the open-ended ethnographic (in-depth) interview":

Unstructured interviewing provides a greater breadth than the other types, given its qualitative nature. ... [It] is used in an attempt to understand the complex behavior of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry. (1994:365)

The interview conducted with the producers and writers of the serial drama mainly focuses on how gender issue in the drama were raised, and the technique or the methodology applied to write and produce the drama in order to be effective in delivering the intended message.

All the interviews were conducted in Amharic, the official Ethiopian language, and two journalists carried out the transcribing and translation process.

Hence, all the audio taped interview data were transcribed. The important parts of the verbatim transcripts that can show the focus of this study were translated in to English and included in the analysis chapter.

Points such as: how Yeken Kiginit conveyed the gender equality issue and attempted to modify already established cultural values through its message; how the drama manifest

the cultural upbringing of the public and its strong attachment to it; and also how the characters in *Yeken Kiginit* created as role models by the writers, and in what manners they fight the cultural stereotyping, were given due emphasis by the researcher in his interview questions. The interview questions and the reply given by the interviewees are included in the appendix of this research study.

3.5. Research sampling

As mentioned earlier, the methods of data collection are gathering episode scripts of the serial drama using systematic random sampling, as well as in-depth interview with the producers. To systematically sample episodes of *Yeken Kiginit* for inclusion in this study, systematic random sampling was employed. This sampling method, systematic random sampling, is often used for 'obtaining a representative sample' in any media coverage based on issues, dates or periods which should be analyzed. (Hansen & Cottle, 1998:103) This depends, according to these scholars, on whether the subject of analysis relates to a specific event, or whether it concerns the mapping of some general dimension of coverage such as the portrayal of women, race, violence... etc in a media. (Ibid, 1998:103)

As systematic random sampling provides a less laborious method for random selection of sample units, (Deacon, 1999:46) the researcher employed it to analyze the message in the 10 of 257 episodes of *Yeken Kiginit* serial drama. Therefore, the researcher divide 257 episodes (the sampling-frame total) by 10 (the required sample number) to have a sampling interval. Then I select a random number, i.e. the first episode of the drama, and the next value which is the 25th – the starting point for the selection of the rest, of the serial to be analyzed and ends at the 225th episode of *Yeken Kiginit*.

The sampling frame was based in order to understand how gender issue was entertained in the serial drama by looking at how our male dominating culture is denying the rights and privileges of women in the society. The researcher also used the sampling method to

show how the cultural values were depicted in the drama through the characters at various times and in different settings.

3.6. Challenges and limitations

The first challenge that this researcher encountered in his study endeavor was lack of time and resources. Due to this fact this project only analyzes 10 out of the 257 episodes. Although the drama had a wide audience, taking only 10 might not be enough to a representative study of how educating and entertaining media program may help the cause of women.

The second point that this researcher want to mention as a challenge is that the limitation of the study to textual or message analysis only. Media scholars stress the fact that in any media research endeavor, media texts, and the production and audience response are vital. They recommend that studying the relationship among the three would make a research undertaking complete. (See for ex. Watson, 2003: 287) Due to time and resource constraint, however, the researcher obliged to focus on studying the text message of the serial drama from gender perspective only. And accordingly this could be the other limitation of this research.

The third challenge that this researcher faced while conducting this study was that the refusal of the two script writers to give an interview to the researcher. The researcher have later learnt that the two script writers, Addis Gebre-Mariam and Daniel Abebe, were in logger-heads with PMC, producer of Yeken Kiginit, for terminating their contract after the end of the drama. Even though Addis agreed first to give an interview, he later changed his mind and cancelled the appointment he had with the researcher. Therefore, the researcher obliged to make an interview with only one of the script writer, Mesfin Getachew.

The fourth factor that the researcher want to mention here is that even if my closeness to the serial drama challenged me to see it critically, it also helped me to strengthen my research as the work with the Population Media Center gave me some inside information

about the production processes and a chance to regularly listen to the story of Yeken Kiginit. By the time when this radio drama was transmitted, I was an editor in a weekly newspaper. Besides doing my journalistic routines, I was assisting the Population Media Center, the producer of this radio serial drama, by doing the lay out and design work for its different publications.

The fifth challenge faced by the researcher is that even if PMC serial drama coordinator was willing to provide me the recorded episodes in real tapes, due to administrative reason it was not possible to hear it in the studio. If the researcher had a chance to listen the real sound of the ten episodes, it might strengthen his knowledge in having a clear understanding on the role and impact of the characters.

Last but not least, this researcher could not also come across other previous research works ever done on related topic. If there were any, it would be of a great help to enrich ideas and information to my study. Unfortunately this did not happen and limited previous studies within the specific area of research could also be counted as a limitation.

Chapter Four

4. Qualitative content analysis of Yeken Kiginit

4.1. Introduction

Yeken Kiginit serial radio drama unfolds in four rural and urban-oriented settings – Asqual, Birima, Fikir Amba and Tena Adam. All that came to pass in these four places was a reflection of the life of the society. The social norms and values, languages, problems and aspirations of the society are reflected in the drama.

This serial drama has four different settings with four different cultures. **Tena Adam** is a place that has no development infrastructure, and harmful traditional practices like abduction and rape are rampant. **Asqual** is a big modern town where numerous illegal activities occur and where drug abuse is rife. **Fikre Amba** is a rural village where harmful traditional practices are more or less dominant like Tena Adam. **Birima** is a town that serves as a bridge between Asqual and Tena Adam where young girls deceived by middlemen, flee from their homes in search of a better life and are exposed to prostitution. (PMC Special Issue, 2004:13-16)

In all these settings the characters have been well identified with the culture in their manner of speaking, thinking and way of life. Fikerte, the main character, represents the thinking of modern life; Minda has given birth to many children with no concern whatsoever about its consequences; Damte, Gizmu and Worotaw, who are always ready for revenge, represent the male chauvinistic culture; and women such as Anguach, Tariqua and Mulu are the victims of the male dominated culture. Most male characters do reflect how cultural upbringing and way of life affect the lives of millions of women in Ethiopia, and most female characters depict how they were victimized due to the existing socio-cultural reality in the country.

The 257 episodes of the drama were broadcasted in the Amharic language over the two and a-half-year period (June 2002-November 2004). All raised different societal and cultural issues, including how one falls victim to HIV/AIDS due to lack of precaution, how family members are exposed to the danger of displacement and poverty because they do not follow family planning, the psychological problems resulting from abduction, the harmful effects of superstitious beliefs, the disadvantages of discriminating women, lack of smooth relationship between parents and their children, the importance of spousal communication, etc. (Mesfin, 2004:17)

Having said this, the message analysis part is subdivided into five topics. These topics mainly dealt to show on how the drama raised issues such as gender equality through modifying established cultural values, characters' creation of women and men as role models to the society, manifestation of cultural upbringing of men and their strong attachment to it affects women equality, exposing the suffering of women by seeking the "missing voices", and opposition of traditional values and modern values in terms of gender issues.

4.2. Modifying established cultural values to gender equality

In order to analyze the message of Yeken Kiginit, the researcher believes, it is first vital to look at the implementation of the Sabido methodology in Yeken Kiginit. Sabido says that this methodology can only be useful when the scriptwriters and producers of the dramas have a thorough understanding of it and also the culture of the people intended to receive the message. That is only when the drama will be culturally relevant and true-to-life. (Sabido & Barker, 2005:44)

According to Sabido, media program producers require to observe the ways that people may be marginalized because of their gender (their defined role in society). Based on this fact, producers of Yeken Kiginit serial drama claimed to give due emphasis in reflecting

the reality women are facing in the Ethiopian society today due to culturally biased attitude by men and modifying it.

To examine this fact in Yeken Kiginit the researcher analyzes two episodes of Yeken Kiginit that focus on how the chauvinistic attitude of men resulted from their cultural outlook affects the lives of women and how it was attempted by the producers to modify such attitude to the culture.

One of the issues that Yeken Kiginit is intended to bring cultural modification among the society through its message is by exposing the grim facts of wife-beating. Wife-beating has been witnessed in Ethiopia resulting long-term physical and psychological damage to women's lives. And one of the manifestations of the prevailing unhealthy attitude (in most areas it is taken as an accepted norm) that belittle women in Ethiopia is wife-beating. (Assefa, 2005:118)

But such practice, according to the drama producers, is not regarded as wrong act in many parts of the country, especially in the rural areas. Serial drama writer Mesfin Getachew says, wife-beating has been a common phenomenon in our culture, especially in places where abduction and rape are rampant. "After all, the aim of such serial dramas is to expose how our culture is dominating the rights and privileges of women, and we have attempted to exhibit the grim facts of wife-beating and rape through Shashe and Sereke." he told the researcher in an interview.

Such kinds of attitudes and behaviors were frequently reflected in the serial drama. In the following episode the serial writers probably attempt to show how the life of millions of women in Ethiopia is affected by rape – a crime which is out of control in the rural parts of the country.

(Shashe is the owner of a local bar in Tena Adam, a place that has no development infrastructure, and harmful traditional practices like abduction and rape are rampant.

Sereke is an elementary school teacher who is always grieved by local men's attitude who considered themselves as superior to women and commit rape and abduction on frequent basis. The physical damage being seen on Wubalem's body, resulting from beating and rape by her husband Chane, was not regarded by other local men as a wrong action and even most of them justified him as a husband who has the full right to do it. If a woman left her husband due to his harassment and beating, they would blame her as a failure in marriage. By then Shashe and Sereke start discussing the grim fact of how women are abused in the area.)

Shashe: Is it fair to say such things to a woman? Is she not the creation of God like them? Because she couldn't defend herself, how could she incur all those physical damages?

Sereke: Ignore them!

Shashe: How could I ignore them, teacher! ...At least they have got a mother, a sister, or at least a relative. Abduction, rape, marriage without the consent of the two partners, early marriage... could happen to their sisters, daughters and even to their mothers.

Sereke: That is their ignorance!

Shashe: Teacher! ... I don't know why a man become shy to use condom when he commit adultery. I don't even know why a man, who raped a woman, ignores that that would also be one day the fate of his sister.

Sereke: I can understand your anger, and at least we should try to do our best with a sober mind.

Shashe: How can I be sober while looking all this tragic events?

Sereke: Don't get desperate. Until those who commit these crimes become desperate, we shouldn't be either.

Women can be beaten by her husband for different reasons, says Dr. Assefa Haile-Mariam of AAU in his post intervention survey on the effect of Yeken Kiginit and Dhimbiba serial dramas among listeners. According to Dr. Assefa, the reason that most

husbands were beating their wives are: “if she goes out without telling him; if she neglects the children, if she argues with him; or if she refuses to have sex with him.” (PMC Publication, 2005:118)

What was exhibited in the different characters’ lives of Yeken Kiginit, such as Shashe and Sereke, seems to emanate from prior understanding of the culture of the people by the script writers. In the above episode, even if Sereke tried to encourage Shashe, she couldn’t hide her desperate feeling on getting a solution for male dominance in the society. What she has been left with was blaming the culture that exposed her for all the bad happenings surrounded her.

Sabido says that even if girls acquire the necessary knowledge on the impact of harmful traditional practices the gender power relations make it difficult for them to act on this knowledge.

It is not sufficient for girls to have information – they also need to have more power to act and more options, just as men and boys need to be willing to change and to discuss and negotiate rather than coerce and rely on superior powers. (2005:56)

Communication scholars do also currently argue that a successful and well designed media program should have to acquire best understanding of the culture of the target audience. F. E. Jandt, a communication expert, says the following on this:

Culture cannot be known without a study of communication and communication can only be understood with an understanding of the culture it supports. (2004:29)

In this respect, the researcher believes that as long as women are not aware of the situation, all efforts to make them equal with their male counterparts as a futile attempt. That is why, in this particular episode of Yeken Kiginit, Shashe is crying out her desperation as male chauvinists make her life miserable. But the positive character such as Sereke, based on Sabido’s methodology demonstrates behavior that is overwhelmingly

positive, and embodies the positive cultural values in the values grid by encouraging her to see a better tomorrow.

Even though most women are players of the pivotal role in managing their family lives, they have less access than men do to resources, opportunities and decision-making. In a society such as ours where traditional culture is important the major responsibility of child bearing falls on the shoulders of women. That is why most girls do suffer as a result of unwanted pregnancy, or being rejected by their child's father. The quality of a good father is to bring money to the family and nothing more. The wife is expected to do all the house work – washing clothes and even dishes, preparing food, cleaning the house, taking care of the children and the husband etc.

In Ethiopian culture it will be considered as taboo and immoral if the man enters into a kitchen and give a hand to his wife. That is why the burden of life falls on most women shoulders as it was depicted in the lives of many women characters in the serial drama Yeken Kiginit.

In one of the episodes of Yeken Kiginit, Anguatch, one of the lead women characters, became pregnant. But the man responsible for bringing her into such a miserable situation disappeared and abandoned her alone. Most girls in Ethiopia commit suicide or do illegal abortion in fear of their parents or other members of the community they live in when they found themselves in such a situation. “The case of Anguatch is a daily happening to millions of women in the rural Ethiopia,” serial drama script writer Mesfin Getachew told this researcher in an interview. Adding, “The writers attempt to transmit this fact through her misery and frustration in addition to the life burden that she expected to bear on her shoulder for the sake of her child”.

(After repeated harassment by her mother-in-law, Anguatch allowed her husband to impregnate a woman his mother has brought to their house. Because she couldn't bear a child from Demlew, she considered herself as an infertile woman. His mother brought him another lady, Ayal, from near by village and he slept with her. Ayal has a child from

her former husband who died of a prolonged illness. Even though Demlew's family considered Anguatch as an infertile woman, it was found out at last that the problem was of his. Anguatch accepted Demlew's action as justifiable, because of her cultural background that 'a man can not be infertile'. But when Demlew slept with Ayal he didn't take a precaution measure such as checking his/her blood for HIV or use condom. Later he found out that he was infected with the virus when Ayal died of illness. He too became infected soon after and the responsibility of caring him and Ayal's child fall upon Anguatch. Being smitten by this unfortunate incidence, she went to the health center to ask their help in treating her husband. The following dialogue between Anguatch and the nurse of the health center in her village shows how she became frustrated after finding herself in such a grim situation.)

Nurse: I want first to tell you that I appreciate the exemplary job you and Demlew did when Ayal died.

Anguatch: It was not a big deal. We did what was expected from us.

Nurse: If we find few people like you, we can abate the spread of the virus in a short time. By the way how is Demlew?

Anguatch: Thanks to the Lord, he is getting well.

Nurse: And the child?

Anguatch: He is fine too, and he is currently living with me.

Nurse: What about his father? Has anyone found his where about?

Anguatch: I didn't try that so far.

Nurse: I am sure you can raise him as your own child. I know it is a big burden for you besides taking care of your husband's health.

Anguatch: I would like to raise him as my own child, but I've promised Ayal to find his father and give him back.

Nurse: His father has already abandoned him. You can have him now.

Anguatch: Don't you think it would be a little tough for me to raise him well.

Nurse: I can understand that... You should incur some kind of income to look after him, like for school fee, books, cloth, and food. Besides

all this you should know the fact that HIV/AIDS has a negative impact not only on individual health, but also in family's income and economy. You should engage yourself in any income generating activity in order to support your husband as well as the child.

Anguatch: I can see now that Demlew became too weak to earn an income to his family. (she starts to cry)

Nurse: Be strong. I will come to your home in the next few days and offer him the necessary counseling.

One can realize from the above dialogue that women are the burden bearers of the mistake that men commit due to negligence. Demlew, first committed adultery then he became HIV positive, and finally he brought his mistress child to the house. In the house we find Anguatch who was, firstly psychologically traumatized by her husband's deeds, secondly who struggles to treat her husband's health besides her other responsibility in the family, and finally became the mother of some one's child with no income of her own.

The message of this episode is clear: First, women's empowerment needs modifying the existing male-based power structure and culture by encouraging women to make decisions. Secondly, it is vital to improve women's access to sources of income through employment and other income-generating schemes. And thirdly, it shows the social importance of women and their role in household activities.

The researcher believes that priority should be given to raise the level of awareness of women to know and understand their right and privileges in the society in order to address all these issues. For example, Anand (1983:7), a development specialist, maintains that "information is useless to women unless it helps to raise their consciousness about the oppressive structures that keep them in positions of powerlessness... [What a woman] craves is knowledge of why she must bear so many

children, work endless hours without respite, be beaten and raped, have an alcoholic husband, and go hungry.” (Ibid, 1983:7)

The above episodes show the existing male-based power structure in the country at different levels and how women are considered and treated by men in their communities. The researcher believes that to bring an attitudinal change among the community, program producers in the media would first need to study the culture practiced by its members. Then only media programs can play their roles in bringing issues that affect the rights and privileges of women into light and tried to modify the existing cultural attitude among men. Sabido says the following on the impact of media programs such as *Yeken Kiginit* in bringing change among their target audience on gender relations and cultural attitudes:

Throughout the world, in terms of gender relations, the media acts as a cultural force, which subtly and indirectly, helps to shape, rather than merely reflect, men’s and women’s social reality. (2005:9)

In fact, every detail of a Sabido-style serial drama is developed according to a theoretical and empirical research based formula in order to reinforce a coherent set of interrelated values that is tied to specific pro-social values. PMC’s country representative, Dr. Negussie Teferra also attributed the popularity of the drama to the fact that it was written by taking local values and traditions into account.

Prior to the writing of the dramas a large number of proverbs and sayings from local people were collected. They were used in the dramas. Customs and traditions which appeal to the local audiences were also incorporated in the scenes of the dramas to attract the audience. (PMC Pub., 2004:7)

In an interview this researcher also conducted with Mesfin Getachew, one of the serial writers of *Yeken Kiginit*, he acknowledged that the Sabido methodology they applied in

writing the serial drama helped them a lot to look deep into the cultural values of the target audience and bring the intended result by shaping their attitude.

Mesfin Getachew: Previously, the dramas that were produced in the media were conventional. When I say conventional they were written and produced using the usual methods of writing serial dramas such as tragedy, comedy, tragic-comedy and so forth.

But in the Sabido style, we were using melodrama style of writing which obligates us to follow procedures in every episode. One of the main purposes of the Sabido style serial drama is, as Sabido says, entertainment with proven social benefit. Therefore, using this methodology to produce a serial drama has its own rules, such as capturing audience attention first by entertaining the public and then subtly blending messages into the story. I think this has never been tried in previous radio serial dramas and we have achieved the desired result that we have acquired from the out set. I'm sure this serial drama could serve as a model to other dramas to be produced in the future in this country based on its previous achievements.

In fact, carrying out first a formative study to prepare the serial drama has a paramount role to expose how our culture dominated the rights of women in every aspects of their life and can also help to modify those attitudes by blending messages in the story.

Indeed, women's empowerment should start from raising their consciousness, though it is difficult to bring a change of value among the society with regard to its tradition and culture over night. This researcher realized in analyzing the serial drama that the producers were very careful to criticize the culture of the society from the out set of the

drama. For instance Wubalem's father Irgete is developed as a very dictatorial and arrogant person, and they have realized that it is not possible to bring a change of attitude to such a guy over night.

In the Ethiopian culture even most women accept men as their superior. When you attempt to criticize the culture directly, it is like pushing the listeners to shut down their radio. By presenting the real scenario of our culture in a moderate manner, it is also possible to educate them how it affects the lives of women in the family as well as in the society too. In this respect Yeken Kiginit attempts to educate the listeners moderately by showing how men's cultural attitude contributed to the grim scenario that they are in.

The other issue raised in Yeken Kiginit drama is the pressure put on girls to marry and begin bearing children before they are ready to do so. Men often deny women their right of choosing a life partner. In the rural parts of Ethiopia the decision about when and whom a daughter should marry is believed to be a decision best left to the father alone. And this was considered as a cultural obligation to be accepted by the wife and also by the children.

Sabido says, one of the issues expected to be raised by the Sabido style serial dramas is sexual and reproductive rights of women. These rights encompass both the right to reproductive health care and the right to self-determination, which includes ...the right to choose a marriage partner. (Sabido & Barker, 2005:8)

One of the basic rights of women, according to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Program of Action, is "the right to choose a marriage partner". (ICPD Program of Action, 1994) But unequal gender relations in addition to the norm and culture of the society have curtailed women's ability to make their choice of partner. In Ethiopia, especially in the rural areas, girls have been shaped since childhood not to discuss or even think about sex or whom to marry. Therefore, for girls and young women, having a life partner of their own choice is unthinkable. Rather they consider themselves as a sex object made to please the man.

In this respect, Yeken Kiginit serial drama has attempted to exhibit this fact through the life of Wubalem and modify the existing cultural values among the society.

(Wublaem, a 16 year old girl, who highly desires to pursue her education and later marry her lover Mekuria. But her father, Irgete, put pressure and even forced her to marry Chane, a wealthy farmer in their surrounding. Chane, who is old enough to be Wubalem's father, has six children from two previous marriages. Chane promised to offer a plot of land to Irgete if he agreed to give him Wubalem's hand. Even the priest of the family was involved in this case and urged Irgete to fulfill Chane's desire or a curse would fall upon the family. Wubalem discussed the issue with her mother Minda, as the mother has no knowledge of what was going on between her husband and Chane. Even if she knew the fact, she has no power to save her daughter from being taken by Chane.)

Wubalem: My father has decided to give me to Chane. (She is crying)

Minda: /shocked/ How do you know?

Wubalem: The priest was here a moment ago.

Minda: What did he say?

Wubalem: He has brought a message.

Minda: Whose message has he brought?

Wubalem: It was Chanes'.

Minda: This will never happen!

Wubalem: He already gave his word to the priest that I'll marry him.

(Irgete enters the house in the middle of the discussion.)

Irgete: /in an angry voice/ Wubalem!

Wubalem: Yes father.

Irgete: Go and bring the children.

Irgete: Why is she lamenting?

Minda: What was the reason of the priest's visit today?

Irgete: You better serve me food first before asking questions that is not of your concern.

Minda: But you asked me why she cried.

Irgete: I know the reason. It is the joy of marrying Chane.

Minda: Why do you want to offer your daughter to a man like Chane, who is so rude and manner less to his previous wives?

Irgete: He is not manner less as you think. He proved himself as my good friend when I was in trouble.

Minda: So, you gave him Wubalem as a favour.

Irgete: Can you find a better husband to her in terms of wealth and family background?

Minda: What about his bad manners... you know how many times he married and divorced.

Even though Wubalem's mother tried to pursue her husband to change his mind, he became furious and warned her not to mention the issue again. He has already made up his mind to give his daughter's hand to Chane. But before a marriage ceremony took place Chane abducted Wubalem and put her in his house as a prisoner. Abduction is one of the issues addressed by Yeken Kiginit in its different episodes to show how women's rights are violated in Ethiopia.

After being abducted by Chane, Wubalem was severely beaten and exposed to long-term physical and psychological abuse. However, she fortunately managed to escape Chane's house and returned home. But her father Irgete resisted to let her into the house, fearing that Chane would be disappointed if he did so.

Wubalem also suffered in her marriage with Chane as the decision about when a daughter should marry or not is best left to the man of the family alone. She was given to Chane without her will simply to fulfill her father's ambition. He desired to gain from her marriage and he also fears the curse of the priest would come up on him.

We are witnessing today that in most rural parts of Ethiopia women's life partners are chosen by their family. Due to this fact, a woman who enters into wedlock with man, with no knowledge of his past life experience, often suffers a lot. Simply by fear of curse from her parents or for being rejected by her family she would enter into such a relationship and suffer the consequence. Sabido argues that most girls in the developing countries suffer in their marriage because the father is the sole decision maker in his daughter's life. (Sabido & Barker 2005:34)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 2003 report, the grave consequence of women's early marriage and the denial of choosing their life partners are being witnessed today in many developing countries:

Social expectations often put pressure on girls to marry and begin bearing children before they are ready. Despite a shift toward later marriage in many parts of the world, 82 million girls in developing countries are now between the ages of 10 and 17 will be married before their 18th birthday. Early marriage jeopardizes the health and limits the opportunities afforded to women, usually disrupts their education and often violates their human rights. (2003:65)

And due to this fact, many girls and young women in Ethiopia die of early pregnancy or fled to urban areas and became prostitutes. This problem is also being witnessed in the lives of women characters in Yeken Kiginit serial drama.

Sabido argues that in order to bring a desirable change in the lives of women, entertainment-education programs such as Yeken Kiginit, has a paramount role in exposing the deprived situation of girls especially in developing countries such as Ethiopia, and modify the existing norm and tradition by bringing behavioral change among the target audience. (Sabido & Barker, 2005)

Mesfin Getachew, one of the serial drama script writers, also argued that such culture of marriage is exposing the lives of millions of women to underage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS,

pregnancy related diseases and even death, and that was the reason for emphasizing the topic in the serial drama, as it needs to be altered forever.

Mesfin Getachew: Currently, in many parts of the country the traditions and cultures of marriage by abduction is being considered as crime. And Yeken Kiginit has played its own role to bring such attitudinal change in every community by exhibiting the impact of abduction in the lives of girls and young women.

This researcher, from the message of the above episode, have come to realize that even priests may play a role in fixing such a marriage, which could bring a devastating result on the life of the woman. In the Ethiopian culture if a girl resists accepting the request of a clergy man, she will be considered as an inviter of a curse upon herself. It also seems to this researcher that Yeken Kiginit is calling religious organizations to be involved in modifying the cultural attitude manifested by men, which negatively affects the lives of millions of women in Ethiopia.

In general, the researcher do believe the fact that men often are the sole “beneficiary” of the Ethiopian culture, and showing the negative impact of our culture in the daily lives of women mean that the culture has to be modified or even sometimes be changed forever.

4. 3. Role models /characters/ in Yeken Kiginit serial drama

Yeken Kiginit characters are designed based on the value grids that emanates from the culture, norm and traditions of the society. The story emerges from the likely interactions of the differing characters with regard to those values.

It is claimed by the producers that Yeken Kiginit relied on extensive formative research to identify the culture of a specific group of people in order to develop an archetype in

the drama. Then, those archetypes that represent the cultural and social values (or the antithesis of these values) will be addressed in the serial drama. Sabido says if the formative research upon which the serial drama is based being done properly, the scriptwriters will be able to develop archetypical characters with which audience members will be able to identify. (Sabido, 2005:3)

Any media entertainment program has role models portrayed as bad or good men and women (positively vs. negatively valued) or sometimes they can even be both. These role models in the drama have a great impact upon the audience by playing a motivating or a discouraging role. In this respect, Yeken Kiginit has developed the three kinds of characters - the positive, the negative and the transitional – in order to convey its messages through them.

Through out the analysis of the selected episodes of Yeken Kiginit serial drama three kinds of characters appear, the positive – Fikerte and Anguach, the negative – Damte and Irgete, and the transitional – Demelew and Minda in Yeken Kiginit serial drama. These characters play an important role in familiarizing the audience with the story – the positive by their good impressions, the negative by their evil deeds and the transitional by their patience to learn the truth.

Each of the above three groups of characters will move during the course of the serial drama towards or away from the pro-social behavior and be appropriately rewarded or punished. According to Barker, these movements, rewards and punishments are carefully plotted according to the number of episodes in the serial drama in order to sustain the drama and to tell the story. Of course all the characters are aimed to serve their purpose and create among audience members change of behaviors.

A key to the use of Social Learning Theory in Sabido-style serial drama is use of appropriate models that are visibly rewarded (or punished) in front of the audience, in order to convert the values that are being promoted by the serial drama into behavior. (Barker, 2004:42)

Barker also argues that one of the major focuses of the creative design of radio soap opera is character development. Scholars in the field do strongly advise that for the audience to care about the characters “they must have strong personalities – being either very likeable or capable of disdain”.

Positive characters exhibit admirable, or pro-social behavior—perhaps promoting the education of girls, delaying marriage, or planning the spacing of their children. Negative characters are decidedly anti-social in their behavior – perhaps drinking to excess or philandering. (Barker & Sabido, 2005:45)

Those characters developed using the Sabido methodology are expected to serve as cultural models to the target audience members. For instance, from the perspectives of Cognitive Anthropology, media productions, whether entertainment, advertising messages, political or social commentary, are viewed as kinds of cultural models, models that are of increasing significance in everyday life. Brad Shore says the following in this respect.

... Of particular value is the recognition of the intrinsic and irreducible double-ness of all cultural models. On the one hand, a “cultural model” always comprises an empirical model-in-the-world in the form of shared social institutions and, on the other hand, one or more cognitive analogues to these public models, which are the property of individuals and take the form of what psychologists call mental models. (1998:7)

Shore says, artists and designers are real specialists in creating new models out of old ones. Artists such as musicians, painters, sculptors, writers or dancers model the world of sight and sound, word and movement. Good art produces pleasure and insight by crystallizing significant forms in every sensory mode. And these models are designed through the characters of the drama. According to Shore what we call “aesthetic” pleasure is probably conditioned by the human love of finding emotional and intellectual meaning in models.

He says models are not just things, but point to an activity – modeling –which is an active process of simplifying, manipulating, and focusing in the interest of making something more intelligible. “Modeling as an activity is a fundamental aspect of our intellectual, emotional and aesthetic experience” Shore added. (Ibid, 1998:15)

Of the different kinds of models that Shore outlined in his study “Descriptive Models vs. Prescriptive Models” is the most appropriate kind of modeling that fits to my topic of study. According to Shore, for instance, a detailed description of a landscape and a photograph of that landscape are models of a pre-existing reality. They are descriptive models. By contrast, a landscape architect’s plans for a new park and his mental images that he used to imagine the park are both models for an intended reality. They are prescriptive models. (Ibid, 1998:16-17) And these two kinds of models were reflected in the serial drama *Yeken Kiginit* through the different characters’ lives.

Basically these models have intimate links, and are often in transit, on the way to being converted into new models for reality, and vice versa. Shore says the following on the presentation of such models in a serial drama:

Media productions inevitably serve, often simultaneously, as both descriptive and prescriptive models. Soap operas or situation comedies, for example, are often modeled on a combination of real-life situations experienced by the writers, and on highly conventional situation formats found in other performances of the genres. In this sense every episode is a descriptive model of both life and art. (1998:16-17)

Most scholars agree that models in any media productions are highly stereotyped and predictable by the facts that: they are simplified models of real life events, episode formats are modeled on earlier instances of the same genre, and the fierce competition for listeners or viewers produced by the proliferation of competing channels, and the deliberate design-strategy of making episode formats highly predictable to enable audiences to hook into any program quickly and not necessarily from the beginning. (e.g. Shore: 1998; Real: 1996)

As Shore puts it, successful media programs simultaneously serve as “powerful descriptive and prescriptive models.”

Yeken Kiginit radio serial drama has also its own models developed as positive, negative and transitional characters. These characters fight to build their own values among the audience. The main positive role model’s strong position in the drama, in advocating gender issues and behavior change, has greatly contributed in changing the position of the transitional characters to the positive one. The role models, created to play a key role, were claimed to be very effective by the producers in appealing to the audience and successfully addressing the cultural stereotyping. (PMC Publication, 2004)

In the following, the researcher attempts to look at some of the characters from different episodes of Yeken Kiginit and how they manage to appear as role models of the society using the following categorization of characters on the role they are expected to demonstrate in the serial drama.

4.3.1. Positive characters

According to Sabido, positive characters exhibit admirable or pro-social, behavior – perhaps promoting the education of girls, delaying marriage, or planning the spacing of their children. (Sabido & Barker, 2005:48) In addition, they are expected to manifest the following characteristics:

- embody the positive values in the values grid (*see values grid topic*)
- to be icons for the audience
- demonstrate behavior that is overwhelmingly positive
- to be more human, caring and sensitive than the ordinary person
- to be humble people who care for the world around them
- to be rewarded consistently for their positive deeds

In this category the researcher finds that Fikerte is one of the main positive characters who embodied positive values in Yeken Kiginit serial drama. Fikerte serves the purpose of demonstrating positive behavior in Yeken Kiginit that could account her as an icon to the audience. Every part of the drama that transmits the message of women's equality issue was mainly demonstrated through her firm belief in the cause.

In most rural parts of Ethiopia, girls are expected to be housewives. Therefore, they are not allowed to go to school and manage their own lives using the knowledge they acquire in school. They are expected to be dependent on men economically, socially and even in family affairs. That is why Sabido highlights the use of such kind of serial dramas in bringing women equality issues into light using the demonstrated behaviors of positive characters.

Positive characters are archetypes, perhaps more moral than possible for a real person, but an ideal to which the audience could aspire. (Sabido, 2002:22)

One of the important components of Sabido methodology is that it needs outlining value grids to every drama based on the countries legal, political and cultural framework. Hence, one of the value grids developed by PMC to write the serial dramas is: "It is good that parents provide education equally to both girls and boys". (Value grids, PMC Unpublished Document, 2001) In order to reflect this value in Yeken Kiginit, character development was the major focus of the creative design. The serial writer Mesfin Getachew says the following in an interview with this researcher:

Mesfin: We developed Fikerte as a positive character after a thorough discussion on the creative design of the drama using the Sabido methodology. Fikerte, as her name indicates, is a lovable character cherished by the audience. Fikerte means in Amharic 'lovable'. We chose the names of the characters carefully to embody the values that the character represents.

Sabido also says that the names that are chosen for characters are extremely important in defining their roles within the serial drama.

Positive characters should have names that reinforce their positive characteristics, and negative characters should be given names that reflect (often symbolically) negative values in the society. If well chosen, audience members will react to and reinforce the use of these names to define values and traits... (2002:64)

Fikerte's name, too, defined her role in the serial drama Yeken Kiginit as a woman who stands to the right and privileges of woman in every sphere. She fights abduction, rape, and marriage without the consent of the other partner and men who have chauvinistic attitude. She promotes girls' education and general empowerment.

In most rural parts of the country, and sometimes even in the urban centers too, parents do not provide education equally to both girls and boys. Some parents do not allow their daughters to go to school at all due to a cultural belief that women are not as intelligent as their male counterparts. The following episode attempts to reveal the fact that how positive characters such as Fikerte are used to promote good values, such as girls' education, in Yeken Kiginit.

(Fikerte is a strong proponent of girls' education, as she is also well educated, and advised Wublaem to go to school. On the contrary, Wubalem hesitates to accept Fikerte's advise from fear of being considered a rude and indecent girl by her father and even by the community too. The following dialogue between Fikerte and Wubalm could reveal how women such as Fikerte could stand and fight for their right.)

Fikerte: Why are you crying?

Wubalem: Do I have any other alternative? [Father] is not always happy when I go to school. I have been absent for several days now.

Fikerte: I know that... (She takes a long breath)

Wubalem: I've decided not to go again as long as it makes him
unhappy.

Fikerte: That wouldn't be a wise decision.

Wuabalem: What shall I do then? Whenever he sees me reading a
book he rebukes me. I am fed up of his harassing words.

Fikerte: I've decided now to take you with me to my house and
you will go to school from there.

Wuabalem: It would be a great chance to me, but father will not
allow you to do so.

Fikerte: Leave it to me.

We can see from this dialogue that many girls are denied the rights to go to school and to become self-reliant economically as well as psychologically. In most societies such as ours, the place of a woman is considered to be in the kitchen, and nowhere else. Such kinds of beliefs by the society was strongly resisted by the positive character Fikerte as she decidedly express her idea of taking Wubalem with her to enroll her into school.

The researcher has an opinion that Fikerte in the serial drama became instrumental in challenging the existing cultural scenario of male resistance to change their attitude towards their culture. She fights the unequal gender relations and values in the society in terms of educating girls and young women. Later she strongly argued her father that educating Wubalem means not only changing her life to better, but also having a help support for himself in times of needs. Fikerte, in this respect, played a pivotal role in helping to shape, rather than merely reflect, men's and women's social reality.

Sabido says the following in developing positive characters such as Fikerte in a serial drama intended to entertain as well as educate the society:

Positive characters exhibit admirable, or pro-social, behavior – perhaps promoting the education of girls, delaying marriage, or planning the spacing of their children. (2002:65)

Indeed, Fikerte has exhibited all those pro-social values to the cause of gender equality by becoming more human, caring and sensitive than an ordinary person in real life. The message subtly blending through her was so strong and can motivate the target audience member to recognize and accept women's vital role in the society.

Script writer Mesfin Getachew, too, agrees on this fact and believes in showing the real scenario that women are facing today through the life of Fikerte.

Mesfin Getachew: When we first discussed on the formative research study, the writers and the producers came to consensus that the drama should manifest, as far as possible, all the problems of women in the country. And the best option that we find to show the severity of the problem is to divide it according to the role that the characters were given in the drama. And there was not any exaggerated fact in Yeken Kiginit with regard to what women are facing today especially in rural areas. But we also manage to make women victorious in their struggle for gender equality some by themselves and some with the help of Fikerte.

According to the Social Learning Theory, which was developed by Albert Bandura and applied in the Sabido methodology, positive characters in a radio serial drama serve as a model to the audience members and may have a great effect in motivating their listeners to follow their path.

Positive rewards have a vicarious effect upon the observer (in this case, the audience) and can motivate audience members to practice similar behavior (s). Punishing a role model for practicing a socially undesirable behavior likewise provides a vicarious experience for the observer and can inhibit his or her practice of the same behavior. This adoption is called modeling because it is based on the role model's conduct. (Bandura, 1977:79)

Fikerte represents the positive character role to the audience by exhibiting a socially desirable behavior in the Yeken Kiginin serial drama. Even though Fikerte grew up in her uncle's home in Addis Ababa, she became an archetype that represents the positive cultural and social values, and fights the negative cultural attitude of men in rural areas. The analysis of the selected episodes show how Fikerte's life not only demonstrates values that are positive in the value grids, but her life is also an indicative of the existence of a relatively better opportunity and freedom to women who dwell in the cities than in rural areas in Ethiopia.

4.3.2. Negative characters

Negative characters can also be archetypes, embodying anti-social values and receiving appropriate punishment for their behavior. According to Sabido, (Sabido & Barker, 2005:48-49) negative characters manifest the following characteristics in the serial drama:

- demonstrate behavior that illustrate the negative values in the values grid
- have negative behavior which is slightly exaggerated
- are regularly punished for their bad behavior
- occasionally suffer internally and regret their actions, but do not change

By adopting the Sabido methodology, Yeken Kiginin serial drama attempts to show the chauvinistic attitude of men by exhibiting negative characters such as Irgete and Damte. The next episode from Yeken Kiginin attempts to show how women are underprivileged in their societies, and also how those responsible for their misery are punished accordingly.

(Irgete treat his wife Minda as his servant. Minda has no right to speak about her siblings or any other family affairs as we have seen in the engagement of Wubalem to Chane. Here also Minda appears to be the sole decision maker in the life of his son Ababu.)

Minda: Please! Let him stop his cattle herding job, and continue his education.

Irgete: (He laughs) a tail of a goat can not cover anything. Who is advising you such a rubbish idea? And don't forget I am the man of the house, the decision is mine.

Minda: Is he not my child too?

Irgete: Keep quite! You don't have a business in such affairs. Your place is in the kitchen, and I know Fikerte is the one who instigates you to talk like that to me.

The above dialogue is intended to show that women's right to participate in decision-making process even at a household level is denied. One of the issues addressed by Yeken Kiginit serial drama was promoting women equality at every level including decision making from the elementary (such as small purchases) to major household-level decisions that affect the lives of the members of the household.

Dr. Negussie Teferra claims that one of the fundamental aspects of Yeken Kiginit is bringing into light how women suffered for long in their marriage life, and that was successfully conveyed to the target audience using characters that reject the pro-social values.

Dr. Negussie Teferra: ... it [the drama] has successfully conveyed gender equality issues and rightly projected already established cultural values through its messages using both the positive and the negative characters. The

formative research work which was conducted prior to the launching of the drama greatly helped in identifying the deep rooted cultural values which have been an impediment in the promotion of gender equality. Improving the status of women in the community has been one of the main focuses of the drama and in that the drama has effectively raised the awareness of the target population using both the positive and negative characters.

This researcher believes that negative characters such as Irgete have an equal role to the positive characters in depicting some of the major gender issues which were widely advocated and addressed by the drama such as girls' education, improving the status of women, equal job opportunity and equal participation in all aspects of developmental activities, spousal communication and respect for women's reproductive health rights.

Sabido says, the negative characters that reject the pro-social behavior embody social stereotypes that are likely to impede people in the target audience from practicing the proposed behavior. (Sabido & Barker, 2005:48) Indeed, the negative characters in Yeken Kiginit such as Irgete, Damtew and Chane have exhibited behaviors that illustrate the negative values in the value grids of PMC such as rape, abduction, belittling women and philandering.

From the demonstrated behavior of the negative character Irgete, it appears that unless and otherwise women's access to sources of income through employment and other income-generating programs is improved, they would remain to be considered by male chauvinists as beings fit only for the kitchen.

4.3.3 Transitional characters

Transitional characters, according to the Sabido methodology, demonstrate movements from negative values to positive values during the course of the serial drama. By doing so, they become role models of attitude and behavior change for members of the audience to emulate.

Sabido says the following characteristics are expected to be manifested by transitional characters of the serial drama:

- oscillate between good and bad values
- have interests, ideas and tendencies that are in conflict with those of others
- are the ones closest to the audience
- are ordinary people struggling through life
- are rewarded and punished appropriately

A good example in exhibiting such behaviors of transitional characters in Yeken Kiginit is Wubalem's husband Mekuria. Mekuria tried to impose his idea first based on his cultural background, but he later surrendered himself to the idea of the positive character, Wubalem.

One of the cultural value grids by PMC which was intended to be promoted in this serial drama was that: "It is good that mothers limit number of children they have to bear". As the burden of child bearing is mostly the sole responsibility of the woman, her decision in bearing or not bearing a child is also very important. But our culture wouldn't allow her to have that opportunity of limiting the number of off-springs in the family.

It is a fact that women in most rural parts of Ethiopia have no right in spacing or limiting the number of their children they give birth to. As long as the man wants to have a child, she has to bear one. The following scene is a typical example of how women in the rural parts of Ethiopia are denied their status in the family due to the cultural attitude of men.

(After getting her father's consent to leave her tyrannical husband Chane, Wubalem married her lover Mekuria. Soon after their marriage, Wubalem gets pregnant and gives birth to a baby girl. Wubalem's older sister, Fikerte, encourages Wubalem to use family planning to postpone having her next child. But Wubalem was facing the same trend of male dominance again by her husband Mekuria. Fikerte's advice incites the following conversation between Wubalem and Mekuria.)

Mekuria: You give too much attention to the crazy words of your sister, Fikerte. You listen more to her advice than to mine. You give less weight to my position as the head of the household. You received the order from your sister to limit the number of our children.

Wubalem: Let's live according to our means...that's what I say. I know what having many children amounts to. It results in suffering, and I don't like that.

Mekuria: I am a hard working farmer. I have all the energy in the world. I can feed others' children, not to mention my own....There is no reason for me to hold myself back from having as many children as I like.

Wubalem: Listen to me, Mekuria. My father was as strong as you when he started to have so many children, but what legacy did he leave behind for us? What did he benefit from it himself in the first place?

Mekuria: Don't compare me with your father.

Wubalem: Many brave men in our area produce numerous children and leave because they have nothing to feed them. They can't stand their suffering. They can't listen to their cries. What I am saying is that we have to take the necessary precautions. Why don't you learn some lessons from your friend, Awgichew, who lives a good life? Look at his home.

Mekuria: Stop, I say stop!

As a transitional character in the drama, Mekuria first resists the idea of Wubalem, who wants to limit the number of their children in the family. But, based on the Sabido style serial dramas, Mekuria demonstrates behavior of a transitional character who finally surrenders himself to the idea of the positive character, in this episode Wubalem.

(Wubalem resisted accepting Mekuria's idea of having another child)

Wubalem: I am the mistress of the house, and since the consequences of our actions apply to me as well, I have to decide how to prevent tomorrow's sufferings.

Mekuria: So...

Wubalem: Rather than being in tears tomorrow, it is better for me to think very carefully. You think it over too and let's decide to limit the number of our children together. I don't want to have children one after the other and suffer the consequences.

Mekuria: Okay! You've put it quite well. You will see what I will do in a few days.

As a result of this conversation Mekuria apologizes and agrees with Wubalem, promising not to listen to others but only to each other. Here, Mekuria as a transitional character manages to shift from rejecting pro-social values to supporting them. Using this transitional character the writers strive to motivate the audience members to identify and form social bonds with him.

Another good example that can show the behavior of transitional character is Gezmu, a man who maltreats his wife by beating and belittling her. These common phenomenon in Ethiopia are resulting a severe damage in family life, women's psychology and in their well-being. The researcher finds Gezmu in the serial as a good example of how most men treat their wives at home. His wife Mulu has no authority in decision making process in their household affairs. More than that she was regularly abused and beaten by her husband Gezmu. The following dialogue between Mulu, Gezmu and his friend Agonafer and his wife Tsedale show us how the unequal gender relations and values of a society

being manifested in one family. Agonafer is portrayed as a good person who cares for women maltreated by their husbands. His wife Tsedale has equal rights as her husband Agonafer in every decision they make concerning their family life.

(Gezmu returned home after several days of hiding his whereabouts from his wife Mulu. He tried to defend himself in front of his friend Agonafer and his wife Tsedale. Mulu accused him of beating her and having an affair with another woman in a remote area.)

Mulu: Is it because you love me that you came after several days of disappearance?

Gezmu: It is the nature of my job!

Mulu: So, was it the reason that you beat me till I bleed to death?

Gezmu: I have already asked you an apology.

Mulu: Is it because you love me that you disrespect my dignity?

Gezmu: Oh God! What a day?

Agonafer: Don't try to find an excuse. You should regret first in your mistake and ask her an apology. Stop defending yourself.

Gezmu: I haven't done any thing wrong to her.

Agonafer: Husband and wife should live in love and respect. You should accept her decision too as your life partner.

Tsedale: She must also have an equal say over the children. She is the one who carried them in her womb for nine months. How could you deny her rights over her children? I have never quarreled with my husband Agonafer even at once as he didn't try to impose his idea on me.

Gezmu: Oh! This idea of equality has brought trouble on us.

Agonafer: You should also treat both your son and daughter equally. Don't look at your daughter as if inferior to your son.

One can see from the above dialogue in the drama that to empower women there is a need to modify the existing male-based power structure at different levels by allowing and encouraging them to make decisions. Therefore it is imperative to promote women's

participation in decision-making process including at the household level as it was depicted in the drama in the life of Mulu.

Yeken Kiginit serial drama is not only intended to demonstrate how men are abusive in their behavior, but also how some of them regret their deeds and become caring and sensitive to women. In the above scenario Gezmu's ideas and tendencies were in conflict with those of others, but later he demonstrate positive behavior by admitting his previous mistakes. By doing so he portrayed a transitional character role that overcomes barriers to change his behavior.

It is a fact that women's involvement in decision-making at different levels will determine their status in the family and in the society at large. But it should be supported by all concerned bodies including the government organs, not only by passing laws, but also by helping them achieve their rightful place in the society. For instance the Constitution of FDRE Article 35: 2 and 8 say the following on the rights of women in marriage and in employment:

Women have equal rights with men in marriage as prescribed by this constitution.

Women shall have a right to equality in employment, promotion, pay, and the transfer of pension entitlements. (1992:38)

Even though the different laws and policies issued by the Ethiopian government encourage women's participation in the country's development endeavor, they should be supported by other methods that can create awareness among the community. That is why Sabido argues that serial dramas such as Yeken Kiginit "should not create values, but reinforce pre-existing pro-social values, attitudes and behaviors".

The moral framework (for a Sabido-style serial drama) ensures that the social message corresponds to issues that are officially sanctioned and that it is relevant to an agenda articulated by national policy makers. (2005:34)

But due to the fact that the cultural upbringing has shaped most of men to consider themselves as superior to women, they will not allow any one to interfere in any issues that concern their belief. Yeken Kiginit serial drama attempts to depict this fact through its transitional characters, Mekuria and Gezmu, in the above episodes.

In general, characters in Yeken Kiginit radio serial drama were developed in their personalities and beliefs, as they are the major transmitters of the intended message to the audience through dialogue. And by developing such characters, the listener may find an archetypical essence of himself or herself that interacts with the social message.

In analyzing the message of this serial drama, the researcher has reached to an understanding that all the three kinds of characters formulated by Sabido were developed in Yeken Kiginit serial drama. Among those, this researcher has come across in its message analysis – *the positive* (Fikerte and Anguatch) exhibit admirable, pro-social values such as promoting girls education; *the negative* (Irgete and Damtew) embodied anti-social values that mainly emanated from the culture and tradition of the society such as denying equal rights to the wife in family affairs; and *the transitional* (Mekuria and Gezmu) oscillate and finally overcome barriers to change themselves from believing bad to good cultural values such as believing in marriage with the consent of the two couples rather than marriage by abduction, respect to wife and accepting women's role in family affairs.

4.4. Manifestation of men's strong attachment to their culture

In order to address the issue of societal problems that women are facing in today's Ethiopia, it is vital to look the value that members of the society, especially men, give to their culture. By doing this media programs such as Yeken Kiginit can play their role by showing how those values can bring a negative impact on women's day to day life. These negative impacts could be early marriage, marriage by abduction, rape, sexual harassment and other issues that affect the rights and privileges of women. And these problems,

directly or indirectly, are witnessed to be the manifestation of our culture or cultural attitude.

The researcher believes that any culture has its own value to those who practice it, as long as it dictates them to think and believe the same way. The renowned cultural communication expert William R. Catton defines cultural values as “conceptions of the desirable”, and in acquiring these cultural values the media can play an important role.

Values are acquired in the socializing process. To the extent that the mass media are involved in socializing human personalities, there is an inherent possibility that these media can affect the way people acquire values and the kinds of values they acquire. (1994:335)

One of the important aspects of this research study is to show how the manifestation of men’s strong attachment to their cultural values in Yeken Kiginit serial drama affects women’s status and dignity in the Ethiopian context. In this respect the serial drama producers have developed cultural value grids and attempts to show their impact on women’s rights through its messages, especially by looking on how this attachment to culture prevent them operating on a level playing field from men. (*See the value grids outlined by PMC in Chapter 2*)

The Ethiopian culture has made men biased towards women and their important role in the development of the nation. For instance, such kind of strong attachment of men to their culture is practiced in their preference of having a baby boy than a girl in their family. Most men are not happy when their wives give birth to a baby girl, and usually consoled by their friends for encountering such “a misfortune”.

The researcher believes that the whole issue of women inequality starts right from parental desire of having a baby boy rather than a girl. And it is a common thing to see in many Ethiopian families, especially in the rural areas, that a father would be congratulated if he got a baby boy, and he would be consoled if he is blessed with a baby girl. That is why boys are privileged for every right that girls denied in many Ethiopian

families. Unless and otherwise such strong attachment to culture is changed and a man starts to believe in having a baby girl as a blessing, there is no chance of bringing girls in to equality when they grew up.

In her prestigious book entitled “Patterns of Culture”, Ruth Benedict argues that the problem of social value is intimately involved in the fact of the different patterning of cultures, and every individual is the product of that culture he grew up with.

In reality, society and the individual are not antagonists.
His culture provides the raw material of which the
individual makes his life. (1960:218)

As Benedict argues, (1960:219) no individual can arrive even at the threshold of his potentialities without a culture in which he participates. That is what the researcher witnessed in most male characters of Yeken Kiginit as they are manifesting the strong cultural attachment they have with their culture. One manifestation of such a strong cultural attitude of men was depicted in the serial drama Yeken Kiginit through the life of Merne, a man who considers himself as an unfortunate person for being “blessed” with four daughters.

(Merne is a married guy for many years. But he considered himself as an unfortunate person for having four girls in few years time and he blames his wife for this incident in the family. Even his friends were mocking at him by saying “Merne, father of many girls”. The following dialogue between Merne and his friend Worotaw depicts how men manifest wrong attitude towards having a baby girl due to their cultural upbringing. They were attending a marriage ceremony in their village, and as everybody sing, drink, and shout, Merne sat on his chair depressed. And this bothers his friend Worotaw and asked him to relax.)

Worotaw: You look so depressed.

Merne: Ahh! Don't worry... I am enjoying it.

Worotaw: I know you very well (laughing at him) ... Ever since you heard the death of Ayal, you look so disturbed.

Merne: How could you talk about death while we are in the middle of such a joy? But I'm worried about my future fate again. My wife is nine months pregnant, and I am happy for having a baby boy. That happiness makes me depressed.

Worotaw: How could you know that you she will give birth to a boy?

Merne: I know... She was 'hatching' so many girls in the previous years... if she did that again there must be something that has been done behind my back.

Worotaw: Ah! What are you saying?

Merne: She knew that there is someone in our area who plotted to kill me. I need a boy who can protect me as a shield. If she gave birth again to a baby girl, she too is my enemy.

Worotaw: At least it is better to be a father of girls than sitting idle.

Merne: Don't try to comfort me.

The above dialogue between Merne and Worotaw shows that having a baby girl in the family is not desirable by a man of the house, as he doesn't give equal value to girl and boy children. The strong attachment to his culture has already led Merne to believe that by becoming a father to a boy, every one in the community would respect and fear him. That is why he also considers himself as an unfortunate person for not having such respect and admiration from his surrounding. Even his neighbors did not give him due regard as they gave to other men in the area because of the cultural attitude of disrespecting 'a father of girls'. Such kinds of strong attachment to the culture and beliefs aggravate the problem of inequality between men and women in our society.

In the same dialogue between Merne and Worotaw this researcher has come across another male strong attachment to their culture. It is marrying a woman whom they desire by abduction. In a society where abduction is praised by men who are strongly attached to their culture as a courageous deed, it is not only enough to show in a serial drama the act and its outcome on women's lives but is also equally important to depict the cause that motivates men to commit such a crime. And the researcher believes that the root cause of marriage by abduction is the culture that men grew up with and the strong attachment they have with it.

(After encouraging Merne for being the father of girls, Worotaw shared his problem of falling in love with a woman who lives in the neighboring vicinity. And the advice offered by Merne exemplifies the typical cultural attitude and male chauvinism in the rural parts of Ethiopia.)

Worotaw: My friend! I fall in love with a beautiful, hot girl. She became my aspiration, and she became my dream day and night.

Merne: You are just wasting your time... You don't need to dream her. If you have such a strong aspiration to her, why don't you wait her on the road side and abduct her. That is how brave men do to whom they love.

Worotaw: No, no. I'll not do such a thing to her. ... Rather I will ask her to be my wife in a traditional manner by sending elderly men to her parents.

Merne: (despising his idea) ...a honey will be tasteless in the mouth of a donkey, as the saying goes. Why don't you regard her as an ordinary woman that one can find as anything in the village? She doesn't deserve to have that kind of honor...Like her big sister, abduct her too.

Worotaw: Let me show her mother that honor first, then I know what to do!

The serial drama coordinator Mesfin Assefa told the researcher that after doing their formative research survey one of the themes of Yeken Kigininit was to show the grim facts of men's attitudes towards believing in marriage by abduction.

Mesfin Assefa: During our formative research survey to produce this serial drama we have found out that marriage by abduction, rape, wife beating and other similar situations were common phenomena that prevail in most rural parts of the country. Therefore, we have decided to be included as a theme in the serial drama and exhibited through the negative characters such as Damtew and Merne.

This researcher believes that this societal problem of women which was manifested in the drama using the different characters is emanated from men's strong cultural background. Marriage by abduction is rampant in the rural parts of the country like rape, female circumcision, wife-beating ... and was given a considerable time in the drama with the intended purpose of showing men's strong attitude towards their culture. According to Sabido, one of the aims of education-entertainment programs is "to show and shape culturally biased thinking into modern way of understanding the reality" and guiding on how to abide by it. (Sabido & Barker, 2005)

PMC's Country Representative, Dr. Negussie Teferra, says the following when asked in an interview whether he believes or not that the drama manifest the cultural up bringing of the public and its strong attachment to it.

Dr. Negussie Teferra: Yes, the drama has successfully reflected the deep rooted cultural up-bringing of the public. The formative research and other assessments conducted were instrumental in defining the audience as well as the socio-cultural issues which under-developed gender

equality in the country. The storyline of the drama effectively interwined the issues in a very entertaining manner and eventually addressed the culture including the harmful traditional practices which had a negative bearing on the society.

Yeken Kiginit in its long serial not only attempted to exhibit how women are treated by men and their position in the community by depicting the impact of our culture on the attitude of men, but also how they are favored by men who have positive attitude towards their important role in the family as well as in the society. The researcher appreciates the fact that media program producers should take into consideration of demonstrating men who have good behaviors could also help to bring an attitudinal change among members of a society. Yeken Kiginit serial drama attempts to prove that there are also good men who consider women as equal partner in every aspects of life in the mist of those chauvinists in one of its episodes the following way.

Even though Merne persists in his chauvinistic attitude of having a baby girl as a curse and considers himself as an unfortunate person in life, the health officer he met at a cattle field challenged his wrong attitude towards women.

(Worotaw and Merne were relaxing and discussing family issues at a cattle field in Tena Adam when the health officer in the area joined them. Merne who is already considering himself as unlucky person for having a baby girl for the fifth time was telling his friend how he was disappointed over his wife for giving birth to a baby girl again. The health officer who joined them in the middle of their discussions criticized him for having such attitude and advised to regard himself as a lucky person for being blessed with a baby girl.)

Worotaw: My friend! After you were “blessed” with a baby girl,
you look vexed even in your spirit.

Merne: Do you think I can have pride for being the father of girls?

Worataw: What shall you do if it is God's will?

Merne: What is His will? He gives a baby boy to every idiot in our surrounding?

Worotaw: Are you referring to Mekuria?

Merne: How many times am I going to be a father to a girl? ...And who is going to avenge my death?

(In the middle of their discussion Merne looked from distant as the health officer coming towards them.)

Merne: Oh! The health officer is coming to us before we left this place.

Health officer: Friends! How are you?

Worataw: Fine, thanks.

Health officer: Merne, how is your wife?

Merne: She is fine. What else can she be?

Health officer: What do you mean? ...You have watched how she suffered in labor room for several days. Both your wife and the baby girl survived their death.

Merne: (with a stern voice) it was better for me if both of them were dead.

Health officer: What a mean thing to say about them.

Merne: A womb that carries a girl is not a blessed womb. And how could a girl even be counted as a child in the family?

Health officer: Oh Man! Do you believe in God?

Merne: What do you mean by that?

Health officer: Men and women are created by God equally. It is not wise to speak such words for being blessed with a baby girl.

Worotaw: Is there no problem of having a baby girl in your surrounding? I know you are a well educated person. (He

speaks with irony as if he was attempting to cool both of them down)

Health officer: I can understand your irony... and there is no science that can give parents their choice – a boy or a girl, (and he says with irony)...how about in your surrounding, is there any possibility to make that happen?

Woratw: (with anger) what?!

Health officer: By the way, your mind attitude of having preference to boys than girls emanated from your society and the culture you grew up with. In any sphere, a man is not superior to a woman, and a woman is not inferior to a man. If you understand what I'm saying, I'll leave you at peace. Have a good day!

Worotaw: (after the health officer went away) have you seen how he boasted? How could a woman be equal to a man?

Merne: Forget him, he doesn't understand the difference.

Merne's attitude of desiring a baby boy represents the majority of men's cultural upbringing and the value they attached with it. Even in urban parts of Ethiopia such as Addis Ababa, one can find a great number of men who have the same thinking as Merne. After all, the whole aspect of gender inequality comes from the societal and cultural values that a person attached with. That is why Sabido referred to gender the following way:

Gender is a socio-cultural expression of particular characteristics and roles that are associated with certain groups of people with reference to their sex and sexuality. (2005:10)

In other words gender is how we are shaped after we are born into society. The researcher has an understanding of the fact that the attitude of believing in gender inequality

exhibited by Merne and Worotaw in the above episodes was a result of the society they grew up with and the culture that shaped their mind in such a way.

Yeken Kiginit serial drama has also demonstrated the other challenge that women are facing today in Ethiopia which is rape. The act of infidelity and rape such as the one committed in Yeken Kiginit by Zenabu was considered in our culture until recent times as a normal phenomenon. Sometimes even husbands commit such a crime and are justified as doers of an accepted norm. Dr. Negussie told this researcher the following on how the drama depicts such facts that we find in our culture:

Dr. Negussie: The impact of the drama has been confirmed by the findings of the post intervention survey. Some of the major gender issues which were widely advocated and addressed by the drama were girls' education, improving the status of women, equal job opportunity and equal participation in all aspects of developmental activities, spousal communication, fighting women's harassment such as rape and wife beating and respect for women reproductive health rights.

Even though the Country Representative claims the serial drama has impacted the lives of millions, he can not be sure of the fact that it has also criticized those people who are expected to defend women's right from being abused and suffered. The researcher believes that women's rights suffer not only by the hands of men who are so cultured in their attitudes, but sometimes also by men considered by the majority as well-educated, and by people who are assigned by the government to protect those rights. It can be said that strong attachment to cultural values may not be sometimes be altered easily through education or by only being aware of the negative consequences of anti-social behaviors on the overall societal assets.

In one of the episodes of Yeken Kiginit serial drama, the researcher came across not only with the grim scenario of rape but also understands how culturally biased attitude towards women cannot simply be adjusted by being a law enforcing agent. This was depicted in the serial drama as Zinabu, one of the negative characters in Yeken Kiginit and a person engaged in sexual trafficking of girls into urban centers committed a crime by raping Tariqua, who is only 16 years of age, and a police officer in the area took this crime as a normal phenomenon that shouldn't be exaggerated..

(Zinabu, who is a sexual trafficker of girls in to urban centers, raped Tariqua. When her sister Fikirte discovered what he did to her sister, she encouraged her to file a case to police and sue him. Fikirte and Tariqua went to the nearest police station to report the case, but the response they got there from a police officer was quite frustrating.)

Tariqua: Please, don't cry.

Fikirte: (with a sobering voice) Oh Damtew! The judgment of God will come upon you. How could he do such an awful thing upon my sister?

Tariqua: (crying with her) Please sister, forget it.

Fikerte: Have courage and be strong! This world will not be favorable to those who have weak spirit. Let's go to the police station and report the case.

(They reach the police station and meet two Police officers, Dawit and Tujuba. They started reporting their case.)

Dawit: Can I help you?

Fikerte: My sister was raped, and we want the guilty person to be apprehended.

Tujuba: Who did this crime?

Fikerte: He cheated her using the pretext of offering her job in Tena Adam.

Dawit: Do you know his name?

Fikerte: Zinabu.

Dawit: Has she swallowed her tongue? Why don't you speak?

Tariqua: She is right. Zinabu raped me.

Tujuba: Are you sure?

Fikerte: Yes.

Dawit: The guy might not commit the crime.

Fikerte: How could you say like that? He raped her!

Tujuba: Calm down.

Fikerte: You should arrest him before he escapes.

Dawit: But we don't have any evidence so far.

Fikerte: She is the evidence! Is it not your duty to investigate such a serious crime committed upon an innocent girl?

Dawit: What makes it so serious? It is a common incident in our area.

Firkerte: You mean it is not a serious crime, because it has become common to see girls who are victims of rape? What makes it common is that there is no one to take a serious measure on you or on the guys such as Zinabu.

Dawit: What do you expect to be done besides this?

Fikerte: Nothing was done when a great number of young girls raped and abducted in the most rural areas.

Tujuba: It is our culture, and we can do nothing about it.

Fikerte: The so called culture! In the name of culture women's life and dignity is being destroyed, and for how long should we tolerate such crimes which equal to taking one's life?

Tujuba: Are you here to find a solution to your problem or to criticize us?

Fikerte: When we came here first, we have expected a solution from you as a law enforcing agent. But you didn't give a slightest regard to our problem.

Dawit: Then, you can go wherever you like and pursue your case. (he leaves the office)

Tujuba: Sister, please sit down. We will try to apprehend him as soon as possible.

In most rural areas those who consider themselves as law enforcers are being witnessed to manifest their wrong attitude on women due to their cultural up-bringing and the strong attachment they have with it. One of the police officers, Dawit, has come out in the drama as a good example to depict the attitude of such male chauvinists in the rural parts of the country. Even though he resisted in helping Tariqua and Fikerte because of his cultural attitude towards rape, his colleague Tujuba offered them help and apprehended the culprit at last.

That is why some argue the fact that attempting to teach such cultured men using radio serial dramas is a waste of time, as they are already strongly attached themselves with such anti-social beliefs and behaviors, and resist change. PMC serial drama coordinator Mesfin Assefa argues this:

Mesfin Assefa: When we say that men and women are not the same, we refer not only to their biological sex differences, but also to the different gender roles that have been created by the society. Because gender is constructed by society and not fixed, stereotypical constructed notions of male and female roles can be challenged using serial dramas such as Yeken Kiginit. And I believe the drama has depicted the real picture of women's place in our society by challenging the attitude of male chauvinists.

Indeed, men's attitude towards gender inequality can be challenged first by challenging their mental status on the issue. Every change, if it was intended to be real, must start from the mind. The message passed through the health officer has the power to challenge the different attitudes of millions of male chauvinists in the country, not only men like Merne and Worotaw.

Hence, in order to ensure women's rights and privileges in the society, they should have been given the chance to access information about their vital rights first, and then they can manage their own issues by themselves.

4.5. Opposition of cultural and modern values in seeking the “missing voice’

Each individual today is a unique blend of cultural forces, says Real in his book ‘Exploring Media Culture’. (Real, 1996:3) That is why culture exists in our head like a walkman implant, and our heads are filled from many sources, both individually and as groups. The researcher attempts to examine the basic concepts of culture and cultural values in the previous chapters. Each individual experiences culture and expresses them externally according to his or her understanding or belief. The following definition of Real would help us to grasp a clear understanding of why people differ in experiencing the same culture while they live in it.

Each of us finds and creates meaning in our life in and through culture. The way we understand and feel about our relationship with our family, our friends, our work, our play, our politics, our music, and all the rest occurs in and through the culture we share. (1996:3)

It is also expected in every episode of serial dramas to encounter two antagonistic characters fight in practicing their culture, no matter whether it is wrong or right. For instance, cultural stereotyping of women, such as treating women are not equal to men, the place of women is in the kitchen, decision-making should be left to men only, to have many children is a blessing, infertility is a curse on women...etc were reflected in Yeken Kiginit serial drama with opposing characters who promote the old and modern way of cultural attitudes in the society.

For instance, the majority of people in the rural and even sometimes in the urban areas of Ethiopia believe that if married couples cannot get a child, the reason for their misfortune will be the woman, not the man. One of the episodes of Yeken Kiginit focused on

exhibiting on how this traditional value in the society clashes with the modern value, i.e. men could also be infertile. The cultural belief of considering women as the sole cause of infertility has resulted the breaking up of many marriages through out the nation. The break-up of marriages have usually a devastating impact on the lives of women due to their economic dependency on men. Previous researches on this issue have also confirmed the fact that one of the reasons that we notice so many rural girls practicing prostitution in many urban centers is due to such kind of cultural beliefs valued by the society and that results breaking-up of marriages. (Bogaletch, 2005) (Assefa, 2006)

Script writer Mesfin Getachew do also agree in the fact that men's attitude of looking at women as inferior being is the result of their understanding to the culture they grew up with, and that was one of the intended messages in the serial drama Yeken Kiginit.

Mesfin Getachew: Of the many issues addressed by the serial drama, the biased attitude of our societies and its impact on women's lives was exhibited quite in many episodes of the serial drama.

When we look at the life of Wubalem, despite the fact that she has someone whom she loves and adores, she was abducted by Chane. But people like Fikerte and her lover Mekuria, have fought that culture as well as the people who supports the actions of Chane as justifiable. Even Irgete, Wubalem's father, has supported Chane's action when his daughter was abducted. That was one instance of the serial drama to depict the clash between the old and modern tradition and culture through its characters like Chane, Irgete and Damtew on one side, and Fikerte, Wubalem and Mekuria on the other.

Indeed, Yeken Kiginit gave quite a considerable space and time in its episodes to depict the impact of the negative cultural attitude of men in the life of many woman characters such as Anguatch, Tariqua and Wubalem. The following scene of Yeken Kiginit shows how our culture doesn't easily accept the idea that a man could also be infertile, and the clash between the two polarized ideas of the old and modern cultures.

(The thinking of being barren has traumatized Anguatch as she takes all the blame for the misfortune. Her trauma has been aggravated as her mother-in-law, Imagela, frequently criticized her as 'a disrupting factor in the continuation of the family line'. Anguatch has been suffering for three years and she started considering herself as 'a cursed woman' who brings such misfortune to the family of the man whom she loves in her entire life. She had never had a slightest suspicion that her husband Demlew might be the reason for their misfortune. As usual, one afternoon Imagela came to the house of Anguatch and started conversation by indirectly attacking her. She also suggested the idea of bringing another lady to her son who can bear a child to Demlew. The following dialogue can reveal the fact that how, because of culturally biased thinking among the society, family life is being disrupted and exposed women to become victims to HIV or fled to urban areas and engage themselves in sex work .)

Anguatch: You better sit on the “Medeb*”. The stool is not comfortable. (*”Medeb” is a place made of mud and stone, and serves as a sofa in rural homes)

Imagela: You better worry about yourself...I am comfortable here.

Anguatch: /tries to swallow her anger/ Please, forgive me. I thought you were tired and needed a good rest

Imagela: How could I get rest when my mind is burning down with my unfortunate circumstance?

Anguatch: Shall I bring you some food.

Imagela: Ayal served me a nice food at her house. I am very thirsty and I need “Tela*” if you have it in the house. (*Ayal is the lady that Imagela is wished to sleep with Demlew and blessed her with a grand child*), (*Tela is a local beer made in the rural parts of the country)

Anguatch: (pouring the “Tela” in her glass) I have baked a bread...have it too.

Imagela: (she seems to ignore Anguatch and started enjoying her own fantasy) Ayal is indeed a blessed woman. Indeed, the Virgin Mary blessed her with a handsome boy.

Anguatch: (murmuring to herself) Oh! Angel Michael! Please, shut this lady's mouth at least for this moment.

Imagela: I have become desperate to have a grandchild now. I always cry when I look at somebody's child on the street.

Anguatch: Why don't you try to ignore it?

Imagela: When are you going to show me my grandchild's eyes? I don't want to go to my grave with tears in my eyes.

Anguatch: I was never tired of trying to have a child. I prayed to God since I married your son to fulfill our desire.

Imagela: If God couldn't answer your prayer, why don't you try some other way? My son married you to bear his child, not to make him envy on other families' blessings.

Anguatch: I am a poor woman who has no helper except God.

Imagela: /raising from her stool with anger/ Then, I'll help my son in my own way. (She leaves the house murmuring)

The above dialogue simply shows the fact that in the Ethiopian culture being barren is a curse from God that befalls on women only. And the solution is entirely left to the man. Either he divorces his wife or conducts sexual intercourse with another lady and gets a child. This could be considered in the developed world as committing adultery or having an infidel character. But in Ethiopia the man would be encouraged to have another sex partner not only to get a child but also to be admired as a "man".

In the next episodes of the drama, Imagela has encouraged her son Demlew to sleep with Ayal. Ayal is a lady who buried her husband after a prolonged illness. Even though Demlew slept with this lady, he and his mother couldn't get what they desire. Rather he got infected with HIV virus and became bedridden. The drama at last punished the

cultured character Demlew and Imagela for their undesirable act over Anguatch by rewarding her for promoting the modern way of cultural attitude in the society.

In general, Yeken Kiginit has played an important role in seeking the “missing voices” by depicting the clash between the old and modern cultural attitude through its message. In fact, the researcher believes that Yeken Kiginit serial drama attempts to address at least most issues that affect the rights and privileges of women in this country and which were described by PMC as its “central aim”.

In one of its publications, in December 2006, PMC described the following as a central aim:

PMC uses research based entertainment-education radio serial dramas to encourage delayed parenthood, the consistent use of effective methods of contraception and sexual behaviors, to empower women to play equal roles in family decisions and society, and to prevent HIV/AIDS and harmful traditional practices. (PMC Pub., 2006)

And empowering women starts from seeking the “missing voices” and helping them to be heard in every way possible, as PMC attempted to practice it in Yeken Kiginit serial drama.

4.6. Yeken Kiginit Vs the three communication theories

As stated in the previous chapters, Yeken Kiginit serial drama applied the Sabido methodology, which is an approach to development of mass-media serial dramas. And this methodology is based on different communication theories. These different theories that guide the development of Sabido-style serial dramas provide the methodology with a foundation for the structure and design of messages, settings, characters, and plots of Yeken Kiginit serial drama.

David O. Poindexter argues that who/what determines the message(s) is a major difference between many entertainment-education programs and the Sabido methodology.

Because much entertainment-education lacks a clear methodology to serve as a steering mechanism, the message, as well as the means for its delivery, is most often controlled by the funder/sponsor.

... [But] Sabido-style serial dramas are controlled by the social science research and theory underlying the methodology and by the feedback provided by on-going evaluative research. (2004:95)

Even though Sabido's methodology was drawn basically from five theories of communication and behavior change, I will only focus on the three of the five theories as they are most relevant in the actual context of Ethiopia. These three theories are: Albert Bandura's The Social Learning Theory, Eric Bentley's Dramatic Theory, and Carl Jung's Theory of Archetypes and Stereotypes and The Collective Consciousness..

4.6.1. Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, as articulated by Albert Bandura, explains how people learn new behaviors from vicariously experiencing the actions of others.

People can either learn through the direct experience of trial and error and the rewarding and punishing effects of actions, or through the power of social modeling. Trial-and-error learning by direct experience is only tedious but harmful when errors produce costly or injurious consequences. So, many people will short-cut this process by learning from the successes and mistakes of others. (1977:79)

According to Bandura, this short-cut, called vicarious learning, or modeling, is a key of his Social Learning Theory. The theory argues that people not only learn in formal situations such as classrooms, but also by observing models. The models can be people in real life or characters in mass media (such as radio and television).

A key to the use of Social Learning Theory in Sabido style serial drama such as Yeken Kiginit is use of appropriate models that are visibly rewarded (or punished) in front of the audience, in order to convert the values that are being promoted by the serial drama into behavior. In short, characters in Yeken Kiginit “teach” audience members via modeling so that they are able to make a recommended response. (See Role models /Characters/... in 4.2)

For example, in Yeken Kiginit serial drama Fikerte embodied a positive character that was desirable by many and at last rewarded for her actions, and Damtew was punished for his crooked behavior. The consequences of these positive and negative behaviors were directly linked to the behavior in question. Damtew was a character that is practicing abduction and rape on young girls; and Fikerte is a character who was dedicated in fighting to the rights and privileges of women in the society. Sabido applied Bandura’s theory in his methodology to reward and punish good and evil characters accordingly.

It might be argued that the clearest examples of the Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura in Yeken Kiginit appear when good characters such as Fikerte and Wubalem are rewarded, and evil characters such as Damtew and Chane are punished for their actions.

4.6.2. Dramatic Theory

Eric Bentley’s Dramatic Theory describes the structure and effects of five genres of theatre (tragedy, comedy, tragic-comedy, farce, and melodrama). Among these genres, according to Bentley, melodrama presents reality in a slightly exaggerated sense in which the moral universes of good and evil are in discord. (Bentley, 1967)

Sabido employed Bentley’s structure of the melodrama genre as a basis from which to design characters and plots. For example, good characters in Yeken Kiginit such as Wubalem and Fikerte who accept and promote the positive social behavior – women’s equality, resource control by women, and marriage with consent - fought with the

negative characters such as Damtew and Chane, who promote women's inequality, marriage by abduction and rape.

According to Bentley's Dramatic Theory, such tension between the good and evil characters evoked by the serial drama places the audience between the forces of good and evil. Plots then constructed around the relationships between good and evil characters as they move closer to or farther away from the proposed social behavior. Their actions encourage the audience to either champion or reject these characters accordingly.

But, in a twist of the typical audience role in melodrama, where audience members simply watch or listen to the battle between good and evil, Sabido inserted the audience into the heart of the action – by representing audience members through the transitional characters. In *Yeken Kiginit*, transitional characters such as Demlew and Yonas were uncertain about the social behavior in question, and guide the audience members through their own evolution toward adoption of desired behavior change. The unique feature of Sabido style serial dramas such as *Yeken Kiginit* is that it applies transitional characters that encourage the audience with their actions to either champion or reject the negative or positive characters taken from Bentley's melodrama theory. (See *Transitional Characters*, 4.2.3)

Although the three groups of characters in *Yeken Kiginit* serial drama, the positive – Fikerte and Wubalem, the negative – Damtew and Chane, and the transitional – Demlew and Irgete, are exaggerated as in the case of melodrama of Bentley, they are modeled on real people within the target audience and the perceptions these people might have regarding the social and cultural value and behavior presented. The dialogue between Fikerte and Dawit witnessed the two extremely opposing characters discord over a woman's right issue, whereas Tujuba has depicted the transitional character role by shifting his previous stand of supporting Dawit's stand to helping Fikerte's cause.

4.6.3. Theory of Archetypes and Stereotypes and the Collective Consciousness

One of the theories Sabido methodology draws from is Carl Jung's theory of Archetypes and Stereotypes and The Collective Consciousness. According to Jung's theory, (Jung, 1970) there are certain scripts or stories with familiar patterns and characters that people play out throughout history. These scripts or stories appear in myths, legends and folktales around the world. Jung posited that "these scripts or stories are the "archetypes of a collective consciousness and share common characters such as "Prince Charming," "the mother," and "the warrior." Jung further suggests that these archetypes are expressions of a primordial, collective unconscious shared by diverse cultures." (Jung, 1970)

Based on Jung's Theory, Sabido used the archetypes as a basis for developing characters that embody universal psychological and physiological characteristics to address themes within the serial drama. For instance, Yeken Kiginit, as a drama based on Sabido's methodology, has developed its characters based on the value grids outlined by the serial producers and other researchers, (PMC Publication, June 2004) and the story emerged from the likely interactions of the differing characters with regard to those values.

For instance, many Ethiopian folktales and stories were told in previous years about women's inferior position to men in our culture, the cruel deeds of the mother-in-law over the wife of her son and so on. This researcher was also told by Dr. Negussie Tefferra, Country Representative of PMC, that numerous folktales and sayings were collected during the formative research study to design this serial drama. It has been witnessed in many areas after the conclusion of the serial drama Yeken Kiginit that when people confront a man who has a chauvinistic attitude they named "Damtew", and when they met a woman who has a feminist approach, they named her "Fikerte". This shows that the characters in the serial were developed to embody the values that they represent, and became familiar among audience members. (See Manifestations of Cultural attachment..., 4.2.3)

Chapter Five

5. Findings and recommendations

5.1. FINDINGS

This researcher believes that Yeken Kiginit serial drama has proved to be a powerful form of entertainment-education that can influence specific human behaviors and related cultures and norms of our society by highlighting the challenges that women are facing in contemporary Ethiopia.

In its two-and-a-half year transmission over the radio, the drama has attempted to show how women are underprivileged in the activities they undertake, in participation in decision-making, in the power they have to manage their lives, and how they are denied equal chances and opportunities to men due to the prevailing cultural attitude by their male counterparts. The drama has also addressed gender disparities and discrimination. Based on these facts, the following are findings of the researcher while analyzing the message of Yeken Kiginit serial drama.

5.1.1. Manifestation of male chauvinistic attitude

One of the several issues pertinent to Ethiopia that the serial drama dealt with was how male chauvinistic attitude is affecting women's equality in every aspect of life. Most male characters in the drama are representatives of the chauvinistic attitude practiced among the society in real life situations.

These attitudes that emanated from men's cultural background were manifested in the drama resulting marriage by abduction, rape, female genital mutilation, wife-beating and other anti-social activities. Such practices were given a considerable time in the drama with the intended purpose of manifesting male-chauvinistic attitude. This researcher believes that the drama has achieved its intended target by exposing most of those

cultural factors that affect women's status in the society through the characters fictional life.

The researcher has also observed in doing the message analysis of Yeken Kiginit that women were denied their right in participation in decision-making, including at a household level. Decisions such as when and whom the daughter marries, whether the wife will be allowed to work outside of the home, and about family planning were made by men and men only. This also is a reflection of men's chauvinistic attitude that prevails in the society.

5.1.2. Manifestation of men's strong attachment to their cultural upbringing

Yeken Kiginit in its long serial not only attempted to exhibit how women are maltreated by men but it has also depicted men's strong attachment to their cultural upbringing. Most men characters were developed as enthusiastic proponents of their culture and tradition in the drama. These cultural attachments that most male characters exhibited have helped the serial drama to discuss the social problems faced by women in the rural parts of the country. In short, culturally sensitive issues that appeal to audiences' needs were raised in Yeken Kiginit by portraying male characters, which are strongly attached with their cultural upbringing.

5.1.3. Modification of established cultural values

Yeken Kiginit has attempted not only to expose but also to modify established cultural values resulting in women's inequality by blending messages into the story. Women have been suffering due to the prevailing cultural values of inequality and imposition for long in Ethiopia. These values, which were exhibited in the serial drama as a manifestation of our culture, are still being considered by most men in rural areas as invaluable.

This researcher has learnt that the serial drama writers have received a proper training on how it was important to be familiarized with the culture and norms of the characters as well as the settings in the drama before starting the writing job. Based on the training they received the writers have indulged themselves in modifying the already established

cultural values that have a negative impact on the rights and privileges of women through the positive characters such as Fikerte and the transitional characters such as Sereke, Shashe and the health officer.

Yeken Kiginit was designed and produced using the Sabido Style - a style which has been accepted in many countries as an effective method in bringing about behavior change among different audiences through cultural modification. (Sabido and Barker, 2005:48) The post intervention survey conducted by Birhan Research and Development Consultancy, an organization subcontracted by PMC-Ethiopia to evaluate the implementation of the radio serial drama, has verified the fact that the drama achieved its target by bringing behavioral change among a large portion of audience members. And the researcher believes that one of the reasons that the serial drama was able to influence the beliefs and emotions of its audience was because its message was based on their culture and traditions.

The drama has developed the positive characters to embody the positive values in the value grids and be an ideal to which the audience could aspire. The aim of creating such aspirations among the audience is bringing behavioral changes in real life situations that encourage them to accept gender equality and also impede them practicing anti-social values that could result unequal gender relations.

5.1.4. The drama succeeds in seeking the “missing voices”

This researcher believes that Yeken Kiginit has played a paramount role by depicting the real picture of women’s status in the society. Women were deprived of their rights and privileges for long, and one way of exposing these scenarios is by giving them a chance to speak for themselves how they are maltreated, abused and suffered at the hands of their male counterparts. Based on this fact, producers of Yeken Kiginit serial drama have succeeded in seeking the “missing voices” by giving due emphasis to reflect the reality women are facing in the society today.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

This researcher would like to put three points as recommendations observed in carrying out this research study. Even though these points were raised in the previous chapters from different dimensions, the researcher believes that mentioning them as recommendations would help other serial drama producers to give due consideration in their future endeavor

5.2.1. Avoid exaggeration in character development

Some characters in Yeken Kiginit seem very hard to find in real life situations as they are extremely negative or positive in their behavior. Most negative characters such as Damtew and Irgete are decidedly anti-social in their behavior in which no one can find at least few good qualities in their actions. The positive characters such as Fikerte and Wubalem are also developed as saints in their behavior. Even though such kinds of characterization were promoted by the Sabido Methodology, it should be considered that finding such persons in real life situations is impossible in the world, let alone in Ethiopia.

In this regard Sabido argues that important characters in serial dramas such as Yeken Kiginit are the transitional ones, as audience members more easily identify with them. (Sabido & Barker, 2005:49) But in the case of Yeken Kiginit, important messages such as women's equality were exhibited through the positive characters such as Fikerte and Wubalem. And as it is normally difficult to accept a character with consistent and strong personality in a more than two years serial drama, the audience members might also be forced to hesitate in accepting the values promoted through the drama. Therefore, characters in such serial dramas, whether they are negative or positive, should smell humane-like in their behaviors and beliefs, rather than making them saintly creatures. If not, the audience might not accept their beliefs and values, as they are more moral than what might be possible for a real person.

5.2.2. The boring effect of the serial drama

The major tenet of the Sabido methodology is that education does not have to be boring – and that entertainment can be educational. Sabido originally termed his approach “entertainment with proven social benefit”. But the drama went on for more than two years and it might result a boring effect to some audience members, and that again could result in its main message being ignored by audience members.

But Serial Dramas Coordinator of PMC, Mesfin Assefa, hesitated to accept this fact by arguing that the important point is not how many years the drama took to be concluded, but how it captured audience’s attention to the last episode. Even though, Yeken Kiginit was successful in getting huge audience members, there were also tendencies of being bored by its endless suspense for long among its listeners.

Of course, designing an interesting story, creating emotional situations and events, and deliberately creating suspense at the end of each episodes of the drama might help to avoid such situations to occur. (Sabido, 2005) But it also needs high caliber and professionalism, too, to produce a serial drama in such a way, and PMC and other organizations should take a serious consideration on the time length of a serial drama they intend to produce in future.

5.2.3. Overshadowing the educational aspect by entertainment

The entertainment element of Yeken Kiginit accounted for a large portion of the drama. It is understandable that the Sabido Methodolgy, in which this serial drama was basically written and produced, recognizes entertainment as the most important element of entertainment-education. But giving a large portion of the drama to entertainment might sometime affect the important message intended to pass to the listeners.

Even though producers of the serial do not also agree with this idea, the impact of the entertainment aspect in overshadowing the educational message must not be taken lightly in their future endeavor.

5.3. CONCLUSION

This researcher recognizes the fact that serial dramas such as Yeken Kiginit can play a paramount role in depicting the various socio-cultural problems that exist in our Ethiopian society. As this research study has discussed and illustrated, Yeken Kiginit largely succeeded in exposing the real problems of women in Ethiopia, by showing in an entertaining but yet educative manner how women often are disadvantaged in many aspects of life. It is assumed that by applying different methodologies that include a local approach to local challenges in its message in the production of serial drama, such as the Sabido's, other NGOs engaged in media related activities can also achieve satisfactory result. Based on the experiences of the Yeken Kiginit serial drama and its research based entertainment-education, it is believed that this format could serve as a model to other Ethiopian dramas in the future.

I. Bibliography

Assefa, (2006) The Effect of Radio Serial Dramas on Reproductive Health Behavior: Key Findings from the Evaluation, Artistic Printing Enterprise
Ibid (2006:128)

Babbie & Mouton, E. Babbie & J. Muton . (2002) The Practice of Social Research.
Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Bandura, Albert B. (1977), Social Learning Theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Ibid (1977)

Barker, Kriss Barker. (2004) Media and Arts for Social Development, The Sabido Methodology, PMC Special Issue, Artistic Printing Enterprise

Barker and Sabido, Kriss Barker & Miguel Sabido. (2005) Soap Operas for Social Change to Prevent HIV/AIDS: *A Training Guide for Journalists and Media Personnel*. PMC and UNFPA Pub.
Ibid (2005:48)
Ibid (2005:55)

Barker, Kriss Barker, (2004) Media and Arts for Social Development, The Sabido Methodology, PMC Special Issue, Artistic Printing Enterprise

Barker and Sabido, Kriss Barker & Miguel Sabido. (2005) Soap Operas for Social Change to Prevent HIV/AIDS: *How the Sabido Methodology differs from other forms of Entertainment-Education*, A Training Guide for Journalists and Media Personnel, PMC and UNFPA Pub.
Ibid (2005:49)

Ibid (2005:67)

Barker, Kriss Barker, (2004) Media and Arts for Social Development, *The Sabido Methodology*, PMC Special Issue, Artistic Printing Enterprise

Barker and Sabido, Kriss Barker & Miguel Sabido. (2005) Soap Operas for Social Change to Prevent HIV/AIDS, *How the Sabido Methodology differs from other forms of Entertainment-Education*, A Training Guide for Journalists and Media Personnel, PMC and UNFPA Pub.

Ibid, (2005:22)

Ibid, (2005:48)

Benedict, Ruth Benedict. (1980) *Patterns of Culture*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. England

Bogalech, (2006) *Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Women's Health and The Role of Media*, A study paper presented at Mass Media for Social Development Training Workshop for Senior Program Managers and Practitioners, PMC, Nazareth

Brown, I. C Brown. (1963) *Understanding Other Cultures*, USA: PRENTICE-HALL, INC. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Bryman, A. Bryman. (1988) *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Routledge.

Ibid, (1988:273)

Catton, Williams R. Catton. (1983) *Problems in Materialism and Culture*, London:Verso.

Ibid, (1994:335)

Christians, Clifford, & Carey, James. (1981) *The Logic and Aims of Qualitative Research*. In Guido Stemple & Bruce Westley (Eds.), *Research Methods in Mass Communication*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Clarke, John Clarke. *Culture, Ideology and Social Process*, Billing & Sons Ltd. Worcester, 1986

Communication for better Health, Population Reports, (2008) *Ethiopian Radio Serial Follows Process to Success*, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Series J, Number 56

Fontana & Frey, Fontana, A. & Frey, J. H. (1994) *The group interview in social research*. *Social Science Journal*, 28.

Higgins, Tory (1989) *Continuities and Discontinuities in Self-Regulatory and Self-Evaluative Processes: A Developmental Theory Relating Self and Affect*, *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 57, London.

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) *Plan of Action (1994) (Article 11:23)*, Cairo

Jandt, F. E. Jandt. (2004) *Introduction to Intellectual Communication: Identities in Global Community*, 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications.

Levine, Donald N. (1965) *Wax and Gold, Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press

Lindolf, T.R. (1995) *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. London: SAGE.

Media and Communication for Social Development (2006) PMC Special Issue, Central Printing Press

Mesfin, (2004) Media and Arts for Social Development, Yeken Kiginit – “Looking Over One’s Daily Life”, PMC Special Issue, Artistic Printing Enterprise

Mesfin, (2006) Media and Communication for Social development, *From Yeken Kiginit to Menta Menged*, PMC Special Issue, Central Printing Press

Morley, David Morley. (1992) The ‘Nationwide’ Audience. London: British Film Institute.

Nariman, Heidi Nariman. (1993) Soap Operas for Social Change, Westport, CT: Praeger publishers.

Negussie, (2006) Media and Communication for Social Development, *Behavior Change is Possible*, PMC Special Issue, Central Printing Press

Negussie, (2004) Media and Arts for Social Development, *Message from the Country Representative*, PMC Special Issue, Artistic Printing Enterprise

Negussie, (2006) Media and Communication for Social Development, *Behavior Change is Possible*, PMC Special Issue, Central Printing Press

Negussie, (2004) Media and Arts for Social Development, *Message from the Country Representative*, PMC Special Issue, Artistic Printing Enterprise

Ong, Walter J. Ong. (1981) McLuhan as teacher: The future is a thing of the past. *Journal of Communication*, London.

Poindexter, D.O. (2004), Personal Communication.

Real, Micheal R. Real. (1996) Exploring Media Culture, SAGE Publications, Inc.

Ibid (1996:11)

Ibid (1996:3)

Ibid (1996:3)

Ibid (1996:180)

Sabido, Miguel Sabido. (2002) The tone, theoretical occurrences, and potential adventures and entertainment with social benefit. Mexico City: National Autonomous University of Mexico Press.

Ibid, 2002

Shore, Bradd Shore. (1998) Cultural Cognition, Models Theory as a Framework for Media Studies, Goteborg University.

Ibid, 1998

Singhal & Rogers, Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers. (1999) Entertainment-Education: A communication strategy for social change, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Singhal, Arvind Singhal. (2004) Entertainment-Education and Social Change, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Singhal & Rogers, Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers. (1999) Entertainment-Education: A communication strategy for social change, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Ibid, (1999:60-61)

Soap Operas for Social Change, A Training Guide for Journalists and Media Personnel, (2005), PMC & UNFPA Publication, Leahy Press, USA

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, (1995), Art.35, No. 2, 8

Tuchman, Gaye Tuchman. (1978) Introduction: The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media: In *Hearth & Home*, New York, Oxford University Press

Ibid (1978:370)

WHO. (2003) *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programs*. Geneva: WHO Report.

Wilson, R. W., Wilson A. A., Greenblat, S. L. eds (1979) *Value Change in Chinese Society*, New York, Praeger Publishers

II. Additional Resources

Anand, Anand A. (1983). Rethinking Women and Development, In Isis International Information and Communication Service (Ed.), Women in development: A resource guide for organization and action. (Geneva:ISIS)

Aronowitz, Stanley Aronowitz. (1994), Dead artists, live theories and other cultural problems, New York: Routledge.

Assefa, (2006) PMC Radio Serial Drama: Its impact and the lesson learned, Media and Communication for Social Development, PMC Special Issue

Bentley, E. (1967) The Life of Drama. New York: Athenaeum.

Cultural Policy, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, Addis Ababa, March 2003.

Denscombe, M. (2003) The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects. 2nd ed. Maidenhead, Open University Press

Ethiopian Media Profile. (2006) Population Media Center, Artistic Printing Enterprise.

Guantlett, David Guantlett. (2004) *Media, Gender and Identity*, New York, Routledge Pub.

Hansen, A. & Cottle, S. (1998), *Mass communication Research Methods*, London. Macmillan Press.

Lasswell, Harold Laswell. (1964) *The Structure and Function of Communication in Society*. In L. Bryson (ed.), *The Communication of Ideas*. New York: Harper Brothers.

Lindlof, T. R. (1995) *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. London: SAGE.

McQuail, D., *Mass Communication Theory*. 2000, SAGE Publications Ltd.: London.

Ryerson, William N. Ryerson. (2006) *Message From William N. Ryerson - President, Population Media Center and Recipient of the Intl. Nafis Sadik Prize for Courage*, PMC Special Issue, Central Printing Press

Sabido, Miguel Sabido. (2004) *The origins of entertainment education: Entertainment-Education and Social Change*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Shore, Bradd. (1998) *Cultural Cognition, Models Theory as a Framework for Media Studies*, Goteborg University,

Singhal, A., Rogers, E. M. (1999) *Entertainment-education: A communication strategy for social change*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

United Nations Development Program, *Reporting on the Millennium Development Goals at the Country Level*, Guidance Note, 2001.

Value Grids for Ethiopian Serial Drama. (2001) PMC-Ethiopia, Unpublished Document.

Appendix I

Interview Questions to Yeken Kiginit producers and script writer

Do you believe that this radio serial drama conveyed gender equality issue in its message?

Most women characters in the drama were portrayed as victims of men. Was it intentional or a coincidence?

Have you done any attempt to modify the already established cultural values through the message of the drama?

Do you believe that that drama has manifested the cultural up-bringing of the public and its strong attachment to it?

How are the characters in yeken Kiginit created as role models, and in what manners do they have the potential to fight the cultural stereotyping?

But on the contrary, don't you think that such kinds of characters also serve to capture the attention of the audience?

Does the drama include more than one perspective in a story? Does it seek the "missing voices"? For instance, girls education, resource control, decision at every level, abduction, rape... etc.

There are people who believe that our culture and tradition in previous times were good compared to the "so called modern culture". And there are others who argue that our culture and tradition should be modified and even be replaced with modern

cultures and traditions, even if they are imported ones. Does the drama create a conflict between the two polarized ideas?

Some people argue that when the entertainment aspect takes more parts in the drama, it could harm the education aspect. Don't you think that such problem was not manifested in Yeken Kiginit?

The drama took more than two years to be concluded. The audience might get bored to follow all the serials regularly. What is your opinion on this?

Do you believe that the Sabido style serial drama could serve as a model for other dramas in this country in the future?

Appendix II

The ten Amharic scripts of Yeken Kiginit serial drama

