

38

**THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN
DHAABAA'S SELECTED AFAN OROMO
PROSE FICTION**

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**BY
TESHOME EGERE**

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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
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BY
TESHOME EGERE

Approved by Examining Board

Yimer Kifle

Adviser

Teshome Egere

Signature

A. Subba Rao

Examiner

A. Subba Rao

Signature

Ch. Ga. Yazbee

Examiner

Ch. Ga. Yazbee

Signature

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Acknowledgments -----	i
Table of Contents -----	ii
Abstract -----	iv
Acronyms -----	vi

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION -----	1
1.1 Background -----	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem -----	4
1.3. Objectives of the Study -----	6
1.4. Significance of the Study -----	6
1.5. The Scope of the Study -----	7
1.6. Methods of the Study -----	7

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FREMEWORKS -----	9
2.1 A Brief Historical Overview of Oromo Literature -----	9
2.2 A Brief Biography of the Author -----	20
2.3 Synopses of Gurraacha Abbayyaa, Godaannisa and Dungoo Halkan Sanaa -----	21
2.3.1 Gurraacha Abbayyaa -----	21
2.3.2 Synopsis of the Novel Godaannisa -----	22
2.3.3 Dungo Halkan Sanaa -----	25
2.4 Feminism and Feminist Literary Criticism -----	27
2.5 Historical Perspectives of Feminist Literary Criticism -----	31
2.6 Patriarchy and Gender Roles -----	34

2.7 The Concept and Issues of Black Womanism/ Feminism -----	36
2.7.1 Home/Homelessness in Black Womanist/ Feminist Context ----	42
2.7.2 A Study of the Issues of Women In the Works of Some African Novels -----	44

CHAPTER THREE

THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN DHAABAA'S SELECTED AFAN OROMO PROSE FICTION -----	52
3.1 Women as Victims of Male Violence -----	52
3.2 Women as Victims of Homelessness -----	62
3.3 Women as Subordinates -----	69
3.4 Women Portrayed as Victims of Poverty -----	92
3.5 Women as Resistant, Courageous and Determined Individuals -----	102

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION -----	125
Appendix -----	132

ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to analyze the portrayal of women in Dhaabaa Wayyeessaa's selected prose fiction. As discussed in the introduction part and the first section of the second chapter, creative writing in Oromo language is the recent phenomenon. Besides, almost no a serious study as far as the researcher knows, is undertaken in the works under discussion. More specifically, the portrayal of women in these works has not been touched upon. Therefore, examining how women are portrayed in these selected prose fiction arises from this fact. In this study, three Oromo prose fiction of Dhaabaa, which are believed to be thematically important are selected for analysis.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, the reason why the texts are selected, the objectives, scope and methods of the study.

Chapter two discusses two aspects. The first one is assessing the historical overview of Oromo creative writing. Secondly, it discusses the theoretical frameworks of feminist literary criticism from global and black contexts.

The third chapter critically examines the diverse problems of women characters based on the texts and interviews conducted regarding Gumuz women. In the former's regard, how a single character passes through both positive and negative stereotypes is examined i.e. analyzing in detail of how a female character is depicted as victim of male violence, object of sex and marriage by exchange, homelessness, poverty and at times exercises her own agency in changing her life. Moreover, responses from the interview conducted are also used to support the evidence from the text. This is done to cross-check to what

extent the author depicts the female characters in the text **Gurraacha Abbayyaa** for its setting is in Gumuz ethnic group and the author is an Oromo. In the last chapter a brief conclusion based on the analysis is given. Lastly, the appendix, which presents the full text of the interview conducted with selected Gumuz people, is attached.

In the study most women characters are depicted to be the victims of male violence, homelessness, poverty and subordination. On the other hand, some of these women characters are revealed as agents that exercise their power, determination and courage either to overcome or get rid of the oppression or burden imposed on them.

Acronyms

AO Afaan Oromoo (Oromo Language)

RAL Research on Africa Literature

Key to Oromo Phonetic Transcription

Consonants	symbols	
B/b	b	is written in AO as in bona , 'winter'
D/d	d	is written in AO as diida , 'outside'
F/f	f	is written in AO as foon , 'meat'
G/g	g	is written in AO as ganna , 'summer'
H/h	h	is written in AO as hoolaa , 'sheep'
J/j	j	is written in AO as jaarree , 'century'
K/k	k	is written in AO as kibba , 'south'
L/l	l	is written in AO as lafa , 'earth'
M/m	m	is written in AO as mana , 'house'
N/n	n	is written in AO as nama , 'person'
R/r	r	is written in AO as rakkoo , 'problem'
S/s	s	is written in AO as saree , 'dog'
T/t	t	is written in AO as tola , 'free'
W/w	w	is written in AO as waanjoo , 'yoke'
Y/y	y	is written in AO as yabbuu , 'tick'

Ejective **c'** is written with **c** in AO as in **cabbii**, 'snow'

Ejective **k'** is written with **q** in AO as in **quba**, 'finger'

Ejective **t'** is written with **x** in AO as in **xaba**, 'play'

Fricative **š** is written with **sh** in AO as in **shan**, 'five'

Affricate **č** is written with **ch** in AO as in **laachuu**, 'to give'

Implosive **d'** is written with **dh** in AO as in **dhiiga**, 'blood'

Nasal **n** is written with **ny** in AO as in **nyaata**, 'food'

Ejective **p'** is written with **ph** in AO as in **qophii** 'program'

Vowels:

Afan Oromo has five short and corresponding long sounds. These are:

a	aa	o	oo
e	ee	u	uu
i	ii		

Vowel lengthening in AO brings meaning difference as in:

A/AA or alaa, **ta'e'**, 'something happened' unlike the long
vowel **taa'e**, 'sat'

Elee ro e/ee,	cire, 'cutting something' unlike the long Ciree, 'breakfast'.
II/I or i/ii,	dhibe, 'not found' unlike the long Dhiibe, 'push'
OO/O or o/oo,	oduu, 'news' unlike the long' Ooduu, '
UU/U or u/uu,	bute, 'snatching' unlike the long Buute, 'going down wards'

Consonants are doubled for germination in AO as in

Soddaa, 'in-law' unlike sodaa, 'fear'

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Some literary theories and criticism like Marxism and feminism hold the view that literature is not divorced from society. Literature reflects what is already there in the society (Jafferson and Robey, 1991: 167). What the society expects from communities, families and how the society dominates groups and constructs them is what is reflected in one way or another in literature.

Today, there exist many theories and critical approaches in literary studies. This is made possible for each literary theory and critical approach aims at revealing a differing and new kind of knowledge when applied to the analysis of a literary text. Conforming this, Ruthven (1991) says that every critical method is closely examining devices to select a particular type of information. He goes on to say that the reason for coming up with a new device is to 'reveal what was previously invisible and in that way to articulate a new kind of knowledge (ibid.:24). For example, if someone identifies himself as a boy or a man, he will do the kind of things that will let other people know that he is a boy or a man. Similarly, if someone identifies herself as a girl or a woman, then she will do the kind of things that will let other people know that she is a girl or a woman.

Ruthven explains the above point in the sense that in order to analyze a certain literary text, the choice of an effective critical approach depends on the knowledge, social and cultural values and practices that the text is supposed to manifest. Thus, broadly

speaking, "Feminist criticism ... operates in the service of a new knowledge which is constructed by rendering visible the hitherto invisible component of 'gender;' in all discourses produced by the humanities and the social sciences' (Ibid: 24).

The 1960's feminist movement is raised from the overlooked gender imbalance for generations. The known proponents of this movement as mentioned by Green and LeBihan (1996: 230), includes Simone de Beauvoir, Ann Oakley, Kate Millet, Juliet Mitchell and Germaine Greer. As further noted by Green and LeBihan, the writings of these feminist proponents 'did inform the theoretical positions of those working in the literary field and became the basis of the current framework that supports feminist criticism (Ibid, 230). One of the focuses of these scholars, as Green and LeBihan mention, include the portrayal of women in texts by writers of either gender. Guerin, et al. (1992:184) summarize these focuses of feminist criticisms into three: which 'expose patriarchal premises and resulting prejudice; which 'promote discovery and re-evaluation of literature by women', and which 'examine social, cultural, and psychosexual contexts of literature and criticism.'

Tyson (1999) explains that patriarchy operates differently in different countries, societies, and ethnic groups. This in turn refers to how patriarchal works could be varied within the border of a single country. If societies are conservative in the role they assign to women, they, not naturally but culturally, are classified as inferior, subordinates, objects, and dependent. This is what Bathsua Makin as quoted in Ruthven (1991: 45) notes saying that 'custom hath a mighty influence: it hath the force of nature itself'.

Though many black women agree on the aforementioned feminist views, on the other hand, they argue that blacks have experienced diverse problems. They experienced racism, gender and class oppression. By those who have the upper hand on them, they are victimized by male violence, poverty, sexually abused, and racially marginalized. When Bell Hooks as quoted in Collins (2000:347) discusses about the subordinate groups, she says, "As objects, one's reality is defined by others, one's identity is created by others, one's history named only in ways that define one's relationship to these who are subjects". On the contrary, what ought to be done as bell hooks further notes is that as subjects, people need to have the right to define their own reality, name their history, and establish their own identity (Ibid). However, because, the former one has been operating, African-American women have been portrayed as objects by white American upper classes. This is what an African-American woman experienced which is not similar to that of the white woman. Therefore, there seems to be a difference of experience (Ibid).

This racist patriarchal ideology exerts its imposition not only on black African-American women but also victimizes other coloured women. Conforming this as quoted in Mohanty, scholars like Moraga and Anzaldwa (1981), Hooks (1981, 1984), Hull, Scott, and Smith (1982); and Smith(1983) among others, have raised their voice against racial, sexual, economic operation imposed up on 'Third World women'. As a result, they called upon the 'Third World Women' to organize themselves separately and construct a feminist theory relevant to their needs. These scholars also suspect the separatist view of Anglo-American women saying that it is "... the desire of a few white women to enter the corporate 'boardroom' (Mohanty, 1991: 319).

In relation to the wave of women movement in the world from 1960's and onwards, although it was too late, some attention has been given to women's issues in African literature. Issues like the images of women in oral texts, women as writers and as subjects in African literature have been matters of debate. Related to this, questions like whether images of women are depicted in oral literature or not, whether these images are maintained or altered in the writings of the colonial and post-colonial periods, as to what the status of women in African literature is and as to how women are portrayed in the works of male writers and how the theories of western feminism have been and should be applied to the African context are some of the major questions that African women have been raising (Margaret Hay and Sharon Sticheter, (1984: 102); Ogundipe-Leslie, (1994:44); Nfa-Abenyi, (1994:10) and Nnaemeka, (1997: 3).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Some studies have been undertaken on the genre of Oromo oral literature. It appears to me that no attention, at least at the post-graduate level, is given to the area of Oromo prose fiction. The aim of this study is therefore, to fill the gap. For this, the researcher has selected Dhaabaa Wyyessa's two novels **Godaannisa (The Scar)** and **Gurraacha Abbaayyaa (The Black Man of Blue Nile)** and a short story **Dungoo Halkan Sanaa (The Light of that Night)**.

Texts, **Gurraacha Abbayyaa**, **Godaannisa** and **Dungoo Halkan Sanaa** are selected because they depict the life of Oromo and Gumuz people. As my first impression of these texts show, the last two texts revolve around the life of Oromo people. In addition,

these works seem to show what the Oromo women value and the burden they carried for years. However, no attempt is made to study these texts. Therefore, it is a timely task to study these texts in terms of the portrayal of women characters in these texts.

On the other hand, **Gurraacha Abbayyaa** reveals the life of Gumuz people. The basic reason for selecting the text is that the setting is in one of the least studied minority ethnic groups- the Gumuz. Besides, as my first impression shows, one of the dominant themes is the problems of women's lives in this ethnic group.

Again, no study has been undertaken regarding Oromo and Gumuz women in these texts. Furthermore, despite the fact that a number of fictional texts have been written by Oromo authors, which we shall see in the first section of the second chapter, no significant attempts have been made either to introduce or analyze these texts. More specifically, Dhaabaa's works have been slightly touched upon by Hinsene Mekuria. Hinsene has studied the biography of Dhaabaa and his plays entitled የዳባ ወየሳ አጭር የሕይወት ታሪክና የአሮጫኛ ተውኔቶቹ (*Dhaabaa Wayyessa's Biography and His Plays*) in 1993. His emphasis as shown in the title is to introduce the life history of Dhaabaa and to analyze his plays **Jennan(Saying)** and **Dukkanaan Duuba (Beyond the Darkness)**. As has been mentioned above, it is a timely task to study the aforementioned Dhaabaa's selected works focusing on the portrayal of women characters.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Therefore, the objective of this study is two fold. First, it introduces some selected works of Dhaabaa. Second, it analyzes the portrayal of women in the selected works. A thorough analysis is made to find out whether strong, determined, resistant and respectful women are portrayed in the texts or not. Although the general objective of this research is to study the portrayal of women in Dhaabaa's selected works, the study has the following specific objectives:

- to assess to what extent women are affected by male violence;
- to identify whether women by patriarchal tradition are subordinates as a result of which considered as objects of sex and exchange by marriage in the selected works.
- to examine to what extent women are depicted as the victims of homelessness and poverty and
- to examine whether women are resistant to the tradition and patriarchal ideologies imposed upon them.

1.4. Significance of the Study

As stated earlier no serious study has been made on Dhaabaa's **Gurraacha Abbayyaa**, **Godaannisa** and **Dungoo Halkan Sanaa**. It is generally agreed that literary criticism plays an important role in the development of creative writings such as novels, plays and short stories. As will be discussed in the following chapter, although Oromo fictional writing is about a decade old, no serious attempt has been made to study the above

selected works of Dhaabaa. Hence, dealing with such untouched area, I believe contributes to the development of both Oromo literature and criticism. Second, it gives some insight into the understanding of gender imbalance that exists in that society. Last, but not least, the study may serve as a stepping stone for other critics to make further studies of Dhaabaa's creative works.

1.5. The Scope of the Study

Dhaabaa is a play- write, a short story writer and novelist. He has made a remarkable contribution to the development of Oromo creative writings. However, this study is limited to the portrayal of women in some of his selected works, **Gurraacha Abbayyaa**, **Godaannisa**, and a short story **Dungoo Halkan Sanaa**. The scope is limited to this work only because the study of the works of the author will be beyond the range of the present study

1.6. Methods of the Study

In most cases, literary study requires qualitative method of collecting data. Therefore, the researcher employs this method of study. Hence, the text is thoroughly analysed. This is because some feminist theoreticians and critics argue that the language and literary elements in the texts are also important in examining the lives of women in a text i.e. by making a 'close -reading' one can come up with a good interpretation of the text.

Furthermore, an interview as a method of data collection is also employed. The setting of one of the text **Gurraacha Abbayyaa** is in the area where Gumuz people live. The author of this novel is an Oromo. As a result crosschecking is believed to be very important. The researcher, therefore, needs to conducted interviews with some selected Gumuz people. In addition to this the researcher took down some notes where recording became difficult or impossible in such cases as gesture, moods and attitudes. Besides, observation, and discussions were also carried out.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FREMWORK

2.1 A Brief Historical Overview of Oromo Literature

Oromo language is a widely spoken language in East Africa. Studies show that it is spoken in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. In Ethiopia, it is used by several ethnic groups such as the Adare, Sidama, Berata, Anuak, Koma, Kulo and Kaficho as a means of communication and trade with their neighbours (Tamene 2000: ii).

Regardless of all this, Oromo language remains one of the least studied languages. As a result it lacks a developed literature, more specifically fictional writings. The fact that its literature is not developed is one of the factors that made the people not known much to the outside world not only its existence but also its thought patterns. This is because literature is one way through which a society communicates to the outside world. The culture and social relations in terms of wealth, age and gender and problems of a society are reflected in literature.

In the last years of the twentieth century attempts were made by some Oromo and Western scholars to develop Oromo literature. German scholars Karl Tutscheke and Krapf were some who studied the Oromo language. For instance, Johann Krapf's work "*An Imperfect outline of the Elements of the Galla (Oromo) (sic) Language*" was published by Church Missionary Society in London in 1840. He also translated the Holy

Scriptures into Oromo language. Similarly, Karl Tutschke after learning the Oromo language from Oromo ex-slaves, collected data, which were published by his brother Lawrence Tutschek entitled "*Dictionary of Galla Language*" and "*A Grammar of Galla Language*" in 1844. The works of these two scholars were the basis for the history of Oromo studies for two reasons. First, they introduced the Oromo language to the European world of scholarship. Second, they were the basis for Oromo scholars like Onesimos Nasib and Aster Ganno to take the study of the Oromo language and literature a step forward. (Muudee, 1995: XII, bender et al, 1976: 167).

The effort of these German scholars was, followed by Oromo religious leaders and scholars from the late 19th century and onwards. Onesimos Nasib and Aster Ganno are among the Oromo religious leaders who apart from translating different scriptures, published a text "*Jalqaba Barsiisaa*" or the "*The Oromo Reader*" which contains 174 pages, 3600 words and 79 short stories (Mekuria, in Journal of Oromo Studies, 1994: 94). The purpose of this book was to help the people develop their reading ability in the Oromo language. It incorporates different oral texts and new stories that reflect the culture of the people. Some of these are pastoral songs, nursery songs, ritual songs, hymns to God and biographies. He also translated John Bunyan's "Man's Heart" in 1899. Onesimo's works are the foundation for Oromo literature.

On the other hand, Aster Ganno is one of the eye- breakers along with Onesimos. Apart from assisting Onesimos, she also contributed very much to the development of Oromo literature. She made remarkable contribution in writing Oromo songs, fables and stories and compiling an Oromo dictionary. Mekuria, describes her contributions saying that "... much credit for the final structure of the language in the works of Onesimos ought to go

to his young female assistant" (p. 94). Hence, it is possible to see the contribution that an Oromo woman like Aster made in laying the foundation of Oromo literature. The works, as noted by Mekuria (ibid), that Onesimos and his language team accomplished are taken to be the 'first and the only significant step' towards the study of Oromo literature.

The response to these innovative works of Onesimos and Aster especially from the Ethiopian clergy (Orthodox priests) was negative. As a result, Onesimos was blamed for all his works and warned by Emperor Menelik even not to teach his own children using Oromo language. Regarding Emperor Menelek's warning Mekuria has the following to say, "The Emperor allowed Onesimos to go free but forbade him to continue with his teaching. He was not even allowed to teach his own children." (Mekuria, in *Journal Of Oromo Studies*, Vol.1, No.2, 1994:96). This indeed discouraged the effort made by scholars who had interest in working on the Oromo language and literature. This in turn became the main cause for the absence of publications on Oromo literature during the last decades of Menelik's regime. During the power struggle in Addis Ababa after the death of Meneilk some scholars made attempts by working on Oromo literature. To mention some of them, Cerulli's *Folk Literature of the Galla of Southern Ethiopia* (1922) was the major contribution made. This work incorporates the best and most varied collection of Oromo folk literature (Gene, 1976: 170). It contains different kinds of folk songs like love songs and pastoral songs.

As quoted by Gaddisa in (Wiirtu, V.3, 1990) books like *Oduu Qulqullu Akka Yoonaa Qulqulluu Xaafe* (A Holly Speech as St. Yona wrote [1934]) *Dhaamsa Qualqullu Akka Xaafe Luuqaas* (The Sacred Massage as Written by Luke), 1945; *Waan Ergamtuun*

Tolchite (The Good Deeds of a Servant) 1954 were written by unknown scholars. Moreover, a Swedish scholar wrote two books entitled *Caasaa Afaan Oromo* (The Structure of Oromo Language) and *Galata Waaqayyo Gooftaa Maccaa* (Glory unto God) in the years 1947 and 1952 respectively. To sum up, as we can see from their titles, the contents of these books are mainly religious and oral. On the other hand, as their years of publications show, books in Oromo language are scanty for about half a century. This, as some critics say, is due to the imposition made on Oromo language and literature by the then government. (*Journal of Oromo Studies*. Vol. 1, No. 1, 1993: p. 36).

After the return of Haile Sellasie from exile an imposition on Oromo literature continued to the extent that people could not use any languages other than Amharic for official and religious purposes (Negarit Gazeta, No. 3, 1944). However, efforts had been made in some places like the province of Harar to write in Oromo script. A case in point is Sheik Bakri Saphalow, who was a historian, a poet and religious teacher. He for the first time also developed an Oromo alphabet. His works especially, his scripts gained popularity in eastern Oromo in the 1950s and 1960s.

As can be seen from the above survey, works that contributed to the development of Oromo literature are scanty. Even, when compared to the early works (Tutschek, Krapf, Onesimos and Aster) it seems difficult to say that any progress was made to develop Oromo literature. Worse of all, no attempt was made in the area of creative writings in the Oromo language.

After the fall of Haile Selassie and the coming into power of the Därg, attention was given to vernacular languages like the Oromo language. The purpose was to inculcate the revolutionary agenda into the people's mind. As a result, books on the Oromo language in Sabean alphabet flourished. Apart from dictionaries, the contents of these books range from politics and religion to oral texts.

To begin with, as Gaddisa in *Wiirtuu* mentions books which have revolutionary agendas: *Warraaqsa Etoophiyaafi Loltoota* (Ethiopian Revolution and the Military), *Qabeenyi Lafa Baadiyyaa Kaleessaa Hanga Har'aatti* (Countryside Land Ownership from the Past to the Present), *Lafa Mandraafi Lafa Barahaa Kaleessaafi Har'a* (Areal and Desert Lands from the Past to the Present), *Warraaqsa Itoophiyaa Keessatti Gahee Mana Barumsa Siyaasaafi Gurmeessa Uummataa* (The Role of Schools in Promoting Politics and Organizing People) were published in the same year i.e. (1971). These books were meant to raise public awareness and make the people actively participate in the political situation of the then government.

On the other hand, the Bible Association of Ethiopia translated and published books entitled *Qulqulluu Wangeelli Gooftaa Keenyaa* (The Gospel of Our Lord), *Hojii Ergamtootaa Hiika Haaraafi Gara Koo Koottaa Anarraa Baraa* (The Acts of the Apostle [The New Version] and Come and Learn From Me) in 1977; *Wangeela Maarqoos Qophii Tokkoffaa* (The Gospel of Mark [The First Version]) in 1978; and *Mee Dubbisaa Oduu Gaggaarii Kanaafi Ergaa Phaawloos Gara Warra Roomaatti Erge* (Read these Good News and the Message of Paul to Rome) in 1979. As the titles of these books show, the contents of these books are religious (Ibid).

Moreover, Gaddisa mentions Rev. Dafa Jamoo's contribution to the development of the Oromo language during the Därg regime. Dafa wrote a book, *Aadaa Oromoo Wallaggaa* (The Culture of the Oromo of Wollega) in 1974. This book includes themes like cultural values embodied in Gada system; the issue of Sabbath, *Damara* and funeral ceremonies. He also published another book, *Gumbii Oduu* (Collection of Tales) in 1975.

The book is written not only in prose but also in verse. It incorporates themes like the impact of being passive and the importance of basic education. The book entitled *Safuu Biyya* (Societal Ethics) was published in 1983 and as its title indicates, it deals with the *Safuu* (ethics) of the society. Rev. Dafa also wrote a book that has few fictional elements, entitled *Huursaa* (A Terrible Sound that the River Creates) in 1969. Its theme is addressing both male and female to stand united for work and to be active participants in the development of the nation. It also addresses a social value in that it encourages the people to minimize the expenses spent on marriage ceremonies (Ibid).

However, one important development in the history of Oromo literature during the Däрге regime was, the appearance of a weekly-published newspaper *Bariisaa* in 1975. This newspaper contributed much by showing the fact that the Oromo language is a language of scholars, poetry, oral narratives, through which the history, culture, way of life of Oromo people are expressed. Added to this, the newspaper realized the fact that Oromos began to write and read in their language. Conforming this Gregg in Bender (1976:171-172) writes:

Finally, this encouraging sign that the Oromo are taking the responsibility for the study of their language into their own hands is now seconded by evidence that Oromo is at least taking its rightful place as a vehicle of written and mass-media communication.

Besides, *Bariisaa* contributed much by helping Oromos to express their feelings, the reality they face, their daily activities, social problems and relations using one of the genres of literature-poetry. The poems, as explained by Muudee (1996: x-xi), deal with issues like the importance of learning in one's own language, the culture, tradition, social interactions, and the challenges that Oromo people faced during the past regimes. Muudee, in the book *Oromo Rivolutionary Poems* (1996) compiled the poems written in *Bariisaa*'s newspaper from 1975-1977. To sum up, the newspaper helped some of the creative works like poems to be written and read.

The beginning of the media communication was another event in the history of Oromo language and literature during the Därg regime. It allowed the transmission of Afan Oromo programme on Revolutionary Ethiopian Radio. However it was not genuinely meant to develop Oromo language and literature rather than to promote the revolutionary programmes of the government. Although, some plays and poems were broadcast, it is difficult to categorize them under creative work for they were written by amateurs just to fill the gap (Gragg, in Bender, 1976: p. 172).

As the aforementioned contents of the books written during the Därg regime show, the main objective of using the Oromo language by the then government seemed to be initiating the people to be mere supporters of its policies. An example that can be cited to justify this argument is the absence of a creative writing in the language. Had the

government genuinely made an effort for the development of Oromo creative writings, it would have encouraged some people to publish their works. This has been said not without reason. For instance, there were short stories and a novel, which were written but not published. Conforming this Gaddisa in the preface of his first novel writes:

Macaafin Kuusaa Gaddoo (Kuufama haaloo) jedhamu kun seera mootummaa darbe keechatti maxxansa akka argatuuf gaafatamee deebisni kennameef "Afaan biraatit hiikamee jabeenyii fi yareenyi isaa yoo hubatameen booda "kan jedhu ture... Waan kana ta'eef silga kana abbaa mirgaa bira dabarsuun yaada koo waan hinturreef kanaan guyyaa isaa eeggachise. (Gaddisa, 1991:V)

This book Kuusaa Gadoo (Cumulative Grief) was to be published during the past regime. But, the response was 'Let it be translated into the official language and its weaknesses and strengths be known'. Since it was not my objective to give this privilege to someone else, I decided to wait for its day.

So far, an attempt has been made to give the brief historical overview of Oromo literature. As has been seen in the aforementioned historical periods, Oromo literature has not been given due attention. Besides, prose fiction in Oromo language has not been encouraged. This made the history of Oromo prose fiction only a decade old regardless of the large number of the people that speaks the language. Next to this an attempt shall be made to see some Oromo creative writings written during the last years of the Darg regime and the present government.

Although not published, some creative writings such as short stories and plays were broadcast on Ethiopian radio Afaan Oromo Programm during the last years of the Därg regime. In addition, after the fall of the Darg regime some creative writings have been published. Below an attempt is made to deal with these works very briefly.

One of the creative writings which were broadcast on Ethiopian radio Afan Oromo Programm is *Utuu Hinsee'iin* (Unknowingly). It is a short story by Dhaabaa Wayyeessa.. Its themes are love and corruption. In this short story he satirizes those people who are corrupt. It has some fictional qualities in that it creates suspense and employs appropriate diction.

The other text worth mentioning is *Gaaddidduu Farraa* (The Shadow of Evil). This is also a short story written by Dhaabaa. This short story used to be narrated on Ethiopian radio afan Oromo program for several weeks on each Sunday morning in 1990. This short narrative reveals the evil nature of killing people.

Before it was developed into a novel, *Gurraacha Abbayyaa* was written in one of the genres, called a play. The play was broadcast for several weeks every Sunday on the Ethiopian Radio Afan Oromo Program. Its themes include the lives of Gumuz people in general and of Gumuz women in particular.

Jennaan (As Said) is a play written by Dhaabaa, which was staged at Hager Fiqir Theatre. It is about an artist (a painter) who respects his culture, poor people and whose life was troubled due to the Därg cadres because of his refusal to paint the revolutionary emblem. They warned him several times. Hence, the play seems to depict conflict in love affairs, the misuse of power by government officials, and the life of people who are below the poverty line.

Heeruma Galgalee (Galgale's Marriage) is also Dhaba's work, which was broadcast on Ethiopian radio Afan Oromo program in December 1983. It is a play that revolves around two youngsters who fight for a countryside girl. One of them is from a poor family whereas the other one is from a rich family. While, the latter boy is comfortably waiting for the girl for he has sent money and elders, the former marries the girl by culturally called *sabbat marii*, which means the boy with his colleagues goes early in the morning accompanied by elders to the girl's family home and asks for the girl. If the family is willing, they give the girl to the boy. If not they leave it.

A short story *Waa Lama Dhabuu* (Losing Two Things) was written by Gaddisa Birru. This too was narrated on Ethiopian Radio Afan Oromo program starting from May 22 to August 29, 1990 on every Sunday morning. Its themes include depicting the misuse of power and the negative aspects of associating education with business/ money.

After the fall of the Därg regime the first Oromo fictional work *Kuusaa Gadoo* was written in 1991 by Gaddisaa Birru. It is the first novel written in the Oromo language. There are reasons to say that it is the first novel. The first is, it is written in Latin script. Second it is rich in fictional elements. Third, it paves the way for others to write in the Oromo language. For instance, novels like *Godaannisa*, *Suura Abdii* were published immediately after this novel. Moreover, the themes of this novel include the misuse of power, corruption by government officials, injustice and others.

His second novel *Dhaamsa Abbaa* (The Message of the Father) was published in 2000. This novel is published nine years after his first novel. Its themes include social and political conflicts, and cultural values like the value that the message of elders have.

Yaadanii (Thoughtful) by Banti Olika is a novel published in 1998. This novel depicts the conflict between tradition and modernization in the sense that those groups of people who are engaged in works of leather products are ostracized. Their children cannot marry the children of other groups. However, this traditional outlook is opposed by the younger generation. On the other hand, the theme of the novel also includes violence against women. It portrays a woman character who dropouted out from high school for fear that she would be married by force. But ironically she is married by force.

The other novel is *Suuraa Abdii* (The Vision of Hope) which was written by Kumsa Burayu in 1995. This novel reveals the economic exploitation by factory owners and managers. The protagonist Amansisa is shown as suffering from exploitation of his labour power in the factory. He ultimately kills his manager and leaves his wife and only child helplessly and flees to Eastern Harar.

Dirmammu is a novel written by Takilu Kinati in 1995. Its story revolves around two characters who try to trap each other. The novel is allegorical and it satirizes the misuse of power in Oromia .

Although the above attempts are made for about a score of years, it seems to be not satisfactory as compared to the proportion of the population of Oromo and the speakers of Afaan Oromo. Next to this, we shall try to see the biography of Dhaabaa Wayyeessa.

2.2 A Brief Biography of the Author

Dhaabaa was born in Sept. 1966 in Wollega in the district of Horro Guduru, in Jega Bot village. He began his education at a church school and continued his elementary education (2-5 grades) in Qello and his junior elementary education (6-8 grades) in Hinde Junior secondary school. He further continued his secondary education in Gida Ayyana. Then he joined Bahir Dar College of Teachers' Education and studied Biology for two years. He began his teaching career in 1990 in Wollega and then once again joined Addis Ababa University to study Educational Administration. It was while he was attending his education that he published the play called *Dukkanaan Duuba* (Beyond the Darkness) in the year 1991.

When the aforementioned biography of Dhaabaa is viewed, it is clear that he has no exposure to any formal education of creative writing. Dhaabaa had an inclination towards creative writing. He had a dream to be a writer. While he was in elementary school, he used to compose poems. Then once upon a time, he became chairman of youth theatrical group in his Kebele. He was also used to serve as a member of Drama club in Gidda Ayana school.

Apart from this, Dhaabaa used to read the creative works of well-known authors both from inside and outside the country. Although he had no exposure to the art education, it seems true that all the aforementioned experiences made him a creative writer.

2.3 Synopses of *Gurraacha Abbayyaa*, *Godaannisa* and *Dungoo Halkan Sanaa*

2.3.1 *Gurraacha Abbayyaa*

The saction of this novel begins in North-West Wollega Administrative region mainly in the former Horro Guduru district and extends to the small town of Gojjam Administrative region, Bure.

The protagonist of the novel was Teto Bachangire Bakalu. He was born in the former Ebantu sub-district, at a place called Mettin. His father and mother died in a tribal conflict. After this catastrophe, he and his sister Dochan were persecuted. After travelling to different places like Chagini, Bure, they finally settled in Luquma. There, Teto loved a girl called Yenche. But he could not marry her due to the local society's tradition. According to the tradition he was required to give his sister in exchange to Yenche's brother. But, Dochan refused to be exchanged and committed suicide. As a result, Teto's chance of marriage became narrowed. However, he left with one chance only i.e. to marry her after giving many gifts like guns and goats. But, he couldn't. As a result, Yenche married another prosperous man against her consent.

Her marriage relationship with the man was not healthy because Yenche had not been a virgin. Due to this, he didn't make any contact with her. Even immediately the day after the marriage, she was taken to her family because she was not virgin. Because Teto confessed that it was himself who took her virginity, he was made to pay a

compensation. After that she was taken back to her husband's home. The onwards they had not share the same bed. He always insulted and beat her. Meanwhile, Teto was forced to leave the place because of the tension between him and Yenché's family and her husband. As a result he went to a village called Oborra and lived there for a few months and turned back. When Yenché heard about his arrival, she came and told him that he should take her and leave the place because the dispute between her and her husband was worsen. Then, they began their journey following the bank of the river Blue Nile. Meanwhile, a terrible sound of gun is heard and Teto is short dead by Yenché's husband. When she realizes this, she ran into the river as she went to in the river, it took almost half of her body and the story ends

2.3.2 Synopsis of the Novel *Godaannisa*.

The protagonist began narrating about his birthplace, after the death of his father, he and his sister Kuleni left with their mother at the age of nine and half, and six years respectively. His mother married a man called Manalew Belay. His sister joined her mother at a small town called Nadjo after staying with her uncle for ten years. He goes on narrating that once upon a time Kulani's mother went to the countryside. At mid-night her stepfather staggering due to excessive drinking came home. She gave him dinner. He forced Kulani to sit besides him and ate the dinner. She unwillingly accepted and ate with him. When the dinner was over, he washed his hands and seized her hand, she tried to escape but he threw her on the bed and raped her. The following day, when the mother heard this news from her children, she went to commit suicide but saved by the neighbours. Manlew's act of rape reaches every body's ear including Kulani's relatives. Fearing her relatives, Manalew left the place.

One day, while he was going back to the university from his birthplace he met a girl who was travelling to Haramaya University. On their way to Dirre Dhawa she told him that she is going to join Haramaya University and he in turn told her that he is a second year student in the same university. After Abdisa heard this, he adjusted himself in every way possible to put her into his trap. She on the other hand, came close to him with a genuine hope that he would help in introducing her to the atmosphere of the campus.

The next day, they arrived at the university and he assisted her in taking dormitories. Then onwards, he didn't stop his follow up. She in turn also genuinely accepted him. Sometimes, they began to spend the evening, walking together in the streets of the campus especially, the street which he all the time wishes to walk on along with his lover a street known to be 'love street'.

Meanwhile she told him her and her families' stories saying that her mother had been ill and rarely leaves bed that her father had brought her up and her brothers and sisters working as daily laboroures. She told him that they had been severely suffering from poverty. He in turn sympathised with her. Then, he embraced her and tried to kiss her. She pushed him away and ran towards her dormitory. He got shocked, wondered why, cursed his fate, went to the nearby bar threw himself to the world of drinking to the extent that he was unable to remember in the morning what he did the night before, but, asked by the owner of the bar to pay the money for the bed he slept on and for her whom he spent the night with. He said nothing but threw ten Birr and left the bar.

The other day, Talile called on Abdisa, asked for an excuse for what she had done the day before and she promised not to hurt him anymore. Then, their relationship continued, and one day he suggested her that they would go to Dirre Dhawa and get to relax. She indifferently accepted his offer and they went to Dirre Dhawa. He systematically made her stay long and finally insisted to spend the night there for it is too late to turn back to the campus. Then he rented a room and asked her to enter but she refused. But in the end she agreed, shared the same bed and shared everything.

After that he started to accuse himself. He started to feel guilty. He debated hotly between his consciousness and his emotions. His consciousness betrayed him very much. He couldn't stand the accusation of his own consciousness. However, after a month, she found out that her menstruation ceased its recycling. She told this to him. He unconsciously ran away from her, she also got nervous and turned back and ran towards the direction of her dormitory. But, she accidentally fell down and her forehead was injured and bleeds. Then, after some days she left the campus.

After three weeks a message came from Talile through Rahel to Abdissa. She took him to the place where Talile was sleeping. He saw her, she too saw him. She thought about the fate of her mother and about the character of Abdisa. She told him that she would leave the place. He came back to the campus sold everything he had, went back where Talile is but he couldn't find her. He searched for her for some days. Meanwhile when he asked shoe shiners they told him that a certain woman was died and the city authority took her and buried her. He couldn't control himself. Then onwards, he seriously suffered from guilty consciousness. Then he got employed in an office called

Hoomisha Alaa (An Export Office) in Finfine. Meanwhile, he went to visit his family, he found the letter written by his sister Kuleni.

He also narrates that he refused to create a relationship that Tujiba proposed for him, the girl who had come from his born place, who assimilated the life style of Finfinne. While Abdisa was suffering from the temptation of his friend and the guilt consciousness in which he was put, his sister Kuleni came to Finfinne and they started living together. Meanwhile, Talile also got Abdisa's address, phoned to him and got him and told him that she had given birth to a child in Finfinne, and she was continuing her education in Finfinne. Finally, the title *Godaanisa* which he had been trying to get, came to his mind after he met with Talile. And he started writing based on the title *Godaannisa* and the story ends.

2.3.3 *Dungoo Halkan Sanaa*

Dungoo Halkan Sanaa is a short story by Dhaabaa Wayyeessaa. It is about two characters: the female character Intalo, a fourteen years old girl who lived renting a room, with her mother in the unnamed hotel and the male character (Bonsa). Bonsa, after he entered the hotel, saw a girl, but turned away from her not to break his promises that he had made to his colleagues and directly went to his class. But, someone came from behind and stretched hands to him. It was Intalo who was welcoming him. He greeted her with fear. She departed saying that she would come back.

He wondered why she said that. After some minutes, she entered the class and sat besides him. He became nervous. Then she asked him whether he had eaten his dinner or not. He said he hadn't and she asked him whether she could go out and buy something for him. He reluctantly agreed and gave her money. She went and brought the food very soon and gave one to him and the other one to her mother. She came back again and sat beside him. The more she frequently came, the more his courage to keep his promises left him and he tried to rationalize and his frustration increased.

She once again left the room and came back wearing her nightgown. This time he hardly controlled himself and highly tempted and asked several questions that backed him against his promises. She again left the room. He in turn began to think about her, appreciated her and created her image in his mind and was highly attracted towards her. She came and sat beside him once again. When he tried to embrace her she warned him not to do that and after staying for a few minutes she left the room again. Now he had the time to rethink about her and decided not to leave her.

Finally, she came again and went into the bed. Bonsaa does too and he tried to embrace her but she warned him not to touch her and told him that her mother is doing the same thing unwillingly and told him why they were there (in Finfinne) saying that their father had been a colonel, that they lived in Asalla and they had come here for the court case and that her father had built a house in Finfinne. The judgment had been delayed for reasons she did not know. After he heard all these he made another extra promises to consider her as his sister and the story ends.

So far, the brief historical overview of Oromo literature, Oromo creative writings and Dhaabaa's biography and the synopses of his selected prose fictions has been discussed. Now, some theoretical framework of feminist literary criticism and related studies will be discussed.

2.4 Feminism and Feminist Literary Criticism

It is not easy to give a brief definition of some terms. Out of various literary theories and critical approaches, feminism seems to remain without a comprehensive definition. As quoted in Guerin et. Al. (1992: 182) an author and a critic Rebecca West remarked that she herself had never been able to find out precisely what feminism was. Likewise, most scholars aired the same view in trying to define feminism and feminist literary criticism. For instance, Deborah Cameron (1992:4) says, '... this term does not have any one agreed meaning that could be formulated as a set of beliefs and it probably never did have...'. This seems to be the reason why although other literary theories and criticisms are definable, feminism is usually called feminisms or feminist approaches. Conforming this, Sara Mills (1995: 3) contends "Feminism (or more accurately, feminisms) is difficult to define because of the many different kinds of feminisms which exist today".

Warhol and Herndl in the book they edited, entitled *Feminism - An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, explain the plural definitions of feminism saying:

We've used the plural form "feminisms", rather than feminism to acknowledge the diversity of motivation, method and experience among feminist academics. From the outside, "feminism" may appear monolithic, unified, or singularly definable. The more intimately one becomes acquainted with feminist criticism,

however, the more one sees the multiplicity of approaches and assumptions inside the movement (1991: x).

From this we may notice that the terms feminism and feminist literary criticism are diverse and heterogeneous based on the culture, level of education, development, and the like depending on nations and ethnicity.

Hence, one can easily understand that feminism has got its plural approaches from the fact that it centers on the complexity of women's lives in different cultures and historical circumstances. Conforming this Annotte Kolodny as quoted in Guerin, et al. (1992: 183) calls it 'playful pluralism', and others also agree to these plural approaches (Jefferson and Robey, 1991: 205; Magali, 1996: 11).

Agate Nesaule Krouse, in her article "Towards the Definition of Literary Feminism", has tried to enumerate some characteristics of feminist concerns in a given text of which dealing with the complexity of women's life is the one. Her objective is to identify some elements of feminist literary criticism. She bases her point of discussion on some of the texts of Jong's *Fear of Flying*, Piercy's *Small Changes*, Weldon's *Female Friends* and Alther's *Kinflicks* (Brown and Olson, 1978: 281-282).

In describing literary feminism, she focuses on elements like characterization, point of view, selection of details and emphasis. A work with the characteristics of literary feminism according to her can have a female protagonist or several female characters who are significant to the theme or central action" (Ibid). She further notes that examining characterization enables us to identify as to how women form a significant part of the work and to what extent they are treated seriously. Added to this whether

female characters in the text control reader's sympathy or not is also important in examining feminist literary criticism. For example, she takes Barth's woman character, Rennie, in the novel entitled *'End of the Road'* who is the victim of male 'possessiveness' and an example of the fate of a woman who completely bases herself on the ideas of a man.

Krouse also discusses ways of examining feminist characterization that includes either stereotypes or "the author's avoidance of stereotypes". In the later case she cites Lessing's, Drable's and Ashton-Warner's women "who often have fairly traditional responses to men and children-they like them. And who are interested in other things like artistic, intellectual and political, or academic matters". She also mentions the "change and growth" of women characters across the text.

On the other hand, Krouse notes the importance of examining recurring stereotypes depending on the context in which they appear and as to who is an agent for that behavior to be manifested. Conforming this Ruthven (1991: 74) stresses the fact that repetitiveness in portrayal of women's life is unavoidable. He further notes that let alone in different societies, this could frequently happen in the same society.

For A. K. Krouse, feminist criticism may also be evident in the attention given to the details of the lives of women. This, according to her, includes the characters sexual autonomy and freedom of choice, the problems related to ageism and woman -to-woman bound (Ibid, 285-286).

Furthermore, she also discusses the importance of focusing on issues like victimhood in which women characters are portrayed to be the victims of the 'society, individual men or both'. Ruthven also elaborates the issue of victimhood by quoting Sandra Lee Bartky's view "feminist consciousness is the consciousness of victimization" (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar, p. xxiii). He further elaborates victimization by citing Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), whose heroine finds herself on a beach and then swims out to sea and drowns herself. When such images are treated in literary academics with an objective of raising feminist consciousness, according to Ruthven and others, the students couldn't overcome the 'depression it builds up on them.' (Ruthven, 1991: 71).

Krouse also takes Christina Stead's work entitled *The Man Who Loved Children* and elaborates how the issues of motherhood, poverty and powerlessness affect the life of the woman character Henny. She also notes the need to focus on motherhood in texts citing the novels of Drabble's *The Millstone* and *The Garrick Year* and Lessing's *A Proper Marriage* in which she finds out the fact that there is a high degree of the effect of children on mothers than vice versa. In examining the details of women's lives, she also points out the need to focus on the effect of war, conflict and economic dependency on the lives of women.

An important point in Krouse's theoretical framework is that "elements of literary feminism may appear in the works of both women and men... literary feminism does not have an absolute relationship to the author's sex". (Ibid: 282). However, she believes that certain elements or characteristics of feminism may be more recurrent in the work of women than that of men.

In general she discusses the need to focus on a female protagonist or simply female characters having a good thematic significance. Thus, according to Krouse characterization, details of lives of women, stereotypical images, women's friendships, victimhood and poverty are some of elements of feminist literary analysis (Ibid).

However, while discussing the above elements of feminist literary criticism, she completely overlooks the issue of race. This is one of the reasons why black womanists /feminists oppose white feminists labeling them as separatists which shall be discussed in Section 2.7.

Krouse's elements of literary criticism are discussed because some of them are taken as a model of analysis in this thesis. For example, elements like themes, characterization, injustice made by men in which women are victims and details of women's lives shall be focused in this thesis. Moreover, issues like victimhood, poverty, stereotypical images and avoidance of stereotypes are also discussed in this thesis based on Krouse's literary critical framework.

2.5 Historical Perspectives of Feminist Literary Criticism

Critics notify that feminist literary criticism has a long history. Even if feminist literary criticism started in 1960's after the critical works of some feminists like Kate Millette, its history goes back to hundreds of years in time. For example, it can even be traced back to Aristotle's declaration that "The female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities," and St. Thomas Aquinas's view that woman is an "imperfect man".

(Oppermann, 1994: 2002). Such a diachronic study has many advantages in that the forgotten texts, aspects of lives of women and images of women are re-evaluated. For instance, texts going back as far as Aristophanes's *Comedy Lysistrata*, which is about how women achieved social changes by withholding sexual favors from their men in 1399, are re-examined (Ruthven, 1991:6).

Furthermore, with the passage of time more and more critical views regarding the issue of women appeared. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) which according to some scholars marks the first modern awareness of women's struggle for equal rights, and which is an attempt for the equality of both sexes can be cited as an example. Fifty-eight years later, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote a poem entitled *'The Run Away Slave at Pilgrim's Point'* (1850) "which is about the flogging to death of a black slave for murdering the child she bore after being raped by her white owner". Sixty years later, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) appeared. Here, Virginia Woolf argues that the male dominance in the patriarchal society hindered women from exploiting their creativity and true potential (Ibid, 31-32).

Explaining the need for diachronic study, as it has been successful to discover the literary achievement of early women writers, Elaine Showalter argues that "Before we can even begin to ask how the literature of women would be different and special, we need to reconstruct its past, rediscover the scores of women novelists, poets and dramatists whose works have been obscured by time..." (Davis, 1986: 176). She further remarks that through such historical studies feminists would be able to "establish the continuity of female tradition from decade to decade (Ibid). Thus she has identified three

phases of development in women's literary tradition. When put chronologically, they are the "Feminine", the "Feminist" and the "Female" phases.

The three phases are characterized by different literary developments and concerns of feminists. According to Showalter, the Feminine phase dates from 1840 to 1880, the Feminist phase dates from about 1880 to 1920, and the Female phase is on going since 1920 (Davis, 1986). Then, she explains that all these thematized phases "have been important to feminist literary criticism in the 1960s and 1970s" (Ibid, p. 176).

Showalter notes, in the feminine phase the famous women writers like George Eliot, Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, and others who "wrote in an effort to equal the intellectual achievements of the male culture, and internalized its assumptions about the female culture" (Ibid, p. 177). This phase is, thus, characterized by "[male] pseudonym" because women writers imitated the dominant (male) tradition." (Guerin, et al. 1992: 185), at least, to get their texts published. On the other hand, the Feminist phase is summarized by Guerin, et al. (Ibid) as a phase "during which women protested and advocated minority rights.". Showalter also elaborates that in the feminist phase "Women are historically enabled to reject the accommodating postures of femininity and to use literature to dramatize the ordeals of wronged womanhood" (Davis, 1986: 177). Finally, as far as Showalter is concerned the female phase is a period in which women writers started to reject their concerns in the feminine and feminist phases, i.e. imitation and opposition of male literary tradition respectively. Instead, she says that the female phase is characterized by a turn "to female experience as an autonomous art, extending the feminist analysis of culture to the forms and techniques of literature" (Ibid, p. 177).

So far, we have discussed the historical perspectives of feminist literary criticism. As has been seen, with the passage of time concerns regarding the rights of women, subjecthood, autonomy and the like in the area of literary criticism has been increasing. This in turn shows the fact that feminist literary criticism is dynamic. Next, how women's role is viewed in a patriarchal society is discussed.

2.6 Patriarchy and Gender Role

As member of society, human beings create social relations. These relations may vary depending on sexual difference. As a result in a society a system, which enables men to dominate women in social relations, may exist. Such male dominance in feminist discourse is known to be patriarchy (Ruthven, 1991: 1). Patriarchal ideology works to keep women and men in traditional gender roles and there by maintain male dominance. The patriarchal ideology that functions in this way is a belief shared by all feminists (Tyson, 1999: 86).

In patriarchal society men have got the upper hand and hence dominate the social, political, economic situation i.e. they are privileged in every aspects of the social order (Mills, 1995: 39). It is thus, by definition, sexist, which means it promotes the belief that women are naturally inferior to men. This belief in the inborn inferiority of women is called 'biological essentialism' because it is based on biological differences between the sexes that are considered part of our unchanging essences as men and women.

However, feminists do not agree with this essence, which is imposed up on them by patriarchy. Feminists do not deny the biological differences between men and women.

Even, many feminists celebrate those differences. But, they do not agree the fact that such differences as physical size, shape, and body chemistry make men naturally superior to women. For instance, it cannot make men more logical, courageous or better leaders. Therefore, scholars like Guerin, et al. (1992: 184-185), Ruthven (1986:8), distinguish between the word sex, which refers to the biological construction as female and male, and the word gender, which refers to the cultural construction as feminine or masculine, which is created not by nature but culture.

When patriarchy exerts its power on women, it is inevitable for a woman to internalize patriarchy. Such women are known as patriarchal women i.e. a woman who has internalized the norms and values of patriarchy, which can be defined, in short, as any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles. These traditional gender roles may label men as rational, strong, protective and women as irrational, weak, nurturing, and submissive. Green and LeBihan (1996: 234), Jefferson and Robey (1993: 219).

Similarly, Tyson (1999) explains that men are considered to be unmanly if they show fear or express their sympathy for other. In addition, men are not permitted to fail at anything they try because failure in any situation, action, and happening implies 'failure in one's manhood' (Ibid, p. 86). Tyson takes an American situation as an example to show what the patriarchal society expects from men. For instance, a man is expected to fulfill the economic need of his family. This in turn makes a woman to expect the income of her husband.

Moreover, Tyson cites the story of *Cinderella* to further explain how patriarchy functions in stories because it equates the role of women with "submission, encouragement of women to tolerate family abuse, wait patiently to be rescued by man and view marriage as the only desirable reward for right-conduct" (ibid: p. 86).

She also takes other stories like *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* and *Sleeping Beauty*, to depict the myth embodied in them i.e. ("females must be beautiful, sweet, and young and rescued). She goes on explaining the plot of these stories saying "In all three tales, the main female characters are stereotyped as either "good girls" (gentle, submissive, virginal, angelic) or "bad girls" (violent, aggressive, wordy, monstrous).

Therefore, in the analysis part to what extent women take subordinate position, internalize patriarchal myths, objects to serve the interest of men, are made to expect the income of her husband are examined based on the aforementioned theoretical framework.

2.7 The Concept and Issues of Black Womanism/ Feminism

As highlighted in Section 2.4 because the issue of difference plays a significant role in feminism, Guerin et al. (1992: 207) classify the feminist criticism into four groups: Gender studies, Marxist feminist, and Psychoanalytic feminists and Minority feminists. The last category includes Black feminism, Hispanic, Asian- American, Native American, Jewish, Third World, Lesbian, Handicapped, and Elderly feminists. When he further elaborates on black feminism he has the following to say, "When referring to black feminists in the United States in particular or in the New World in general... we

use black here to include black feminist else where ..." (ibid, p. 208). This reference seems to incorporate African-American, Caribbean, African and 'black feminists elsewhere'.

Despite their unity in their experience the debate among black women hangs over whether a black womanist standpoint should be named 'womanism' or 'black feminism'. The known feminist scholar Alice Walker has introduced the term 'Womansm' in the study of black American feminist criticism. Alice Walker argues that the term "womanism' is rooted in black women's concrete history in racial and gender oppression (Humm, 1992:141).

Julia Sudbury (1998: 46) justifies Alice Walker's Womanism as a popular term, which black feminists use to struggle both against racism and sexism and she called this 'gendered racism'. According to Sudbury, the term womansim may refer to a theory or practice that enables black women to speak about the racial, gender and class oppression:

'Rather than speaking to a history of (white) women's struggle against patriarchy to which the fight against racism and imperialism was later included. Womanism reminds us that black women and women of colour did not wait for feminist consciousness raising to initiate struggles of social justice in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and in the West (pp. 46).

No matter how the term womanism arises from African-American tradition, some African womanists also tend to use it. Most African women writers, like diasporic writers do not prefer to use the term 'feminism'. Most African women claim that Western feminists are separatist because when they raise the problems of African women they emphasise

only females sexuality i.e. they rarely focus on the other problems African women are facing like poverty, property right, accessibility to education and others. Discussing the interrelated effects of these problems, Nfah-Abenyi has the following to say, "There can be no clear-cut separation between sexuality, history, economics, and politics in the texts that are written about women's lives". (1997: 30). She goes on to say that these oppressive conditions are highly combined with traditional practices, colonial and post-colonial heritages.

These real situations of African women forced, some African women writers to suspect 'Western Feminism' and prefer not to be named by that. For example, Buchi Emecheta, when she was asked in an interview conducted in 1980, what she felt if named 'feminist', she responded saying, "I am a feminist with small 'f'. I love men and good men are the salt of the earth". But to tell me that we should abolish marriage like the capital "F" (Feminist), women who say women should live together and all that, I say No!" (qtd. In Nfah-Abbenyi: 1997:7). In another interview conducted in 1989 she says that she believes in an African type of feminism saying "They call it womanism, because, you see, you Europeans don't worry about water, you don't worry about schooling, you are so well off" (Ibid). Similarly, Miriam Tlali when interviewed in 1990, she says that she prefers to be called 'black woman writer'. Moreover, a Zimbabwean female writer Tisitsi Dangarembga has also stated in an interview that "the white Western feminism does not meet my experiences at a certain point; the issues of me as a black woman. The black American, female writers touch more of me than the white ones" (ibid: 9).

As highlighted (discussed) above most black women are not happy to use the term 'feminism' because of some of its shortcomings. This necessitates black women writers and critics theorize about black women in black context and more specifically, African women in African context. For example, in the book edited by Obioma Nnaemeka entitled *The politics of (M)othering*, scholars like Juliana Makuchi, Nfah-Abenyi, Charlies Peter, Huma Ibrahim, Celeste Fraser Delgado, Renee Larrier, Uzo Esonwanne, Francoise Lionnet, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Peter Hitchcock and others have dealt with the works (texts) of African writers like Mariam Bâ's, Tsitsi Dangalembga's, Chenua Achebe's and others. Issues of feminism, whether women are portrayed as victims, agents, sisters, subjects and the like are discussed in the works of some African and diasporic writers in this book. Moreover, the complex lives of women related to motherhood, speech, silence, power, poverty, knowledge and others are also discussed.

In the introductory part of this book Nnaemeka argues that the pitfalls of African literary criticism is dismantling feminist criticism from African context. "The paradox of some of the existing feminist analyses of African literature is that they ignore the elaboration of the feminist ideas in the African contexts and choose instead to force them (the text) into absolutist either or molds" (ibid: 3). This view seems to comment on the fact that some African feminist critics polarize the difference between African males and females i.e. Nnaemeka argues against the view that says "to counter attack patriarchy, matriarchy should be established." Opposing this view, Nnaemeka says, 'It seems to me that the paradox of feminist theorizing stems from its failure to articulate the ideas of

fairness, power sharing, etc. that gave impetus to feminism itself." (Ibid: 3). [*emphasis mine*]

Nnaemeka bases her argument on the aforementioned scholars contributions. Based on these contributions, Nnaemeka discusses two central issues regarding women in African context. That is on the one hand, she discusses the idea of fairness which is at the heart of African value system and on the other hand, the 'heterogeneity and complexity of feminist scholarship' in African context. Regarding the former there is a dominance of male power in African tradition, which is revealed in the studies of these scholars. This is a truth that African women are arguing against '... speaking against debilitating excess and unevenness and on the other hand arguing for balance and fair share' (ibid). Based on the essays Nnaemeka focuses on 're-imagining' of some central issues in feminism, like the portrayal of women as victims of (male violence, poverty, homelessness), mothers, agents, and the like. In her theorization of feminism in African context she underscores the difficulty to purely label these feminist issues into binary opposition agent/ victim, speech/silence, male/female. She argues that these oppositional binaries are not fixed. At times, females are portrayed to be agents and the other time they are portrayed to be victims. This in turn makes African women criticism complex and multi-dimensional.

From these theoretical discussions it seems possible to know that the purpose of feminist literary criticism is not simply labeling female characters into stereotypes. Instead, examining the diverse problems in the lives of female characters which make feminist literary criticism meaningful. Krouse, as indicated earlier, also supports such a view for the fact that she emphasizes on the need to examine as to how the author

avoids stereotypes. Moreover, Sara Mills also supports the importance of focusing on the multi-dimensional and complex situations of female in analyzing a text from a feminist point of view. She also notes that there are cases when the analysis and its findings become open ended. From these views one can understand that feminist literary criticism can study both stereotypical situations and an avoidance of such situations. For example, in the latter case, how both aspects are working in the single lives of single female characters can be the focus of a study. (Krouse, in Brown and Olson[eds.], 1978 and Sara,1995).

When the issue of subjectivity is raised, some black womanist/ feminist scholars note that women characters in male works are portrayed to be sub-serviant of male. Furthermore, they are portrayed as passive, as objects always ready to obey their husbands and family, as having no status of their own and hence become dependant on their husbands.

If the cases of African writers are considered, because most early African literary works are male writers, they, in most cases, present a world of male heroism. However, there are some exceptions to this trend; there are male writers who are sympathetic to the women's cause is central to some of the issues raised by womanists (Lloyd W. Brown, 1981: 9).

Ngugi Wa Thiongo is among few male writers who portrays strong female characters in his writings. From his early works to the later revolutionary work he depicts strong African women. He is also exemplary in showing the women's strength, political inspiration, and spirituality. His depiction of women in his fiction reveals the

indispensability of women as opposed to their irrelevance in socio-political situations. (Abu-Haidar in RAL, summer, 2002).

Moreover, the works of Sembene Ousmane in English translation corroborate the position that some male writers reveal fidelity in depicting the positive attributes of the African women. Ousmane's females are true to life and he does not fail to focus on the social situations that delimit women's role in his society. He depicts the life of women characters who are suffering as a result of the imposition of tradition and Islamic rule. On the other hand, he depicts women who struggle as individuals to reject docility, as seen in his short story, "Her Three Days" (Brown, 1981: 9).

To sum up, some black feminist literary critics note that black women's experience is different from that of the white women. For example, racial oppression is one of the black experience which is not the main concern of white feminists. Added to this, they also embark on the need to consider African context in the examination of African women's problems in the literary works. In this thesis, the issues of victimhood, agency, silence and others discussed above are considered as a model of analysis in his thesis.

2.7.1 Home/Homelessness in Black Womanist/ Feminist Context

As mentioned earlier, black women's life have passed through diverse problems like gender inequality, racial discrimination by both male and female whites. Besides, the issue of home/homelessness is also one of the main problems of black women.

The concept of home has got multiple meanings i.e. it can be discussed from various points of views. The major concerns addressed regarding home is that we consider a given location to be really 'a home' when it is safe and livelihood. In other words 'home' is a safest place in which our personal, family and social personality make up is built. It is a place where we feel belongingness, recognition, equality, "a myth of unitary origin." (Davies, 1994: 113). If these things are not fulfilled, it means that there is a feeling of homelessness. bell hooks, a black African feminist writer as quoted in (Davies) has the following to say about the concept of home.

At times home is nowhere. At times one knows only extreme estrangement and alienation. Then home is no longer just one place. It is locations. Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and ever-changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference (p. 49).

The quest for home or the feeling of homelessness could be motivated by a number of factors or reasons. Among these as mentioned by Davies are: migration, rejection, misrecognition(alienation), 'exploitative disruptions of people's lives as end result of colonialism' and destruction of natural environment which she calls 'cycles of poverty', and problems that happen at 'personal level' like, 'people's seeking refuge in shelters, displaced from their home because of abuse, dispossassation, economic exploitation and personal disasters.' Therefore, the issue of home/homelessness is one of the themes of black feminist literary criticism.

2.7.2 A Study of the Issues of Women In the Works of Some African Novels

Nafa-Abenyi in the book entitled *Gender in Africa* (1997) studies the women characters in the works of Buchi Emecheta, Ama Atta Aidoo and Tsitsi Dangarembga. One of the focuses of her study is the value African women attach to motherhood and its drawbacks in a patriarchally dominated societies. No matter how it is treated from the perspective of either male or female writes according to her, motherhood is closely linked to the understanding of African women's lives (ibid: 35).

Based on the novels of the above three authoresses, Nfah-Abenyi classifies the life of women characters into generations. The first group of generation of characters includes women characters' lives from pre-colonial to the end of colonial period that are shaped by the tradition of their societies. The second group includes the life of women whose families are illiterate where as the lives of their children (girls) are exposed to the colonial education.

To begin with those women characters who are shaped by the tradition and culture some Tsitsi Dangarembga's women characters in *Nervous Conditions* like, Mbuya, Tambuez's grandmother and Tambuazai's are mothers constructed based on the tradition of Shona society. Tambudzai's mother, for example, is the woman who is busy at domestic works and child bearing combined with backbreaking work in the fields.

On the other hand, Nfah-Abenyi classified Nnu Ego, a protagonist in Buchi Emecheta's novel entitled *The Joys of Motherhood* into the second group. She is an illiterate woman whose children are educated. Initially she had a strong desire to have children especially male children for having a son is valued in Ibuza society.

After she got a son who died at the age of four months, she attempts to kill herself. As Nfah-Abenyi explains the exchange of women, marriage, childbearing, and child rearing are the components around which male-female relationships are grounded in Nnu Ego's society. It is this exchange of women and the right to patrilineality that Nnu Ego is made to accept as the standard which directly shapes her expectation to bear and raise children.

Nfah-Abenyi mentions four points regarding gender relationship portrayed in the novel. The first one is the fact that marriage is portrayed as institutionalized. Second, it is pregnancy that legitimizes marriage. Third, marriage and motherhood domesticate women. Finally, pregnancy and reproduction make a woman, a woman and a man, a man. It is because of these gender relationships in the society that Nna Ego suffered very much to proof of her womanhood. Regarding this Nfah-Abenyi says 'motherhood is so ingrained in women's psyche that the alternative to the loss of a child is the loss of self, of gender and of identity' (ibid: 39).

Although Nnu Ego's expectation of motherhood is fulfilled, what is tragic is none of her sons who are in America help her. Conforming this Nfah-Abenyi has the following to say "... it is my view that Nnu Ego's story can be read as a rebuttal to the so-called "joys" of motherhood since her life does not end in happier circumstances than that of a childless woman" (ibid: 49). Worse of all, Nnu Ego's life ended up by the road-side with no child to hold her hand and no friend to talk to her (ibid).

From this what she concludes quoting Haraway's view of Nnu Engo's life is that her portrayal cherishes "ambiguities, multiplicities, and affinities with out freezing identities"

(Ibid: 50). Therefore, Nfah-Abenyi based on her study of Buchi Emecheta's novel *The Joy of Motherhood*, found out that although motherhood is rewarding its drawbacks are also multi-dimensional. Buchi Emecheta's Nnu Ego is an illiterate woman who is enslaved by her tradition. She is portrayed as a woman who finally learns the yoke of patriarchy and who make a futile attempt to free herself but dies tragically.

Some critics wonder why Buchi Emecheta like some African male authors portrayed her protagonist Nnu Ego to be obsessed with childbearing, child rearing and to the joy of motherhood in general. This as Emecheta says, as quoted in Nfah-Abenyi, is not without reason. Emecheta responds to such question saying that the main theme of her novels are "African society and family: the historical, social, and political life of Africa as seen by a woman through events. I always try to show that the African male is oppressed and he too oppresses the African woman" (ibid: 46).

Nfah-Abenyi in her study of the lives of women in a known Ghanaian writer Ama Ata Aidoo's novel "Change-A Love Story" focuses on the life of the protagonist Esi. This character is portrayed to be the one who, like Nnu Ego, passes through multiple and varying contradictions in her life (Ibid: 51).

Nfah-Abenyi tries to see the life of Esi from two points of views. The first one is the effort she makes to change her life style i.e. when the first husband doesn't suite her interest she cuts it off. Then she tries to live alone but the social condition in Accra doesn't allow her to do that, then she marries another man. She knows that he has a wife and children. But she married him denying all this simply because the society needs the license that she has a husband i.e. to escape the shame which is attributed

to widow woman. She also divorced him in that his presence is not better than absence. Then she finally decides to live alone. In her critical study Nfah-Abenyi found out the fact that "In both instances, Esi has been the agent of her own self-destruction, self-reconstruction and self-determination (ibid: 60).

The second perspective, as Nfah-Abenyi writes is 'home and the politics of location'. When Esi marries Ali she redefines the traditional concept of home' (p. 57). What is traditionally practised is that in a polygamous family, the wives and the husband have their own house in the same compound. Contrast to this Esi ignores the traditions that go with polygamy in that she refused to accept Ali's wife title of 'first wife'. She even constructs her as if she is "other, non-existent, as an absence," (ibid). She continues to live at her house ignoring her co-wife. The distance that Esi creates between the first wife and herself in the end resulted in Ali's disappearance from her home. Emphasizing the issue of home, Nfah-Abenyi says, "not even home is home to Ali who always finds himself rushing off to what he considers home" (ibid: 58). As far as Esi is concerned she redefines the traditional concept of "home". However, it results in Ali's feeling of homelessness, which makes him to distance himself from Esi. Her expectation has been denied because love is interpreted in that society in communal ways as Nfah-Abenyi comments saying, "Love is shown to depend on a more familial, collective, cultural context, governed by customs and traditions that are therefore beyond any individuals control" (Ibid, pp. 57-58).

The custom is living in the same compound or if it is town in a room having different classes in which the wives share their own classes. However, Esi rejects all these traditional laws and redefines them in her own terms. All her attempts to escape from

'shame, loneliness, and heartbreak' fail and she ironically finds herself in the same world.

Nfah-Abenyi studying the writings of the aforementioned three women authors: Tsitsi Dangarembga, Buchi Emecheta and Ama Ata Aidoo, she found out the multidimensional view of African women's life before, during and after the colonial period. As the portrayal of the women characters in the works shows, as time passes the lives of African women becomes complex although some women are portrayed to be determined to subvert what tradition, colonial and post-colonial world imposes up on them. Nfah-Abenyi's methods of studying female characters in the texts will be used as a model in studying female characters in Dhaabaa's selected prose fictions.

Even if feminists disagree on some issues, they share several important assumptions which might be summarized below.

There seems to be a general agreement on the fact that women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially and psychologically. Patriarchal ideology is the means through which women are guided. Therefore, a feminist critic needs to be concerned with revealing the portrayal of women in patriarchally appropriate societies. Sara Mills holds a similar view in that "Most feminist hold a belief that women as a group are treated oppressively and differently from men and that they are subject to personal and institutional discrimination" (1995: 3). Hence, in any society where patriarchy has got the upper hand woman is 'other' i.e. she is marginalized and defined in relation to what she lacks (for example, a woman is weak and she needs to wait until rescued by man).

Feminists also agree on the issue that female oppression is not biologically produced but culturally imposed. This oppression could be manifested in 'various degrees of physical, mental and spiritual domination (Guerin, et al, 1992: 184-185; Magali, 1996: 33; Ruthven, 1991: 74; Nfa-Abenyi, 1997: 132).

This shows the fact that culture plays a dominant role in the construction of women in a certain society. Ruthven, (1991: 44-45), by citing Levis-Strausse's the most famous binary oppositions nature Vs culture explains saying that nature refers to "the way things are" where as culture refers to 'what we make them out to be'. Because the latter is deep rooted in the socio-cultural situation of the society it gradually develops to "the second nature". This reveals how culture triumphs over the lives of women. He also notes saying that to be inferior for a woman is not in born but as a result of 'acculturation' (ibid).

Feminists also share a similar view in studying the role assigned to women as they are portrayed in texts. On the other hand, most feminists support the portrayal of women positively. In view of this critics are also encouraged to assess to what extent a text is liable in revealing the positive portrayal of women so that women should be constructed in a society as active, determined, strong, subjects, resistant and respectful (Ruthven, p. 70). Furthermore, what most feminist critics agree upon is that feminist theory and criticism, has as its ultimate goal to change the world by promoting gender equality (Mills, 1995: 4; Nfa-Abenyi, 1997: 7 and Nnaemeka, 1997: 22).

Furthermore, most feminists agree that examining the life of women in texts is one of the approaches of feminist criticism. For example, Krouse, notes that one of the elements of feminist criticism is detailed analysis of the lives of women characters in texts. Dallis shares similar view in that she notes that feminist criticism needs "specifically to deal with the concrete and literary realities of African women's lives (1993: 13). Nfah-Abenyi also shares the same view and analyzed the detailed lives of women characters in the works of African women writers (Nfah-Abenyi, 1997). Moreover Nnaemeka also supports the above views in that she addresses the need to examine in literary texts in what way the live of women is victimized by (male violence, poverty, space homelessness), and as to how they exercise their agency by becoming active, assertive, courageous, determined respectful in literary texts.

In this thesis, the theories and criticism of feminist scholars like Krouse, Davies, Nfah-Abeny and Nnaemeka, are considered as a model of analysis. In the following chapter, to what extent female characters in the prose fictions of *Dhaaba's Gurraacha Abbayyaa*, *Godaannisa* and *Dungoo Halkan Sanaa* are portrayed as victims of (male violence, poverty, homelessness) and exercise their agency like courage determination, respect and resistance are examined in detail.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN DHAABAA'S SELECTED AFAN OROMO PROSE FICTION

This chapter mainly concentrates on the characterization and themes of female characters as they are shown in the selected prose fiction. Therefore, questions like: how are female characters portrayed in his literary works under study? Are they victimized by patriarchy and male violence, poverty and homelessness? A detailed assessment will be made to answer these questions and unravel as to how the lives and images of women are presented.

3.1 Women as Victims of Male Violence

The term 'victim', from the point of view of feminist literary criticism has diverse meanings. Huma Ibrahim in her article, "Ontologica Victimhood", mentions three varieties of victim. The first one is related to women's sexuality, i.e. it has to do with how women are exploited the autonomy of their sex. The second is connected to the clash between the woman and her society and how it affects her life. Finally, the issue of 'victim' is related to women's gender. This refers to problems like mothering in a society where too many children are favored at the expense of mothers (Nnaemeka, ed, 1997: 148).

When the idea of 'victimhood' is discussed, one may wonder who, the agent that victimize women is. In a patriarchal society, men are favored as compared to women.

Under such circumstances, men become agents in victimizing women. This in turn paves the way for male violence to perpetuate.

In view of the aforementioned issues, we shall see how women are portrayed to be the victims of male violence in Dhaabaa's selected fictional texts. In relation to this, in the novel *Gurraacha Abbayyaa*, there are some female characters who are thematically important. In this regard, three characters, namely Elame, Dochan and Yenché can be presented.

To begin with, Elame, Bachangre's second wife, is victimized due to the conflict between one of the highland settlers (Gabru) and a Gumuz descendant, Bachangre Bakalu. The cause of the conflict is that Gabru kills Bachangre's brother and Bachangre revenges by killing Gebu. Gabru's relatives, Mulatu and Ashenafi, in turn take revenge on Bachangre by destroying his family. As a result, women and children from Bachangre's family are shot dead. Elame is one of the victims who is killed by this tradition of violence.

These women and children are shot dead because Mulatu and Ashenafi want a part of the dead body which is a sign of victory when they turn back to their village. They take this action because they couldn't get Bachangre at home. If they go back without 'a part of the dead body', men and women (especially women) in their village consider them cowards. Hence, they think that they wouldn't bear the insult that the women heap upon them. This is explicitly shown in the following text as:

*Yoo faacha malee, harka duwwaa Axaballaatti deebi'an immoo
nama giddu deemuun rakkoodha. Dubartiifuuldratti*

*mul'achuunis. Waarsaa waliin xabachuunis....niitolii isaaniis
Niitii Gurguduu jedhamti.*

If they turn back without 'faacha' (to mean the part of a body), walking with pride among the people is very difficult. In front of a woman is also too. To converse with 'waarsaa' (the wife of a patrilineal uncle) is another problem.... Their wives are also called the wives of cowards. (p. 48).

It is such a gender role expectation given to men by patriarchal society that forces them to destroy each other's lives. For example, Gabru, after he killed Badija, takes the part of his body, goes to his village and men and women of the village praise him and give him the title of a hero. Such kind of revenge as commented by the narrator is practiced in one of the northern parts of Ethiopia more specifically Gonder. However, as described in the novel, such violent practice is observed when it influences the other people like Gumuz. Bachangre, too, after revenging the blood of his brother, his people praise him and give him the title for a hero. Following this, when Asfaw and Ashenafi go to Bachangre's village to revenge and in order to be praised by their people, they are not lucky in getting a male victim (preferably Bachangre). Hence, they destroy his family. The reader may observe how this chain of revenge begins and gets developed. In this catastrophe, there is patriarchal oppression and there are actors who give motivation- the women who internalize patriarchy.

The patriarchal expectation not only victimizes the active participants i.e. men in this case, but also the lives of innocent women and children. All these destructions happen just for fear of being labeled coward especially by women; 'difficult to walk in front of a woman', 'to converse with *waarsaa*' and 'not to be the cause for their wives to be called the wives of cowards'. As an interviewee "A" responds the wife of the one who does not

kill is always secondary "in every activity she performs" with the wife of a hero. The former is even insulted by the latter for her husband is considered to be a coward. All these things are what patriarchal law imposes upon them. Men are portrayed as agents which victimize both their lives and the lives of innocent women and children. One of the victims of male violence is Elame who has been heavily laboring to bear a child. This shows the fact that in a male dominated society, a woman is always a victim. Therefore, Elame is portrayed to be the victim of male violence.

Moreover, Dochan is a female character who is victimized by male violence. Because of the catastrophe Dochan is forced to leave her birthplace. After a journey to several places like Qundo, Chagni, and Bure, she finally resides in a village called Luquma. From the destruction she gains nothing but loses her stepmother, father, brothers, sisters, the fetus that has been struggling to join this world and her home. She is also victimized by male violence who are running for supremacy and men showing their manhood.

The other female character in the novel *Gurraacha Abbayyaa* is Yenché. She is a girl from the famous family in Luquma. Her husband Saso, whom she unwillingly marries, seriously beats her on the night he marries her. She is tortured because she is not a virgin. According to the omniscient narrator's description, no part of her body is left unbeaten, "a blood and a scar on her calf", 'a scar has made a line from her shoulder down her waist', 'her face has been swollen' (p. 24). He mercilessly tortures her the whole night and brings her back to her family. According to the culture of the society, the girl who does not keep her virginity is taken back to her family the following day. Regarding pre-marital virginity, one of the respondents has the following to say:

He, the (bride groom) brings her back to her family. The family in turn, asks her who took her virginity. Then, that person is forced to appear in front of elders and judged and pays compensation.....He pays a gun and about eight, nine or ten goats.

This shows how virginity is valued among the Gumuz society. It goes to the extent that any kind of physical torture could not compensate virginity. After all Yenche is like his property and he can take any action he wants up on her. She has no right on her own body. The only thing she can do is to bear what patriarchal ideology has imposed on her. Because, she does not live up to the expectations of that society she becomes the other in that society, She is considered to be violent who has brought shame to her family and the society at large. Most of the respondents in the interview say that a girl who does not keep her virginity till the date of marriage is a violent girl who brings shame to her family. In the novel, although Yenche is the victim of male violence, from the point of view of patriarchal tradition, she is considered to be wicked who deserves such physical torture. By portraying her in this way Dhaabaa seems to comment on the burden imposed on Gumuz girls.

Furthermore, to what extent she is physically beaten is described through the focalization of Teto while he is going to his hut to bring the gun for compensation (since he confessed that it is he who deflowered the girl). The narrator describes this as follows:

.... Waan hundi akka abjuu itti mul'ata... Yeroo qaamni ishee alangaa roobiitiin tumamu... Yeroo ilkaan ishee walitti cinintee himuu diddu.... yeroo reebichi itti heddummaateennaan gaggabdee of wallaaltu... Yeroo hafuurri ishee itti deebinaan, hammas reebicha itti fufan... dararama ishee! Iyya ishee!

... Every thing, is seen to him like a dream... while her body is beaten by gorgeous robe... While she resist using all power she has not to disclose... while she fails to control herself due to merciless tortures... while they beat her once again after a little recovery... her disgrace!... her cries!... (p. 244).

In the above extract, it seems important to examine words like 'beaten [2 times]', 'tortures', 'disgrace' and 'cry'. These words depict the extent to which Yenche is dehumanized. From the description of violent actions against this female, it seems possible to infer how the society's tradition or rule of law is quite hostile to women. It unravels to what degree pre-marital virginity is highly valued in that society. Hence, violating this rule, for a girl, makes her deviant who fails to abide to pre-marital virginity. And what she deserves is torture. That is, the society considers females who try to have autonomy on their own body or sexuality as whores who violate the norms of the society.

Nevertheless, the reader may wonder why this scene is narrated through the focalization of Teto. This seems to show that he is speaking from his experience; experience in a sense that he might have participated in such actions once up on a time or he might have heard of it. If it is the latter's case, the reader may wonder how that society programmes patriarchal ideology in the minds of girls and boys and in the society at large. From this, we may infer that such violent action by males is highly practised in a society as a result of which everybody, not only a woman/girl but also a man/boy has been made to 'visualize' what would happen to a girl on the night of her marriage if she was not found virgin.

Moreover, as the story develops, an aggressive action against Yeneche by her husband is narrated. One night, Yenche dreams a dreadful action which is done by her husband. In that dream, two powerful men (Teto and Saso) appear and disappear in her mind. She first sees Teto smiling and asking her to come towards him and she in turn is running towards him. After that, she notices a hand seizing her knep from behind. It was Saso, her husband who appears with a burning face, whose eyes have been drastically changed and stared at her. The narrator describes his appearance through the focalization of Yenche as "Seexana dhiiga ishee dhuguuf irra dhaabatu itti fakkaata..." [He looks her as if a Devil is standing up on her to suck her bloodthirstily.] (p. 290). Here, it is possible to see how an omniscient narrator reveals in what way she visualizes him in her sub-consciousness. She associates him with the devil who is the cause of every trouble.

A few minutes later, she encounters the actual action taken by her husband, which is more serious than what she saw in her dream. The case in point is the description of the action he attempts to take as narrated from the perspective of an omniscient narrator "Yeroo kaataa butee rasaasa nyaachisee, dhaqee uuruu qawwee morma isheetti dhaabu of hin beeku"[He doesn't even know what he is doing when he checks the bullet in his gun, goes and aims at her.] (p. 291). Moreover, the narrator describes his thought as, "Otuu rasaasni meeshaa qaama uree seenuu tahuun hafee ibidda hafuura tokkoon qaama bobeessee, ija isaa duraa balleessu tahee daraan gammada." [He wishes if the bullet would destroy her like a consuming fire rather than piercing and entering her body.] (p. 292).

If the source of such deep hatred is examined closely it would be realized that patriarchy is highly operating in that society. For example, Yenche was not loved and chose him. She was not the one who chose to marry him. But, she was forced by her father to marry him. It was she who was denied her natural right to marry the one whom she did not choose. Even if it was she who had been denied all these, it was she who is deeply hated. Therefore, why does Saso wish the bullet 'destroy her like a consuming fire'? The answer seems to be obvious i.e. Saso is a patriarchally programmed man. Because patriarchy is highly operating in the society, he aggressively thinks, feels and acts like that. His feeling, "Devilish feeling..." (p. 292), acts, "aiming gun at her" and thoughts "he wish that it destroys her in front of him" (Ibid), are the products of patriarchal practice. Hence, if one observes this from a feminist point of view, it is Yenche who is victimized in every aspect by male violence.

Similarly, in the novel *Godaannisa* Kulani and her mother are the victims of male violence. When her first husband dies. Kulani's mother marries Manalew Belay. After they live for a few years and the income of Manalew increases from time to time he begins to be taken to drinking and due to this, he happens to batter her which is narrated by the first person narrator Abdisa as, "Hadha Koo Wajjiin wal gooluunis ni eegale" [The dispute with my mother also begins] (p. 8).

As time passes, his addiction to drinking increases and when he comes home being drunk, he insults and beats Kulani together with her mother. The narrator's comment on this as "... Maannaloon yoo machaa'ee dhufu, ishees haadha koo wajjin walitti arrabsuu-walitti rukutuu-walitti dhiituu jalqabe"[When Manalew comes drunk, he starts to insult, beat, and kick her together with my mother.] (p. Ibid).

Apart from battering her together with her mother, Kulani has been raped by her stepfather at the age of sixteen. The scene is described through the focalization of Abdisa as follows:

Balbala rukute. Ni banteef. Gola hirribaatti derbee taa'e. Bishaan harkaa kennuufiif faana deemte. Irbaata dhiyaateef na wajjin nyaatte malee jennaan bira gad teesse..... Irbaata fuutee yoo bishaan harkaa fidee dhuftu, harka isaa dhiqatee harka ishee qabate. Waan isaa bitaa itti galee jennaan yoo isheen gad dhiifachuuf harkifattu takka butee of cinaa doph godhe. Yommuu inni afaan isaa isa akka siicoo qunduftii lafa sochoosu afaan isheetti qadaadu asii fi achi wixxifattee hamma sagaleen ishee danda'u iyya keessaa fuutee... Iyyi ishee fi iyyi haadha ishee kun duraan waan gurra hundumaa quubseef 'amala isaanii ti' jedhee kan itti birmate tokko illee hin argamne

Kuulaniin osoo faltuu harkaa futtaafattee yoo isheen gara fuulduraatti utaaltu miilla ishee qabee jennaan takaalamtee fuula isheen lafatti rukkutamte. Yoo achii kaatee tuftu ilkaan ishee fuul duraa tokko dhiigaan maramee lafa bu'e. Maannaaloon osoo kana illee arge hin jedhiin ol baatee siree irra ishee buse. Kana booda fedhii isaa dhugaatiin ho'e qabbaneesse.

He knocked at the door. She opened it. He went to the bedroom and sat. She accompanied him with water for his hand, to let him wash and eat his dinner. Then she brought the dinner and he forced her to sit beside him and eat. She did so. He put the food into her mouth to the extent that she found it difficult to breath. Getting embarrassed, she controlled herself till the eating was over. When she took the dish to the kitchen and came with water for hand, he washed his hands and caught her's. She got confused and tried to free herself. When he closed his mouth on hers from which bad smell of local drink arake, comes, she exerted her maximum effort to push his mouth away from her's and then cried. When something unwillingly comes from her stomach she released on him, spat at his face...

When Kulani made the last effort, to escape and ran a step, he kicked her from behind and she fell on the ground. When she stood up and spat, she saw one of her front teeth on the ground. Manalew, ignoring all this, carried and threw her on the bed. Then, he satisfied his sexual desire that had been motivated by drinking (p.9).

Here, Kulani is a victim, raped by her stepfather on her mother's bed. Susan Brown Miller (1975) writes that 'forcible rape is a conscious act of intimidation and the secret of patriarchy. Both the possibility and actuality of rape are the main agents of male domination over the female' (cited by Humm 1987: 14). As Miller contends, this violent sexual abuse victimizes Kulani to the extent that she leaves her home and flees to different places.

Despite the fact that, she cries several times, there is nobody from the neighborhood who is willing to rescue her. Rather, as the narrator comments, they say, "... amala isaaniiti." [... it is their usual behavior.] (Ibid). From the neighbors' comment we may infer that if a man beats his wife and children it is usual for them to cry. Second, it also depicts the fact that Manalew always beats Kulani and her mother. No matter how it is a violent act the neighbors do not want to interfere, which reveals the fact that such silence is favoring the man. This obviously is a manifestation that in patriarchal society males are favored where as females are victimized.

Kulani is physically tortured in that she lost one of her front teeth and too much blood flows following that and she also is raped and was bleeding for she was deflowered, [Siree haadha koo wajjin irra ciise irratti anaanis dhiiga koo dhangalaase...] [He shaded my blood on the bed he slept with my mother."] (p. 119).

When the accumulated grieves of Kulani are seen, we may ask questions as to how a girl of this age tolerates the long-term psychological damage this act of rape brings on her. Mcpherson (1991: 274) discusses the psychological effect that rape brings as "... severe anxiety, depression, guilt, anger, somatic symptoms, sleep disturbance, sexual

difficulty, feelings of isolation and worthlessness may all play their parts." What makes Kulani's sexual abuse horrible is the fact that it is her stepfather who victimizes her. Therefore, one can easily infer that this act brings a 'life threatening trauma' on her future life. Also, it is possible to predict how far this affects her perception of herself and others.

3.2 Women as Victims of Homelessness

Home as discussed in the review is the theme of black writers. One may see the issue of home which seems to exist both at physical and psychological levels. June Jordan as quoted in Davies offers various examples regarding home and homelessness. He says that the issue ranges from "boat people detained in island -prison camps or blockaded, as were Haitian refugees, or homeless, on streets and sidewalks parks in cardboard cities"(p.113).

In the novel *Gurracha Abbayya*, Dochan, one of the female characters begins to develop the feeling of homelessness at her birth place during which her father and the highland settlers (whose descendants are from Gonder) are rivals of each others. In most cases her father and brother forces her to stay at home. However, she refuses to do so. The narrator comments on this as, "... Isheen tole hinjettu. Qofummaatu itti dhagahama. Adaree keessatti dhalattee guddatteetti **jaatanii** taate. Qee sana jibbite."(emphasis mine) [She does not agree. She feels lonely. Although she was born and brought up in the village, she became an-other. She hated the home.](p. 60). A narrator does not attribute such feeling either to her father or brother. But, explicitly associates this feeling with her. It is observed that Dochan begins to develop the feeling

of homelessness at her early childhood at her birthplace. She considers her peer female children and mothers from her neighbors as others. Here, the root cause for her being a victim of homelessness is the conflict between the two feuding families. Conforming this, Davies (p. 114) says, "... it also produces the notion of strangers at home." Likewise, Dochan develops the feeling of hatred to her own family's home and becomes "a stranger at home".

In the previous section, an attempt has been made to discuss how Dochan becomes the victim of male violence and how she is forced to leave her birth place Mattin and flee to Chagini, Bore and finally settles in Luquma. She travels from one place to another together with her brother because they do not feel at home. For example, in Qundo and Chagini, they are afraid of their rivals since the place is near to their birthplace. They once again travel to Bure. There, they once again are considered to be others. As a result, they still do not feel at home and travel to Luquma.

There, Banzi, one of the descendants of that village gives them a sort of hut in which no one has lived. The narrator describes the hut saying "Mana isaa fuullee akka deebbii qotiyyoo tokkoo irratti godoo lameen yeroo dheeraaf onanii taa'an keessaa tokko harsiisee kenneef" [He, by letting them sweep one of the huts that is deserted, has given them so that they live in it.] (p. 110). Up to this juncture both are equally the victims of homelessness.

However, after a few months, gender oppression and the feeling of homelessness begins to target Dochan only. Initially, they were sharing all problems together. For example, survival from catastrophe, hunger (ate sand soil), poverty, loneliness, dwelling

in a rugged and narrow hut are some of them. But, gradually, things changed. Teto is on the way to decenter the binary sister/brother relationship. The case in point is an Omniscient narrator's comment, "Amma garuu haalli ni jijjiirame. [But now things have been changed.] (p. 240).

Teto is gradually, trapped by Yenche's love, one of the female characters, to the extent that he finds it too difficult to pass a day without seeing her. Dochan in turn is aware of it and follows each and every step of his. This is because, if their relationship continues to the extent of marriage, the one who is going to be given as an exchange is she. When the girl, "F", one of the respondents, was asked what she responds if she is exchanged to an old man, she said that as much as she can she would resist it, but if her family rejected her resistance she had no choice other than accepting marriage by exchange. Similarly in the novel, this in turn highly worries Dochan. When Teto concentrates all his thoughts and actions to Yenche, the house Dochan shares with him becomes no more a house in which she feels at ease rather, a house where she feels lonely, powerless and helpless. That 'home' becomes a place where she experiences horror "... halkan illee akka wareerretti bulti." [... she spends the night suffering from the nightmare] (p. 140).

Finally, Dochan hears from Teto that she must marry Dambe as an exchange to Yenche whom he marries. In their debate Dochan violently insists on not marrying Dambe and Teto left the hut assuring her that he will just take and give her to Dambe. However, she followed him leaving that rugged hut. She realizes that a home is not the safest place to dwell in. The hut that she shares with her brother is not inviting, rather a

place where she is considered to be an object of exchange and hence prefers to leave it, and runs towards the Blue Nile, drowns and is eaten by crocodiles.

Similarly, Kulani's perception of homelessness is depicted towards the beginning and middle of the novel *Godaannisa*. Kulani's homelessness, like Dochan also begins in her early childhood. It is when she is at the age of six that her father dies. After that she tries to live at her uncle's home but it happens that she doesn't agree with the wife of her uncle and joins her mother. There, she experiences a disgusting sexual abuse by her stepfather. Then she leaves her mother's home, because home is not the safest place where her personality and social make-up are built; it becomes a place where she couldn't feel belongingness and recognition (Davies, 1993). This is expressed in her own words in the letter she writes to her mother saying "Mana haadha Kootiin jalqabe." ["I began it from my Mother's home."] (p. 119). Here, her 'mother's home' was the place where she used to live as a daughter. Therefore, one wonders why she couldn't feel a sense of belongingness. That is because she was considered to be an-other in her 'mothers home'. Here, the clause 'my mother's home' is worth considering. Had she felt belongingness, she would have said 'our home' rather than saying ' my mother's home'. The clause 'my mother's home' may refer to the fact that the home is not Kulani's. This seems to be the reason why she couldn't say 'our home'.

Kulani is affected by the feeling of homelessness not only at her mother's home but also after she has left. This is shown in the same letter that says, "Gaadaa mana namaa jala buleera... diidatti kufee ciiseera... Bakka baayyee naana'eera. Amma Jimmaan jira..." ["I have slept on people's veranda.... I have slept on the roadside... I have traveled to

several places. Now, I'm in Jimma...] (Ibid). Here, words like 'veranda', 'road side' and 'several places' are important in portraying the issue of homelessness.

Kulani as depicted in her letter has traveled to so many places. June Jordan, in "Notes Towards Home", as quoted by Davies, offers home as "a place of departure" (Ibid). Kulani, in her departure from place to place encounters male abuses both verbal and physical (p. 119). At each and every place, it seems that she develops a feeling of homelessness. The life of Kulani is depicted in the novel to show the life situations of Oromo women who are the victims of homelessness. Here, Dhaabaa's purpose seems to show the diverse problems of women's lives in general and Oromo women in particular who are victimized by male violence as a result of which they flee to different towns for fear of stigma and discrimination at home and suffers from a feeling of homelessness.

Dhaabaa not only has shown the ups and downs of Oromo women through one of his female characters Kulani but also depicts the prevalence of hope in the same character towards the end of the story. A case in point is Kulani's feeling of home after she started a new life with her brother Abdisa in Finfinne. She comes from Jimma, joins her brother, asks him to take her to the place where house furniture is bought. As a result, "Manittiin dur bookeen itti huursaa ooltu, aduu sanaa jalaqabee mana namaa fakkatte." ["A house in which flies were humming now looks a comfortable house."]. Here, although, some feminists do not agree on the fact that Kulani's role is limited to house work, it seems that Kulani's previous definition of home and her present definition of home are quite different. Because, in the later case she at least exercises her agency on her body which previously was the object of male's sexuality. It seems that her redefinition of

home is highly related to her redefinition of identity, "... home is a multiple identification of identity" (Davies, 1993: 113).

Dhaabaa seems to be ambivalent in portraying the life of Kulani in relation to home/homelessness. Initially, she is portrayed to be a victim of homelessness. As the story develops, towards the middle of the novel her feeling of homelessness gets intensified. However, at the end of the novel she starts to develop a sense of home. From this what we infer like what Krouse (1978) contends is that as the story develops change and growth are observed in the lives of Kulani across the text. Krouse also says that one of the ways of examining feminist characterization is examining "the author's avoidance of stereotypes". To sum up, though Dhaabaa sympathizes with Kulani, he unconsciously marginalized her i.e. the space the stories of her life conditions occupy are minimal as compared to other stories. However, he characterized Kulani in such a way that she plays a key role in contributing to the thematic significance of the novel. Conforming this Krouse also notes the need to focus either on female protagonists or simply female characters having a good thematic significance (Ibid).

Similarly, Intalo and her mother in *Dungoo Halkan Sanaa* also experience a feeling of homelessness. Initially, they live in Asalla. They come to Finfinne because they have a court case. The case is about the house that their father built in the city. Unfortunately, the court case is delayed and they begin to suffer financially. These two females have no relatives that provide them with shelter in the city. The protagonist comments this in her own words saying "Maal godhan, biyyaa baanee rakkoon nu argate." [What can be done, we left our country and encountered a problem] (p.10). 'Biyyaa' (country) here may refer to the place of departure. Intalo uses a word *biyya* to refer to her own

birthplace in which she feels sense of belongingness. In this case, she finds herself in the place where she and her mother considered as others in the eyes of the judges who refuse to do justice to them; and the people of Finfinne who experience 'individualism' in the sense that they could never receive every person that comes to Finfinne. Due to these reasons, the girl does not consider Finfinne her home.

One may wonder why a poor girl with her mother takes about ten months and seeks justice living in a city like Finfinne. Because the institution (justice) and the people are indifferent to her, the protagonist feels homelessness in Finfinee and says, 'biyyaa baanee' (leaving our country) i.e. since she doesn't feel a sense of belongingness in the city, she considers it as if it is another country. Regarding this Intalo says, "Seerri immoo murtaa'uu dide" ["The judgment refuses to do justice"]. Here, personifying the 'judgment' itself, Intalo ridicules the judges who the people that pass a judgment are. Due to the delaying of the judgment Intalo and her mother are depicted victims who lose their time and money. It is especially because of this that her mother becomes a prostitute. The protagonist strengthens this view saying "Haayyaan koo osoo hin jaalatiin har'as kanatti seente. Guyyaa booyaa turte... ["My mother joins such practice unwillingly. She spent the day weeping..."] (p. 10). The root cause for the act of prostitution of Intalo's mother as shown in the extract is the malfunctioning of the justice system. That seems to be why Asafa says the theory of Oromo literature should initially bring out the problem of Oromo women who are denied property right. (Asefa, 2004: 67).

The protagonist while she is telling her background and why they are living in Finfinne, raises the word 'mana' [house] three times in a paragraph as "Mana ijaaree ture." [He built a house.], "Mana kana malee..." [Except this house...], "Mana kana immoo..." [This house too...]. This indeed seems to serve as a foregrounding feature to show how the protagonist is highly engaged in the issue of 'home'. This foregrounding feature also seems to show that these women are denied of their own property and as a result subjected to crises. Hence, they are portrayed as victims of homelessness in the city where their father had built a house before his death.

3.3 Women as Subordinates

As pointed out in the background and review of this thesis, in most societies women usually take a subordinate position. In some societies, the subordinate position of women has its roots in the culture of the society. C. G. Okafor, in her article, *Rewriting Popular Myths of Female Subordination* contends, "The Myths of female subordination include the view that women are inferior, weak and peripheral beings in a world where men are central and superior." Similarly, I. Mojola, in the same book, in her article, *The Ounus of Womanhood: The view of woman's subordination* as, "(w)omen have been so long conditioned in the environment of masculine dominance that they have come to expect the male to be dominant and the female to be subservient." (p. 127).

We shall try to see how women are portrayed as subservient in aspects like household services, marriage, sexual matters and mothering. First, the role of the first generation women is discussed in the prose fiction. These groups are Yalunge, Yechagua in

Gurraacha Abbayyaa, the mothers of Kulani and Intalo in *Godaannisa* and *Dungoo Halkan Sanaa* respectively. Secondly, the role of the younger generation as they are portrayed in the texts will also be discussed.

In the house chores, for instance, Gumuz women have a lot to do. They bear the burden of being wives, mothers and housekeepers. In short, they are the workhorses of the family. Conforming this all the respondents in the interview say that women do a lot of things both at home and in the field. Added to this, the duties at home as depicted in the novel include: grinding maize (p.9) and sorghum (p. 139), preparing a local drinking beer what is locally called 'farso' for groups of people who are engaged in field work "dabo" like ploughing the land for cotton plantation (p. 130), fetching water, (p. 114), preparing 'marqaa' [(the local food made from either maize or sorghum a kind porridges, semi solid (p. 139)], and others. Yalunge is one of the Gumuz women who is busy at home. The narrator describes her situation at home while she was grinding maize as "Isheen bakka jiibeefferatee boqqolloo daakaa turtetti harki majii irratti gogee..." . [She, where she kneels down and grinds maize, as her hands are stiff on 'maji' ...] (p.9). 'Maji' is a reasonably small flat stone which is used to grind cereal crops.

Similarly, Yechagua, Yenche's mother is shown to be busy in household works. This is depicted in the text when Teto is called by Banzi (Yenche's father) to discuss the marriage proposal between him and Yenche. When Teto enters, Yechagua is engaged in household chores. The narrator describes the scene through the focalization of Teto as follows:

Baanizii ibidda qarqare jirma citaa irra taa'ee gaayaa xuuxa. Yecaaguwaan itto irbaataaf sadoo lanqaxaa jirti... Yeroo hafuura 'uss....' 'uss...' jettee lanqaxxu, waan dhaqaa-deebii isaa waliin yaadaan gilindistu fakkaata.

Banzi sitting by the fire side on a log which is cut short smokes 'tamboo'(a kind of smoking made of the leafs of 'tamboo'). Yechagua is grinding... Yechagua, while she is breathing saying 'uss.. uss..' Teto thought as if she is dancing in thought with him. (pp.155-156)

The action and thought of the three characters (Banzi, Yechagua and Teto) is shown in this scene. In this case an important gender role of a man and a woman is depicted. For example, Banzi is busy smoking *tamboo*. On the other hand, Yechagua is busy in the house chores. The third one is Teto who has been called by Banzi to discuss the marriage proposal. While, Yechagua is preparing food, Banzi and Teto are discussing the marriage proposal. Meanwhile, Yenchu enters the hut and sits behind her mother. Banzi and Teto continue their discussion in that the former recommends the latter to bring another daughter from his birthplace as an exchange and the latter responds saying that he has no relative left. As for Yechagua and Yenchu they listen passively the discourse between the two.

This seems to arise from the fact that a woman's role is secondary while a man's role goes to the extent that he decides on the fate of the former. This means, a woman has no right to interfere in her daughters' future welfare, but give household services to a man while he endorses his decision on her daughter.

Banzi asks Teto to bring another girl as an exchange simply because he doesn't want to break his premises "Anis kan afaan koo dubbate deebisee hin dabsu" ["I do not want to

break what I have already promised" (p. 157); and Teto responds saying "Ani obboleettii hinqabu" ["I have no sister"] (Ibid). However, the only role Yechagu together with her daughter plays in this discussion is listening to their discussion. This is explicitly depicted in the novel as "Yechaaguan daakuu bisingaa xuwwee marqaatti naqaa, mimil'attee isa ilaati. Yeencheen morma ishee cabsitee diriirfattee lafa teessi." [Putting the powder into the pot, Yechagua, looks at him now and then. Yenché sits, having stretched her legs and bowing her head down ward] (p. 158). Added to this the two girls that were selected for an interview also repeatedly bowed down their head while the interview was under taken.

Here, though the issue is about her daughter, Yechangua has no role to play in the discussion other than preparing food for them and listening passively to what is going on. This shows to what extent women's voices are unheard in a society where patriarchy is operating. Her role, as said earlier, is engaging in house chores. Whenever, issues related to this are raised she is ready to say, "Here I am". For example, when the discussion between Banzi and Teto is over and Teto wants to leave saying, "Amma deemeen rafa" ["Let me go and sleep"] (p. 159), Yechangua's voice is heard, "Kunoo irbaatni qophaa'ee, nyaattee deemta" ["Look, the supper is ready, you will eat and go"] (Ibid).

Of the conversations that take place between Banzi and Teto, it is only this statement that Yechagua utters. The context in which she speaks this is when the issue of marriage proposal is over and Teto wants to leave. Her statement is to disclose that she has completed her subordinate role and is ready to give them the food she has been preparing while they are discussing. What concerns Yechagua is reporting the fact that

she has completed her share of the work. From this it seems possible to infer that the gender role that a man is assigned to is debating, discussing, and deciding on social issues like marriage and the gender role a woman is assigned to is giving secondary services or playing subordinate roles like preparing food. Hence, the dominance of male power has already programmed Yechagua at the subordinate position and that is why she behaves accordingly. In addition to this, as observed by the researcher all women have internalized patriarchy. In the novel Yechagua has already internalized patriarchy to what Tyson calls herself "I call myself a patriarchal woman because I was socially programmed, as are most women, and men, not to see the ways in which women are oppressed by traditional gender roles." (1999: 85).

Moreover, the fact that women take a subordinate position is further shown when Banzi gives blessings to the bride and bridgroom (Yenche and Saso) saying "Ilmi dursee haadhufu. Ilma irratti immoo intalli haa dhufu." ["Let a son come first. Following the son, let a daughter comes"] (p. 229). This unravels that in a patriarchal society a woman is always secondary. Her importance is realized if and only if the son comes first. This is because she comes to existence just for the sake of the son-in this case to be used as an exchange. This can be evidenced by the repetition of the word 'son' in two sentences under discussion. The first 'son' seems to represent that the son is given primary importance. The word 'son' in the second sentence represents (signifies) that he (the son) is at the subject position and considered socially also as the subject and she (the daughter) is at the object position and also considered socially as an object created just for the sake of the subject 'the son' which indirectly shows the importance of male in this patriarchally dominant society where a 'daughter', indirectly a woman, represents a

subordinate position. The respondents in the interview justify this saying that they prefer the son first. Emphasizing on the importance of the son one of the respondents says the following:

In case one encounters a problem, it is the son who is there to help. Otherwise, if the son-in-law is brave, he also may help his father-in-law. The son of a man, holding his spear, can protect us. That is why we prefer the son first. The son for his father, people and government is very important. Therefore, if a man gets two, three, or four sons first that is very good.

Apart from household chores, a Gumuz woman is also responsible for fieldwork. For instance, there is no limitation of sex and age in the participation of the ploughing of a farmland for cotton plantation. Regarding this, the narrator comments, "Daboon Luqumaa itti fufee jira. Dardarri, shamarran, jaartiin, jaarsi, lafa jirbii qotuutti yaa'a." ["The *dabo* in Luquma has continued. Young boys and girls, old women and men are marching to the field to plough a land for cotton production"] (p. 139). As described in this extract, both men and women are equally participating in fieldwork. Culturally, this type of work is done in-groups, which is known as *daboo*. After the work is over, this group of people expects the family for which they plough the land, to serve them by giving them a local drink '*farsoo*' made from barley and hop. The one that prepares the *farsoo* is obviously the woman. Besides, on that day she is expected to serve the group giving '*farsoo*', which at least takes a week for its preparation.

On the other hand, Dochan's stepmother was killed while she was laboring to bear a child. "Ciniinsuu dubartii, waca ijoollee fi dubartoota,..." (A labor of a woman, a noise of women and children...) This is taking place from behind the house. As it is told by the

narrator, according to Gumuz culture, "bakka kanatti dubartii fi ijoollee malee dhiirri akka hin argamne beeku" [... they know the fact that no body is allowed to be there except women and children] (p. 47). Her husband, is fortified in the field waiting for his enemies where as she is labouring behind the house.

There seem to be two points that need to be emphasized. First, one of the roles of a woman in Gumuz society is to bear a child. This is what she is expected to do -to bear a child preferably a boy. In the interview all respondents say that they prefer to have a son for the continuation of the life cycle of the society. Hence, Dochan's stepmother is expected to bear a son that perpetuates the patriarchal rule. Secondly, while she is bearing a child she is expected to leave the house they live in and bear the child in a backyard. This is what the culture of the society expects from women. It is because, during child bearing, as one of my informants says, a woman is considered to be impure. Therefore, she should leave her house and go to the bush and come back after she gave birth and cleansed.

In relation to showing the social and cultural value of the Gumuz like group work, the burden born by women is also depicted in which women are shown being busy both in the house chores and child bearing and field works.

On the other hand, in the novel *Godaannisa*, Kulani's mother's role is limited to house work. While she was Solan's wife, she was a housewife. After his death, she begins to live with Manalew and bore him three children and has lived as a housewife for twelve years. Although, this is not explicitly stated in the novel, one may infer that her role is limited to house chores. Added to this, when Manalew left her with four children, the

only option she had to bring up her children was to prepare a local drink called *araqe*. As the first person narrator tells, her day to day practice. "Halkaniifi guyya abiddatti waadamtee, haraqee baastee, ijoollee sana guddisuun dirqama itti ta'e" [Her only responsibility to bring up those children becomes dwelling by fire side day and night to prepare *araqe*.] (p. 10). In addition to showing her grievances, the fact that the role of Kulani's mother is limited to household chores is also portrayed.

Although not explicitly shown in the short story, which might be because of the economy of time, words and space, Intalo's mother in *Gurraacha Abbayya* like Kulani's mother, initially was a housewife. However, after the death of her husband, who is the source of every expense in the family, she, with her children, becomes the victim of poverty.

To sum up, based on the lives of the aforementioned women, it seems possible to infer that women of this generation are stereotypically kept at home and are engaged in house chores like cooking, grinding and preparing local drink (Yelunge, Yechagua, Kulani and Intalo's mothers). Added to this, they are portrayed to be passive, as they do not express their views and opinions in aspects of social issues like marriage. Moreover, they are portrayed to be mothers who are responsible to bear children in the absence of their husbands. For example, Kulani's mother is portrayed to be a mother of five children (two from Solan and three from Manalew), Intalo's mother also has children whose number is not mentioned. What makes the issue of motherhood difficult is the fate of all these children is upon the shoulder of these women. Regardless of all these burdens, some are denied justice. In this case, Intalo's mother having children without

any income has been denied justice. This in turn shows the multi-dimensional problem of womanhood and motherhood in these two different societies-Oromo and Gumuz.

I. Mojola contends that the burden of African 'womanhood' comes from 'within'. This is to say that women in Africa are often treated as objects used to satisfy the sexual needs of men or objects to be exchanged as commodities. She takes the Senegalese and Nigerian societies as examples and says that women are 'second-rate', 'non-beings' and are 'rarely consulted before far-reaching decisions are taken concerning their welfare.' Newell (1997: 127).

In Dhaabaa's selected prose fictions, female characters more specifically, the young generation namely Dochan, Yenche and Kulani share similar experience mentioned above. For example, in *Gurracha Abbayyaa* Dochan and Yenche are characters that experience brutal patriarchal practice. They are shown to be objects of exchange. Their choices and interests as human beings are totally ignored. That is, no matter how they resist the power that patriarchy exerts on them, they couldn't escape.

Dochan, for instance, begins the experience of subordination at her birthplace when her father and brother ask her to stay at home with women and children while they are dwelling in the bush waiting for their enemies to come. The narrator comments this as "Dooccaan immoo akka eegee isaan hordofti. Akka isheen isaan biraa haftee adaree keesa hiriyoota ishee waliin ooltu godhuu yaalanii turan. I sheen tole hinjettu." ["As for Dochan, she follows them like a tail. They so many times have tried to let her stay at home with women and children. But, she refused." (p. 60). Here, it seems possible to see two points from a feminist perspective. First, the role Dochan is assigned to is "to

stay at home with women and children". This has an implication that females are not strong enough to face the challenges that males face outside. Second, though she is determined to face what her father and brother face, she is always from behind 'like a tail'. The simile 'like a tail' shows the myth that a woman is subordinate and cannot equally perform in male's territory like waiting people to ambush. Dochan seems to resist that space where as her father and brother try to push her to the same space where her predecessors (her mother and stepmother) dwell.

On top of this, no matter how she tries to exercise her agency at different places by her own courage, her brother always considers her as his own property. His perception begins at her birthplace before she is persecuted. He considers her his own possession based on whom he "... Akka bonus isa tolcha- Yoo boones dhugaa qaba. Fuudhuu yoo fedhe, Kan ittin jijjiirratu, obboleettiin isaa boodaan dhaqabdee jirti. Hanga ishee qabutti durba kan fedhe filachuu dandaa'a." ["... He is overwhelmed by a sense of pride. Actually, he can. If he wants to marry a girl of his choice, his sister whom he can exchange is growing up following him. As long as he has her he can choose any girl he likes"] (p. 21). This shows how patriarchy favors male and dehumanizes female. It is Teto who is attentively following the growth of Dochan. The more she grows, the more he fills with pride "... He is over whelmed by a sense of pride". It is not surprising if he finds himself in such a state of feeling because the patriarchal practice favors him. That is why, the narrator comments saying, "Actually, he can". That is, the patriarchal society has allowed him to possess her "... As long as he has her,...". This means that Dochan totally has no autonomy on herself. She is somebody's possession. She, as Ruthven says is "unspeaking and unfeeling object of men" (1991: 78).

After they settled in Luquma, he soon loves a girl called Yenche and begins to think and plan how to give his sister Dochan as an exchange for Yenche. This is shown in the dialogue between Yenche and Teto while they are discussing the marriage proposal between them. In the dialogue, when Teto tells that he loves her, she proposes the way he marries her as:

"Maal jedheen gaafadha?"

" 'Intala Keessan gedderaadhaan naaf kennaa' jedhii manguddoo gaafachiisi."

"Eenyuun eenyutti haa gedderanuuf?"

"Ana siif kennanii obboleettii kee Daanbee dhaaf fudhatu kaa."

"What do I say when I ask?"

"Send elders and let them ask stating that you said, 'Give me your daughter for an exchange' "

"Whom for whom do they exchange?"

"They will give me to you and they will take your sister for Dambe."(p. 137).

In the above extract one observes the marriage by exchange, a kind of give and take model. Here, the author seems to sympathise with Dochan. This is because he intentionally silences her and make others speak about her fate. As Mojola says, Dochan is not "consulted before far-reaching decisions are taken concerning" her future life.

Besides, what is noticeable here is the fact that a socially programmed girl (i.e. Yenche) is deciding the fate of Dochan. This shows that, females, if they internalize patriarchy begin to oppress their sisters. What is appealing to Yenche is that she is going to escape the patriarchal power that is going to exert its force on her. If she misses such a chance she never marries a man of her choice. That is why she is deciding the fate of

another girl and hence becomes an agent in oppressing the other female. But, ironically, she fails to achieve what she plans which we shall see later.

In this dehumanizing act of marriage by exchange, Yenche is exercising her subjectivity whereas nobody considers Dochan's decision. On the same day before this dialogue, it is depicted that Dochan is busy working in the field where men, women, girls and boys are participating in ploughing the cotton farm. Next to that, she together with her brother goes to the plot of land they are given by Banzi and work there, till dawn. However, in discussion about her welfare (fate) she is not around – that is she is an-other.

Here, the author seems to portray the complexity of the burden Dochan is carrying: (a) spending the whole day working in the field with people, (b) working with Teto on their plot of land till dawn (c) becoming busy at home preparing food while her only relative (brother) is deciding her fate with his lover as Yenche proposes saying, "They just give me to you and take your sister for Dambe" (p. 137). From this one may infer the model that is at work in Gumuz society – give and take model. What is tragic is not the fact that the society and men are agents to perpetuate patriarchal law but that women are also unconsciously agents.

Such model is nothing but considers girls as objects to be 'given' and 'taken' to whoever the family has chose. Behind this, is an institution –patriarchal institution. For example, there are elders who perpetuate and control the fulfillment and continuation of these laws. Yenche's advice to Teto to send elders to her parents attests.

Moreover, the word "geedaraa" [exchange] is foregrounded in that it is in italics in the text. This would enable the reader to focus on the matter. As the story progresses, the relation between Teto and Yenche also increases. Dochan in turn follows their relationship seriously. She doesn't feel at ease about the relation between her brother and Yenche. This in turn forces her to worry and thoughtfully speculate about it. Hence, a divided mind is created within a single soul. An omniscient narrator through internal focalization depicts the debate she is creating within herself like:

*Hinta'u! Kundhuma hinta'u!
Hin fedhu!
Yoo tole jedhanii kennanif hoo?*

*Never!, This can never be an end!
I do not want!
What if they say yes to give her by exchange? (p. 40).*

As shown in the monologue, it is herself who asks, who refuses and who predicts. On the one hand, her consciousness tries to deny the fact saying "Never! This can never happen!" On the other hand, she accepts that their relationship (Teto's and Yenche's) can never be broken, "... It is dead! A love which has already been deep rooted like this can never be broken." Her mind once again denies the truth relating the issue to their poverty and encourages herself. "Hiyyeessa lafa inni dhufee hin beekamneef hin kennani." [They shall never give her to the one whose origin is unknown.] However, another opposing idea triggers a question in her mind "What if they accept the proposal" (p. 41). All these conflicting ideas make her restless. She suffers a great deal because it targets her. This is shown in the omniscient narrator's comment as "Naqata obbolessa ishee fi Yeenchee booda dirqama ishee eeggatu yeroo yaaddu goraa isheetu itti

hadhaaha." [When she thinks of the responsibility that awaits her behind the courtship of her brother and Yenche, her saliva goes sour.] (Ibid).

However, after several thoughts, being unable to find out a possible solution, she tries to trivialize the matter and silences herself and gets relief at a later stage. Though she tries this several times, she finds it difficult to genuinely accept patriarchal objectification and becomes impatient. Then she becomes determined to break the silence. This is depicted in the dialogue between her and Teto as follows:

"Eenyutu warra isheetti siif dubbata?" jettee gaafattee.

"Jaarsa qopheessadheen jira..." ittiin jedhe.

"Hawuyaa ... ati akkamitti Yeenchee fuudhuufi?" Obsi ishee baddubaanaan gad dhiifte.

"Akkam?" jedhe-Teetoon

"Akaamiti siif laatu?" Tola siff laatu moo?

Insaal-Akkam tola naaf laatu?..." jedhee...

"Ahaa? Maal goota ree egaa? "jette-fuula ishee itti gudunfitee.

"Geeddareen fuudha kaa"...

"Hingowwomiin-ani Daanbeetti hin heerumu!".ija ariin irraa boba'u ija isaatti baafttee dubbattee.

"Who is going to talk to her family about the matter?" she asked.

"I have already selected the elders," he responds.

"Brother... in what way are you going to marry Yenche?" she explodes after her patience is over.

"How?" Teto inquired.

"How are they going to give her to you?" "Are they going to give her to you freely?"

"No! – How do they give me freely?"

"Oh? Then, what are you going to do?" She said with frowning face

"I marry her by exchange"....](p.142)

In the dialogue, it is Dochan who initiates the discourse. The first question she poses to him is directed to finding out who the people that take the message of the marriage proposal to Yenche's family are. One may wonder why she asks this question first. But she asks this question because the proponents who perpetuate the patriarchal laws are

these elders. They are responsible to check the functioning of patriarchal ideology that dehumanizes girls. Although elders are very important in promoting constructive values like the act of reconciliation among the disputed people, acting as go betweens in issues like marriage by exchange should not be practiced. This seems to be the reason why she begins the dialogue by asking 'who the people are'. Here, it seems that the oppressive role of elders is emphasized. Hence, elders are portrayed as agents in perpetuating the dominance of male power and objectification of girls.

Her second question targets her brother. That is, how he is going to marry Yenche. However, she knows whom he is going to give by exchange but she wants the case to be disclosed. From the question one may infer that it is to tell him that he is not better than those elders in exercising his agency to promote male dominance and to consider female as object. She knows the fact that he has no body there except herself whom he considers his only property.

When he insists in not disclosing what he has already planned with Yenche and the elders, she still further specifies the question as to how they give Yenche to him. What is more important here is her leading question "Are they going to give her to you freely?" The problem with their conversation is that he is not willing to make the matter open. Hence, he raises another question wondering how a family gives its daughter freely. This question enrages her and forces her to ask "Then, what are you going to do?" It is at this point that he couldn't help disclosing the role he is assigned to perpetuate the patriarchal practice and says "I marry by exchange". If one critically examines these sentences there is no role that Dochan plays in deciding by herself whether or not she marries a man of her choice. Moreover, she also has no role in

sharing her view with her brother regarding both her and his future plan of marriage. Her only role is to be given to somebody as an exchange for his sake. Here, the subject 'I' is Teto, the action is "an act of exchange" and an object that is exchanged is Dochan. Hence, Dochan is described to be a property or object passed over to someone by her brother. Added to this all the respondents also supported marriage by exchange except one of the girls "F" who reluctantly responded saying, 'Actually, I prefer the handsome one. But, if the family exchanges me to somebody else, what can I do?' Moreover, one of the respondents said that he had a daughter whom he was planning to exchange for another wife. This shows how the society's tradition and man dehumanize the women in Gumuz. As Krouse states that feminist criticism should examine how a society or man or both affects the live of a woman.

The other character that is depicted as object of exchange is Yenche. As has been seen previously, she is an agent in deciding the fate of Dochan. But, when Dochan commits suicide, her proposal fails and she happens to be given to a rich man. What makes Yenche's case worse is the fact that she is given as a lent material in which those who take her will pay the cost of marriage sometime in the future.

To escape such kind of a marriage she tries to persuade Teto to take her away. However, he ignores her request and begins to think about his courage. This is commented by the narrator as, "Isheen itti of kennitee, 'Na fudhuu badi.' jettee turete. Kan durbi tokko gochuu dandeessu kana." [She gave herself to him, and said, 'Take me and get out of here'. This is what a girl can do"(P.:203). As shown here, what a girl could do is submitting herself to her male counter part and expects him to do something. That means, a girl is not able to take any initiative regarding her future

welfare, rather, waiting on her counterpart so that he rescues her. Hence, girls are portrayed as submissive and weak (to be rescued). For example, when Yenche tells him this way out he ignores her proposal (p. 203). As a result, she suffered from all yokes that patriarchal force exerted on her in her later life.

Teto neglects her advice for he was filled with excessive courage. He attributes his excessive courage to so many things. First, he thought the fact that he courageously crosses the Blue Nile by swimming (the thing that no body has ever attempted). The second one is related to his escap from the attack by crocodiles through his courage. Third, he associated it with the gifts given to him, "qawwee sodii" [three guns], "re'ee torba" [seven goats], "eeboo afur" [four spear] and "waxxee tokko" [one arrow]. All these make him feel very proud and in turn forced him to ignore Yenche's wise advice.

After telling all this, the narrator comments on his excess saying, "Jabinatu itti dhagahame. Onnee isaa tu humnaan guutame. Akka waan Yeencheen jette sana gochuu hin dadhabne ofitti dubbate. Harka isaa lamaan aboottatee bitaa fi mirgatti micciirame." [He felt strong. His heart is filled with power. He tells himself that nothing prevents him from doing what Yenche says. Then he bunches the fingers of his hands together and turns towards right and left."] (p. 205).

But finally, his excessive courage makes him a victim (to be killed by his rival). Nnaemeka, when discussing a debilitating excess of Okonkwo's life, says, "He is for excess and against half-way... his fatal flow is his excess." (1997: 21). Okonkwo's "fatal flow" brings his own destruction. However, Teto's "fatal flow" in which he was overwhelmed by excess and in which he neglected Yenche's advice had its roots in his

manhood and discrimination of womanhood. Undermining female's advice (Yenche's) not only like Okonkwo destroyed Teto's life but also victimized Yenche at the end of the story.

From this, what we can understand is that, Yenche is considered; even, by Teto, subordinate, whose role in deciding on her fate is totally ignored. However, ironically towards the end of the story, Teto accepts Yenche's advice, which is too late. This destroys his life and Yenche is also victimized.

As the story progresses, Yenche experiences a dehumanizing situation in her life when her lover kills her brother who is an obstacle for him to marry her and when her father decides to give Yenche as 'a lent' so that he focuses his actions and thoughts on finding the one who killed his son. The narrator reports this when Yenche tells this disgressing news to Teto as:

*"... Ani... ani maalan godha?... Abbaan koo geeddaraa malee na heerumsiisuuf," jette.
"Tola moo?!" jedhe-Teetoon
"Liqii na kennuuf"
"Eenyuuf?"
"Saassoof."
"Jarreen adaree Jawaaj sun jaarsa itti baasnaan 'amma durba gedderaa fudhachuuf waan na hariifachiisu hin jiru', – jedhee liqii na kenne... Ana dafee heerumsiisee gumaa Daanbee barbaaduu fedha." jette.*

["What can I do? My father is going to give me without exchange" she said.

"Just freely?!" asked, Teto.

"He is going to give me as a lent."

"To whom?"

"To Saso."

"When those villagers from Jawaaj sent an elder to him, he responded saying, 'There is nothing that hurries me to seek a girl as an exchange

by this time," and gave me as a lent. He want to give me as soon as possible and will revenge the blood of his son." she said.(pp. 251-152)

While she is telling him this sad news she refers to her husband's family saying "Jarreen... sun" ["Those.... People."]. 'Jarreen' in Oromo, according to this context refers to 'an-other' or an alien people. This seems to show that she is rejecting (distancing) their marriage relationship. If she is interested in them she would say "my in-laws". But the way she speaks reveals her unwillingness to accept their marriage proposal.

Like Dochan, Yenche once again mentions elders in the sense that they still play their role in nurturing one of the patriarchal institutions "marriage". Marriage in African's view is a highly valued practice. It is a system that enables the continuation of life cycle (Mbeti, 1991; 243). However, its most evil side is if it goes against the interest and choice of those that get married. What is portrayed here is the fact that these elders are not only going against her interest but also considering her as if she, like Dochan, is an object of exchange.

On top of this, another marriage institution in patriarchal society apart from 'exchange' is depicted in this extract. Yenche's father, because he is in a hurry to revenge the blood of his son, spontaneously comes to a decision of giving his daughter "as a lent". What is usually practised is that one may lend money, property, items and the like but at least not his own daughter. This is what Yenche is telling to her lover, "... liqii na kenne..." [... he gave me as a lent...]. Here, the term 'lent' according to the context of the text is giving one's own daughter to the one who marries her with a common agreement that he will pay back the bride price another time.

Moreover, what is important is her statement "Ana dafee heerumisiisee gumaa Daanbee barbaaduu fedha" ["He wants to give me away as soon as possible and revenge the blood of Dambe." Yenché's father is preoccupied with revenging the 'blood of his son' who was killed long ago. But, this is done at the expense of Yenché whose interest is not taken into consideration. What he wants is getting rid of her as soon as possible. Hence, Yenché is dehumanized to the level of a property to be lent by her father based on his interest that he gets any time what he 'wants'.

Yenché expresses this burden imposed upon her by her father and the patriarchal society at large by escaping in the world of oral song that takes place on her wedding day saying, "Yaa haadha na deesse na jibbitee jennaan biyya biraa deemuu kiyya. Yaa hadha na deesse arba da'i.... [" Oh! the mother who delivered me, because you hates me, I am going to another place. Oh! The mother who bore me; let you bear an elephant...](p.229).

Something seems to be obvious, as far as Yenché is concerned, she knows that her mother once upon a time had faced what she is facing now. She also knows that her mother is helpless and is silenced. She seems to realize as to where the source of her misery is. But, by blaming her mother she complains against patriarchal imposition and male chauvinism escaping in oral songs. Moreover, the system in which patriarchy operates seems to be implied in this song in that patriarchy projects its brutal oppression on mothers who bear females. Explaining the burden of bearing females, Nfaha-Abenyi says that the problem of African women is not motherhood, but having money daughters for the fact that patriarchal culture discriminates the latter.

In the novel *Godaannisa*, the female character Kulani is shown to be an object of male abuse. Regardless of physical abuses that we have seen under male violence, she is victimized for the fact that she is considered to be a sexual object by males.

Towards the beginning of the story, she is shown when she is waiting for her stepfather till mid-night to give him dinner which is narrated by the first person as, "Kuulanii qofaatu irbaata kennuufiif jedhee jilba isheetti goombifamee mugaa isa eega ture. [It is only Kulani bowing down to her knees and struggling with sleep, who waits for his coming to give him a dinner] (p. 9). She waits for him because her mother had gone to the countryside for funeral. Here, Kulani is taking the role her mother used to play i.e. house chores.

While she is giving such services she becomes the victim of rape. What seems to be important in this case is how she becomes an object of sex. This is depicted when the narrator comments Manalew's feeling when he rapes her saying "Kana booda fedhii isaa dhugaatiin ho'e qabbaneesse." [After that he satisfied his sexual desire, which had been motivated by drinking.] (Ibid). Here, she is depicted as the one that can be used as a sex object when one needs to gratify his own sexual desire. Regardless of his fatherhood and her age she is an object of sex in the absence of her mother.

What she experienced on her mother's bed forces her to leave her birthplace and travel to different places for fear of stigma and discrimination at home, "... akka baatetti hafte." [She left and never came back.] (p. 118).

In all her journeys, she happens to define herself as the other. As a result, becomes a prostitute. This is revealed in her letter to her mother as follows:

Amma garuu, sadarkaan koo gara hojjettuu mana bunaatti ol guddate. Foon koo gurgureen, nameenyaa koo dhiichiseen jiraadha. Maali eenyummaan koo kan dhiitamuu jalqabewoo, mana hadha koo -siree hadha koo irratti! ... Foon koo malee kabajaan koo lafa keesa gad awwaalameera. Kan nameenyaan koo awwaalame, gaafa ormi fira fakkaatee, siree haadha koo wajjin irra ciisurratti dhiiga koo dhangalaase dha!... Arrabsoo, dhiittaa, kabala danda'uun bare. Hafuura alkoolii, hooqqisa dhiiraa suunfachuun shaakale. Meeshaa xabaan ta'e.

But, now, I have been promoted to the rank of a bar lady. I'm living by degrading my personality and presenting for purchase my body. Alas, my personality began to be degraded at my mothers home-on my mother's bed!...My flesh is alive where as my sense of pride has been buried deep down to the core of the earth. My sense of identity was buried, when an alien approaches like a relative, shaded my blood on the bed where he had slept with my mother! ... I learn to tolerate an insult, kicking, slaps. I practiced to smell an alcoholic breathing, the vomits of men. I became a doll to be used. (p. 119)

In places where she travels, she is forced to sell her body. As described above, the things she experiences are "Hafuura alkoolii, hooqqisa dhiiraa suunfachuun shaakale. Meeshaa xabaan ta'e." [I experienced the smell of an alcoholic breathing, the vomits of men. I became a doll to be used.] Here, phrases like "alcoholic breathings" and "vomits of male" are very important feminist concerns. Kulani is made to pass through such degrading life situation to show the life condition of many Oromo women. In this case, males are shown as drunkards and when got drunk, they need a woman to satisfy their sexual desire. Kulani at her mother's home becomes an object that satisfies her stepfather's sexual desire after his excessive drinking. Similarly, after she left her mother's home, she still becomes an object of men's desire who after excessive

drinking want to satisfy their sexual desire. That is why Kulani says, "I become a doll to be used." Therefore, Kulani in the beginning and towards the middle of the story is portrayed as a sexual object in a patriarchally dominated society.

Kulani is subjected to violent verbal abuse "arrabsoo" [insult], physical assault "dhiitta" [kicks, slaps], and sexual assault "Meeshaa xabaa" [doll to be used]. Such description of her disgraceful life depicts the fact that she does not have total control over her body. This, as she repeatedly notes in the letter, is the direct result of her stepfather's action. That is why she says, "kan nameenyaan koo awwaalame gaafa ormi fira fakkaatee siree haadha koo wajjin irra ciise irratti dhiiga koo dhangalaase dha!" ["My sense of humanity is buried when an alien approached me like a relative and shaded my blood on the bed where he slept with my mother!"]. Here what one observes is that the source of her victimization by male violence has got its root in the house of her mother. This victimization becomes complex when the agents (males) increase. This makes her forget her own body and constructs an-other that is 'not-I'. As a result her body is taken to be a commodity that brings rewards in monetary terms 'Namummaa koo daldaleen jiraadha' [I am living by selling as a commodity my own body].

This shows that she has been so used to alienating herself from her body that she has never been able to feel shame; in short to feel at all. "Foon koo malee, kabajaan koo lafa keessatti godi awwaalameera." [Except my flesh is alive, my humanity has already been buried deep down to the core of the earth.] (Ibid) Kulani, in the aforementioned contexts is, depicted as a sexual object at different spaces and times by different men, which is of patriarchal social structure.

3.4 Women Portrayed as Victims of Poverty

Poverty in the third World context arises from different situations. It can stem from natural calamities like the change of climatic condition or man made situations like war, conflict and others. Whatever the cause may be, Oromo's situation, the grinding poverty is the appalling living condition. When we see the real situations of women in this regard, women are the victims of poverty due to consistent famine and displacement. This forces women to live in conditions of abject poverty. In view of these, we shall see the economic status of women as they are portrayed in Dhaabaa's prose fictions.

In the novel *Gurraacha Abbayyaa*,, poverty seems to threaten the life of Dochan. As pointed out earlier, Dochan and Teto flee from their home place due to the conflict between the highland settlers and Gumuz people. In the places they settled and resettled, they face the ups-and-downs of life. For example, the life they lead in one of the places they settle (Qundo) is shown in the novel from the third person narrator's point of view as follows;

Achi ga'aniis rakkoo hedduu shaakaln- qofummaas, iyyumas. Lubbuu isaanii oolcanii bulchuf, bulchanii oolchuuf dhama'aa oolanii yeroo galan, godoo xiqqoo tokko keessa ciisu. Wal haammaatanii beelas yaadas walitti obsu. Otuu qorri jiraatee garuu, qaamoleen gugurraan wayyaa malee qoddiroo irra bitaa fi mirgatti garagalanii of hooqaa bulan kun waan obsuu danda'an hin fakkaatu.

After they arrived there, they have experienced several problems-loneliness and poverty. After a hard labor both day and night to save their lives, they spent the night in a ragged hut. They tolerated hanger and misery. Had there been a

terrible cold, those black skins that are bare and that are turned right and left could have never survived (p. 75).

Semantic nuances like 'poverty', 'ragged hut', 'hunger' 'bare skin' are important in showing the grave conditions of abject poverty. They at their early age are without mother and father, living with people whom they do not know. Besides, they have nothing to eat and wear. They become victims of poverty because of male supremacy. Therefore, based on the above lexical evidence, it seems possible to observe the fact that Dochan and her brother face the ugly reality of poverty.

Even though the issue of victimhood refers to male that of the female is complex. For instance, in the novel under discussion, no matter how both Dochan and Teto are victimized by poverty, that of Dochan's is quite diverse. Although Teto is poor, there is one thing that differentiates his poverty from that of Dochan's. That is, he, at least, has Dochan whom he can exchange. As for Dochan, she is just an object created for his sake. Hence, she is poor not only because she has nothing to eat, but also has no authority of herself.

Similarly, the issue of poverty as the main problem of women is depicted in the other two works, *Gadaannisa* and *Dungoo Halkan Sanaa*. Therefore, we shall see how the lives of Kulani, her mother and Talile in *Godannisa* and Intalo and her mother, in *Dungoo Halkan Sanaa*, are shown in view over poverty.

To begin with, Talile, the main character in the novel, is from a very poor family. Regardless of their poverty, her father has brought up his children, especially Talile, to the extent that she joins higher education. He does this by working as a daily laborer.

This is made explicit in the text when Talile narrates her family's background to Abdisa.

This is told through the focalization of Abdisa as follows:

... haati ishee sababa dhukkubsattuu taateef akka siree irraa hinbuune... abbaan isaanii ba'aa baatee gatii dafqaa argatuun, akka isaan guddise... Isheen sababa hangafa taateef, yero haraqee baasuudhaan yookaan waan tokkoo tokko hojechuudhaan isa gargaaruuf kaatu illee 'Hinta'u'Boqonnaan koo, gaafa ati haadha kee ishee dhukkubsattu kana badaddee fayifattu dhaa! jedhu...

... because her mother is ill and hardly leave bed... the fact that their father working as a daily laborer brought them up by his sweat and blood.. the fact that her father refuses saying 'My rest will be when you finish your education and rescue your mother from her disease', when she inquires him to share his burden by preparing a local drinking known as 'arake'(p:44)

This is the summary of the story of Talile's background. This story shows that she comes from a family that is below the poverty line. For example, her mother is "dhukkubsattuu" [a sick person], her father is 'a daily laborer' who brings up his children by his 'sweat and blood' i.e. engaging himself in works like carrying quintals. It is what he earns from this that he allocates for food, clothing, and school fees for Talile, her brothers and sisters. No matter how he leads such deplorable living condition, his great expectation rests on her success in her education, "My rest will be when you finish your education and rescue you mother from her illness..." It is with such expectation that she joins Haromaya University i.e. what she has is her father's advice which still hasn't been shackled by poverty. It seems to be because this advice is still alive in her that she pushes Abdisa away and runs away to her dormitory when he tries to kiss her immediately after she has told him this moving story.

Here, to see the difference between Talile and Abdisa seems important. However he appears to be sympathetic to her; he even describes her emotional state as "Waan rakkinni fi iyyumni itti fe'amani morma ishee gad cabsan fakkaatee daraan na gaddisiiste." ["She appears to me as if poverty and deplorable conditions have been overloaded on her shoulder and broken her"] (p. 40), it is at the time that she tells him such story and gets exhausted because she deeply feels that burden that Abdisa tries to hold her tight and kiss her.

It is possible to infer that two things are at work in this scene. As far as Talile is concerned, it is the adverse problem of poverty that goes beyond her erotic love as her statement the other day expresses "... Yeroo hunda wanta sammuu koo muddutu bakaan jiru na wallalchise." ["... It is the thing which always troubles my mind that makes me forget where I am"] (p. 51). Contrary to this, Abdisa gets nervous because of erotic love. This is shown when he narrates the incident of her departure as, "Kan isheen of irraa na darbattee fuula dura koo fiigduttan of bare" [I came to my consciousness when she threw me away and run towards her dormitory" (p. 44).

On the other hand, one notices that both are in a nervous condition but in different ways. Talile is nervous because the 'poverty' and 'adverse problems' that she and her family are in, bothers her. But, Abdisa gets nervous because he is over powered by erotic love. Hence, Talile is portrayed as the victim of poverty to the extent that it is deep rooted in her and she could not be challenged by sensation. Hence, Dhaabaa, as a social critic seems to portray the evil nature of poverty that goes to the extent of suppressing one's own sexual desire. That is why Nfah-Abenyi emphasises the difficulty

of separating the economic, racial, and class situation from sexuality (Nfah-Abenyi, 1997: 30).

However, Talile's resistance to Abdisa's seduction doesn't stay long. As their relationship continues, he carefully applies the mechanism he has designed earlier "Onne ishee harka koo galchuuf jecha..." [Just to win her heart...] (p. 35). To achieve this, he persuaded Talile that they would go to Dirree Dhawaa and refresh themselves. There he pushes her to drink beer and systematically lets her delay creating grounds in which she surrenders to him and finally takes her virginity. Then she conceives and asks him to seek for the solution. However, he runs away from her because he thought that he couldn't bear it. Meanwhile, Talile tries to abort using local medicine and other instruments but couldn't succeed. The effect in turn makes her suffer very much.

One of the reasons why she experiences such distressing situations seems to be the fact that she is very poor. Had she had some money she would have solved the problem through medical treatments. Since she has no money, she tried the local medicine to abort but failed. This is explicitly shown in her dialogue with Abdisa as, "Baasisuf horii hinqabu... Of keessaa baasuuf illee shaaworii seenee waanan godhe natu beeka.....Sibiila illee... Ihii... Sibiila illee of itti...." ["I have no money to terminate the pregnancy. I know what I did in the bathroom to get rid of it. Even, a sort of needle.... Yes... even a wire to my...."] (p. 77-78). Becoming the victim of poverty leads Talile to be the victim of diseases as told by Abdisa "Guyyuu, akka dhukkubsattetti.... Bobaatetti,..." ["As she had been suffering from the illness... as she had been weeping, ..."] (p. 103). She expresses her terrible situation in which she is saying, "I have no money to abort..." This leads her to try what she thinks will enable her to get rid of it but

in vain. What seems torturing is the wire she inserted into to her sexual organ. From this, one may observe the vilest side of poverty.

It is not only before she left the campus that she tried to abort, but also after she went to Dirree Dhawaa and stayed in the class that Rahel (one of the bar ladies in a hotel) rented; she tried this and that local medicine as a result of which she is reduced to a skeleton. This can be depicted from the first person narrator as:

Qoricha kan jedhame, baala if hidda mukaa cuunfitee, summii liqimsitee, lubbuu garaa ishee keessatti uumame wajjin 'ba'i-hin-ba'u, du'i-hindu'u'. Utuu wal'aansoo wal qabduu, foon ishee qorqamee-foon ishee harca'ee lafee qofa taateetti.

By drinking any local medicine mixed from leafs and roots of different trees, by drinking toxic substances, by battling with the fetus saying "get out-I don't," 'die out – I don't,' her flesh has been consumed and she dried up and left with skeleton] (p. 92).

So far, we have seen how Talile is portrayed in relation to poverty. From her characterization, it is possible to infer that she could be the representative of Oromo women who are suffering from abject poverty.

Another female character that is the victim of poverty in *Goddaanisa* is Kulani. She began to encounter the evil side of poverty at home when her stepfather left the place after he had raped her. From then on wards she began to lead miserable life. Kulani also left the place because she couldn't bear the stigma that her stepfather brought on her-the rape.

After she left the place, what awaited her is what she experienced at home. This is shown in the letter she wrote to her mother which is read by the first person narrator as:

"... Waan ani hin hojjetiin hin jiru.' jetti." Waan ani hintaiin hinjiru, ya fira ko. Mana haadha kotiin jalqabe. Gaada mana namaa jala buleera. Belli na waadee, mar'immaan koo maradhee akka saree ciiseera... Daaree, wayyaan na irratti ciccitee,... Foon koo gurgureen, nameenyaa koo dhiichiseen jiraadha."

"There is nothing that I did not do." she says: "Oh, my relatives there is nothing that I have not encountered. I began from my mother's home. I slept in people's verandas. I was scorched by hunger, I have slept empty stomach for several days like a dog. My clothes have been torn and I have been bare.... Now, I am selling my own flesh, and make a living"(p. 119).

The above extract unravels the complex problems that Kulani encounters. She says that it began from her mother's home where she experienced sexual abuse and hunger. She also summarizes what has happened to her after she fled. One of the basic problems she encounters is poverty i.e. she 'has slept in peoples veranda,' 'slept for a long times empty stomach,' 'her clothes have been 'torn' as a result of which she is left 'bare body'. She in her own words tells the fact that she is a victim of poverty saying "Beelli na waadee", [fried by hunger] 'daaree' [I have nothing to wear], 'mana namaa jala bulee' [I slept in people's veranda]. All these phrases and sentences depict situations of increased adversities, and deplorable conditions of abject poverty.

Furthermore, Kulani's mother is one of the female characters who faces the agony of poverty. Her suffering begins after her ex-husband (Manalew) left the village taking all his belongings. Kulani's mother lives with four children three of whom are Manalew's. This is depicted in the novel by the first person narrator as "Gafa sanaa jalqabee haati

koo ijoolle afur qabatee gargaarsa malee maasii keessatti hafte. Okkotee soofte, ibiddatti waadamtee araqee baasuudhaan ijoollee sana guddisuun dirqama ishee ta'e" [" From that day on wards, my mother is left with out help with four children. Preparing local drink 'arake' by battling with fire and bringing up those children, became her day to day obligation" (p. 10). When she has nothing to give to her children she suffers from looking at them starved. From this, one infers that Kulani's mother's problems are multi-dimensional in that it involves physical, psychological and social suffering. Abdisa describes a distressing situation in which his mother is saying:

Dubartii walitti cabdee ibidda qarqare teessuu. Dubartii godoon citaa irratti dayya'ee irri isaa bokkaa dhimisu.. dubartii haadha daa'immanii, daa'imman ishee beela'anii itti naanna'anii booyan.. daa'immaan foon ijoollummaa irraa soofamee dhume, harkii if miilli isaanii muka calii fakkaateeru.... ijoollee rifeensa isaanii irratti injijji if injiraan akka xaafii adii faca'eeru!

The woman who sits by the fireside bowing downward... the woman whose hut is ragged and that couldn't protect from rain....the mother of children, whose children have encircled her and are crying hit with hunger. ...children who are left only with skeleton...children whose hairs are infested with lice.(p. 105)

This extract unravels the extent to which Abdissa's mother together with her children becomes the victim of poverty. The above quotation vividly presents her image as a victim of poverty. For example, the fact that she tolerates hunger sitting by the fireside is depicted. Moreover, her suffering gets intensified during the summer season when there is nothing that holds off the rain that drips through the roof of her hut to the extent that she and her children couldn't get a place to sit on. Added to this, when those children cry encircling her because of hunger one may tell of the feeling of a mother and how she is tormented.

One wonders why Dhaabaa creates such a disgusting image of Oromo woman. It seems that he is forced to present the real life situation and experience of most Oromo women. Therefore, Dhaabaa as a social critic seems to portray the different problems that an Oromo woman faces.

Similar to Talile, Kulani and their mother, in *Godaannisa*, Intalo and her mother in *Dungoo Halkan Sanaa* are also portrayed to be victims of poverty. As stated earlier, while they are in Finfinne for the court case, they have nothing to eat. The only property they are left with is the house that they are waiting for its inheritance through judgment of the court. The protagonist tells Bonsa in her own words as "Ana, haadha kiyjaa fi obboleeyyan kiyyaaf qabeenya waan tokko hinhambifne, mana kana malee." (p. 10). ["He left nothing for me, my mother, sisters and brothers except this house." As shown here the family is in a very serious economic crisis.

Intalo's mother is a mother of many children whose actual number is not disclosed. These children except 'Intalo' are left in a town known as Asalla. It seems possible to perceive what kind of miserable life they lead there without mother and father. The mother carrying the trauma of her children's deplorable conditions suffers in Finfinne for the judgment of the court case is delayed. The immediate solution is that she has to save the lives of herself and her child by selling her own body. That is why she has to rent a bedroom and engage in such a business.

Intalo tells Bonsa that they spent two days without food. She tells him this after she warns not to touch her when he tries to embrace her. What occupies her mind like Talile, is not sexual desire but an abject poverty that she and her family are in. Bonsa's

previous perception of her is that she is there to sell her body. But he also considered her as "the disease that consumes". Regardless of his perception, as the story developed, he embraces to seduce her. One may wonder as to how the one that equates a human being to a disease few hours ago now desires to sleep with. This shows to what extent Bonsa is portrayed to be, erotic and not principled to stick to his words.

As for Intalo, she is not what he had initially took her to be. In fact, when the story begins and develops, it is she who appears to be seductive. But, towards the end of the story, it becomes otherwise and he appears to be seductive and she appears to be a girl with the determination of her own and who as seen by him is not a sex object but one surrounded with so many problems. To come to the point, she is portrayed to be a girl that gives emphasis to her dignity and the welfare of her family. This is what she is highly engaged in and tells him as well in the same scene. The case in point is "Erga dheengaddaa, amma nyaachuu keenya. Agabuun asitti nu fixe. Kana irratti immo idaan siree kan guyyaa torbaatu nu irra jira." (p. 8)[*"Starting from the day before yesterday, it is now that we are eating food. Here, hunger is finishing us. On top of this, we haven't paid the seven day bed rent."*].

According to some feminists, prostitution is the direct result of poverty or economic dependency. Those who participate in such a practice in African context are females. It seems that Dhaabaa is forced to create such a negative image of Oromo women to unravel the hidden practice of patriarchy in which women are portrayed to be prostitutes or that their body is exploited. Hence, Intalo's mother joins such a disgusting practice

for the survival of her daughter and herself. Had the court passed immediate judgment, "Ji'a kudhaniif as teenye." (p. 10) [We have stayed for ten months her.] and had their property right realized, she wouldn't have indulged in such a shameful act. The patriarchal institution that favours the male line of inheritance fails to provide immediate justice to Intalo and her mother, "Abbaan offii Abbaa ofiiti manni isaa mana ofiiti. Seera maalii barbaachisa. ["One's own father is a father and his house is one's house. What kind of rule of law forbids this". (p. 10). Dhaabaa, by depicting the lives of these two female characters seems to comment on the existing patriarchal institution that oppresses women. These women are portrayed to be the victim of poverty due to the lack of justice. Hence, Intalo and her mother are not ideal characters but the one's whose life depicts the real life situation of many Oromo women.

In some cases prostitution is used as a weapon of revenge to fight male power. However, in the case of Intalo's mother, it is an acknowledgment of defeat or an ultimate solution to the difficulties they face. The protagonist in her own words says. "Agabuun asitti nufixe. Kan irratti immo idaa siree kan guyyaa toorbaa tu nu irra jira." ["Hunger is finishing us here. Added to this, we haven't paid seven days bed rent."]. Even the protagonist tells him with happiness that her mother is lucky enough in getting a customer. This shows how much their life is highly dependant on her mother's prostitution.

3.5 Women as Resistant, Courageous and Determined Individuals

In the previous sections, we have seen as to how women are portrayed to be victims of male violence, homeless, subservient, objects of sex and poverty. However, these are

not the only concerns of feminist literary critics. As tried to discuss in the review part some feminist felt the need to study the complex and multiple lives of women in literary texts. They say that women in some literary texts are not simple stereotypes but dynamic who could manifest or experience self-assertiveness, resistance, determination and courage.

For example, Krouse, as mentioned in the review, notes the fact that there could be multiple and complex ways of portraying women characters. Besides, Nnaemeka discusses in the introductory part of the book, "The Politics of (M)othering" about the 'complexity and ambiguity' of African literature in general and African women's writing in particular saying that labeling women's issue simply to 'oppositional binaries' like 'tradition/modern, agent/victim...' where the existing reality and lives of women 'disrupts such binaries' is not the right position. Hence, she argues that women are "... both traditional and modern, both victim and agent, both goddess and whore... in short human" (pp. 2-3). She further notes that the essays in the book dismantles victim/agent, weak/resistant, subject/object dichotomy, and she says that victims are also agents who can change their lives, outlooks, ways of thinking or viewing the world. (Ibid). Moreover, Nfah-Abenyi also shares a similar view in that some characters in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, in Ama Ata Aidoo's, *Change-A Love Story* are the one's who have been the agents of their 'self-destruction, self-reconstruction and self-determination" (1997: 60).

Similar to the above points some female characters in the selected prose fictions of Dhaabaa are depicted in a diverse life conditions. These are characters like Dochan, Yenche, Kulani, Talile and Intalo. They are female characters who redefine their agency

as the stories progress. These are characters who experience complex and multiple lives and who exercise growth and change in the texts. Their aspirations are not only restricted to limited gender roles as wives, mothers, or instruments of patriarchy but also exercises their agency in deciding on their future welfare.

Dochan, in *Gurracha Abbayyaa*, is a female character who in most cases breaks the patriarchal gender expectation. For example, her father and brother have tried to force her stay at home with women and children. However, Dochan is a character that wants to exercise her aspirations in her own ways. Her father and brother try to let her stick to the patriarchal myth that dictates males to dwell (stay) outside in practices like guerilla fighting, but not females. However, Dochan is shown to be a female character who breaks this myth "Isheen tole hinjettu". [She does not accept].

One may wonder from where she gets such self-assertiveness. In her early childhood, it happened that her mother died. Then her father takes every responsibility to bring her up carefully showing her love affection and keeping her interest. This is shown in the novel as, "Bacangireen, akka hiriyyaa isheetti, xabachiisee guddise. Itti qoosee, arrabsee, akka ijoollee irraa baqata...Ulee fudhattee ariiti irraa baqata." [Bachangre, brought her up, chatting with her like her peer. By uttering those words that provokes her, he ran away from her... She in turn takes a stick and ran towards him: he, in response to her action ran away.] (p. 34). Her father unconsciously enables her to exercise self-assertiveness in her early childhood, which later on helps her to be an actor in the world of men as shown above.

This indeed has helped her to suspect her only brother whom she tried to save his life when he is determined to go towards the direction of his enemies while they were in 'Qundo', which he later realized that her decision was right. Also, she runs towards the gun aimed at him saying "Obolleessa Koo hin ajjeesina" [Don't kill my brother] (p. 72) when they were in their birthplace where the life of their people is destroyed, here, she is portrayed as active, determined and as one who plays the role of agency in saving both her and her brothers lives. However, in Luquma she suspects her brother who is determined to give her as an exchange to the one whom she hates most so that he marries the girl whom he loves.

Here, Dochan once again exercises what she has experienced in her life starting from her early childhood. She refused her brother's proposal of marriage by exchange. This is revealed when she forcefully resists his arrogant speech saying " 'Hin gowwomiin-ani Daambeetti hin heerumu.' ija aariin irraa boba'uun ija isaatti baaftee dubbatte." ["Don't be fooled- I shall never get married to Dambe!" She spoke to him with anger and staring at him with burning eyes."] (p. 143). Besides, when the debate between the two continues she gradually responds to his request with a strong resistance as the narrator comments 'terribly enraged', 'staring at him' and 'with burning eyes' and ' responds arrogantly' (Ibid). This in turn makes Teto get astonished for he has not heard such a strong and resistant confrontation from his sister as the narrator comments, "Teetoon hamma dhalatanii wajjin guddatan kana, kan Dooccaan akkana aartee itti dubbattu dhaga'ee hinbeeku" [Teto has not even heard Dochan speaking strongly like this"] (ibid). This shows that she is quite resistant to his proposal. She not only resists Teto in that she is not an object to be possessed and transferred from hand to hand but also

scornfully rejects him by spitting her saliva in front of his leg, "Hancufa ishee miilla isaa jalatti cirriiqfatte." ["She spat her saliva in front of his legs"] (p. 143).

Dochan begins to think the true nature of her brother. She tries to remember who he was when they were playing together in their birthplace (p. 34), when they lived suffering from hunger in Qundo, when they ate soil by the time they could not get what to eat, while they were escaping from their enemies to Chagni. In all these places she hasn't experienced her brother's becoming another to her. This is shown by the narrators' comment as "Yeroo dura yaaddu, Tatoon gara-jabina hammanaan waan itti dubbatu hinseene" [All the time she does not think that Teto arrogantly speaks to her like this] (p. 44).

However, now, Dochan begins to suspect him as another. She fears him. "Amma garuu ni shakkite. Sagaleen isaa ishee sodaachise." [But, now she suspected him. His sound frightens her.] After she thinks and rethinks about the past, present and future, she finds it difficult to get away from the vicious circle of patriarchy that favours males. She completely loses her hope that rests on her only brother for years and hates him, considers him a beast walking with two legs. This is described in her last utterances as follows:

"... ani akkas natti garaa jabaatta hin se'u.... Otuu yaadattee ree Baabbuun koo anaa fi si qofa walitti dhiisee du'e... Amma garuu, ani ija kootiin si arguu na jibbisiiseera! si mannaa naacha bishaan Abbayaa Keessaa wayya!...Ati bineensa...."

[" I haven't thought that you harden your heart at me like this,...If you remember, Dadi had left us together and died. But, now, I hated to see you with my eyes! A crocodile in Blue Nile river is better than you!... You are a beast!..."(p. 147)

Finally, she is determined to be drown in the Blue Nile and be eaten by Crocodiles. Here, it is possible to see the evil nature of patriarchy in that a sister and a brother who do not keep any secret from each other, who haven't even departed from each other in a society where boys and girls do not create such relationship, who taste the grievance of life together, who cross various villages and mountains, deserts, in their journey to save their lives from their predators are now in different poles. One is running to possess the other as a property. And the other is objecting this and determining not to be some body's object. One is trying to find out every way possible to use the other as an object and the other is running with a firm determination with a motto ' I Do not ever give hands!' A good example in this case is Dochan's harsh and self-determined, speech "Anis ofan ajjeesa malee akkan Daambeetti hinheerumne beeki" [You should know that I had better commit suicide than being married to Danbe.]

Some feminist critics oppose committing suicide as an alternative for women to subvert male power. However in a highly patriarchal society like Gumuz where women (girls) have no choice to free themselves from being exchanged as an object i.e. rather than leading a dehumanizing life which is not better than death, what else does one prefers other than death? This is just choosing the better of evil. Therefore, the life of Dochan that she resists not to be exchanged as an object depicts the evil nature of patriarchy.

The other female character in *Gurraacha Abbayyaa*, who is portrayed, to be active resistant and assertive one is Embo. In Gumuze society there are situations in which a girl or a woman lives alone in a ragged hut a little bit far distant from the usual home with her peer. This happens when she is on her menstrual cycle for she is considered to be impure. Almost all respondents in the interview agreed on the fact that a female is

impure during menstruation period. Some, even, say that the crop plant in which she passes happens to dry out. In the place she lives she is expected to take much care not to be seen by anybody other than her peer (colleagues) who gives her every service in her stay in the hut for four or five days till she is "cleansed". In case she encounters somebody seeing her she immediately hides herself in the hut. "Yeencheen biliqii takka gad mil'attee godootti qalaw jette" [Yenche, after she once steers down the way rushes into the hut] (p. 118). This is because during that period she is taken to be impure and that place is called "bakka hintaane" ["improper place"] for people in case they go to such places (p. 118).

Embo is shown to be resistant to such a degrading tradition and provides advice in which Teto visits Yenche (the one whom he falls in love with). This is depicted in the text as, "Eemboo xiqqoo lafa ilaltee turtee, 'Mee asiin gadi gara laga Abbayaatti deemii nu eegi. Akka namni is hin argine immo' jette" ["Embon after she looked dawn for awhile, 'perhaps, let you go dawn to river Blue Nile and wait for us. Watch out not to be seen by people!' She said."] Let alone a man (Teto), it is a taboo even for a woman to visit such a place. But, here we observe Embo creating a system in which Teto meets Yenche. Though three of them are deviants who break the norm of that society, Embon plays a great role in devising how to escape the imposition of that tradition. This shows the fact that Embo is actively resisting the tradition that exerts its power on women.

Embo is also assertive in expressing her love to the opposite sex. For example, after Yenche got married to Saso she went to Teto's hut and tells him that she loves him saying "Ani jaalala guddaan si irraa qaba" ["I have great love for you."] (p. 234). After she expresses her love for him, she holds his hand tightly and tells him how she deeply

loves him. When he couldn't control himself, he tries to free his hands as much as he can but she "Hamma godoon hawwaala fakkaate sun lubbuu horattutti qas-qas jettee itti kolfitee barruu isaa ofitti qabdee dhungatte." [She violently laughed till that ragged hut which sounds like a grave was warmed and kissed his thumb.] (p. 235). When he goes towards the door to escape from her, she utters "Mana Keetti na gattee deemuufi?" ["Are you going to escape leaving me inside your home?"] From this discourse it is possible to infer that she is assertive in expressing her feeling. For example, it is she who expresses her love for him i.e. taking an initiative. Added to this, she also holds his hand tight to the extent that he finds it difficult to free himself. And, when she examines that he gets disturbed and tries to leave the hut, she laughed violently. All these things show that she is active, strong and assertive in expressing what she feels.

Nonetheless, her courage is shown when she confronts her fiancée when he catches her in front of Teto's door and gives her slaps and verbal abuses saying, "Miriixee!..." ["You sexy!..."] (p. 250). She freed her hands and necks that he tightly held by force and says, "Baga! ... Ee!... Maal akka ati na gootun ilaala." jette-sagalee aariidhaan hoollatuun." ["That is it!... Yes! ...I shall see what you shall bring,' she said, with anger and with shaking sound."] (Ibid). Embo, when she comes across things that restrict her own choices and independence, she is not the one that accepts it submissively.

Moreover, when he warns her not to meet Teto any more she refuses saying "Gaafa anaan isa irraa dhorkuu dandeesse jabinni kee argama." ["Your strength will be seen when you forbid me to meet him any more"] (p. 250). After this powerful speech Bagundo realizes that she surpasses his expectations and hence determines to try the other way by trying to calm down her saying, "... Maal taate-Embo?... ["Embo What happened to

you?"] (p. 251). Then he tries to let her remember their earlier times. However, she tells him with determination that she was not his fiancée and is not and will never be his. "Ati duraanis taanaan kaadhima koo miti. Ani si hin fedhu. Kunoo har'a garaan kee haa citu, jeheen sitti hime." ["Previously, you were not my fiancée. I do not want you. Here, now I am telling you to think no more of that." (p. 251). When he insists on persuading her she totally rejects him saying "Na gaddhiisi! ... Ani nan iyya! si hin fedhu – is hin fedhu!" – Sagalee ishee ol fuutee dubbatte. ["Leave me alone!... I will cry! ... I do not want you – I do not want you! She screams raising her voice."] One may wonder whether such a determined girl exists in a society that crashes the dignity, personality, and the spirit of girls in particular and women at large. However, it seems important not to forget the fact that either there could be exceptional individuals who challenge the burden of male dominance or Dhaabaa seems to create an ideal character just for raising consciousness to which Ruthven agree "Women's self awareness will be heightened by a process known as consciousness raising" (p. 71).

However, Bagundo still tries to warn her saying that he will disclose the fact that she met Teto at his hut the other day and that he brought her from Teto's hut to her family. Here, one may observe that males are favored in every direction in that when they encounter a courageous, resistant and determinant female, they shift to the other alternative that patriarchy cherished them-the family. Embo, gets frustrated a little bit but soon generates her courage as the narrator comments "...hin jilbeeffanne." ["... she never submitted herself"] (p. 252). Even she insults him saying "Yaa sare! – Edas na faana dhaha bulte?! – Dhaqii itti himi!" ["You dog, -were you following me yesterday?!

... Go and tell them!"] (Ibid). Here, she not only rejects him but also rejects the patriarchal myth which is perpetuated through families.

When their conflict gets intensified, Bagundo couldn't control himself and decides to use his muscles. He then throws her, she falls, throws himself on her, tries to rape her, she in turn tries to cry and he holds her mouth with his mouth so that she could not cry, and bites her lips. However, she holds his neck tightly with her two fingers, bites his face and "... gudeeda isaa giddu dhiitte." ["... kicks in between his two legs"] (p. 253). Then he faints. When he comes to his consciousness he is sleeping facing upward. Most feminists claim that women especially in male works are portrayed stereotypically. However, Dhaabaa, as a male writer, seems not to be limited himself to stereotyped female characters. He, rather, portrays determined, courageous and resistant female characters like Embo who never submit to male chauvinists but free themselves by counter attacking their predators. Although, Dhaabaa preoccupied in portraying victimized female characters in the selected prose fictions, he has also played his role in unlearning sexism by depicting strong female characters like Embo.

What is a great crisis in patriarchally programmed males is to be won by females. This is what has happened to Bagundo. After he realizes that Embo won him, begins to think and rethink how he could compensate this failure. When he comes to know that he couldn't exercise his victory over her, he once again tries another way possible through which he "cleanses his shame" (p. 254). He thinks the way through which he persecutes Teto i.e. he knows one secret -the killing of Dambe. He immediately goes to the roof of his hut, picks a bow and arrow by which Teto killed Dambe, goes to Teto's hut and tells him that he knows the secret.

Bagundo, when he realizes that it is difficult for him to physically battle Embo because she exercised her courage in counter attacking him, turns his target to another male and becomes the cause for Teto to leave Luquma. Bagundo, thought that what he does to Teto could compensate his fear of shame. However, as the story progresses, she once again declares with firm determination that he is not her choice when he sees her with Teto after Teto comes from exile saying "Ani kaadhima kee miti. Takka sitti himeera" ["I'm not your fiancée, I have already told you once and for all."] (p. 318).

In the novel, Embo is characterized as a strong, courageous and determined female character from the beginning to the end of the story. She is shown to be an ideal character that is not passive reactor in the man's world, but rather exercises her own choice, and becomes independent in deciding the course of her life. Using Embo as a model, Dhaabaa exposes the weakness, egocentric nature and failures of male chauvinists. Dhaabaa seems to create a caricature character like him in order to show the fate of male chauvinists. Therefore, it seems that Dhaabaa is a social commentator who develops concerns for independence, self-assertion and determination of Gumuz women in particular and all women at large.

In the same novel, Yenché's resistance like her peer Embo begins in resisting the tradition that patriarchy imposed on her by welcoming Teto in the prohibited area in the hut where she stays as impure (p. 118). Yenché, though she is impure and the tradition dictates her not to see anybody other than her colleague, joins Teto in the place Embo appoints him. "Yeencheen gara isaatti maqxe" ["Yenché follows the way that takes towards the direction that Teto is found and joins him."] (p. 126). She also joins her

colleagues in rebelling against the patriarchal tradition that perceives women during menstruation period as impure and hence, they should meet no one and the people should not see them.

Though, she, is victimized the other time by the forces of patriarchy, at times, she exercises her agency in rebelling against it. For example, no matter how she herself patriarchally internalizes the patriarchal institution of marriage, she rebels by exercising her sexual autonomy in which case she loses her virginity while she is having sex with Teto. When she is accused of and made to confess by the patriarchal law for she lost her virginity, after her husband discovered that she is not virgin, she refuses to speak and remains silent as the commentator's speech "Milla ishee mirgaatiin lafa qotaa, lafa ilaaltee cal jettle." [Looked at the ground and said nothing started to dig the ground with her right foot.] (p. 241) shows.

She prefers silence when one of the elders orders her to speak. Ngaemeka notes such silence saying "one exercises agency when one chooses not to speak: the refusal to speak is also an act of defiance that signals the unwillingness to participate" (1997: 4). This resistance enrages Dolo, one of the elders, and forces him to interrogate her once again saying "Intalo, maliif callista?" [Woman, why do you keep quite?"] (Ibid). Moreover, her husband Saso also orders her with angry voice saying, "Speak!". Here silence seems to communicate the fact that the accusation should directly go to patriarchy and male chauvinism. For example, it is her father who has given her to the one who is not her choice. This is shown in the dialogue she makes with Teto as follows "... Abaan Koo geeddaraa malee na heerumsiisuuf." ["... My father is going to give me in marriage without exchange?"] Here, what one infers from her speech is, that she

does not like marriage by exchange. Added to this, it is her husband who has harshly beaten her whom she doesn't want to marry to. Although she has been given the chance to disclose all her secrets, she prefers not to speak because they are nurtured and supported by patriarchy. Her silence, in turn, presupposes, "Let these men speak what they have done to me." After all she knows that she is not a criminal.

As the story unfolds, Yenche realizes that her marriage relationship with Teto does not work. As a result she determines to drop it and join Teto who is her lover and her choice. This is shown when she responds to Teto's inquiry where she comes from late at night. She says, "Badeen dhufe. Saso jalaa badeen dhufe." ["I came unseen. I came unseen from Saso."] (p. 326). Yenche has tried to tolerate what patriarchy and male violence exerts on her as much as she can. However, towards the end of the story when it becomes beyond what she could bear, she decides to escape and join her lover. Then she forced him so that they leave that place. " 'Hamma adaree kana irraa fagaannutti qaraqare Abbayaa qabannee haa deemun.' Jette" [" 'Till we distance ourselves away from this village let us go following the bank of Blue Nile, she said"] (p. 327). Teto who refused her advise earlier, accepts this time because he has no alternative. However, Saso follows them from behind and kills Teto.

Yenche's resistance and determination once again is exercised here after she realized that the one who killed Teto is Saso. She jumps towards Teto's gun, picks it up, aims at her husband but couldn't manage to operate it. Then, she with terrible anger bites her lower lip with her upper tooth. She once again creates an image of her husband Saso "As though he is a monster." Then she gives her back to him and runs away to the Blue Nile where, Crocodiles, once, ate up Dochan. She, rather than leading a miserable life

under patriarchy and male chauvinism prefers to drown herself in the Blue Nile like Dochan. She is determined not to be submissive to patriarchy and male violence. It seems that what is commented towards the beginning of the novel "Yoo abdi kutatan ni muratan" ["When one loses hope, one decides"] completed (p. 28). There is nothing that Yenche hopes to achieve from such patriarchal society. As a result she is determined to enter to Blue Nile.

Kulani's life, in the novel *Godaannisa*, is not limited to an object of violent sexual abuses. She, in the beginning of the novel is portrayed as a rape victim and then joins the life of prostitution. However, towards the end of the story, she resolves to stop the life of prostitution and begins a new life. Kulani begins exercising her agency in changing not only her life but also her brother's life. The case in point is the narrator's comments, "Jireenyi koo sirna qabate." ["My life has been led orderly."] (p. 149). Moreover, Kulani, who previously wrote a letter that shows her disgrace, degradation and agonies to her mother once again writes a letter that shows hope, future fulfillment and in general a beginning of a new life and agency. This is depicted in a the telephone dialogue with Abdisa after she completed her letter and decides to send it to her mother as follows:

"Xala'aa irratti immoo kanan jedhe beektaa?"

"Ihii"

"Bara dhufu, ijolleen walakkan nu biratti baratu. Isaan kaan immo akka achitti baratan goona. Anis daldalaa, barnoota galgalaa hordofuuf yaadeen jira.'n jedhe"

"You know what I said in the letter?"

"Emhi(ok)?"

"Next year, some of the children will join us and learn, and we will make the others learn there. As far as I am concerned, I am thinking to begin trading and attending evening class", I said.] (p. 152).

The first point one observes in this telephone dialogue is hope, and bright future i.e. the future in which one follows his/her own thoughts, and decisions. Secondly, it is possible to see that Kulani redefines herself and realizes her worthfulness. Here, she begins to exercise her subjectivity. For example, the word 'I' is used four times in this discourse i.e. in both discourse patterns Kulani used the word 'I' – 'I said ...'(2 times),"As far as I am concerned..." and "I am thinking..." Therefore the ideas that are written in the letter originated (emanated) from her, 'I said in the letter'. Moreover, the idea of thinking to use one's own agency also emanates from within, "I am thinking...". Here, an important feminist point is made. It is the fact that Kulani takes off the 'an-other' and begins to realize her true self, that is, the 'I' not the 'not-I'. In other word, she begins to exercise not the object but the subject position.

The third point is, after she realizes her true self, she doesn't stop there, rather she involves herself in others welfare. First, as stated earlier she is the cause for the change of the life of her brother Abidisa. Second, she comes up with a very good proposal for her brothers and sisters who are suffering from poverty at home. She says that some of the children will join us and learn here and the rest will stay and learn there.

When, the reader examines deep in to the life of Kulani, s/he may wonder how such noble ideas emanate from the female character who in the past was a rape victim and a doll used by males, and was leading a life of a prostitute. Regardless of all these physical and mental traumas she went through, she in the end is portrayed as an agent

who redefines herself and changes both her brothers and her life and comes up with a very good proposal for her brothers and sisters who are living in abject poverty.

In the same novel, Talile, like Dochan realizes the fact that Abdisa is not the one she could rely on in order to solve her problem. After she genuinely accepted him as the one that shares her problems, she submitted herself to him and loved him. But, when she tells him that she was pregnant and asks him for a solution saying "S'i Abdi ... Ihii... maal godhu?!.... Maalif calluma na jetta?!..." ["Abdi ... yes... what shall I do?! ... why do you keep quiet?!"] (p. 76), his response at that moment was running away from her as the first person narrator tells, "Humnaan harka ishee tii gad dhiifadheen furguggifame.... Calluma jedheen fiige... Irraan gadee gara ulaa baatiittan konkolaadhe." [I got my hands freed from hers by force and rushed ... I ran away.... I rushed down to the hotel Batii.]. (p. 79).

Abdisa expends his money for Talile only when he invites her a tea from Batii and when he takes her to Dirre Dhawa to seduce her. After that he spent nothing, if any selling all his properties to send her to the place where she prefers to go after things are out of control. If he had previously taken this last solution before every thing is out of control she might have solved her problem. Rather than taking a little time and thinking of possible solutions, to the problem he runs away from her and put himself into the world of smoking and drinking. What Talile seemed to expect from him is to share her burdens at least psychologically. This was explicitly shown in the text when Talile consistently tells him that his presence and psychological treatment meant a lot for her as, "Abdi. Ihii? Maaloo na dhaga'i... Abdi-ihii? Xinno no bira turuu hindandeessuu?! Ani

maal godhin siin jedhe?["Abdi,emhi? Pleas listen to me. Abdi, emhi? Do not you stay with me a little while?! What an extra thing I asked you?](p:125).

Contrary to her inquiry, the solution is running away from her to Batii and taking a refuge in the world of drinking. From this, what one infers is, he is not willing to share her burde. But, after everything is over he begins to curse himself saying "Gogaa, garaa gogaa"[Stone, stone hearted].

For Talile, this is the first experience. Then, she decides to leave the campus and joins Rahel in Dirre Dhawaa. However, she couldn't completely stop, thinking about Abdisa. She then sends Rahel so that she calls up on him. When he comes, he reads a conflicting feeling from her faces, 'Takkaa dinqamtee, takka mamtee, dhumatti immo fuula ishee walitti gudunfitee dubbatte.'" ["She at times gets surprised, then puzzled and finally uttered with a frowning face."] (p. 93). Words like 'surprised', 'puzzled' and 'frowning face' are very important in that they reveal the change that Talile is going to bring in her life. She gets surprised because she expected him to support her at least psychologically. That is, she had not ever imagined the fact that Abdisa ignores her at a critical moment. It seems that she gets puzzled because she couldn't comprehend his true nature. However, she finally arrives at the conclusion that she, now and on wards, has to decide on her future life. This shows the fact that she is in the process of self-determination as the following speech of her shows "Garuu ...Namni.... Namni akkasi jedhee hin yaadun ture," jette" [" ' But... I had not ever imagined that ... people ... People become like this,' she said"] (p. 93). She goes on to say, "Shakkii na barsiifte ... Halaalatti yoo ilaalan... cirrachi iyyuu galaana ... ahi ... galaana fakkaata" ["You taught me suspicion ... When seen from a distance ...a sand looks like a sea ...ahi ...looks

like a sea"] (Ibid). Abdisaa suffers not only from Talile's comment but also from his consciousness when he enters the room where she is sleeping before her speech, saying, " 'Gogaa!' naan jedhe, sammun koo. 'Gogaa! Gogaa garaa gogaa!" [" 'Stone hearted!' accused my mind. Stone hearted! Stone, stone hearted! ' "]. It seems that, this is what is puzzling Talile, whether he is shrewd, emotional or stonehearted and the like. The metaphors 'sand' and 'sea' she used in the proverb shows that she comes to realize that he is stone hearted because, if one sees sand deposited at seashore, due to the distance, one may assume that it is a sea. But, when one approaches, s/he discovers that it is not. The 'sea' refers to Talile's previous assumption that Abdisa is polite, genuine, rational and considerate simply based on his words, and appearances. And the metaphor 'sand' refers to what she comes to know that his heart is otherwise i.e. dry like stone.

Here, Talile is depicted as a female character who redefines herself in relation to the personality of a man. Moreover, it is also shown that some men are, shallow, and stone hearted. This indeed, affects the life of females. However, Talile gradually exercises her agency in defining both herself and the personality of men at large.

It is this self-construction that helps Talile to leave Dirree Dhawaa and come to Finfinne. This shows her attempt to break away from that physical and psychical prison by building physical and emotional walls of determination through what bell hooks has described as resisting by constantly shifting" from the margin to the center,". Because Talile gets pregnant, she gives up her higher education where as Abdisa resumes his education. Her's direction is towards misery, hopelessness and poverty. In order to

escape all this, she has to do something. Hence, she joins a family from her birthplace. She tells them every thing and they help her during her child bearing.

Meanwhile, Abdisa completes his university education and gets employed in an office called 'External production' which the narrator says is one of the good offices. As to Talile, had she not used her agency, and got a work of her own, one seems to predict what she would have faced a disaster. The fact that she gets the work of her own actually, is not by Abdisa's help, but by her own effort. Therefore, it seems that the author wants Talile to exercise her own agency not to stay at the margin but dwell between the margin and the center as her speech to Abdisa about her employment tells "Amma, anis hojii xinnoo argadheen galgala barataa jira." ["Now, I have got a small job and also I am learning in evening"] (p. 157). Here it is possible to see that Talile physically, emotionally and morally exercises her own subjectivity. So she is no longer dependant economically, psychologically and socially. Therefore, when her life is examined through the novel, she passed through three stages: a dream of future fulfillment, the denial of fulfillment and finally the fulfillment of her dream, (at least partially).

Moreover, Talile is also shown to be a great moral agent. This is depicted when she says "Qubeelaan kees kunooti" ["Here is your ring."] (p. 157). This shows her loyalty and fidelity to her lover. On the one hand, she has a job of her own and has continued her education. On the other hand, she also seeks her only lover to whom she is faithful. A reader may wonder why she one's again seeks the one who left her while she was crying when she was in that trouble situation (pregnancy) in the university. It seems that Talile has two goals in her life. First, she wants to have a job of her own which she in

the end gets and which enables her to exercise her own economic independence and secondly, she seems to have a goal to seek and get her lover. Finally, both of her goals are achieved. Hence, she is portrayed to be the 'powerful moral agent' (Guerin, et al, 1991: 226) of Oromo women. In this case, the author seems to treat his female character with more realism and depth.

The other active and courageous female character that Dhaabaa treats in his prose fiction is Intalo, in the short story *Dungoo Halkan Sanaa*. She is portrayed as not a simple sex object. Intalo, regardless of her age, is active, who does not surrender herself to male seduction.

Towards the beginning of the story, it is this female character who initiates talks with the male character (Boonsa) when he goes to the room he rents and opens and enters, that is comment by a narrator as "Yeroo of irra deebi'u harki nagaaf hiixate bira gaheera" ["When he turns back he saw a hand stretched towards him for greeting"] (p. 2). After greeting when she tells him that she will come back soon and leave the room, Bonsa gets shocked because he immediately associates her coming with sexual assertion.

Most of Dhaabaa's male protagonists do have a distorted image of women. For instance, Abdisa, had been suspecting that Talile may change her behaviour and reject him as the monologue depicts, "Maaltu beeka dubartoonni yeroo mooraa Univeristii seenanoo qeerransa ta'u..." ["Who knows, females, after they join University become tigresses"] (p. 39). Here, what is shown is that males do not want to see strong, courageous and independent females. Boonsa, also has a distorted image of females. Rather than attacking his own shallow, rough and emotional behavior, he associates

females with HIV/AIDS. This is commented by the all seeing narrator as "Dubartooni marti nama osoo hintaane dhukkuba soofaa itti fakkaatu." ["He perceives all females not as human beings but as a disease that consume one's own body"] (p. 3). This indirectly shows the perception he has for Intalo. This seems to be one of the failures of Dhaaba's male characters. Regarding sexual matters, they are not serious in taking care for their female counterparts. For example, Teto does not care about the force of patriarchy that crashes Yenche in her later life when he takes her virginity. Abdisa also didn't think about the future well-being of Talile when he takes her virginity as a result of which she gets pregnant and discontinues her higher education. Similarly, Bonsa, did not know the true nature of Intalo, but simply considers her as a simple sex object and worse of all, as a disease. Although these three male protagonists are very strong regarding national feelings and issues, they are emotional as far as their relation to their women counterparts are concerned. Contrary to them, the female characters are far-sighted, rational, and concerned about sexual matters.

Intalo, for example, is a female character in the world of men. It is she who introduces herself to Bonsa (p.2) who repeatedly enters his room (six times, [pp. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]), who tells him that her hair and cloth styles are things that she is proud of (p.8), who catches his hands (pp.79), sits on his bed (p.8), sleeps on his bed (pp.9, 10). When she does all this intense dramatic action, at each and every juncture, Bonsa finds ways by which he breaks his promises (what he promised to his friends i.e. not to touch women) and finally attempts to embrace her.

However, she warned him not to touch her saying "Natti hin bu'iin" ["Do not touch me.]. When he turns his face to her side and tries to embrace her the reader may wonder how a girl, who hasn't experienced any sex, enters male's private room, sleeps on his bed, (man who finds it difficult even to see women from the distance and passes by) and warns him not to touch her. This is where, her determination lie i.e she warns him at the point when Bonsa could not control his balance and falls on the bed holding her.

At the beginning of the story, it was he who suspects her, as if she is sexually assertive and associates her with disease. But, in the end, he ironically finds himself in the world where he could not control his sensation. Here, what is depicted is in cases of sexual matter, it is Bonsa who follow his emotions not his reasons .As to Intalo she stopped him saying, " Do not touch me."

Intalo, knows what she should do and say. Across the stories, she is portrayed as open, free, active person, but serious in matters of sex. Her sole reason to approaching him is not to have sex, as he wrongly perceives, but, to share her burdens to him by telling him what has happened to her and her mother, the injustice that the court in Finfinne is doing to them, the fact that she is homeless, that she and her family are in abject poverty and problems that she could not bear at that age level.

Based on this ideal female character, it seems that the problem of Oromo women is depicted. This is what African feminists embark on. Broadly speaking, this is a battle cry of African feminist writers. They raise their voice to disclose the problem of African women like the issue of survival rather than sexual matters.(Gita Sen and Caren Grown,1989:19). Here, Dhaabaa, seems to be successful in portraying a determined,

courageous and resistant female character, who raises her voice and addresses the problem of Oromo women.

Moreover, the reader may observe the role played by the author to invite the reader to rethink about women from a different perspective. In this short prose fiction, Dhaaba is attacking sexism and the stereotypical image that the society associates with women in which women are portrayed to be submissive and passive. The author is trying to raise the consciousness of the society as (Ruthven, 1991: 70) states that the society should encourage girls in the sense that they could be active, assertive, courageous and determined

Chapter Four

Conclusion

Yelunge, Dochan's stepmother, Yenche's, Kulani's and Intalo's mothers are constructed to conform to the social expectations of roles of women, i.e. domestic. They are made submissive and passive to oppressive acts of men to women. Because they internalize such patriarchal ideology, they consider themselves that they play subordinate roles and give secondary services. This indeed, made them want to be or live under the dominance and protection of male figures than to secure an autonomy of their life as a fully human beings. Stereotypically considered, these women are either house wives, mothers, or widows who are left alone with children and who feel loneliness and helpless due to their lack of husbands.

Some women characters are shown as oppressed by patriarchal tradition that subordinate women. More specifically, in the novel *Gurraacha Abbayyaa*, women are exploited by patriarchal tradition. When Dochan's and Yenche's characterization is examined, it is found out that they go through multiple life conditions. They are victimized by male violence and marriage by exchange. As depicted in the novel and as the response of the interviewee show in the marriage system of Gumuz people a woman needs to be exchanged for the wife of her brother, father, paternal uncle, other relatives or a neighboring man. It is such a dehumanizing marriage system that Dochan opposed to the extent of death. The other ugly side of marriage among these people is that when a bride to which a Gumuz women is intended for exchange dies, she is given as a lent. Yenche, for example experienced such type of marriage. Dochan and Yenche, opposing such dehumanizing patriarchal exploitation, resist it with determination. Dochan's life is ended up in tragedy. This is because even though she

exercises her agency to save both hers' and her brother's life where they travel to different places to escape from death, her brother, because of the societies gender expectation becomes an agent in victimizing Dochan. That is, it is his obsessive possessiveness together with conservative patriarchal gender expectation that force Dochan commit suicide. Here, the evil side of marriage by exchange and the hostile patriarchal tradition that dehumanizes women in Gumuz is unraveled based on the victimization of Dochan's life.

Similar to Dochan's fate, the fact that Yenché prefers to run into the Blue Nile is because of the tight trope of patriarchal system of oppression. Such treatment of female characters arises from the highly conservative gender role expectation of Gumuz society. In the society where marriage by exchange, women's impurity and male violence are rampant women may prefer death rather than carrying all these burdens across their life. Yenché, for instance, experiences one of the ugly ways of marriage by exchange. Though she tolerates this patriarchal expectation, the other one awaits her in which she is tortured because of pre-marital lose of virginity. In addition her husband (Saso) bitterly tortures her after he realized that she has conceived from Teto. When Yenché realizes that it is difficult to bear all these complex patriarchal expectations, she decided to cut off her marriage and joined her lover, though, her lover (Teto) was killed by her husband(Saso). It is the accumulative grievances of the aforementioned patriarchal traditions and male violence that forced her to jump into the river i.e. at that critical juncture she thought that they are going to take and give her back to Saso from whom she escaped. The only place to which she could run is the river. One may wonder why she jumped into that river and why she chooses the other merciless place

that had consumed the other female (Dochan). Yenché as Nhafa-Abenyi, in Nnaemeka (1997: 107) contends took the position of "self-contradictory identity".

When Dochán's and Talile's lives are examined across the two texts *Gurraacha Abbayyaa and Godaannisa* their ways of self-realization is found to be similar. For example, it is in her later's life that Dochán realizes her brother's true nature that he is highly obsessed with possessiveness. Dochán initially accepts and respects her brother; but gradually she realizes that he is her predator and finally determines not to abide to both his and the society's expectation of marriage by exchange. Similarly, in the novel *Godannisa*, Talile realizes Abdisa's possessiveness in her latter life. She initially does not suspect Abdisa and accepts his proposals (such as love and sex). Gradually, she suspects him and realizes that relying herself only on him does not work and finally develops her own agency. Therefore, the lives of both female characters pass through multiple and complex situations.

In the novel *Godaannisa*, Kulani is a female character who initially become an object of violent sexual abuse. This in deed forces her leave her birthplace for fear of stigma and travels to different places. As a result of this victimization in places she travels, she constructs another self which is not "I" and treats her own body like an-other. (Nnameka, 1997: 103). Hence, she experiences a degrading life situation, the life of prostitution. Towards the end of the novel, she determines to stop that life of prostitution and joins her brother. In the end she redefines herself and begins to exercise her own agency. When her life is examined across the text, she passes through the life of self-destruction, self-determination and self-construction. Therefore, it can be concluded that

Kulani has passed through complex and multiple life conditions i.e. she initially is portrayed negatively and in the end is portrayed positively.

The aforementioned life situations of Kulani can be taken as the representative of Oromo women. This is to say that, she is used as a representative of Oromo women whose lives are full of ups and downs under successive Ethiopian governments that exploits and oppresses Oromo women in particular and Oromo people in general. For Oromo women, it could be violent sexual assaults, physical and moral abuses, abject poverty, the feeling of homelessness, and others. Regardless of all these, as Kulani after experiencing such dehumanizing life conditions, finally, exercised her own agency, Oromo women can also continue to challenge all these burdens and play their role in exercising their knowledge and intelligence to use it in decision making for the welfare of themselves and their society.

Similar to Kulani, Talile also passes through diverse life conditions. From the beginning she is a victim of poverty. That is, she is from a very poor family, which has a direct impact on her higher education. Also, after Abdisa's consistent seduction she submits herself to him. Meanwhile, when she suspects him and realizes that submitting herself to him is not the ultimate solution for her survival, she decides to exercise her own agency. Finally, she resumes her education, begins a job of her own and searches for her lover and gets him. Across the novel, Talile has passed through great expectations, the denial of expectations and finally a partial fulfillment of her expectations.

Like Kulani, Talile's multiple life situations can also be a representative of some Oromo women. Like Talile, some Oromo women may lead lives under serious economic

problem. They can also be seduced by individual men who, like Talile could subvert their great expectations. They, like Talile, could also pass through all these problems and becomes a great moral agent in their society. Talile, after securing her means of subsistence, searches for her lover and tells him that she still is loyal to him. Guerin, et. al. calls such female characters a "powerful moral agents" (1991: 226). Therefore, Talile regardless of the ups and downs she passes through is a representative of a powerful moral agent of Oromo women.

When Intalo's characterization is examined from the feminist perspectives, she is also a young girl who wants to live as a free and fully female human being by refusing to conform to the patriarchally assigned roles of women in the society. Even though she experiences an abject poverty, the feeling of homelessness, lack of justice and lived with a prostitute mother in a morally decayed society, Intalo prefers to stay with her chastity. In addition, though she is helpless in a society around her there are many conditions that show Intalo that she is morally and psychologically different. The fact that she is free in expressing her feeling openly is one of the attributes that she reflects. Also, she is a girl who is not ashamed of her cultural heritages like her dressing and hairstyles. Moreover, what made her morally and psychologically strong is her firm stand in matters of sex. She resisted the act of seduction that Bonsa attempts. Besides, her strong, rational, thoughtful speeches made him change his mind and forced him promise to share her burdens considering her as his sister. Therefore, Intalo in a morally decayed society, portrayal to be a young female character who plays the role of changing the minds of men to think and act in playing their role to solve the social

problems like poverty, prostitution, homelessness, male violence, the myth of female subordination and injustices made against poor and innocent Oromo women.

Most female characters are portrayed as wise. Dochan in *Gurraacha Abbayyaa* exercised her wisdom in saving the life of both hers' and her brother's in which Teto realized later on. Also, Yenche offered Teto a wise advice in which he refused and finally became a victim. Similarly, Embon creates a condition in which they escaped from the patriarchal myth that forbids a girl not to be seen during menstrual period.

In this study, it is found out that female characters are depicted not only in relation to negatively constructed (like housewives, objects, mothers), but also positively constructed (like, active, assertive, determined, resistant and courageous) who at times exercise their agency to change their living conditions (Talile and Kulani) and who strongly resist patriarchal yoke to the extent of sacrificing one's own life for their determination (Dochan) and who exercises power in the world shared by men (Embon, Intalo and Dochan).

Based on the aforementioned conclusions, affirmative actions should take place to enable both Oromo and Gumuz women exercise their agency, and develop their self-confidence. Added to this, they need to be economically independent, socially active participants in decision making in social aspects like marriage, family planning and property rights. Besides, there needs to be an advancement of the quest for justice not only at household level but all the way with the local, national and levels. Finally, policies, strategies should be geared towards the agrarian sectors to provide

opportunities for, employment, direct expenditure, on basic needs fulfillment and poverty reduction (food, fuel, water crises should be solved).

APPENDIX

An Interview

Below are interviews conducted with the selected Gumuz people. The interview includes male (three male interviewee), one female and two girls. First selected males are interviewed and next a woman and two girls are interviewed. To make the names of the interviewee confidential, letters A. B. C...are used in the place of their actual name.

1. An Interview Conducted with : A

Question: What is a response of a wife if her husband kills the animal he needs and come back home with a part of the body?

A: She expresses her joy saying 'lilili!'. He, in turn says, 'Look at this! Let you eat his eyes! This is a response to your insult!'

Question: If it happens that a wife of a hero who kills a wild animal and the one that does not kill go to fetch water who fetches first?

A: It is a wife of a hero who fetches water first. The wife of the one who doesn't kill is always secondary in every activity she performs with the wife of a hero. The former is even insulted by the latter for her husband is considered to be a coward.

Question: Where does a pregnant women bear a child?

A: She goes down to the bush, bears, buries the umbilical cord there, cleansed and comes home.

Question: Why is that?

A: It is a custom. Just a custom. This is what is practiced for centuries.

Question: Why is it a custom?

A: It is just like that. It is our culture. Bearing a child at home is a taboo.

Question: Is there any hut in a backyard in which a woman bears a child?

A: Yes, a woman bears a child there.

Question: Can a man stay with a woman who is laboring.

A: A man can never stay where a woman is laboring.

Question: Why not? What if, for instance, you stay where a woman is laboring.

A: What am I doing from the place where a woman is laboring? What will my colleague says If he sees me there? You know what my colleague says? He calls me womanish.

Question: Is there a girl who go against the norm of a Gumuz society?

A: Actually, yes, she may go against the norm. However, if she resists or go against the norm, the father beats her, forces her and gives her to the one who want to marry her.

Question: How is a female treated during menstrual period?

A: There is a hut built and she stays there till she is cleansed.

Question: What is the reason?

A: It is our culture. Even the food she prepares is not clean.

Question: Can't a girl refuse a marriage proposal?

A: If a girl refuses a marriage proposal her father beats her and she without any choice accepts the proposal.

Question: Which child do you want to get first-a son or daughter?

A: I feel happy, if, I get a son first.

Question: Why is that?

A: Just for the continuation of the life cycle.

Question: If by chance all your children become females what do you do?

A: What can one does? One at least can give her to the other man and he would exchange a wife with her.

Question: Do a husband and wife sleep on the same bed?

A: No, it is not. He has the bed of his own and she is also too. If a wife sleeps embracing the arm of a husband, he becomes a coward. Hence, he afrails of hunting. He also afrails of fighting in the battle fields. He visits her only during sexual intercourse.

Question: Have you married by exchange?

A: Yes, I gave my sister to him and took his.

Question: What are the duties of a women at home?

A: She boils a coffee; prepares 'tela', collects firewood, fetches water and the like

2. An Interview Conducted with : B

Question: Do you like hunting?

B: Yes. We like it.

Question: What is the response of a wife, if the husband by chance comes bare hands?

- B: She insults him. She even says, "I will never prepare a food for you!"
- Question: What is his response to her insults?
- B: He never stays at home. He goes to a bush once again and tries his chance.
- Question: Why is it a taboo for a man to stay in the place where a woman is laboring?
- B: It is our culture.
- Question: What if, for instance, you stay where a woman is laboring.
- B: I will be called womanish.
- Question: How is a female treated during menstrual period?
- B: She stays in a hut where people do not see her.
- Question: Why?
- B: Yes, it is our culture. She never crosses in a farmland for the fact that crop plants are dried up. She is not expected to be seen by people. The food is taken for her by her colloquies.
- Question: If a girl, for instance, says: ' I fell in love with Mr. X's son and I want to marry him;' and even joins her lover what is the response of her family?
- B: She is ostracized. Her family and relatives cut their relationship from her.
- Question: Which child do you prefer to get first-a son or a daughter?

B: In case one encounters a problem, it is the son who is there to help. Otherwise, if by chance the son-in-law is brave, he may also help his in-laws. The son of a man, holding his spear can protect us. That is why we prefer the son first. The son, for his father, people and government is very important. Therefore, if a man gets two, three or four sons first that is very good.

Question: If by chance all your children become female what do you do?

B: There is a law. For instance, 'Can't you see this son?' she is given to such a son and he exchanges her for the girl he chooses. It is to support those who do not have a daughter.

Question: If it happens that a bride is not virgin, what does a bridegroom do?

B: He brings back her to her family. The family, in turn, asks who took her virginity. The bride tells the one that takes her virginity. Then, that person is forced to appear in front of elders and pays compensation. If he refuses the family saying 'You, who brought shame to us!' kills him. But, if he says ok, he pays a gun and goats.

Question: How many goats does he pay?

B: He pays about eight, nine or ten goats.

3. An Interview Conducted with: C

Question: If a boy or a girl want to marry, what do they do?

- C: A girl is given as an exchange. She is exchanged. I go to that family selects their daughter or he (from that family) comes to our family and selects my sister.
- Question: Can't she refuse?
- C: She can't
- Question: Why?
- C: If she refuses, a family beats her. After that she soon accepts.
- Question: Is a type of marriage called lending practiced here?
- C: Yes.
- Question: How does a boy who has no sister marry the girl whom he chooses?
- C: By lending.
- Question: What does it mean by lending?
- C: It means, if I have no sister a relative gives me his girl and I marry by exchanging her. And, if I get a daughter of my own, I in turn shall give her to the relative who lend me his daughter.
- Question: If your daughter refuses to be lend to a relative, what do you do?
- C: It is our culture. She do not refuse. How does a relative live with out marriage when I have daughter.

4. An Interview Conducted with: D

Question: Can't a girl refuse the marriage proposal?

D: She can't. If so, her father beats her and after she is beaten she accepts the proposal.

Question: If all your children become females what do you do?

D: One gives her to another man and he exchanges her to another girl.

5. An Interview with an Old woman: E

Question: What kinds of works do a woman expected to do at home?

E: She prepares '*farsoo*', collects firewood, and fetches water. She at times carries her child on her back, firewood on her head and the water on her shoulder.

Question: How distant a river from which she fetches water is?

E: In some places it is too far. In another places it could be not far from home.

Question: Can a woman have the power to limit the number of children she want to have?

- E: She has no power to say this. However, there are situations in which both couples agree so that husband marries another women.
- Question: Were there situations in which your husband had beaten you?
- E: If you do not go to the fieldwork in time, your husband can beat you.
- Question: What is the response of a woman to such acts?
- E: She goes back to her family and tells the case to them and after the family and elders investigate the case, the problem could be solved.
- Question: What do you think is the response of a bridegroom if a bride is not virgin?
- E: He brings back her to her family and she is forced to disclose who took her virginity and the one that takes her virginity in turn is forced to pay compensations. If the bridegroom is willing and wants for the continuation of the relationships of the in-laws he took both the compensation and the bride home or he will reject both and seeks for another female.
- Question: If a daughter refuses a marriage proposal, does a mother support her in refusing the proposal?
- E: A mother does not have the right to refuse. Both a mother and a daughter accept what a father decides.
- Question: Did you get married by exchange marriage?

- E: My father married my mother by exchanging his sister. My patrelinal uncle did too. Also, I was exchanged for my brother's wife.
- Question: What do you feel if you encounter a girl who gets married to a boy she loves and chooses?
- E: According to our culture, unless a family allows, a girl can never gets married to any boy she chooses. We do not have such rule of law. We did not have such rule before and we will never have this for the future.
- Question: Haven't you come across a girl who violates this rule?
- E: No, no girl. I haven't come across such a girl I have not seen.
- Question: If a girl and a boy arrive at the stage where they choose a partner, what do they do?
- E: Well, if it happens that a boy loves and wants to marry a girl, he tells the matter to his family and they ask the girl's family. If the family likes the boy they allow the girl to get married to the boy.
- Question: What if the girl refuses the marriage proposal and tells to a family that she has a boy of her choice whom she would marry?
- E: She can never refuses. I have nothing to say on this issue. (the respondent enraged). How can she says that she marries to whom she loves. No! ours is not like that. Not like that.
- Question: How about the boy? Can he say, 'I fell in love with that girl and I want to marry her'?
- E: Well, he tells the case to his family and they facilitate everything so that he marries her.

Question: Whom do you prefer to bear first, a boy or a girl?

E: We like both. But, we prefer if the boy comes first.

Question: Why is that?

E: A male helps for the continuation of the life cycle, and for the continuation of one's people. If a father dies, it is a male that takes his place. If a male is born, an alien cannot take his father's land. It is a male that inherits the land.

Question: Why is a bed of a wife and a husband different?

E: I do not know. I have nothing to comment on this nothing.

Question: How many children did you bear?

E: Seven. But, only three are alive.

Question: How many of them are boys and girls?

E: All are girls.

Question: How did they get married?

E: Just, by exchanging. By exchange.

Question: Whom for home?

E: I gave them to my relatives and they exchanged the girls for a wife.

6. An Interview Conducted with a girl: F

This is an interview conducted with two Gumuz girls. Although two are selected, one of them refuses to speak because of a fear not to speak under such circumstances. Therefore, the following interview is conducted with a single girl.

- Question: Are you learning?
- F: No, I am not.
- Question: Why?
- F: Well, simply because I am a female.
- Question: Do not you be happy if you were a student?
- F: Yes, I will be happy.
- Question: Then, who forbids you not to learn?
- F: My father refused to sent me to a school.
- Question: Why?
- F: I do not know.
- Question: If you want to marry a man of your choice, can you marry him?
- F: I cannot marry by my choice. Rather, I will go where my family sent me. They are my family who gives me to whom they choose.
- Question: What if you refuse to do so?
- F: I can never refuse the words of my family.
- Question: What if they force you?
- F: If they force me what can I do. This is because, if I refuse, I shall be beaten. Rather than to be beaten, I prefer to marry him even if he is an old man.
- Question: If by chance you fell in love with a bay can you express your love to him?

- F: I cannot. I cannot have such a courage to openly tell him that I love him.
- Question: Why not?
- F: Just, I fear.
- Question: What about him? Can he ask you?
- F: I don not know.
- Question: What do you do if your husband beats you?
- F: I tell the matter to my relatives.
- Question: If you marry to a husband without being virgin, what do you feel?
- F: This is a shame. I suffer the shame of having not virginity among my peers. I will be named a girl whose family is shameless.
- Question: What do you do during menstrual period?
- F: Because it is a work of God, what can I do? I stay in hut far distance from home till cleansed and come back after that.
- Question: What are the things that you are doing at home?
- F: We prepare 'injera', fetch water, collect fire woods.
- Question: What kind of a husband you wish to have?
- F: A young boy who is equal in age with me.

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