

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE
STUDIES, JOURNALISM AND
COMMUNICATION**

***Gender Roles and the Society's Perception of
Women in Macha Oromo Verbal Arts: A
Feminist Perspective***

**A PhD Thesis
Submitted to the Department of Foreign
Languages and Literature**

***By*
Berhanu B. Sura**

Supervisor: Berhanu Matthews (Dr.)

June 2015
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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of Doctor of Philosophy in Literature**

By

Berhanu Bekele Sura

Supervisor: Berhanu Matthews (Dr.)

**Addis Ababa University
June 2015
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

DEDICATION

To my late father, Bekele Sura Moroda

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that *Gender Roles and the Society's Perception of Women in Macha Oromo Verbal Arts: A Feminist Approach* is my own work, which has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Berhanu Bekele Sura entitled: *Gender Roles and the Society's Perception of Women in Macha Oromo Verbal Arts: A Feminist Perspective* and submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Literature complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Abstract

Gender Roles and the Perception of Women as Reflected in the Verbal Arts of the Macha Oromo: A Feminist Approach

By Berhanu Bekele Sura

June 2015; Addis Ababa University

The principal objective of this study is to examine the roles of men and women as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo, and thereby investigate the perception of women in some verbal art genres. The study also purports to investigate the behavioral expectations of men and women as reflected in Macha Oromo verbal arts; it analyzes and interprets folktales and proverbs so as to determine the extent to which the society expects men and women to conduct themselves in order to be acceptable. It takes into account the verbal arts as the primary site from which gender ideology is extracted, discussed and screened from a feminist perspective. The study examines gender roles as reflected in the verbal arts with the aim to show whether folk tradition is biased against women or not. Using feminism as a literary approach, it focuses on how folktales and proverbs reflect the roles, statuses, and identity of men and women in Macha Oromo society.

The study concludes that the verbal arts examined seem to have been propagating, validating, and maintaining the prevailing gender system and the traditional gender based division of labour among the society. The findings indicate that Macha Oromo use verbal arts to maintain conformity to accepted patterns of behavior and to inculcate its values, norms and mores in the minds of its members. In many verbal arts, women seem to have been characterized to possess behaviors deemed inappropriate in the society and were made to suffer from the punishment, implying that they should conform to the norm so as to live peacefully and get acceptance in the community. The verbal arts are, thus, used to encourage behaviors deemed appropriate as per the norm of the society and discourage the evil ones.

The study urges the folk to change their attitude and perception towards women and abstain themselves from using verbal arts which are sexist and designed to distort women's image in the society in any way. It also recommends the youth to create, uphold and disseminate folktales and proverbs which are gender neutral and do not perpetuate the traditional gender based division of labour.

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. While the first and second chapters constitute the introductory and review of related literature parts, the third and fourth chapters deal with research methods and theoretical framework. The fifth and six chapters are mainly concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the actual data. The last chapter concludes the dissertation and provides recommendation. As the study is associated with ethnography, it adopts different data collection techniques including observation, interview and focus group discussion as primary data gathering tools. Verbal arts collected and published in book forms by different bodies have also been used as secondary data.

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Afan Oromo Pronunciation Key

In order to help non-native speakers read the Afan Oromo versions of the text and thereby reduce the problem of pronunciation, the letters and words in which the sounds are found have been transcribed phonetically on the basis of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

N.B. If similar vowels come together in a word, it indicates that the sound is always long whereas the doubling of the consonants shows heavy stress.

letter	As in a word in Afan Oromo /its transcription	Translation/English equivalent
I. vowels		
a - /a/	Abbaa /a'ba:/	father
	Arba /arba/	Elephant
aa - /a:/	Aadaa /a:da:/	culture
	Aanaa /a:na:/	District
e - /e/	Eda /eda/	Last night
	Ergaa/erga:/	message
ee -/e:/ or /ɜ:/	Eegee /e:ge:/	tail
	Eessa /e:'sa/	where
i - /i/	Ija /id ₃ a/	eye
	Iddoo /i'do:/	place
ii - /i:/	Daandii /da:ndi:/	road
	Sariitii /sari:ti:/	spider
o - /o/	Oduu /odu:/	news
	Olla /o'la:/	neighbour
oo - /ɔ:/	Doonii /do:ni:/	ship
	Lootii /lo:ti:/	earring
u - /u/	Ulee /ule:/	stick
	Ukkamsuu /u'kamsu:/	smothering
uu - /u:/	Duudaa /du:da:/	deaf
	Lootuu /lo:tu:/	Reptile/lizard
II. consonant		
b- /b/	Bara /bara/	epoch
	Bona /bona/	winter
c -/c'/ - (alveopalatal, glottalized)	Caasaa /c'a:sa:/	structure
	Cabbii /c'a'bi:/	ice
d - /d/	Daree /dare:/	section
	Damma /da'ma/	honey
f- /f/	Fakkii /fa'ki:/	picture
	Fira /fira/	relative
g- /g/	Goota /go:ta/	Brave/hero
	Gaangee /ga:nge:/	mule
h- /h/	Harree /ha're:/	donkey
	Harka /harka/	hand

j- /d ₃ /	Jabbii /d ₃ abi:/	Calf
	Jibba /d ₃ iba/	hatred
k- /k/	Keelloo /ke:'lɔ:/	yellow
	Korma /korma/	male
l- /l/	Lafa /lafa/	land
	Laga /laga/	river
m- /m/	Mana /mana/	house
	Maatii /ma:ti:/	family
n- /n/	Nama /nama/	Man/human
	Niitii /ni:ti:/	Wife
p- /p/	Paastaa /pa:sta:/-borrowed word	Spaghetti
	Polisii /po:lisi:/-borrowed word	police
q - /k' / - uvular, voiceless glottalized stop	Qofaa /k' ofa:/	alone
	Qomee /k' ome:/	t-shirt
r- /r/	Raammoo /ra:'mɔ:/	worm
	Rirma /rirma/	termite
s- /s/	Somba /somba/	lung
	Suuraa /su:ra:/	Photo
t- /t/	Toora /tɔ:ra/	row
	Tabba /ta'ba/	hill
v- /v/	Vaayiresii /vaIresi:/-borrowed word	Virus
w- /w/	Waarsaa /wa:rsa:/	Sister-in-law
	Waaqa /wa:'ka/	God
x - /t' /- dental, voiced stop	Xinnoo /'ti'no:/	little
	Xaasaa /'ta:sa:/	Can
y- /j/	Yandoo /jandɔ:/	Heavy rain
	Yaada /ja:'da/	opinion
z- /z/	Zeeroo /ze:r ɔ:/-borrowed word	zero
ch- /tʃ/ - alveopalatal, voiceless affricative	Bakkalcha /ba'kaltʃa/	star
	Dacha /datʃa:/	Flat/level
dh- /d' / - alveolar, voiced stop	Dhadha /d'ad'a:/	butter
	Dhara /d'ara/	false
ph- /p' /- bilabial, voiceless stop	Qophii /k'op'i:/	preparation
	Xapha /t'ap'a/	game
ny- /ɲ/ - alveopalatal, nasal stop	Nyaara /ɲa:ra:/	Eye brow
	Sanyoo /saɲɔ:/	lover
sh- /ʃ/ - (alveopalatal and voiceless fricative)	Shaashii /ʃa:ʃi:/	shawl
	Shoora /ʃ ɔ:ra/	role

Definitions of Terms

- Gender role_ Here, gender role refers to the part played by men and women in a given social context, with any characteristic or expected pattern of behaviour that it entails. The term is used to mean societal expectations of proper behaviour, attitudes, and activities of males and females (Bem, 1993). In general, it is how a person is supposed to dress, act, think, and feel, based on whether he/she is a man or woman.
- Society's perception of women_ In this study, this phrase is used to mean the way a society looks upon women or regards them as reflected in the verbal arts.
- Verbal arts_ In this paper, verbal art was used in a way William Bascom defined it in *The Journal of American Folklore*. According to Bascom (1955: 245), "...verbal art was proposed as a term to distinguish folktales, myths, legends, proverbs, and other "literary forms" from the other materials which are commonly considered as folklore..."
- Man_ Here, the term is used to mean any male human being regardless of age and marital status.
- Woman_ For the purpose of this study, the term is used to mean a female human being (whether married or unmarried, young or old).
- Macha Oromo_ One of the major Oromo tribes who inhabit western and south western part of Ethiopia (Jimma, Ilu Abba Bora, Wollega [East, West, Qelem, Horo Guduru], Shewa [West, Southwest], and Wombera in Amhara region) (Alemayehu et al., 2004).

Abbreviations Used

- AAU- Addis Ababa University
- MOFT- Macha Oromo Folktale
- MOPC- Macha Oromo Proverb Cluster
- OALD- Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary
- OCTO- Oromia Culture and Tourism Office
- FGD- Focus Group Discussion

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

It is commonly said that Ethiopia is a museum of nations and nationalities to imply that it is a country where various heterogeneous ethnic groups live with their own unique historical, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Although some of these unique heritages of the groups have been influenced by different factors during the past regimes, a few of them have stood the test of time and have been reproduced and transmitted from generation to generation orally. That is to say, even if external pressure and time have exerted such a great influence on the culture, history and language of many nations and nationalities, most of them have hidden themselves in their oral traditions and were able to reach the current generation by words of mouth. The attention given to nations and nationalities and some policies related to language use introduced in this country in the past two decades have, by and large, brought significant changes in the attitude of people towards using one's own mother tongue.

Among the various ethnic groups which live in Ethiopia, the Oromo constitute the single largest group of the nation and occupy the largest part of the country. When writing about the population characteristics of Ethiopia, Keller (2008) mentioned that the Oromo who live mainly in central and southwestern Ethiopia, constitute about 40 percent of the population. In a similar manner, Jeylan (2006:256) noted, "The Oromo are the largest ethnation in the Horn of Africa; ... they constitute 40% of the country's total population and occupy the largest regional state of the federal [government of Ethiopia]". With regard to Afan Oromo (Oromo Language), Brown and Ogilvie (2009: 809) noted that it is "one of the major languages of the Horn of Africa, spoken predominantly in Ethiopia, but also in northern and eastern Kenya and a little in southern Somalia." However, the language and literature, both oral and written, of these people have begun to flourish and to be studied not long ago. Together with their language, the folklore of these people, particularly oral literature is one of the areas which has been given due attention by different bodies for the past few years. Hence, a great deal of Oromo folktales, folksongs, proverbs, riddles and other forms of oral literature have been collected and published in book forms regardless of the information contained in them.

Some scholars indicate that the range, complexity and variety of information contained in folklore have not been realized by researchers and administrators of this

country (Ethiopia) yet. Based on this, the researcher, here, feels that in some folklore genres of the Macha Oromo, the ways men and women have been represented and their roles in a society need a thorough investigation. Macha Oromo are of great interest to me because of the fact that I am part and parcel of the society; that is, I have lived and worked with them for the entire period of my life, and hence I am very close to the culture, language and literature of the people.

Verbal arts are believed to provide a rich source of cultural history; they also play a great role in the socialization of children, that is the way they learn the acceptable and unacceptable behaviours of a given society, transmitting and reinforcing messages associated with traditional values. Thus, studying folklore can be helpful to have a profound insight of a given society's gender roles, attitudes, creative imagination and living conditions. Different practices, gender based division of labour and its associated perceptions, as well as images, the concepts and beliefs associated with men and women, are all part and parcel of the traditional culture of any society (Nenola, 1999; Sikod, 2007; Locke et al., 2009). Hence, it can be said that gender systems or roles can be reflected in legends, tales, proverbs and myths conventionally shared in oral traditions.

Most of the time, people frequently use some verbal art forms without really noticing the impact they may have on identity construction. For example, among the Oromo, songs, proverbs, tales and other forms of verbal folklore are almost on everybody's lips to back up, enliven and embellish speech from ordinary conversations to higher social discourses everywhere and every time. Most importantly, there are numerous tales and proverbs which are embedded with negative images about women that people use in their dialogue without caring much about their long lasting effect on one's identity.

It is believed that understanding gender system provides one with intensive insights into men's and women's behaviour, relationships, needs, aspirations, roles and so forth. One of the best means in which one can understand gender relations is by studying the way both are portrayed in verbal arts. A number of studies conducted in this country so far indicate that women lack access to productive resources such as land, access to education, employment opportunities, basic health services, and suffer from violence and harmful traditional practices to such a very great extent than men. This clearly indicates that there is a gender gap in this country or a noticeable difference in behavior or attitudes between men and women which could affect the overall development of the country.

A number of scholars described gender role as what it means to be masculine or feminine, and as if it involves the activities, traits, expectations, and behaviours associated with men and women (Bem, 1993; Deutsch, 2007; The Editors of Salem Press, 2011). To be more specific, it can be said that gender role is a set of social and behavioural norms that are considered socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex in the context of a specific culture. Various studies on gender and women's studies indicate that gender systems are in most cases asymmetrical and hierarchical, and are in favour of men. The Macha Oromo do also seem to give more value to men than women. The male offspring gets more respect and value than the female offspring in the society beginning from the date of birth. For example, the women, together with the midwife, ululate five times with joy if the newly born child is male, and only three times if it is female. The Oromo folklore in general and the Macha Oromo verbal arts in particular are also peppered with such sayings as:

- *Beekumsi dubartii fi karaan jaldeessa bowwaa nama buusa* <Women's knowledge and monkeys' trail lead one to an abyss>
- *Durbii fi gundoon hin teessu* <A girl and a plate should never take rest.>
- *Dubartii fi kopheen jijjiiran tolti* <Women and shoes are better changed>.
- *Taa'uu mannaa durba dalchuu wayya.* <Fathering a daughter is better than sitting idle>.
- *Mootummaan dubartii karra cufaatti oolcha.* <Women's administration leaves the gate of the pen closed for the whole day>.
- *Dhiirri fi ibiddi xiqqoo hin qabdu* <A male and a fire can never be little>.
- *Nama Waaqayyo eebbisetu ganamaan ilma godhata* <A man blessed by God fathers a son early>, and so much more sayings.

When seen from the surface, most of the folktales people tell in Macha Oromo settlement area do also seem to undermine the role of women in the society and advocate the supremacy of men over women. They also seem to propagate the wrongdoings of women to the neglect of the wrongdoings of their counterpart, men. This is not, however, accepted by the current generation, especially by women who are struggling to maintain their equality with men in every aspect nowadays.

As the society under focus is patriarchal, many individuals are still reluctant to accept the equality of women, relying on some proverbs and tales which undermine women and have been legitimized in the course of time. They are still using some folklore forms to undermine the role of women in the society forgetting the world in which they are living and finding it difficult to leave behind old ways of thinking and to adjust to the new ways of life nowadays. The legacies of their forefathers and mothers are still in the minds of the

current generation. They do not seem to have an understanding that disparity and hierarchical relations between men and women have been socially and culturally produced and maintained in the course of time (Nenola, 1999).

In general, when seen from the surface, the verbal arts seem to prolong the division of labour between men and women in the society. In this day and age, it is common to see a woman of 60 or 70 years old carrying out monotonous household chores in the society merely because of her sex while a boy of 20 or 30 years old sits down and waits for an old woman to serve him; because it is considered as a taboo for a man to be engaged in indoor chores. Therefore, this kind of conservatism and uncompromising expressions which prolong gender based division of labour and which the society upholds mistakenly demands due attention. The study, thus, presupposes that the roles assigned to each and every character in the verbal arts have an underlying gender ideology when seen from a feminist perspective. Suffice it to hypothesize and speak to the point that in some verbal art forms of the Macha Oromo, the researcher feels that women have not been represented in a manner they ought to be and the gender systems in folklore in general and in verbal arts in particular seem oppressive.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Gender inequality seems to be a widespread problem all over the world. However, the degree of inequality and the unfair treatment of women vary from place to place depending on the development of the country and people's level of understanding. Gender inequality or discrimination is usually assumed to cause and perpetuate poverty and vulnerability in a society as a whole. For developing countries like Ethiopia, maintaining gender equality seems to take a long time and requires a great effort until the society is transformed and changes its attitude towards gender roles. The following quotation taken from the "Report of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on the Implementation of the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa" (2006:3) can project the fundamental problem underpinning this study.

Like many African countries, the majority of women in Ethiopia hold low status in the society. They have been denied equal access to education, training and gainful employment opportunities and their involvement in policy formulation and decision making processes have been minimal. Women play a vital role in the community by taking care of all social activities. However, they do not enjoy the fruits of their labour and suffer from political, economical, social and cultural marginalization.

(www.genderismyagenda.com/...reports/)

The researcher believes that this widespread problem of gender inequality and the unfair treatment of women in this country in general and the areas where the Macha Oromo live in particular seem to have strong association with the oral tradition of the people mainly with folklore. Many scholars also confirmed that conscious and unconscious biases against women have pervaded the discipline of folklore since its inception (Green, 1997).

Folklore in general and verbal arts in particular have special implications for a given society because they are viewed as cultural heritages which are handed down from the forefathers and mothers, and are considered worth maintaining without any alteration. In spite of the fact that language is in a state of flux, Oromo verbal arts have maintained the traditional stance of favouring men over women. In most cases, the Oromo society still regards verbal arts as tools to inculcate and maintain their cultural, social and moral values without noticing the gender biases prevalent in them. A number of cultural vehicles such as folktales and proverbs are still used widely to maintain the long lasting society's moral values and norms. Thus, old ways of life and traditional mode of thinking do not seem to easily give way to modern ways of life and thinking in Macha Oromo society posing challenges to the current generation. Okpewho's (1992:115) observation which says "much of the oral literature that is performed today, or that we see preserved in books, reflects a life style that may have served the earlier generation well but would be considered outmoded or even dangerous today" seems a reflection of such kind of idea.

The rationale behind studying the topic under focus, thus, lies in the fact that in many verbal arts of the Macha Oromo, there seem to be numerous cases and inequalities in the way men and women are represented. In other words, the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo do not seem to provide a balanced treatment of the sexes. Moreover, our concepts of gender roles which consist of the behaviours expected of people in a given society are mainly the results of our interactions with one another and self-concepts which we have learnt from our parents and the society around in various discourses. These concepts, some of which may be wrong, could limit an individual's role and status in that society.

Even if several thematic and descriptive analyses of Oromo folklore indicate that, in most cases, women have been portrayed stereotypically and negatively, attempts made to explore the gender roles and the exploitation of women as reflected in some folklore genres of this country in general and the Macha Oromo in particular hardly exist as far as

my review of related literature is concerned. In other words, despite the fact that many verbal art forms of the society under focus have been collected and published in book forms for a long period of time, they have not been studied well from different angles. In brief, no one has attempted to investigate gender roles as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo in detail from a feminist perspective.

Moreover, one's representation and perception in a way that it should not be can have a negative impact on his/her self esteem and aspirations. In one way or another, the negative images attached to oneself may adversely affect a person's individual rights and roles in a society in several ways. Hence, using feminism as a literary approach, this study explores the ways in which Macha Oromo verbal arts are used to influence the society in general and women in particular. The researcher believes that if the current generation is kept growing up being exposed to verbal arts which show a preference for traditionally masculine qualities rather than feminine ones, men try to put themselves into positions of 'superiority, dominance and prominence' while women are being forced to perceive themselves as subordinate, unfit, and incompetent in the society. Thus by focusing on some verbal art forms associated with men's and women's roles and behaviour, this study attempts to reveal how traditional expressions are used to indicate gender roles and the oppression of women by the patriarchal society. Suffice it to say that the representation of gender in folklore reflects cultural realities of a given society and that cultural realities which may have an impact on a certain group need to be studied thoroughly or dealt with seriously since they influence the society in many ways.

1.3 Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following major questions by way of understanding the Macha Oromo verbal arts and their possible impacts on gender equality.

1. How is gender constructed in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo?
2. What are the roles and statuses of men and women (as reflected in the verbal arts) among the society under focus?
3. To what extent does the division of labour reflected in the verbal arts resemble the day-to-day life experiences of men and women in the society?
4. How does the Macha Oromo society expect men and women to behave?

5. What could the traditional gender systems in the verbal arts teach the current generation about the relationship between men and women in the society?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The principal objective of this study is to examine the roles of men and women as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo, and thereby investigate the perception of women in some verbal art genres. In other words, the study intends to examine how gender roles are indoctrinated by means of verbal arts particularly via folktales and proverbs.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

Besides the above stated general objective, the study is also intended to:

- find out the way the society perceives men and women as reflected in the verbal arts.
- examine whether the way the society looks upon women (as reflected in the verbal arts) is exploitative or not.
- endorse the current and the coming generation avoid unnecessary reference to gender towards work and urge them to become gender-neutral.
- investigate the role and status of men and women as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo.
- accentuate on gender inequality that is mainly noticed in verbal arts.
- expose those verbal art forms of the society which are negative in connotation and bring to light their possible impact on women.

1.5 Significance of the Study

As stated earlier, many scholars agree that studying the verbal aspects of folklore may help one to understand a given society's mode of thinking, beliefs, problems, fears, wishes, aspirations and the likes (Fekade,1998; Oring, 1949; Nenola,1993; Boswell, 1962; Dundes, 1965). Accordingly, first of all, the study can help policy makers, administrators, development agents and the likes to prepare their plans in line with these people's problems, wishes, needs and interests.

Secondly, it would enable the current and the coming generations to know their cultural heritage. In other words, the study can help the youth and others to get insight

into the tradition, philosophy, beliefs and attitudes of the Macha Oromo. Besides, the identification and description of some verbal art forms in this thesis may also pave the way for further comparative studies on the embedded contents of the folklore of other ethnic groups in Africa in general and in Ethiopia in particular.

Furthermore, as the study is expected to investigate the unfair treatment of women in the society, anybody who wants to advocate their roles and status or wants to prevail against the tradition might get useful insight from the results of the study. Above all, the study will initiate women and their supporters to fight for equality as it treats the topic from a feminist point of view.

The study can also give greater insight and understanding into why and how the Macha Oromo women are expected to play a submissive role in their society unlike their dominant male partners. Touching upon a wide variety of issues related to gender, folklore and feminism, the dissertation can help one to gain an in-depth understanding of how patriarchy is reflected through language, and how some verbal art forms help to construct women's identity in Oromo society. Lastly, it is believed that the study can serve as a base for further studies on gender, culture, language, and literature of the Oromo people.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The term Macha denotes a very wide area of land with large number of people. “The present settlement distribution of this main Oromo tribe indeed fits very well with the meaning of the tribal name” (Alemayehu et al., 2004:162). Going round and collecting data from this very large area of land and population, therefore, demands a great deal of money and too much time. As a result, since the Macha Oromo are homogeneous people with negligible dialectical and cultural differences, the required data for the study were collected from four zones of Oromia Regional State, namely, East Wollega, West Wollega, West Shewa, and Ilu Abba Bora. To be precise, five districts including Guto Gida and Jimma Arjo from East Wollega, Gimbi from West Wollega, Tibe Bako from West Shewa and Bedelle from Ilu Abba Bora zone were selected purposefully and considered in the fieldwork. This is mainly because of the fact that it would be impractical to try to go round all the districts where the Macha Oromo live in the time and with budget allocated for carrying out this study. The four zones and the respective districts (study area) were selected for two basic reasons. The first one is based on their location; that means, they would enable me to collect abundant and representative

data since they are found in different directions of Macha Oromo settlement areas (east, central, west, and north). Secondly, I know the areas very well since I lived and worked in them, and hence there would be no problem to communicate easily with the society during data collection.

Genre wise, it is known that verbal art is a broad term that consists of proverbs, riddles, folktales, folksongs, myths, legends, nursery rhymes and so on. The Macha Oromo do also possess all these invaluable and different forms of verbal arts. Although it is believed that these different forms of verbal arts may reflect the psychology, beliefs, attitudes and traditions of the society, it would be difficult to manage and study all these genres of verbal arts besides time and budget constraints. Hence, the study focuses only on folktales and proverbs to examine the gender roles and the perceived oppression of women in the society. The folktales and proverbs to be studied in this paper are also only the ones that characterize men and women and/or primarily focus on women by personifying animals. The two genres are selected based on the popularity they have in the area and the ample information they are hoped to provide for the study. They are the most widely and commonly used forms of oral arts among this society; they also supplement one another. Besides, it is believed that their influence is so strong in conditioning members of the society to behave in a certain way.

1.7 Geographical and Socio-cultural Background of the Society

In order to understand the gender systems/roles and the unfair treatment of women in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo, it is vital to have some geographical and socio-cultural background knowledge of the society. Hereunder, an attempt was made to touch upon the social, geographical, religious, occupational and other aspects of the society briefly.

The Oromo are one of the Cushitic speaking groups of people who are said to be indigenous to east Africa. As stated by Prouty and Rosenfeld (1981), the Oromo were a very ancient race in the horn of Africa. According to the 2007 census estimate, the Oromo, who live in almost every part of Ethiopia, constitute about 40 percent of the population (Keller, 2008). Nowadays, the Oromo live in Oromia and almost every part of Ethiopia, Northern Kenya and Somalia. Oromia is a national regional state in Ethiopia, which extends “from 2 degree and 12 degree N and between 34 degree and 44 degree E” and is bordered by “Somalia, Afar lands and Djibouti in the East, Sudan in the West,

Kenya, Somalia and others in the South, and Amhara and Tigray Regional states in the North” (Gada, 1988: 27).

The Oromo nation has a single common mother tongue called Afan Oromo and basic common socio-cultural, political, legal and religious system known as Gada system (Gada, 1988). Afan Oromo, which belongs to the Eastern Cushitic language group is said to be widely spoken in East Africa particularly in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. As Baxter (1986:53-54) stated there are two important shared attributes among the Oromo. These are “First, any Oromo speaker, whatever dialect he/he speaks, can be understood immediately by another Oromo. Secondly, Oromo all share common cultural values and modes of thought and feel culturally comfortable with each other.”

Many scholars have asserted that through the Gada system, the Oromo had maintained their social, political, legal and religious aspects of life for a long period of time before Menelik II tactfully and forcefully occupied their fatherland and formed the present day Ethiopia (Gada, 1988). As to Rikitu (1992: xvii) the Oromo people had “their own history, culture and form of government until Menilik II, in collaboration with European colonial powers (France and Great Britain) conquered them and made them his subjects.”

Gada is understood as an “age-grade system that divides the stages of life of individuals, from childhood to old age, into a series of formal steps” (Tadesse, 2004:14). Thus, Gada system is an egalitarian system of law in which an individual is assigned to do something according to his age group which alters every eight years. Hence, in a Gada system a person is expected to behave himself according to the age group in which he is found. With regard to this a number of scholars noted that Gada is a system which is transferred from one group to another every eight years in assuming political, military, judicial, legislative and ritual responsibilities among the male members of the society on the basis of age group (Beletech, 2003; Rikitu, 1992; Tadesse, 2004).

As far as religion is concerned, the Oromo believe in one Supreme Being called ‘Waaqa’ or ‘Rabbi’ (God) to whom they attribute the ultimate cause of everything. ‘Waaqa’ is conceived as a divine and eternal being who is omnipotent and lives at a far distance up in the sky and controls everything below him on the earth. As to the Oromo, one’s fortune or misfortune, success or failure, reward or punishment, and everything that encounters a living being is determined by ‘Waaqa’. As Salviac (2005:3) mentions, “The Oromos are not fetishists. They believe in ‘Waaqa tokkoo’, unique universal creator and

master. They see His manifestations in the great forces of nature, without mistaking them for Him.” Similarly, Rikitu (1992:11) notes, “the Oromo Waaqa/Waaqayoo is one and same for all, the creator of everything, source of every life, omnipresent, infinite, incomprehensible, and He can do and undo anything”. Despite external pressures, great deals of Oromo have maintained their original religion, and nowadays, many have been exposed to different kinds of religion and were converted to Orthodox Christianity, Muslim, Catholicism, Protestantism and others.

Like other Oromo groups, the Macha Oromo believe in one Supreme Being known as Waaqa (God) and they call their religion as Waaqeffannaa. These people believe that Waaqa is the creator of all things and guards His creations in their place in the universe. According to Waaqeffannaa religion, Waaqa (God) has put everything in an order and if anybody breaks His order, it results in sin which in turn leads to punishment in the form of bad harvest, disease, famine and other hazardous events (Tesema, 1980; Gada, 1988; Rikitu, 1992).

Many historians have asserted that the Oromo have been living in and around the highlands of the present day Bale province, particularly around Madda Walaabuu before their sixteenth century expansion to different parts of the country [Ethiopia]. For example, Haberland (1964) confirmed that the ancestral homeland of the Oromo was in the cool highlands in the region of Bale. Similarly, Levine (1974) and Lewis (1965) stated that the Oromo are assumed to have originally been one culturally homogeneous society in Southern Ethiopia, somewhere between the middle lakes of the Great Rift Valley and the Bale plateau.

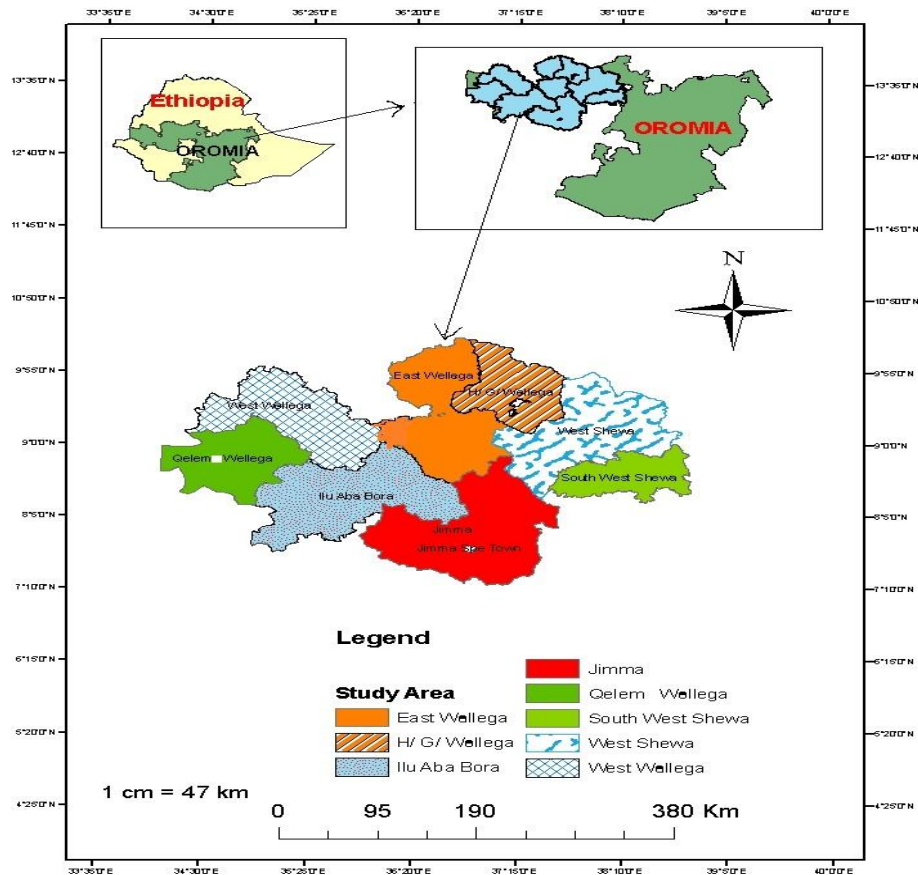
As to oral tradition, Oromo is said to be the father of two major pastoral tribes named Borana and Barentuma. An increase in population, the search for more pasture land, internal conflicts and other similar reasons were said to have forced the two tribes to expand their territories in different directions from where they had been living for long during the sixteenth century (Tesema, 1980). Accordingly, while some groups of the Borana tribes stayed in their place, a certain group of them (especially the Macha and Tulama tribes) were said to have moved “north and northwest leaving the Omo and Gibe river basins to the left” and settled around Oda Nabe, which is located in the present day Eastern Shewa province. Oda Nabe is said to have served the Macha and Tulama Oromo as their socio-political and religious center for several years (Tesema, 1980; Negaso, 1984). Concerning the expansion and settlement of Macha and Tulama tribes at Oda Nabe and their later spilt, Alemayehu et al. (2004:163) write as follows.

The two main tribes of Macha and Tulama have completed the work of reviving the Gada system at Madda Walabu and by the sixteenth century, they undertook a life and death struggle for regaining their old settlement area. The two tribes have indeed established another politico-religious centre at Oda Nabe where they stayed together for several years. Sharply, the Macha tribe left Oda Nabe for the Tulama and made an advance to south western direction and established a new tribal politico-religious centre at Oda Bisil.

According to Tesema (1980:24) an increase in the population of the Macha Oromo apparently brought their split into a number of clans and sub-tribes including Leqa, Sibü, Tume, Amuru, Guduru, Nonno, Jimma, Wollega and Hulle, and forced them to expand their territories in different directions from Oda Bisil. He further explained that while some branches of Macha particularly the Hulle tribe crossed the Gibe River and formed the five Gibe states of Jimma, Gera, Guma, Goma and Limmu , the Tume tribe were said to have moved on westwards to inhabit parts of Ilu Abba Bora. “The others, Leqa, Sibü, Jimma, Guduru, Amuru and Nonno are said to have gradually conquered what is now Wollega region” (ibid).

Concerning the tribe’s settlement areas, Cerulli (1922) also indicated that the name Macha refers to the Oromo tribes living in the districts beyond the Gibe River, that is the five independent kingdoms of Guma, Goma, Gera, Jimma, and Limmu; the Ilu, the Nonno, and the five Leqa tribes. In general, “the present day settlement areas of the Macha tribe include Western Shewa, South western Shewa, Jimma, Ilu Abba Bora, Eastern Wollega, Horo Guduru Wollega, Western Wollega, Qelem Wollega, Wombera and [some parts] of Gojjam administrative zones” (Alemayehu et al., 2004:162). The following map shows the major settlement areas of Macha Oromo tribe in Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia.

Figure 1. Map of Macha Oromo Settlement Area



The most common form of economic activity in Oromia is traditional agriculture. Hence, the society, Macha Oromo, entirely depends on agriculture: farming and herding cattle. Domestic animals especially oxen are used in the tilling of the ground by pulling a plough till today. Maize, barely, ‘teff’, wheat, millet, sorghum, peas and beans are among the various cereals and crops grown in the area. Coffee is also widely grown in many areas where the Macha Oromo occupy. The society is also known for the domestic animals they rear including horses, donkeys, mules, sheep, goats, oxen, cows and chickens.

There does not seem to be any significant cultural difference among the Oromo who live in Wollega, Ilu Aba Bora, Jimma, Shawa and others. The differences merely seem more of geographical and dialectical than in their oral tradition. Hence, while discussing the gender roles and the oppression of women in Macha Oromo verbal arts, it should not be considered as if it is only peculiar to the Macha Oromo, as the Oromo in

general have common cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In other words, since the Oromo all over the country share a large number of folklore forms in common with slight dialectical and lexical differences, there surely exist similar oral prose narratives and proverbs in other areas as well. For example, while undermining the status of women in the society, the Oromo of Arsi, Bale, Borena, Harar and the surrounding areas say:

- *Nadheen qalbii hin qabdu* <Women have no psyche>(MOPC-51:3)
- *Dubartiin qalbii tokkitti qabdi, isayyuu takko dhungatan harkaa baddi* <Women have only one psyche, and they lose it upon being kissed once> (MOPC-51:1)

Similarly, the Oromo of Wollega, Ilu Aba Bora, Jimma and Shawa say “*Dubartiin qalbii hin qabdu*” a saying, which has a similar meaning with the above one and differs only in the lexis- *nadheen, beerri, and dubartiin-* all meaning the same, women.

As stated earlier, agriculture is the main source of employment for Macha Oromo society as in most developing countries where cultural norms do not ban women from work. While women are appreciated for embarking on activities that men usually do (like ploughing, participating on the erection of house, winnowing, harvesting etc), men are discouraged and devalued when seen doing household chores that women exclusively carry out.

There is vivid labor division among men and women in Macha Oromo society. It is considered as the role of a woman to grind seeds/cereals, make dough, bake bread/‘budena’, make sauce, make coffee, brew alcohol (areke and farso), clean a room, and the likes and serve men and children. Food is still cooked in a traditional manner in a cooker made of clay; in many areas, women still use millstone to grind grains. In the society, women are also expected to collect firewood from the forest, milk cows, fetch water from the river, go to the market and buy raw materials for food preparation and so forth. They are also frequently called to assist men in works in the field.

On the other hand, men are mainly engaged in agricultural activities such as ploughing land, sowing seeds, harvesting, winnowing, protecting cereals and crops from wild animals and so on. It is also their responsibility to erect houses, protect the homestead from danger, take animals to pastureland and so forth. In the society, because of the age-old traditions, it is common to see a young man of, for example, 20 years old sitting comfortably at home (waiting to be served) while a woman of seventy years old gets busy to cook and serve the patriarchy. In short, it is considered a taboo for a man to

cook food at home while there is a woman at home; a man is also not expected to clean a room, milk cows, and fetch water from a river.

As far as the duties of Macha Oromo women in general and the Sayyo Oromo women in particular is concerned, Negaso (1984:129) mentions the following.

Women were expected to participate actively in all kinds of economic activities from domestic work up to livestock raising and cultivation. They provided labor power for transportation, for example, that of goods to the market. The milking of cows, the care of calves and of other domestic animals, which were kept at the “qe’ee”, and of the pack animals of visitors as well as those used for riding, the food preparation for the family and its guests, including the washing of their feet, were all the tasks of women.

Thus, in the area where Macha Oromo live, it is shame for a man to grind, cook, collect firewood, and fetch water etc while there are women at home. A woman, no matter how young or old she may be, is expected to serve a man in various ways so as to be called good and accepted by the society.

According to Asmarom (1973) among the Borana Oromo the differentiation between boys and girls commences from early childhood and the way they are brought up. Boys are inculcated to be strong, brave, to speak in public, to freely participate in political affairs, rituals and religious activities. They are also encouraged to do traditional outdoor sports such as horse riding, spearing circular woods, jumping, hunting, stick fighting, wrestling etc. which help them for the physical build up as well as fitness. In contrast, the girls are restricted not to get involved in some of these activities. Traditionally they are not encouraged to speak in public, attend assemblies and are not given public authority in the Gada system.

Ploughing, erecting house and the likes are deemed to be hard works and women rarely involve directly in such activities. Since women are considered as weak, men usually let them do less labour demanding jobs, although in reality what women perform does not seem less labor demanding. In addition to household chores, Macha Oromo women accompany men in the field to scatter seed, weed, harvest, collect, and winnow cereals and crops. In spite of the fact that they are busy both with indoor and outdoor chores all the time, women’s work is not usually appreciated and considered worthwhile in the society. Both before and after marriage, women work in association with the family but much of their works are devalued. While boys are encouraged to leave the home atmosphere and free to be engaged in outdoor and public activities, girls normally stay in

the home and work under constant supervision of the family which ultimately forces them to become dependent socially, economically and psychologically on men.

Surprisingly, until now wives are expected to wash their husband's legs before he goes to bed. While there are women at home, men do not even take water to drink from the container; they should be given by their mothers, wives, sisters, daughters or any other woman at home. Women ought to be busy all the time and are not expected to rest at home. The following proverbs obtained from the area may clearly witness this fact.

- *Dubartiin keessummaa hin qabdu.* <A woman as a guest is never treated> (MOPC-30:2)
- *Durbii fi gundoon hin teessu.* <A girl and a plate should never take rest>(MOPC-30:3)

According to Macha Oromo tradition, women are also not expected to sleep before men. They go to bed later than men and should wake up early in the morning to prepare breakfast and do other jobs while the men sleep. Apart from this, as regards sexuality, while the males are appreciated for making sex with lots of girls, it is shame for women to lose virginity before marriage. If a bridegroom or a husband does not find her virgin upon marriage, he sends her back to her family immediately, though recently very few do so. Anyhow, it seems mandatory for Macha Oromo girls to be virgin before marriage so as to get respect in the society.

Macha Oromo women are also in a disadvantageous position economically. Until recently, only the male offsprings have the right to inherit their family's property. Men are deemed as more valuable than women and thus endowed with more power. It may be as a result of these facts and others that the society in the area says "*Dubartii Waaqayyo eebbisetu dura ilma godhata*" (MOPC- 27:16) which means, "It is a blessed woman who first gives birth to a son". As per the tradition of the society, it is only the son who remains in the family and inherit the property upon father's death. Concerning this Gemechu (1994:140) writes:

In traditional Oromo, male offspring are preferred to female, especially in the case of first-born child. This is because the first-born son replaces his father and becomes his legal heir. This preference for sons can be evidently explained by the fact that daughters had to be given away in marriage and could not inherit their father's estate.

In general, Macha Oromo society is highly patriarchal and, thus, men and women are not accorded the same privilege both at home and out in the public; within the family, husband and wife have no equal status. In the society, while men, irrefutably, have the power to command, women are expected to bow to this social norm.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

As it is known, research methodology enables a researcher in his/her attempt to achieve the general and specific objectives of the research. It also assists him/her to identify the appropriate procedures the researcher is going to use for the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Accordingly, hereunder an attempt was made to discuss the fundamental research method, appropriate data collecting instruments, sampling techniques, methods of data analysis and interpretation, and translation techniques.

To begin with, this study falls under a philosophical worldview named advocacy or participatory. In this type of worldview, a researcher addresses “issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation” (Creswell, 2009:9). As the title clearly depicts, this study is about gender roles and the exploitation of women as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo, and hence it addresses the issues raised by Creswell (ibid) as its focal point with the ultimate goal to bring about change in the way people perceive men and women and the resulting role they play in the society.

The fundamental research method for the study is qualitative. This is because, the research questions designed to be answered in the study do not normally require numerical data which can be counted, measured and validated statistically and mainly deal with the what, how and why of the problem stated. Moreover, the study is aimed at examining and revealing the perceptions, expectations and attitudes of the society on gender equality as reflected in the verbal arts and these societal and public affair issues are better researched using qualitative method. Besides the fact that it is the best method in providing information about the behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals, qualitative research methods, by their very nature, are said to be effective in identifying intangible factors such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, and the likes. In other words, qualitative methods are said to be employed for studying social reality in detail; and as gender issues are one aspect of social reality, qualitative analysis is believed to provide a thorough understanding of the kind of work in hand.

The data required for the study, which is Macha Oromo folktales and proverbs, were collected using different techniques. These genres of folklore were selected since they are supposed to be very important to the Macha Oromo society as the people regard them as a storehouse of their world view. They sometimes use these genres of verbal arts spontaneously in their day to day conversations to maintain their social norms, embellish their speech and appear knowledgeable in some cases. Moreover, folktales and proverbs about men and women were chosen largely because they have been frequently bypassed on issues related to gender inequality and women's oppression in this country. The long lasting effect they may have on the audience and the value the society attaches to these genres in everyday communications does not seem to have been given due attention.

The data were gathered from both sexes, male and female, with an age limit of greater than 18; yet special attention was given to the elderly people as they are those who are believed to use proverbs and tales most of the time in their conversations. The researcher believes that the long standing perspective of Macha Oromo society on gender construction can be determined from the embedded contents of their tales, jokes and proverbs that mainly focus on men and women. Predominantly, verbal arts, especially folktales and proverbs that the society uses in different settings were collected by using interview, observation and focus group discussion techniques from people of various backgrounds in the study area. In addition to this, the oral prose narratives and proverbs collected by different scholars and published in book forms were used as supplementary data for the study.

2.1 Primary Data

The primary data for this study were gleaned from a series of interviews, observations and focus group discussions held with a number of informants from Macha Oromo settlement areas. Field notes and memos relevant to the study and taken from any casual discourse people make in various settings were also included under the primary data.

The informants were selected using snowball and purposive sampling techniques; because these two are said to be the most appropriate techniques widely employed for the kind of work in hand. Snowball sampling (also known as chain referral sampling) is a technique which involves identifying informants for inclusion in the sample by referrals from other subjects. In other words, snowball sampling is a sampling technique used for finding research subjects where one subject gives the researcher the name of another

subject, who in turn provides the name of a third subject, and so on (Miller, L. R. and Brewer, D. John, 2003). Purposive sampling is, on the other hand, one of the most common sampling strategies used to find participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question; it is a non probability sampling technique which is often used to select subjects whose qualities, knowledge and experiences are valuable to the researcher (Koshy, 2005; Somekh and Lewinr, 2005).

2.1.1 Interview

One of the primary data collecting instruments employed in qualitative research is interview. As it is known, a great deal of qualitative data comes from talking with people whether it is through formal interviews or casual conversations. Interview was used in this study in order to obtain new data and ensure the authenticity of the data that circulates among the society in different forms; that means, it was used for collecting some folktales and proverbs, for seeking meanings attached to them, for obtaining clarification on the contexts in which they are used, and for eliciting some information about Macha Oromo society, their attitudes towards gender specific roles, socio-cultural realities and traditional values.

Instead of structured and directive interviews, an unstructured, nondirective, open-ended interview was employed to gather the data necessary for the study. Because, this type of interview does not offer only a limited, pre-set range of answers for a respondent to choose, but also enables the researcher to ask further questions beyond what has already been planned. This type of interview is also believed to give the researcher an opportunity to ask some probing questions in order to get relevant answers to the research questions. This can be substantiated with the words of Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1990:79-80) which says "the consistent ordering and phrasing of questions is ill suited for in-depth examination of thoughts or feelings of individual respondents".

To this effect, a significant number of conversant, outspoken and thoughtful individuals were selected from the four zones (five districts, namely Guto Gidda, Jimma Arjo, Bedelle, Tibe Bako and Gimbi) by means of purposive and snowball sampling techniques and were asked to provide information for the study. Before the selection of the informants was made, an extensive groundwork was accomplished with the respective district's culture and tourism office experts so as to get individuals who are good at storytelling, joking and using proverbs in their speech. As the research is purely

qualitative, determining the population and the sample size in advance for the sake of claiming representativeness to generalize the findings at the end was not given due attention. This is because, qualitative research, by its very nature, uses smaller but focused samples instead of large samples. Hence, in this study, too, a special emphasis was put on the scope, quality and the variety of information that helps to answer the research questions properly than the number of participants.

The leading interview questions were prepared in advance and an attempt was made to collect the data relevant to the research questions besides simply looking for folktales and proverbs people use among themselves. That is to say, besides looking for the verbal arts, relevant questions that need clarifications and that require the individuals' own attitude towards gender roles and the perception of women as reflected in folktales and proverbs were prepared in advance to ease the interview. As it is also very difficult to obtain these folklore genres without a context in which they are used, certain situations were created to elicit the required data or responses from the respondents. In addition, when the interviewee run out of memory to tell a story or use a proverb about men and women, the researcher often used to begin a story and ask him/her to complete it so as to stimulate reactions and bring forth other similar tales and proverbs. This strategy is recommended by folklorists as it enables the researcher to collect a number of data; Schoemaker (1990:27), for example, suggests, "...if the conversation is slow, or if people are not yet relaxed enough to tell stories comfortably, it is perfectly acceptable for you to tell a narrative yourself in order to stimulate reactions and the telling of other narratives."

The interviews were video and audio-taped for later transcription and analysis. After transcription, the responses were sorted out and those which have direct relevance with the study in hand were analyzed and interpreted together with those data collected using other methods. The analysis is based on the assumption that folktales and proverbs used among Macha Oromo society may imply gender role imbalance that reinforces women to submit to men's authority and perpetuate patriarchy. While the main data being the words spoken in face-to-face interviews, non-verbal communication modes (such as hand gestures and facial expressions) were also noted as these modes of communication can strengthen the meaning of the data to be collected. The interview was conducted in Afan Oromo so that the subjects can respond to the questions with full understanding, and the data obtained were later translated into English for analyses and interpretations.

2.1.2 Observation

The study of gender in folklore demands a researcher to closely observe the day-to-day cultural, social and economic life of a society under study. It also requires him/her to go down into remote villages, meet elders in the community and generate adequate information about the past and present traditions, cultural practices, social/gender relations and norms of the society. Thus, paying close attention to the socio-cultural realities of a given society enables the researcher to fully understand why and when the society uses a certain form of folklore (Okpehewo, 1991; Brown D., 1999; Dorson, R., 1972).

Observation was, thus, another data collecting instrument employed in this study. Both participant and non participant observation techniques were employed as major data collecting instruments. As it is known, in participant observation, a researcher or any data collector participates in the everyday life experiences and activities of the people he/she is trying to understand. Since I have been living in the areas and was member of the community who entirely shares the language and the culture of the society, no significant problem faced me during the observation. Hence, this technique of data collection enabled me to share the experiences and feelings of the people as it is not merely observing what is happening in the society.

Where it was found to be difficult to be involved directly in an ongoing activity, non participant observation technique was used. In this way, I was able to observe attentively the actions and interactions of the people, their language use, participants in a certain activity, and the likes wandering here and there in various places and sitting in a corner as a customer in various service providing rooms. As the research is about gender roles, the roles or activities of men and women in their day to day activities were observed and seen vis-a-vis the folktales and proverbs that circulate among the society. As a participant and non participant observer, the researcher made attempts to observe the role of men and women everywhere including people's residences, hotels, market places, billiard rooms, agricultural fields, courts, herding sites, mead and 'katikala' houses, tea rooms and so on.

During the observation (particularly participant observation), the researcher routinely used informal interviews, which enabled him to discuss, probe some issues, and ask questions about why people behave and act in a certain situation with the intention of

eliciting highly candid accounts of individuals. Using this technique, I was able to observe and find out what people do, and was also able to find out what they think about being a man and a woman i.e. their attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and the likes through informal inquiries.

In this method of data collection, the researcher was able to take an extensive field notes about the perception of men and women by the community, stereotypic gender roles, gender based division of labour, and clarifications on the meaning of some folktales, proverbs and jokes told about men and women in the society. In certain cases (with the participants permission), some events were audio and video recorded to show the plausibility and reliability of the data to anybody who needs to check later.

2.1.3 Focus Group Discussion

An attempt was also made to use focus group discussion (henceforth FGD) to obtain primary data for the study. This technique of data gathering instrument was used to understand the differences in perspectives and explore the depth and nuances of perceptions and/or opinions regarding the roles of men and women among the society under focus. It was carried out to draw the respondents' perceptions on the existing pattern of gender roles in households and community. Since FGDs are communication events, they enabled the researcher to know more about gender systems and the existing gender relations in the research locality as they were reflected on the participants' interaction during the discussion. The use of FGD was planned so as to provide complementary data on the meanings ascribed to a man and a woman among people in the study area.

A group of six to eight people were selected purposively to participate on the discussion from the four zones in their respective districts. Assistants of the researcher helped in nominating key individuals who are familiar with the topic, known for their ability to share their opinions and use proverbs and tales most of the time in their communications. The participants were composed of both male and female and literates and illiterates; yet an attempt was made to use homogenous groups in each session of the discussion in order to avoid inhibitions and domination of one member by the other.

About ten main questions related with the gender systems and the perception of women by the society were carefully predetermined and used in the discussion. The researcher acted as a moderator and led the discussion, kept the conversation flow smoothly and took a few notes to remember the comments forwarded so as to use later.

Hence, I facilitated the discussion by giving the participants appropriate contexts that initiated the use of folktales and proverbs referring to men and women and asked clarifications on when and why each is used (when necessary) besides searching for the meanings ascribed to a man and a woman and what each gender does among the society.

Everything in the discussion was recorded on video cassette and tape recorder since they help to understand the context in which the tales and proverbs are used. Before beginning the discussions, the participants were empowered in order to help them feel a sense of purpose and eliminate any barriers that may arise as a result of the differences between them. The data gathered using this technique was also assumed to strengthen and substantiate the information gleaned through interview and observation. In order to make the discussion hot and inspiring, appropriate contexts that initiated the use of some verbal art forms, mainly jokes, folktales and proverbs, referring to men and women were forwarded to the participants when necessary; and clarifications were sought on when and why each is used. Some probes were also used so as to get detailed information and deep insight from the participants especially when they hesitate or refrain from providing enough information.

2.2 Secondary Data

Using secondary data for analysis is a common practice in many research works. Secondary data analysis involves the analysis of an existing data, which had previously been collected by other individuals, usually for a different research question. Hence, in addition to the above data gathering instruments, verbal arts (folktales and proverbs) collected by different scholars and published in book forms were used as secondary data and interpreted from a feminist perspective. Secondary data is data gathered and used for purposes other than that for which they were originally collected (Miller and Brewer, 2003).

These data (secondary data) were used so as to strengthen and crosscheck the information that was obtained from the participants through interview and observation techniques. This is because, for one thing, many individuals and some regional government institutions have made attempts to collect and publish various genres of folklore in book forms since the past few years. Secondly, there are some folktales and proverbs which are widely used by the society in specific contexts; hence these kinds of data (verbal art forms) were collected from the books published by different scholars

since it is difficult to create contexts in which they are told for all of them during the data collection. Moreover, in research works like the one in hand, it is common to use secondary data which involves the use of existing data collected for the purpose of a prior study mainly to pursue a research interest which is distinct from that of the original work (Somekh and Lewinr, 2005; Eliot and Owens, 1998; Miller and Brewer, 2003).

Besides, some folklorists recommend oral textual analysis as an alternative methodology to study folklore instead of spending too much time to collect data through extensive field work. For example, Finnegan (1992:158) stressed:

Most accepted methodologies within literary and linguistic study can in principle be applied to oral texts once they are represented in written form. Indeed textual analysis has often been taken as the method for studying verbal forms, following the model of text as something bounded and organized, a unit through which the traditional methods of philological and literary scholarship can be extended to unwritten forms.

She further noted that the collection and analysis of texts is more important than intensive field work particularly in countries with large archive collections (ibid). Similarly, Dorson (1972: 465) stated that a folklorist's chief resource for broad comparative studies must be printed sources. Here, the researcher also believes that using data from the large archive collections, especially data archived recently in the region, together with the ones obtained from the fieldwork does not disprove the genuineness of the data or bring about change in the validity of data for the kind of study in hand.

Finally, the raw data gathered using the techniques mentioned above were sorted out, and those which have direct relevance to the study were translated into the target language (English), analyzed and interpreted critically from a feminist point of view.

2.3 Method of Data Analysis: Transcription, Translation and Classification

The primary step of data analysis for such kind of research begins with the transcription of the data gathered on the tape and video recorders, followed by the selection, translation and codification of the raw data. Accordingly, all the important elements that were believed to be referred and used during the data analysis were transcribed on different notebooks. The folktales and proverbs that were believed to have some relation with the study were selected and transcribed on a separate notebook

together with their explanations and the context in which they are used. Those data which have high relevance with the research topic were sorted out and written down in accordance with their genres. In line with this, the rest of the conceptual and attitudinal data that were recorded from observations, interviews and the focus-group discussions were transcribed on separate notebook. As transcription of all the data obtained from the fieldwork is so complex and a cumbersome activity which demands the investment of time, patience and energy, I limited myself to transcribing those data which talk about men and women and have high relevance to the research questions.

After the relevant recorded items were transcribed and sorted out, the next step was the translation of the data collected in a local language to the target language (language of research). As far as translation is concerned, so as to maintain the local charm and flavour, communicative and literal translation techniques were used to translate the folktales and proverbs selected for analysis from the original language (Afan Oromo) to the target language (i.e. English). This is because, there is no single best way of translating a text from one language to another; every translation technique has its own advantages and disadvantages.

According to Newmark (1982), the most appropriate approach to the translation of metaphorical and cultural texts is the communicative translation approach. He stated that the use of communicative translation approach helps the researcher to make the text in the target language smoother, lighter and communicable to the reader. He further explained, “The approach gives (the translator) the right to correct or improve the logic, to replace the clumsy words, to remove obscurities, to eliminate repetitions, to exclude the less likely interpretations of ambiguity, and to clarify the highly cultural terms” (ibid: 50). Yet, Newman did not deny that this method has its own disadvantages, too. As a result, where appropriate, literal translation method (that closely follows the form of the source language) was used cautiously when it is believed that it can render the readers with the right information and meaning intended in the source language. Hence, communicative and literal translation techniques were used where necessary and when appropriate in translating the folktales and proverbs.

Even if some highly metaphorical proverbs and texts with cultural elements and local jargons were found to be difficult to be translated accurately, maximum effort has been made to retain the meaning of the data in the source language when translated to English by using an eclectic approach, the fact that it is difficult to dare say that the

translation made is hundred percent correct in few cases. Of course, where it is believed that there is no equivalence between the source language and the target language, the word in the source language is made to retain with explanatory notes.

After the process of translation was over, about 300 proverbs and 34 folktales were selected for analysis and interpretation. The selection and translation of the folktales and proverbs was followed by a content analysis and interpretation from a feminist standpoint. The selected data were categorized according to their subject matter and the analysis was made qualitatively by integrating the other data gathered through different techniques. Folktales and proverbs that were almost similar in their themes, in line with the contexts in which they are used, were brought together during the analysis and interpretation. Considering the context in this case was found to be necessary because language use always depends on context and the interpretations of those involved.

The folktales were coded (given numbers and titles) so as to ease access and manage them easily during analysis and interpretation. Besides the title given to the folktales, the acronym 'MOFT' (Macha Oromo Folktale) followed by serial number was used in naming the folktales during analysis and interpretation. In the same way, proverbs which have almost similar connotations were brought together (clustered) and given titles and numbers (coded). Hence, each cluster of proverbs were titled and given numbers; and the proverbs in each cluster are arranged in alphabetical order. For example, if a code says (MOPC-1:3), it means the third proverb in the first cluster of proverbs, that is to say the third proverb in Macha Oromo Proverb Cluster one (MOPC-1).

Certainly, the categorization of proverbs based on their content posed many difficulties as they may lend themselves to various related and overlapping themes in various contexts. This is because the contents in both genres usually back up each other, and it is also common to observe the Macha Oromo using proverbs to strengthen the themes in folktales and wind up their discourses even in any casual conversations. Obviously, knowledge of the language of the people, familiarity with the existing socio-cultural realities and in general, knowledge of the life experiences of the society under focus has helped the researcher to understand the contexts they are used in, meanings and functions of the folktales and proverbs with less difficulty_ "... a native researcher is an integral part of the tradition, a chronicler and a reminder of the culture around him" (Goldstein, 1964: ix).

While working with the data, I employed a content analysis methodology to interpret the data gathered through observations, interviews and focus group discussions. As it is known, content refers to the various issues, topics, or questions dealt with in speech, discussion, or a piece of writing. Thus content analysis as a research method seeks to make meaningful deductions from speeches, texts and other communicative material by exploring freely occurring texts, and hence, through analysis breaks them down to a more synthesized interpretation of the text's or speech's meanings (Scott & Marshall, 2009). To be precise, content analysis involves the description and analysis of text in order to represent its content. Since human communication and discourse does not merely show social processes and structures but also affirms, consolidates, and reproduces these existing social structures (Gaszo, 2005), this study has relied a great deal on analyses of the contents of the data (folktales and proverbs) gathered through different techniques and their implications for reproducing these dynamic gender systems and the unfair treatment of women in the society.

Hence, during interpretation, an attempt was made to relate the texts to the people's experiences and to cross-reference the oral texts with the theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, the researcher attempted to explore the embedded meanings of the data on the basis of a specific social context. As it is known, in order to reveal the hidden meaning of a certain verbal art through interpretation, one should be more concerned with what it suggests or implies than merely describing the direct meaning of the (folklore) item; thus, focusing on the traditional sense, leaving aside the implications does not seem to give much weight to the kind of work in hand.

Finally, based on the discussions and analyses made, conclusions were drawn about the gender roles and the exploitation of women as reflected in the folktales and proverbs of the Macha Oromo.

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The main objective of this part of the dissertation is to review and present local and external works related to the study in hand and to show the way this work differs from what has been done so far. The works of various scholars, mainly works published in book forms, PhD dissertations, MA theses and journal articles related to the current study were reviewed in detail. An attempt has also been made to give the thesis a theoretical basis by reviewing materials on the study of gender, verbal arts, masculinity, femininity and the likes.

3.1 Related Studies

To begin with the earliest works, Onesmos and Aster are said to be the pioneers in the field of Oromo literature. These two scholars set off Oromo literature by writing a book entitled “*Jalqaba Barsiisaa*” (The Beginning of Teaching) in 1894 with the aim to teach how to write Afan Oromo using Ethiopian script. The book, as cited in *Encyclopedia Ethiopica* (2005:559) consists of proverbs, narratives, traditional religious hymns, poems as well as Christian catechism. Presumably, next to these scholars work, Cerulli’s (1922) and Andrezejewski’s (1962) collections and study of Oromo folklore seem the earliest works accessible to English speaking community. Cerulli collected and documented oral songs, proverbs, and narratives from the tribes of the Macha Oromo in the source language with their translations in English.

On the other hand, Andrezejewski collected and studied Borana folktales to demonstrate how such texts can be used as a source material for the study of Borana people. In his work, Andrezejewski was able to understand from the stories he collected and analyzed how the Borana perceive and practice war. The works of these scholars (Onesmos, Aster, Cerulli, and Andrzejewski) are only related with the work in hand in that they touched upon some verbal arts, but differ in many respects including the aim, methodology and period in which they were written.

Above all, Claude Sumner’s works on Oromo Wisdom Literature (in three volumes), is among those works which deserve praise and acknowledgement, especially in the study of Oromo folklore. In his first and third volumes of “*Oromo Wisdom Literature*”, Sumner (1995, 1996) collected and analyzed a number of proverbs and folktales from the entire region. In his work on folktales, Sumner tried to make a structural typological study of the folktales by using Thompson’s Motif-Index and

classified them based on Okpewho's qualitative approach into mythic-legend, etiological tale, and fable. Besides the above works, Sumner (1997) together with Lemma Guya prepared an illustrated album of Oromo folktales with the aim to preserve and reveal the beauty and truth that lies at the core of the lives of the society. Here, Sumner selected only 13 folktales and translated them into English, and Lemma Guya did the work of illustrating the folktales. The current study differs from Sumner's in that it mainly deals with gender roles and the oppressive treatment of women in folktales and proverbs which has never been attempted so far by the scholar.

As far as the M.A theses are concerned, Berhanu (1986) conducted his thesis under the title "An Analysis of Kambatta Proverbs" _ people who share many things in common with the Oromos and have close affinity with one another. In his work, Berhanu came up with the conclusion that Kambatta proverbs do not have special occasions for their use, but are usually involved in everyday situations and serve an ethical and educational function. Berhanu also noted that the social significance of Kambata proverbs lie in that the expressions serve as an oral medium of instruction and as a vehicle of praise or criticism of persons and practices. Similarly, Melakneh (1990) did his M.A thesis on "The Major Themes and Motifs of Southern Agaw Folktales" with the aim to record some of the folktales and examine their socio-cultural significance through a thematic analysis. Like many ethnic groups (Kambatta, Hadiya, Sidama, Afar, Somali, and the likes), there is a close affinity between the Agaw and the Oromo in Ethiopia with their language falling under Cushitic family (Mous, 1993). In his work, Melakneh identified such didactic themes like stubbornness, ambition, tolerance, credulity, foolishness, greed, escape from the dull routine, human injustice vis-a-vis justice and the likes. Unlike these scholars' work, the present study endeavors to investigate the roles of men and women as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo, and intends to find out how the images reflected in some folktales and proverbs affect the attitudes of the society towards women.

Addisu (2012) also did his MA thesis under the title of "The Functional Analysis of Folktales in Eastern Wallagga Oromo with Reference to Limmu Gelila Wereda" with the main objective to examine the functions of folktales among the Oromo of Limmu Gelila. He used three methods of data collecting instruments namely interview, observation and focus group discussion. In addition to their function for entertainment, Addisu made attempts to identify the functions of folktales such as developing the

cultural heritage of the people, encouraging people to know their identity, culture, history and their language, addressing political affairs, teaching children the philosophy and values of life, directing the people to live as per their social orders and morality and so forth.

The other scholar worth mentioning in the study of folklore in this country is Fekade, who has contributed a lot to the field's scholarship in this country. One of his works is entitled "Unheard Voices: Drought, Famine, and God in Ethiopian Oral poetry," in which he indicated that oral literature is an embodiment and manifestation of the various aspects of life (1998). Fekade further stated that the study of the oral literature of a given people may be of paramount importance to understand and appreciate its values, history, philosophy, wisdom and the like. In his "Ethiopian Oral Literature: A Preliminary Review and Bibliography," Fekade (1984) has also facilitated and encouraged further scientific research and drew attention to the study of folklore in this country.

Sahilu (1996) was another student at Addis Ababa University who studied about folktales. In his study "Borana Oromo Prose Narratives: A Contextual Study", Sahilu paid much attention to view narratives in their context of performance. His attempts to collect and preserve Borana folktales in their actual settings have really enabled many readers to know who the Boranas are and how they view this world. Correspondingly, Tadesse (2004), did his M.A thesis on "A Contextual Study of Guji-Oromo Proverbs: Functions in Focus" with the aim to discover the contextual functions of Guji Oromo proverbs by examining their socio-cultural realities. Having collected his data through interview and observation, Tadesse further wanted to show how the proverbs characterize the life of the Guji people. Accordingly, he maintained that Guji-Oromo proverbs play immense roles in strengthening tribal solidarity and creating public responses to social, cultural and economic obstacles. He further assured that Guji Oromo proverbs are used for building up a community, maintaining culture and producing responsible people.

"Some Cultural elements as Reflected in Somali Folktales" is another M.A thesis carried out at Addis Ababa University by Abdulkadir in 1982. With the objective to reveal the underlying cultural and psychological elements, Abdulkadir noted that Somali folktales have much importance to shape the life and worldview of the people. Similarly, Tesfaye (1990) conducted his M.A thesis on "The Major Themes in Jablawi Folktales." His principal objective was to appreciate the themes in folktales and analyze their social implications in order to find out Jablawi world outlook, beliefs and values. In his work, Tesfaye indicated that the study of folktales remains one of the best means of

understanding people. As it is possible to see from the title, the current study greatly differs from these works in that it endeavors to investigate the role of men and women as reflected in the verbal arts from a feminist perspective.

In addition, Abraham (2007) has written a paper on how the Jimma Oromo have been using oral narratives as an ideological weapon for subordinating women. In this article, Abraham was mainly concerned with examining the ideological significance of oral narratives in justifying and maintaining gender inequality. Besides, in his M.A thesis (2000) “Jimma Oromo Oral prose Narratives: A Preliminary Descriptive Analysis”, Abraham was concerned with elucidating the typical occasions, and situational factors engendering narrative performances, the type of narrators and audience and their respective roles, the style of delivery, and the purpose of narration. The current study as the title clearly shows differs from Abraham’s in its objectives, study area, and theoretical framework.

Sena’s (2008) “Images of Women in the Proverbs and Sayings of the Oromo: The Case of West Arsi Area” is another M.A thesis which has relative proximity to the study in hand. In her study, Sena revealed that in most cases women were portrayed negatively and that they are deemed as inferior members of the society. This study is different from hers in that it is predominantly concerned with gender roles and the unfair treatment of women, not merely the images of women in the verbal arts of the target people.

Besides the above works, there are also some articles published in journals. One article worth mentioning is Negaso’s (1982) “Oromo Historical Poems and Songs: Conquest and Exploitation in Western Wollega, 1886-1927”. In this article, Negaso indicated that the songs and poems he used for analysis will help in understanding the history of the Oromo and thus in solving the linguistic, cultural, social, economic and political problems experienced in the empire state of Ethiopia. Another article is Jeylan’s (2005) “The Functions of African Oral Arts: The Arsi-Oromo Oral Arts in Focus”, in which he concluded that African oral traditions serve as mediums to provide self-conscious commentary on the patterns of life in their societies. Jeylan further asserted that the homology or dialectical unity between oral art and its social function is contextually determined.

Besides this, Jeylan (2005) published another related article entitled “The Social and Ethno-Cultural Construction of Masculinity and Femininity in African Proverbs” in

African Study Monographs. In this work, Jeylan analyzed some African sexist proverbs within the post-modern theory of power relationships between social groups, and indicated that “African proverbs perpetuate gender legacies and ideology; they associate maleness with respect, firmness, or strength, while associating femaleness with meekness, indignity, inconsistency, and powerlessness” (2005:72). The study in hand differs from this work (Jeylan’s) in the fact that it predominantly focuses on the role of men and women as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo from a feminist perspective.

George Cotter was another scholar who collected a great deal of Oromo proverbs (together with other prominent Oromo scholars) and published a book entitled *Proverbs and Sayings of the Oromo People of Ethiopia and Kenya with English Translations* in 1992. Cotter and his allies were able to gather 4800 proverbs and sayings from the entire Oromo settlement areas and translated them into English with the intention to help the people preserve and understand their cultural wisdom. As it is possible to see from the title, the work in hand differs from Cotter’s in its intention. Apart from this, a number of folktales and proverbs have been collected and published in book forms by experts from Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau in different times. So far, the bureau has collected a great deal of folktales and proverbs from the entire region and published each in five volumes under the names of “Afoola Oromoo: Durdurii” and “Mammaaksa Oromoo” [Oromo Oral Literature: Folktales and Proverbs] in the source language and made them accessible to the public at large.

There are also a number of works related to the current study from around the world. To mention few, Kabaji (2005) conducted a PhD dissertation on “The Construction of Gender Through the Narrative Process of The African Folktale: A Case Study of the Maragoli Folktale”. Here, Kabaji collected twenty folktales from the Maragoli people of Kenya through active participation in actual live performances to identify the gender-related themes from a cultural discourse in order to determine how gender is constructed in African society. Kabaji found out that Maragoli folktales define what the community perceives as the proper domains of operation for the sexes. He further indicated that Maragoli folktales are used as a medium through which the people construct ideologies about gender relations. The work in hand differs from Kabaji’s work in many ways. Besides their differences in setting (geographical location) and the ethnic group on which the studies are conducted, they differ in their objectives and the

methodology used to collect data. The works also differ in the number and genre of data they utilise to achieve their objectives.

Robin Ann Mello's (1999) PhD dissertation entitled "Narrating Gender: Children's Responses to Gender Roles Depicted in Orally Told Folktales and other Traditional Stories" is another work related to the current study. Mello examined the reactions of ten fourth grade students to the gender roles depicted in orally told folk tales. In the work, Mello came up with the conclusion that boys highly valued warrior like behavior; girls, on the other hand, had a difficult time equating the value of 'gender bending' warrior women to that of the more socially acceptable roles of housekeeper and caretaker. Apart from the areas of study and the methodology used, the study in hand differs from Mello's in that it does not examine children's responses to the folktales; it rather attempts to investigate gender roles and the perception of women as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo.

In spite of the fact that these works and some others left without being mentioned here have contributed much to the folklore scholarship in this country and paved the way for further research works, they have not touched upon the embedded and hidden meanings underlying each genre of folklore particularly the gender roles and the oppressive treatment of women in their works. In many cases, since the titles of the works themselves clearly depict the similarities and the differences between the foregoing works and the work in hand, it does not seem vital to indicate the borderline between them. Thus, the present study, hopefully, can bridge the gaps that these scholars have not attempted so far.

While studying gender roles and the perception of women by society as reflected in the verbal arts, it also seems vital to discuss relevant concepts such as gender role, gender stereotypes, gender based division of labour, folklore, verbal arts, hegemonic masculinity, and the likes as they are highly related and have much to provide for understanding gender differences.

3.2 The Concept of Sex and Gender

Before trying to see gender roles, it seems essential to distinguish between gender and sex so as to enhance understanding. While the two terms are often used interchangeably, they are distinct terms. Experts who are mainly concerned with women's and gender studies lay a boundary between the two terms and they do not use one in place

of another. Hence, gender differs from sex in its usage. Accordingly, sex refers to the biological characteristics with which we are born, and gender is usually associated with the learned attitudes and behaviours that qualify people of one sex or the other. In other words, the term gender is usually associated with the social, psychological and cultural attributes of masculinity and femininity which are mainly based on biological distinctions. Gender is said to include people's self image (gender identity) and social expectations of individual's behavior. As Lee (2005) notes gender encompasses biological sex but extends beyond it to the socially prescribed roles deemed appropriate for each sex by the culture in which we live. Sex, on the other hand, refers to the physical and biological qualities people are endowed with by nature. In other words, people normally differentiate between gender and sex, as the former describing societal attitudes and behaviours expected of and associated with the two sexes, and the latter as the physical and biological attributes of men and women. Wienclaw in the Editors of Salem Press (2011: 33) distinguishes gender from sex as follows.

Gender refers to the psychological, social, cultural, and behavioral characteristics associated with being female or male. Gender is defined by one's gender identity and learned gender role. Sex in this context, on the other hand, refers to the biological aspects of being either female or male.

Many scholars asserted that society's definition of femininity and masculinity, or properly speaking, gender plays an enormous role in our daily lives. They argue that gender determines and shapes our self concepts and our relation with others everywhere. For example, Tyson (2006: 108), while explaining the role of gender in one's life, writes:

Our gender plays a key role in forming our individual identity: both our self-perception and the way we relate to others. And our gender strongly influences how we are treated by others and by society as a whole as it is embodied in such institutions as the medical profession, the law, the educational system, and our culture's hiring and employment practices.

Similarly, Millett (1971:31) asserted that gender is "the sum total of the parents', the peers', and the culture's notions of what is appropriate to each gender by way of temperament, character, interests, status, worth, gesture, and expression".

Generally speaking, while the term sex is used to denote male and female human beings depending on their biological features like chromosomes, sex organs, hormones and other physical features, gender is used to denote men and women on the basis of social factors such as social role, position, behaviour and identity. "...gender is socially

constructed rather than a matter of biology: women and men usually behave in ways associated with their assigned gender because they are socially programmed to do so, not because it is natural for them to do so” (Tyson, 2006:110).

3.3 Gender Roles

In relation with gender and sex, gender role is another concept that needs further elaboration. Even if gender involves both men and women, being reinforced by feminist thought, any study/report that deals with gender issues is usually conceived wrongly as to be only about women excluding men. This is attributable to the fact that patriarchal society customarily assumes that men are the norm, and that gender is about the way women differ from this standard pattern of behaviour that is considered normal in a society.

Every society in its culture attaches a distinct role, meaning and conception to each sex and creates beliefs about what it means to be a woman or a man. A role is perceived as a set of accepted principles or standards together with values attached to them, and are usually assigned to individuals by society as a whole. Hence, there are masculine and feminine roles and statuses that are ascribed to individuals. Roles are carried out according to social norms, shared beliefs and rules that guide people’s behaviour in specific situations (Wienclaw, 2011).

Correspondingly, gender role could be described as whatever a person says and does to signal to others or to self that he/she is either male or female (Bem,1993). In other words, gender role is about how a person is supposed to dress, act, think, and feel, based on whether he/she is a man or woman. Gender roles are social attributes and behaviors which are assigned to individuals solely on the basis of their sex. According to Bem (1993) gender roles are the traits, expectations, and behaviours associated with men and women and what it means to be masculine or feminine. Similarly, Golombok & Fivush, (1994:3) defined gender roles as including "behaviors and attitudes considered appropriate for males and females in a particular culture... [as well as] a person's concept of him or herself as male or female".

Gender roles are associated with perceived differences between men and women that define how they should behave or more properly think, feel and act in a society. It is said to be constantly changing and can vary between and within culture. They normally

force a society to form a stereotype of what men and women are and how they should behave. Men and women need to follow their specific gender roles in order to be socially accepted by the society in which they live. They are expected to adhere to different positions and demonstrate different behaviours, manifesting different personality traits in their society. As social beings, men and women usually struggle to belong to a certain group and seek for approval by conforming to the social and cultural norms within their society. They learn their gender roles from what they read, hear, and observe in their society. Many research works indicate that traditional gender roles circulate in the society and are perpetuated with the help of verbal folklore, radio, television, magazines, and the likes. For example, Schoemaker (1990: 16) stated, “Folklore can serve to teach and express the dominant cultural expectations about gender roles, but it can also serve to question them or to protest against them, and to express alternate beliefs.”

Gender systems are established in different socio-cultural contexts which determine what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in specific contexts. They are learned through socialization processes, and are established as normal through culture, traditions, education, political and economic systems, legislation and so on. That is to say, gender systems/ roles are influenced by social and economic factors and by the norms and values that underpin our day to day activities. In any case, they are dynamic and subject to change, and help one to determine the amount of prestige, power and status rendered to individuals (Lindsey, 2005; Wienclaw, 2011; Kretchmar, 2011; Butler, 2004).

Gender systems are usually considered as power systems in which men occupy superior and prestigious positions and women occupy lower and oppressive positions. Many scholars confirm that in an unjust gender system, there is unequal distribution of, and access to, resources and power. With regard to this Nenola (1993:53) stated, “Gender systems are also power systems within which power and prestige are distributed unequally according to gender (domination for men, oppression or submission for female)”. She further noted that as power systems, gender systems are interconnected with other social institutions such as family, politics and economy, and get their passageways and motivations in religion, science, law and art or other cultural institutions (ibid). In a similar manner, Barreateau (1998:191) mentions the two basic dimensions of power relations between men and women as follows.

A gender system comprises a network of power relations with two principal dimensions, one ideological and the other material. These dimensions map out the

broad contours of gender systems. The material dimension exposes how women and men gain access to or are allocated power, status, and material and non-material resources within a state and society. The ideological dimension concerns the construct of masculinity and femininity. The ways in which masculinity and femininity are constructed reveal the gender ideologies operating in the state and society.

In many societies all over the world, thus, men and women seem to be perceived and treated differently. The roles assigned to them to play are also different from place to place and society to society. Some scholars, however, object and comment that “Human differentiation on the basis of gender is a fundamental phenomenon that affects virtually every aspect of people’s daily lives” (Bussey and Bandura, 1999: 676). Similarly, Mahler (2008) while explaining the strict definition of gender and its impact on individual lives states:

We live in a culture deeply flawed by the insistence that individuals live their lives according to very strict definitions of gender. As girls grow into women, and boys into men, they are provided with instructions on how to look, act, think and feel—all based on a set of societal beliefs about what is expected of their sex. These rigid gender norms are sadly limiting, narrowing the potential for both boys and girls to live rich and fully human lives (www.ms.foundation.org).

Generally speaking, gender role is perceived as a complex system of individual and social relations through which men and women are socially created and maintained and across which they gain access to, or are allocated roles, statuses, power and material resources within a society.

3.4 Gender Stereotypes

To begin with, it is crystal clear that there are biological variations that differentiate male and female human beings. In addition to this, there are social and psychosocial facets of the society that make boundaries for behaviour manifestations that are deemed appropriate for each sex group. In many cases, society exerts psychosocial pressures on both sexes and dictates every member of the society to act in accordance with certain prescribed manners in one way or another. In some cases, however, members of the society do not clearly comprehend the influence of the manners imposed on them as a result of their sex and what they are expected to do and how they should behave in a society. Thus, gender role stereotypes are among these latent ideas which members of the society fail to comprehend easily and have a long lasting effect on individual’s personal development.

When defined briefly, stereotype is perceived as a preconceived idea or image that many people have about individuals or certain ways of doing something, which may not accurately reflect reality (Vogel et al., 2003; Maltz-Douglas, 2007). Stereotypes are said to be collective group beliefs, meaning that people who belong to the same social group almost share the same set of stereotypes. By extension, gender stereotype is defined as the beliefs about psychological traits and characteristics associated with, and the activities appropriate to, men or women in a given society; put in other words gender stereotypes are beliefs and attitudes about masculinity and femininity (Eagly, 1987). In short, gender stereotypes can be considered as widely held cultural beliefs about the expected behaviour for men and women.

Many psychologists have confirmed that the manner male and female children are treated and brought up in the family and the labels they receive from the society only because they are males and females inevitably influences their conceptions and perceptions of themselves (Derlega and Janda, 1986; Rosen, 1989; Bourdeau et al., 1986). Nevertheless, “gender role stereotypes do not reflect the actual differences in ability and behaviour between men and women and they are simply manifestations of how individuals view themselves and how they relate to other peoples, as well as other areas of human behaviour” (Derlega and Janda, 1986: 113).

Experts in the field of social role theory and gender studies state that gender stereotypes are closely linked with gender roles (Eagly, 1987). Gender roles are defined by the traits, expectations, and behaviors associated with men and women and what it means to be masculine or feminine (Bem, 1993). When people associate a pattern of behaviour with either women or men, they may overlook individual variations and exceptions and come to believe that the behaviour is inevitably associated with one gender but not the other (Bem, 1993; Eagly, 1987). Hence, gender stereotypes are generalizations about the roles of each gender, and gender roles, thus, furnish the material for gender stereotypes.

Every society seems to have its own stereotypic behaviour patterns which members of that society are expected to follow. Accordingly, men and women may be judged by how well they conform to social expectations. Social pressures especially those of parents and peers, rather than natural endowments are at the centre of sex role development. Many researchers have pointed out that the young child’s ability to

internalize those values, social standards and many other behaviour patterns that are accepted and approved by the society rest heavily on the socialization processes undertaken by parents (Maccoby, 1984). However, since every person has his/her own desires, thoughts, and feelings, regardless of their gender, stereotypes are merely simplistic and do not at all describe the attributes of every person all in all. Various studies indicate that even if many people realize that stereotypes are simple generalizations and not completely true, several people still make assumptions based on gender.

Stereotypes are powerful forces in making judgments, and they normally affect the way people think about themselves and others. It is believed that stereotypes have potentially powerful effects on how people perceive and treat one another since they simplify and justify social reality. Gender stereotypes are said to be very influential, and are believed to affect conceptualizations of women and men and establish social categories for gender. They are also believed to affect men's and women's performance, leading to discrimination and prejudice among people in the work place and other spheres (Eagly, 1987; Lee, 2005; Weitzman, 1979).

Even if many people have embraced the idea that women and men are different in what and how they do various activities, a number of research works conducted on gender differences inquired whether there really exist gender differences between women and men along a variety of behavioural and attitudinal dimensions. It has been suggested that when women and men exhibit differences, those differences fit stereotypic expectations (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997). In line with this, Lerner and Spanier (1980: 365-6) mentioned that:

[A boy's] behavior is geared toward independence, self efficacy, and competence above all else; and his behavior _social and antisocial_ can be understood only if it is viewed within such a framework.... In contrast to her male counterpart, a girl strives principally to define herself as a woman and to achieve personal security.

As repeatedly stated above gender stereotypes are simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences, and roles of individuals or groups as a whole. In traditional society, many people used to generalize that women's sole role is to marry on time and give birth to a child. A woman is expected to put her family's welfare before her own, and tolerate the burdens of parenthood at home. She has to be submissive, loving, compassionate, caring, nurturing, and sympathetic in spite of everything. Besides, a

woman is expected to fulfill the sexual desires of her husband when asked and look beautiful if she wants to be loved and stay with him.

On the other hand, men are expected to own property and provide bread to the family as much as possible. They have to initiate sex, be assertive, competitive, independent, courageous, bold, and hold their emotions back (Rosen, 1989; Vogel et al., 2003; Derlega and Janda, 1986). Even if they recognize the impact and dangers of such type of gender stereotyping, many people still continued to make these types of generalizations in this modern world and are perpetuating gender inequality. Feminists and other experts in the field of gender studies have warned that these kinds of unwise assumptions or more properly gender stereotypes can be harmful, and can suppress individual's development and creativity by hindering their personal and professional growth.

3.5 Gender Based Division of Labor

The sexual division of labour is the concept used to explain why in every society men and women perform different functions and tasks that are culturally assigned to them. Some studies conducted on gender and labour confirmed that societies that traditionally practiced plough agriculture have developed a specialization of production along gender lines (Alesina et al., 2011; Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997; Vogel et al., 2003). According to Alesina et al. (2011) when people began to rear cattle and plough land (in general, practice agriculture) men tended to work outside of the home in the fields while women specialized in activities within the home. Along with this division of labour, they argue that, norms about the appropriate role of men and women in society began to emerge gradually, resulting in the belief that the natural place for women is within the home, and that of men is outside of home. "These cultural beliefs tend to persist even if the economy moves out of agriculture, affecting the participation of women on activities performed outside of the home, such as market, employment, entrepreneurship, or participation in politics (Alesina et al., 2011: 2). The researcher, here, also believes that this gender based division of labour that the traditional society adopted is being propagated and perpetuated by the use of some folklore genres such as folktales and proverbs still now, restricting both men and women not to help each other in some cases by engaging on different activities together so as to lessen the burden of their work.

It is clear that the division of labour based on gender varies significantly across societies in the world. In some cultures, it is common to see women participating actively in employment outside of the home; however, in others, there is a clear specialization of tasks along gender lines; women tend to remain within the home and do not participate in activities outside of the domestic sphere (Alesina et al., 2011:1).

A number of studies have indicated the rationale for the prevalence of gender role differences among human beings as to lie in the persistent differences in cultural beliefs about the appropriate role of men and women in society (Fortin, 2005, Fernandez, 2007, Fernandez and Fogli, 2009). Some explain that gender role differences have their origins in different forms of agriculture (shifting cultivation and plough cultivation) practiced traditionally (Boserup, 1970). According to Murdock and Provost (1973) shifting cultivation is the one which uses hand-held tools like the hoe and the digging stick for production and is mainly labour intensive; on the other hand, plough cultivation uses the plough to prepare the soil and is more of capital intensive.

Murdock and Provost further explained that unlike the hoe or digging stick, the plough requires significant upper body strength, grip strength, and burst of power, which are needed to either pull the plough or control the animal that pulls it. Because of these requirements, when plough agriculture is practiced, men have an advantage in farming relative to women. Foster and Rosenzweig (1996) have also the opinion that when the plough is used, there is less need for weeding, a task believed to be undertaken by women and children. Besides, child care which is predominantly performed by women is more compatible with activities that can be stopped and resumed easily (as in hoe agriculture) and do not put children in danger.

In the course of time, as to some scholars, plough agriculture becomes the activity to be more preferred and practiced dominantly. Hence, societies that have traditionally practiced plough agriculture rather than shifting cultivation began to define work along gender lines (Boserup, 1970) leaving women for works to be performed at and around home and giving men the opportunity to engage in works outside of home.

Generally speaking, gender differences can be created through the division of labour found in every society. Once they are formed, they are reproduced and maintained through gender images appearing in cultural values, religious practices, media, and other

means of communication. They may, thus, be used to legitimate the unequal distribution of power, wealth and other resources in a society.

3.6 Hegemonic Masculinity

To begin with, hegemony, albeit it is difficult to define it in a nut shell, can be conceived as the social, political and economic control or dominance of one group over others (Donaldson, 1993). It is about the ways in which the dominating group establishes and maintains its domination, and it involves the persuasion of the greater part of the population in many ways so that their domination and exploitation “appear natural, ordinary, and normal” (Donaldson, 1993:645). Masculinity, on the other hand, is understood as the quality of being masculine or having qualities (appearance, behavior, manner of doing something etc.) considered to be typical of men (Lears and Jackson, 1985; Donaldson, 1993). It is the pattern of social practice connected with the position of men in any society’s set of gender relations (Connell, 2005). This perspective is based on the view that it is the society that makes us masculine and feminine through the process of gendered socialization. Many feminists also assert that women are not born feminine, and likewise men are not born masculine. For them, femininity and masculinity are social constructions (Tyson, 2006). The society defines how boys/ men should behave, dress, what attitudes and qualities they should possess, and how they should be treated in contrast to girls/women.

According to Swatay (2012) masculinity requires various representative traits like physical strength, functionality, sexuality, emotion, intellect and the likes. It should also be success oriented, ambitious, aggressive, egotistical, ethical, trustworthy, decisive, competitive, adventurous etc. Similarly, Lindsay and Miescher (2003) used the term to mean a cluster of norms, values, and behavioral patterns expressing explicit and implicit expectations of how men should act and represent themselves to others within cultural and historical contexts. In the same way, Simiyu (2007) used the term masculinity in its simplest way to mean having culture-specific characteristics, traits and behaviors associated with men. As to him, masculinity is a social construct with a physiologic (biologic) component. This is based on the view that regardless of the many and complex varieties of gender identity, societies tend to assign some roles to male individuals and others to female individuals. Thus, according to Simiyu (2007) masculinity is viewed both as a collective expression of social practice to be observed within specific historical contexts, as well as an individual’s experience of identity and subjectivity.

When put together, hegemonic masculinity can be taken as the gender practice that assures the dominant position of men and the subordinate position of women. In other words, hegemonic masculinity is the social, political and economic domination of men over women (Donaldson, 1993). As to Donaldson, hegemonic masculinity is about the valuing of men's roles, talents and other qualities and the devaluing of women's qualities and belittling their roles and talents in a society.

As repeatedly stated before, gender system is usually described as power system within which power and prestige are distributed unequally according to gender (domination for men, oppression or submission for women) (Nenola, 1993; Meyerson and Kolb, 2000). It is used to organize relations between men and women on the basis of apparent difference and inequality. According to Meyerson and Kolb (2000:563) gender identities and gender inequality are maintained "through formal and informal social processes institutionalized in organizations". They argue that these social processes are basically related to one gender rather than the other. As to Meyerson and Kolb (2000:563), these formal and informal social processes:

.....having been created largely by and for men, organizational systems, work practices, norms, and definitions reflect masculine experience, masculine values, and men's life situations.... That which seems 'normal' and neutral tends to privilege traits that are culturally ascribed to men while devaluing or ignoring those ascribed to women'.

In order to elucidate the socially constructed nature of gender, special attention need to be given to the potential role of the masculine ideology (the beliefs about what men are like and how they should act) to assist one in understanding how young men construct their masculinity (Morrell, 1998). Together with this, the specific gender roles ascribed to men and women seem worth considering. Traditionally, appropriate gender roles for men in most societies include primary breadwinner, head of the household, and the holder of leadership roles not only in their families but also in their communities (Morrell, 1998). These roles are parallel to stereotypical 'real men' masculine identity that can be described as having certain personality traits, such as strong, independent, achieving, hard working, heterosexual, tough, aggressive, unemotional, competitive, forceful and the likes (Courtenay, 2000).

3.7 The Concept of Folklore and Verbal Arts

Literary scholars normally categorize literature into two broad genres. These are oral literature and written literature. It is obvious that the former, that is, oral literature is older than written literature. That means, people have been transferring their culture or tradition from one generation to the next orally before there was no written form of literature.

Some research works indicate that the term folklore is found under an overarching umbrella term known as oral tradition, which is a general concept used to refer to the verbal transmission of “history, literature and law” from one generation to the next. Although the term seems ambiguous, various scholars have attempted to define it in different ways. Dorson (1972:2-3), for example, emphasizes that folklore embraces people’s verbal and material arts, customs and other forms of culture. He classifies folklore into four broad categories, namely ‘verbal art (oral literature), material culture, performing folk arts and social folk customs’. Similarly, Dundes (1965:6) states that folklore stands for the wide concept that embraces “myths, legends, tales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, deaths, insults, ... greetings, customs, folk dances, folk drama, folk art, beliefs, folk medicine, folk music etc.”

Cuddon (1998:322) also defines folklore as “A general and somewhat vague term which includes folksong, ballad, fairytales, drama, proverbs, riddles or charm and legends.” According to Cuddon, folklore is the creation of primitive and illiterate people and therefore, much of it belongs to oral tradition. As put in *Encyclopedia Americana* (1983, V.11, P. 489r) folklore is “the part of the culture, customs, and beliefs of a society that is based on popular tradition.” Abrams’ (1981:66) understanding of the term folklore also runs as follows:

Folklore is an umbrella term which is applied to verbal materials and social rituals that have been handed down solely, or at least primarily, by word of mouth and by example, rather than in written form. It includes among other things legends, superstitions, songs, tales, proverbs riddles, spells, nursery rhymes; pseudoscientific lore about the weather, plants, and animals; customary activities at births, marriages and deaths; and traditional dances and forms of drama which are performed on holidays or at communal gatherings.

As far as the origin of the term is concerned, Boswell and Reaver (1962) indicate that the existence of folklore started as early as mankind himself and that William Thoms

coined the term in 1846. Similarly, Oring (1949:4) confirms, “A serious study of forms that today are labeled ‘folklore’ took place in Germany at the turn of eighteenth century.”

The terms folklore and verbal arts (oral literature) are a little bit confusing (Okpewho, 1992:5). As he indicates, some people use both terms interchangeably, though the latter is only part of the former. Okpewho adds, “Such generalizations whereby the part is made to represent the whole, is frequent in literature and is perhaps excusable” (ibid). According to Dorson (1972:2), “oral literature is sometimes called as verbal art or expressive literature.” Bascom (1955:245) also indicated that “verbal art was proposed as a term to distinguish folktales, myths, legends, proverbs, and other ‘literary forms’ from the other materials which are commonly considered as folklore, but which anthropologists classify under other categories.” Traditional literature, folk literature, popular literature, and orature are also terms people widely use to mean oral literature (Okpewho, 1992:1). Like folklore, hence, oral literature seems an elusive term to define.

As it has been indicated above, Dorson (1972) and Bascom (1995) consider oral literature as a part of folklore rather than as the terms used interchangeably. “Under this rubric (oral literature) fall spoken, sung, and voiced forms of traditional utterance that show repetitive patterns”(Dorson, 1972:2). Similarly, Nandwa and Bukenya (1983:1) as quoted by Okpewho (1992:4) define oral literature as follows.

Oral literature may be defined as those utterances, whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree the artistic characteristics of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression.

In general, the term folklore seems comprehensive and encompasses the culture that people have been handling down from one generation to the other by word of mouth rather than in written form. Verbal art/verbal folklore or oral literature, on the other hand, is considered as a subset of folklore that embraces only the verbal aspects such as folktales, proverbs, sayings, riddles, folksongs, and the likes.

3.7.1 Folktales: Definition and Scope

Many scholars assert that folktales have been attracting different disciplines including anthropology, psychology, folklore and literature and the likes. Presumably it is because of the multiple images they reflect and meanings they embody that various scholars are interested in them. Regarding their popularity among the various disciplines, Luthi (1982:107) wrote:

The folktale enjoys the attention of a great range of disciplines. ...Folklorists analyze folktales as documents of culture and intellectual history and observe their role in the community. Psychologists take the narratives as an expression of internal mental processes and investigate their influence on listeners or readers. Literary scholars attempt to determine what makes a folktale a folktale; they wish to comprehend the essential art of the genre as well as of individual tale.

Researchers in the field of folklore and anthropology have suggested that folktales are more than the literary and oral expression of the people, but descriptions of the entire ethnic groups themselves. As in folklore, the term folktale bears various definitions that literary scholars have not agreed on yet. This can be evidenced from what Coffin and Cohen (1966:1) stated. "The word folktale is not clearly defined in English usage. Rather it has always been a general term referring to the many types of traditional narrative known to the folk." Yet, many attempts have been made to define, classify and describe the term in spite of its vagueness. As to Finnegan (1970) folktale is "the prose narrative genre" of oral literature. To Shaw (1972:163) a folktale is "a legend or narrative originating in, and traditional among a people, especially one forming part of an oral tradition."

Some folklorists deem that it is an inclusive term that covers all traditional prose narratives like legends, myths, fairy tales, fables and others. For example, Abrams (1991:67) also puts his understanding of the folktales as "a short narrative in prose, of unknown authorship, which has been transmitted orally.... They include myths, fables, tales of heroes and fairy tales." Similarly, Boswell and Reaver (1962) categorize all traditional prose narratives such as tall tales, ghost stories, legends, animal tales, fairy tales, fables, myths, anecdotes, narrative jokes, and stories about stupid man under different forms of folktales.

Cuddon (1998:323) also indicated that folktales belong to oral tradition. According to him "they include legends, fables, tall stories, shaggy dog stories, fairy stories, ghost stories, stories of giants and saints, devils and what are known as rhozzums, short humorous tales, often about local characters." Similarly, Shaw (1972) considers that the term covers a wide range of materials from outright myths to fairy tales.

Other scholars, however, limit its scope to animal tales, fairy tales, tall tales and the likes excluding myths and legends. For instance, Bascom (1954:347) views these three genres of folklore as distinct as it is evident from the following: "... it is important

to remember that the functions of the myth, legend, folktale, proverb, riddle, song and each of the other forms of folklore are to some extent distinctive and must be analyzed separately". Luthi (1982) also discusses legends and myths as distinct forms of oral literature rather than as part and parcel of folktales.

On the whole, many agree that folktales are the largest constituents of oral literature that are usually exciting and widely used for entertainment, instruction, and other related purposes. To sum up, it is in the light of the understanding that folktales are various stories composed orally and then handed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth rather than in written form, including "legends, fables, tall stories, fairy stories, ghost stories, stories of giants and saints, devils and spirits, husband and wife tales, master and man tales, short humorous tales, often about local characters" (Cuddon, 1998:323) that the researcher will consider in his study.

3.7.2 Mirror Images of Folktales

Many folklorists asserted that folktales are the creations of primitive people than contemporary writers. People have been telling narratives since time immemorial so as to achieve a certain purpose in mind, which could be entertainment, moral instruction, and other similar purposes. Folktales are, therefore, usually considered as the storehouse from which children learn and the medium through which adults teach and reaffirm social norms and proper behavior. A number of studies indicate that through folktales elders make children imagine and create their own mental pictures, and this mental exercise is believed to leave deepest impression on them.

Many research works indicate that there are various images that folktales reflect. Since they are the products of people, folktales can depict or reflect the day-to-day activities and experiences of human beings. They could also reflect human fantasies and the way people perceive the world. According to Luthi (1982:125) folktales faithfully portray human kind and the way they perceive the world. He further stated that folktales, "in their various modes express not only a variety of universal human needs and attitudes but also a living diversity of epochs, nationalities, landscapes, social strata, and personalities" (ibid).

Folktales can reflect an individual's and community's perception of the world around them. As Luthi (1782:125) explains "...when taken as a harmonious group, folktales present an encompassing images of human kind and the animal world".

Folktales that have no acceptance by the community in which they are told rarely last long. Hence, the community is using a certain tale means that there is something worth in it that the community needs and values. According to Oring (1949: 123):

Folk narratives reflect both the individual and the community. They are reflections of the society's and individuals who create and transmit them. The narrator shapes the narratives he recreates in accordance with his own dispositions and circumstances. Yet his creativity is not unlimited. His narrations depend upon a measure of community acceptance. The recreation of a narrative relies upon a negotiation between the narrator and his audience.

In a similar manner, folktales may reflect long traditions and contemporary practices of a certain society. They may depict a society's way of life, attitudes, feelings, perception and other similar affairs. They can also show the relations among human beings and between humans and animals. As to Oring (1949:132) "Although there exist to day many narratives which can be shown to reflect long traditions of development, innumerable narratives appear as exceedingly contemporary and do not reflect such deep historical roots [only]". Similarly, Courlander (1975) mentioned that folktales and other forms of folklore are the products of long reflections about the relations among humans, between man and woman and between the human kind and the animal world.

Apart from this, some folklorists state that folktales can reflect class interests and struggles. They say that one can infer from folktales the long-standing struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed, the strong and the weak, the superiors and the inferiors etc. According to Finnegan (1992), although there are some disagreements among the scholars, folktales can reflect class interests and struggles when seen from Marxist perspectives.

There are multi-layered meanings embedded in folktales. Even though some folktales seem to deal with trivial matters, they are of great moral and social importance, with experiences drawn from the users' daily lives. Hence, as in contemporary fictions, folktales deal with a great deal of themes. Since they reflect a wide range of human ideas and emotions, themes related with love, hatred, cruelty, deceive, faithfulness, etc are commonly observed in folktales. With regard to this Oring (1949:133) states, "Folk narratives represent themes of violence, hatred, cruelty, racism, prejudice, sexuality, obscenity, and scatology" besides the triumphs of good over evil and injustice, the sacrifices and martyrdoms in the pursuit of righteousness and so on. In a similar manner, Melakneh (1990) while studying the major themes and motifs of Southern Agaw folktales

identified such themes like stubbornness, ambitiousness, tolerance vis- a- vis intolerance, gross imitation, credulity, foolishness, greed and the likes.

3.7.3 Proverbs

Even though defining a proverb is beyond the scope of this paper, let us begin with what some literary scholars have said. A proverb, according to Cuddon (1998:706) is “a short pithy saying which embodies a general truth.” To Abrahams as put in Dorson (1972) proverbs are short and witty traditional expressions that arise as part of everyday discourse as well as in the more highly structured situations of education and judicial proceedings. To Miguel de Cervantes as quoted by Berhanu (1986: ii) “Proverbs are short sentences drawn from long experiences.” Similarly, to Finnegan (1970: 393) a proverb is “a saying in more or less fixed form marked by shortness, ... and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it.” A number of scholars agree that proverbs are drawn from the experiences and study of people's lives and fit certain situations in spite of the fact that they do not always embody truth. For example, according to Kerschen (2012:4), “They [proverbs] may not be true or represent truth, but they indicate what the people hold to as their rules and ideals of life and conduct”.

Many people use a proverb instead of a saying and other terms with similar connotations. The Oromos, for example, exclusively and collectively use “mammaaksa”, a term which could be literally translated as a proverb for all kinds of sayings, be it adage, aphorism, saw, epigram, wellerism and so forth. Regarding this, Sumner (1995:43) confirms “In Oromo language there is but one word to cover sayings, proverbs and maxims_’mammaaksa.” Hence, the study in hand uses the term proverb to refer to all kinds of sayings that the society under focus calls all together as ‘mammaaksa’.

The more elaborate definition of a proverb seems to have been forwarded by Borua (1962:x) which says, “They (proverbs) are the observations and expressions in a concise but pregnant form of the common man, which consists of truth, founded on long experiences in different spheres of the life around.” According to Coffin and Cohen (1966) proverbs have long literary and folk traditions with an amazing ability to remain constant in form over great periods of time. They are said to occur frequently in everyday conversation and “in oratory to embellish, conceal and hint” (Finnegan, 1970:391). Over all, most folklorists agree that a proverb is a short traditional statement, phrase or saying that carries some philosophical or wise observation about a situation, life or human nature

in general. “Proverbs do, at least to a degree, reflect the attitudes or worldview of various social classes at different periods” (Mieder, 2004:135).

Many scholars have asserted that proverbs play a considerable role in traditional legal cases and in educating a society as folktales do. Since they are believed to be used by wise and thoughtful people and deal with various human experiences, they can easily settle down disputes among individuals by warning the disputants and suggesting the consequences to come. They are also believed to ‘maintain group attitudes’ since they bear moral and ethical elements of a given society. With regard to this, Coffin and Cohen (1966:141) state, “Among the primitive groups, they (proverbs) may serve as the major ethical, educational, and legal guides, and even in a highly industrial nation they have a great deal to do with the maintenance of group attitudes.” It is often supposed that proverbs are full of wisdom and spring from stories.

Various works done by researchers in folklore area indicate that unlike riddles, proverbs have no special occasion for their use. As Owomoyela (1979) explains, the universal popularity of proverbs largely depends on their employment in all spheres of discourse. “There are proverbs for every imaginable context, and they are thus as contradictory as life itself” (Mieder, 2004:1). Thus, it seems that proverbs are applied in all spheres of human affairs, and they touch upon a wide range of human experience. Similarly, Oladele (1976:32), while trying to define proverbs, stated, “Proverbs deal with all aspects of life. They are used to emphasize the words of the wise and are the stock in trade of old people who use them to convey the precise moral lessons, warnings and advice since they make a greater impact on the mind than ordinary words.”

Many confirm that, from time immemorial, people who are said to be rhetoricians have been communicating their ideas vividly and tersely with proverbs. Proverbs could be used in every day-to-day communications at any time; that is they are most often performed within an ordinary, everyday situation, usually as part of a conversation. Proverbs are usually characterized by their applicability in various situations with different purposes or meanings. As Fayemi (2008) stated, a proverb is hetero-situational by nature. That is to say a proverb is capable of being interpreted to convey a different meaning which is applicable to different situations. Above all, proverbs are believed to render variety to every day speech. They are mostly amusing and effective in persuading individuals, and usually considered as ‘diplomatic phrases’. By their very nature, they

have the capacity to sum up a situation, pass judgment on a past matter, and recommend a course of action for the future.

To sum up, proverbs are important parts of language and carrier of culture; they have the power to reflect people's feelings, experiences, perspectives and modes of thinking. Thus, by studying proverbs, one can see the deep-rooted gender-biased ideology in society. They can reinforce the stereotyped images of men and women and the traditional roles ascribed to them by a society.

3.7.4 Functions of Verbal Arts

One of the approaches to the study of folklore is the functional approach that deals with the roles and significances of the oral art of a society in a given situation (Dorson, 1972). When he defines functionalism in folklore studies, Glazer in Green, (1997:386), stated, "[it is] the view that every folklore item must have a function". According to Glazer "every proverb, tale, folk belief, or ballad must satisfy some important cultural, social, or psychological function" (ibid).

Various forms of folklore serve different functions based on the occasions in which they are used in a society. For example, many folklorists have asserted that folksongs and chants are mainly used to inspire love, courage, persistence, respect, loyalty and so on. On the other hand, myths and legends help the youth to know something about the origin of their traditional society and other phenomena related to evolution. Moreover, these forms of folk literature are said to strengthen cultural ties and loyalty among the society. They can promote social stability and settle personal disputes. Regarding this, Lindfors (1977:2) mentions:

Genealogies and legends function towards the promotion of social stability because they are symbolic expressions of political power and historical truth; parables are effective in settling personal disputes due to their capacity to symbolize moral truth, and tales and riddles can entertain because of their inherent ability to unsettle reality.

A number of scholars asserted that folktales are mainly used for entertainment and instruction. Similarly, people have been using proverbs and sayings to educate the youth in the expectations and values of the society. They have also been using riddles and tongue twisters so as to widen the scope of thinking of the youth by challenging them. Concerning the functions of oral literature, especially that of African, Courlander, (1975: 1) states:

In his myths and legends he (Man) bridges back to the very dream morning of creation, while in his systems of divination he projects himself into time not yet come, in his epics he asserts the courage and worth of the human species; in his tales he ponders on what is just or unjust, up on what is feeble or courageous, what is sensible and ridiculous, on what moves the spirit to grief or to exultation; in his proverbs and sayings he capsulate the learnings of centuries about the human character and about the intricate balance between people and the world around them.

It has repeatedly been stated that folklore in general and verbal art in particular reflects the social, cultural, economic and traditional practices of a given society. Thus, verbal arts can play important roles in the life of the society they belong to; they have multiple functions that in one way or another refer to different aspects of human life. They can be used to praise worthwhile deeds and condemn evil doings in a society; they could also be used to warn people, offer advice, teach morality and rebuke a person who does not adhere to prescribed social mores or values. In other words, folkloric elements can play substantial roles in educating and advising the young, encouraging good behaviour, discouraging the evil ones, creating social conformity among people, promoting moral purity and strengthening cultural belongingness. In general, "... oral literature contributes to the upholding of the social norms of the society in which it functions" (Andrzejewski, 1985:38). In line with this, Bascom, (1965:277) states:

Some of the most important functions of folklore include aiding in the education of the young, promoting a group feeling of solidarity, providing social sanctioned ways for individuals, serving as a vehicle for social protest, offering an enjoyable escape from reality and converting dull work in to play.

In addition to Bascom, a number of other scholars also stated that folklore, besides entertainment, is used to educate, to validate culture and to maintain conformity to accepted patterns of behavior in a given society (Okpewho, 1992; Dorson, 1972; Green, 1997). According to these scholars, verbal arts validate certain aspects of culture and justify its rituals and institutions. Most of all, Green, (1997) maintained that there is a social network which is made up of the social relationships, actions and interactions among people or individuals in a society. The individuals in a society are in turn controlled or governed by the norms of that society. Hence, according to Green, (1997:387), "Folklore's function is to maintain these norms and patterns".

A number of other scholars have also stated that societies (whether they are literate or illiterate) make use of oral literature to respond to the existing political, social, and economic realities of a given period of time (Okpewho, 1992; Dorson, 1972;

Chesaina, 1997). Thus it can be said that folklore could provide the current generation with the social, cultural, political and economic realities of the past generation. This way, folklore can help someone observe people and their values across generations as they are pregnant with the earlier tradition, norms and philosophical views of the people who create and use them.

Verbal arts have been playing prominent roles in traditional society and are still playing a significant role nowadays in various ways. It has been serving many of the same purposes that written literature is serving the literates now including entertainment, moral instruction, commemoration and shaping the society to the required goal. "... it can reasonably be claimed that oral literature... is of educational value, since being exposed to it enhances the listener's verbal skills, enriches their vocabulary and enlarges their knowledge of their own society and its history" (Andrzejewski, 1985:38).

Broadly speaking, it can be said that verbal arts have multiple functions including what folklorists call pedagogical, entertainment, cosmological, justification, protest and so on. They play significant roles in the socialization of children by way of criticizing, commending, admiring, rewarding and punishing various traits in people. Their role in transmitting, maintaining and promoting social mores, and enforcing individual's behaviour to conform to the established socio-cultural standard is undisputable.

3.8 Some Features of Oromo Folktales and Proverbs

The Oromo have a great variety of folklore forms. Some of these folklore genres include tales of different kinds like myths, fables, legends, fairy tales etc collectively known as 'durduri's or 'oduu durii', proverbs and sayings, together called as mammaaksa, riddles (ibboo), folksongs (sirba aadaa), nursery rhymes (urursaa), religious songs (faaruu amantii) and so on. Thus, the Oromo have been transferring their age-old social values, beliefs, wisdom and in general all aspects of their culture and religion through their oral literature since time immemorial. The tradition of telling tales and using proverbs in speech in different contexts seems a daily preoccupation among the Macha Oromo society.

With very slight differences, mainly dialectical, the Oromo all over the country share the same language and various forms of folklore. Thus, it can be said that the Oromo have a common folklore and language that identifies them from other nations. Concerning this Rikitu (1992:12) illustrates, "The rich Oromo folklore, oral tradition, music, art and particularly proverbs and sayings have given this nation a sense of identity

and common heritage. It becomes the way they see, understand, interpret the world and express their beliefs and values about it.”

Women and men are the subject of a great many Oromo verbal arts in general and Macha Oromo proverbs and folktales in particular. The Oromo in general use proverbs more frequently than other genres of oral literature in their speech because they are shorter and easier to remember and they are weightier as they carry compressed thought and meaning. Like many people in the world, Macha Oromo people use folktales and proverbs very often in their conversations and everybody wants to acquire the skill of using them for one reason or another. They have been practicing this for a long period of time since knowledge and use of folktales and proverbs is traditionally deemed as evidence of sharp wit, thoughtfulness, and adherence to traditional values.

The Oromos call folktales as “durdurii/oduu durii” and proverbs as “mammaaksa”. As it has been stated above, ‘durdurii’ stands for all kinds of tales including myths, legends, fables, fairy tales, and so on. In most cases, the ‘durdurii’s and ‘mammaaksa’s (folktales and proverbs) are told by elders to children for various purposes; yet there are many cases in which adults utilize ‘durdurii’s among themselves at any time and place. They are mostly situational and usually not time and place bound. The ‘durdurii’s are predominantly narrated by male elders to children or adults. It is not common to see women and children narrating the ‘durdurii’s to each other. It is also very rare to see the ‘durdurii’s being narrated by women to children.

The characters in Oromo folktales mainly consist of wild and domestic animals, human beings and supernatural beings. Predominantly the trickster animal among the Macha Oromo is an ape, locally known as ‘hilluu’ (Qamalee). With its wit and technique, ‘hilluu’ is usually observed in Oromo folktales challenging and gaining victory over such fierce and powerful animals like lions.

Among the various forms of folklore, the Oromo children frequently play a riddle, which is called ‘Ibboo’, at night with each other, being supported by their elders. Long ago, children used to play riddles only at night, although it has become common to see them playing riddles <Ibboo> during day times nowadays especially at school. Traditionally they used to believe that if one plays riddles at day times, he/she will bear or grow a tail like animals, and hence, for fear of growing a tail, they play riddles solely at

night. Adults and elders rarely involve in riddling except to support their children to perform well.

Likewise, proverbs or ‘mammaaksa’ are mainly used by elders and adults in every discourse. As in many traditional societies, the Oromo children do not usually use proverbs (‘mammaaksa’) in their day-to-day conversations. As in any other proverbs, the Oromo ‘mammaaksa’ or proverbs occur frequently in every conversation and speech to divert attention, to strengthen idea, to value or reject opinions, etc. They have no specialized occasions for their use; they could be used in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of any conversation. When they value proverbs in speech the Oromos say, “mammaaksi tokko dubbii fida tokko dubbii fixa” which means ‘A proverb brings forth a conversation and the other winds it up.’ Similar to any other nation, the Oromos use proverbs or ‘mammaaksa’ to empower, enliven, and sweeten their speech which complies with the Nigerian saying- *Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten*. When they emphasize its importance in discourses, the Oromos do also say “mammaaksi dubbii mi’eessa” <proverbs sweeten speech> or “dubbiin mammaaksa hin qabnee fi ittoon soogidda hin qabne tokko” which means < A stew without salt and a speech without proverbs are the same>.

As it is known, folklore plays a vital role in the lives of a society in which it exists. As dominant forms of folklore, proverbs and folktales manifest the cultural practices, gender roles, accumulated knowledge and philosophies of a given society. The Oromo have been using folktales and proverbs as tools to teach their children every aspect of life: to ridicule wrong doings, to praise worthwhile deeds, to condemn evil and perverse attitudes, to state moral, to settle disputes, and the likes. Some typical motifs and themes that recur in several folktales of traditional societies like love and hatred, cheating and faithfulness, marriage and divorce, cruelty and humbleness, honesty and dishonesty etc are also abundantly available in Oromo ‘durdurii’s <folktales>.

Like the folktales and proverbs of any people, the Oromo ‘durdurii’ and ‘mammaaksa’ express their philosophy, way of life, attitude, code of conduct (both ethical and moral codes) and so on. They can provide information on the customs, habits, religious beliefs and all other aspects of their culture. As Sumner (1996:202) states, “The Oromo social background, of animal husbandry, warfare and religion in particular, has deeply marked the folktale.” According to him “the system of values is also inherent to

them” [durdurii’] and he particularly mentions the very “prevalence of the moral concern” (ibid).

In a similar manner, peoples’ traditional beliefs and day-to-day activities can be depicted and realized through proverbs. As Taddese observes (2004: 62), “[The Oromo proverbs] transmit customary actions and beliefs of the older generation to the younger ones. They widely portray the diversified aspects of prevailing customary practices, attitudes and beliefs.”

To sum up, the Oromo folktales do exhibit some universal features of oral literature in general and of folktales in particular, such as the prevalence of trickster animals, absence of concrete setting in the stories, cumulative creativity (anonymity), simplicity of plots, and the manifestation of unscientific world outlook and so on. On the whole, Oromo ‘durdurii’ and ‘mammaaksa’ (folktales and proverbs) could be said that they are cultural elements which are concerned with both universal and local incidents, traditions, customs, values, norms and other aspects of the society

3.9 Verbal Arts and the Study of Gender

Many researchers confirmed that folklore enables one to comprehend people’s patterns of beliefs and their customs. For example, Sims and Stephens, (2011: xii) ascertained that “... folklore is a way of understanding people and the wide-ranging creative ways we express who we are and what we value and believe.” Thus, we can say that people’s philosophy of life can be revealed in their folkloric wisdom, and the expression of folklore characters can make one see how people react to social pressures in their environment and how they perceive the world. The voices of the story characters in verbal arts can also provide the means for others to share the moral principles guiding people’s social interaction. Moreover, the folklore of people enables one to enjoy a good story and, in the process, satisfy his/her aesthetic sensibility.

As it is clearly indicated in the title, this study focuses on gender roles and the perception of women as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo. While talking about gender issues, ignoring societal values, feelings, beliefs, customary practices, mode of thinking, and others may lead one to arrive at a wrong destination. Hence, it seems vital to dwell upon discussing the relationship between gender and folklore (specifically verbal arts) which can beautifully reflect the aforementioned features of a given society.

Folklore in general and verbal arts in particular are said to remain the most important storehouse of traditional people as they preserve and sustain people's cultural identity especially before they began to preserve their cultural values in the form of writing. Studying folklore, thus, enables one to behold people's philosophy of life (patterns of beliefs, attitudes, their customs and so on). With regard to this, Bronner, (2007:55) notes:

The various forms of folklore: myths, folktales, legends, folksongs, proverbs, riddles, games, dances and many others can provide a vital resource for a teacher who seriously wishes to (1) understand his students better, and (2) teach those students more effectively about the world and about the human condition. For folklore is autobiographical ethnography—that is, it is a people's own description of themselves.

It is believed that folklore, in addition to many other aspects of human life, is also concerned with traditional beliefs. Traditional beliefs in turn disseminate gender stereotypes such as men should have more power than women in social relationships; women are less than men in every aspect by virtue of their characteristics, and so on. Thus, folklore can be seen as a window through which we see past and present gender concepts and stereotypes. Many scholars have also asserted that folklore reproduces and propagates the idea that women have to act in a manner that makes them submissive to men. Non-conscious ideologies which are considered as a set of beliefs that are accepted because a person thinks that the world cannot be anything rather than the way it is can also be accompanied with the help of folklore as a means of cultural transition (Derlega and Janda, 1986). Hence, it can be said that folklore can help to substantiate non-conscious ideologies related with the role of men and women and so many others in a given society.

As it was mentioned earlier, folklore is autobiographical ethnography in which people describe themselves. Thus, men and women are the subject of much of traditional folklore genres; the characters (whether humans, animals, or super natural beings) and the multiple themes of folklore in one way or another say something about human beings. As far as they are about human beings, they are inevitably about men and women. As Locke et al. (2009: xxxv) put it:

Women [and men] are the subject of a great many traditional and popular ideas, beliefs, and practices. Folklore contributes greatly to the process of turning biologically sexed beings into symbolically and culturally gendered ones— both

female and male—hence, much folklore about women serves to create, recreate, and reinforce ideas about the differences between women and men.

A number of scholars have indicated that gender role is the behaviour expected of a female or a male human being in a particular culture, the attitudes and activities that a society expects of each sex (Alvesson and Billing, 2009; Beasley, 2005; Crespi, 2003). Gender roles are assigned to individuals by society as a whole, and the values attached to these roles are also defined by the same society, and are carried forward by cultural vehicles such as folktales and proverbs among other things. In many societies, men and women carry out different roles and hold specific statuses within the social system.

The status that each gender is endowed within a given community seems unequal in which men and maleness are dominant while women and femaleness are subordinate (Crespi, 2003). The roles that a society assigns to men and women do not seem to come about by accident; neither do they seem to be granted to people by nature. They rather seem to have been learnt and internalized through socialization and through concepts and images that members of a society acquire from its culture in a complex system. From time immemorial, any society seem to have taught and maintained its cultural values, norms, mores and the likes through socialization by various channels such as folklore, media, advertisement and so forth.

Folklore in general and verbal arts in particular can provide a rich source of information for understanding people who use them. The tradition, customs, beliefs, attitudes and other aspects of a society seem to have been interwoven in different forms of verbal arts. Thus, verbal arts are an important component in the culture of any given society and play a significant role in maintaining the status quo prevailing within a society. As Nenola, (1999:23) writes:

Folklore both reflects and upholds the integrity of the community and its culture from one generation to the next by transmitting a sense of continuity in terms of values, norms, and social structure. The users of folklore are seen to be like-minded, no one questions the values inherited by the community.

How a society defines roles for women and men is not a unique phenomena; it can clearly be reflected in that society's verbal arts. People's patterns of beliefs and their customs including the roles each gender is expected to perform or display can easily be observed and studied in their folkloric wisdom in general and verbal arts in particular. It is believed that the different ways in which gender roles are depicted in the verbal arts of a given people reflect the political, economic and societal state of affairs of that people in

a given period of time. The reactions and interactions of folktale characters can help one to understand the moral precepts and principles guiding people's social interaction in the real world. Similarly, since they are loaded with hidden feelings, wishes and intentions of the speakers, the study of proverbs can enable one to understand the worldview of the users. Through verbal arts like folktales and proverbs, thus, young generation's socialization process in their respective society is not only metaphorically depicted but also realized indisputably.

Verbal arts are important part of language; they are carriers of culture and have the power to reflect people's perspectives and systems of a society to such a very great extent. Upon close observation, one may even argue that folktales and proverbs are human creations and hence they talk about men and women, and deal with how they should behave in the society. Those which characterize boys and girls in particular emphasize how they should grow up into responsible husbands and wives. However, some verbal art forms targeted towards men and women seem to provide their audiences with restricted roles of traditional manhood and womanhood; they do not seem to cope with the ongoing changes in gender roles that are taking place in modern societies nowadays. The cultural norms represented in verbal arts play a great role in the socialization processes of the person who attends it. As it is known, these cultural norms contain the shared beliefs of a society or people's philosophy of life as a whole including gender roles and gender stereotypes. Thus, cultural norms may affect the feelings, thoughts and actions of people in various ways.

Many research works have revealed that folklore can beautifully reflect the culture of the society in which it circulates and provides a mirror image of the real situations or attitudes that the society upholds. There is also a general consensus that folklore is used to condition members of the society (both men and women) to accept certain attitudes and sex roles. In other words, folklore can play an important role in influencing a society to behave in a particular way and in shaping the perception of its individual members; they can exert a deep and persuasive influence on both individuals and the whole society. With regard to this, Furniss and Gunner, (1995: i) contends, [Oral literature] "can...be a significant agent of change capable of directing, provoking, preventing, overturning and recasting perceptions of social reality." Through verbal arts, thus, one can see the needs, goals, and concerns of the people and learn the cultural values, social mores, and group norms of the people. As they are deemed as an important component of the culture of a

society, verbal arts can compel people to accept and follow rigid and traditional gender stereotypes.

Generally speaking, the construction of gender, that is, the roles and statuses of men and women among Macha Oromo society can be inferred from the different forms of verbal arts that characterize men and women. By studying these verbal arts, the researcher believes that it is possible to see the deep-rooted gender-biased ideology in Macha Oromo society where women are normally considered as inferior to men.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A number of studies indicate that a researcher is usually unable to investigate a problem from all perspectives concurrently; he/she is expected to articulate the problem within a certain theoretical framework. Theoretical framework, as it is known, is the ideal construction or “the structure, the scaffolding, or the frame of the study” that can support a given research by introducing and describing various sets of ideas and enables the researcher to make sense of the data collected (Given, 2008: 870). It also establishes a perspective or a set of lenses through which the researcher views the problem. Hereunder, an attempt was made to discuss the theoretical framework of the study to establish a vantage point through which the researcher views the problem.

Hence, in order to structure, shape and guide the study, the researcher used the following sets of ideas presented in the form of diagram (followed by its description) having adapted from Eudine Barreatu (1998).

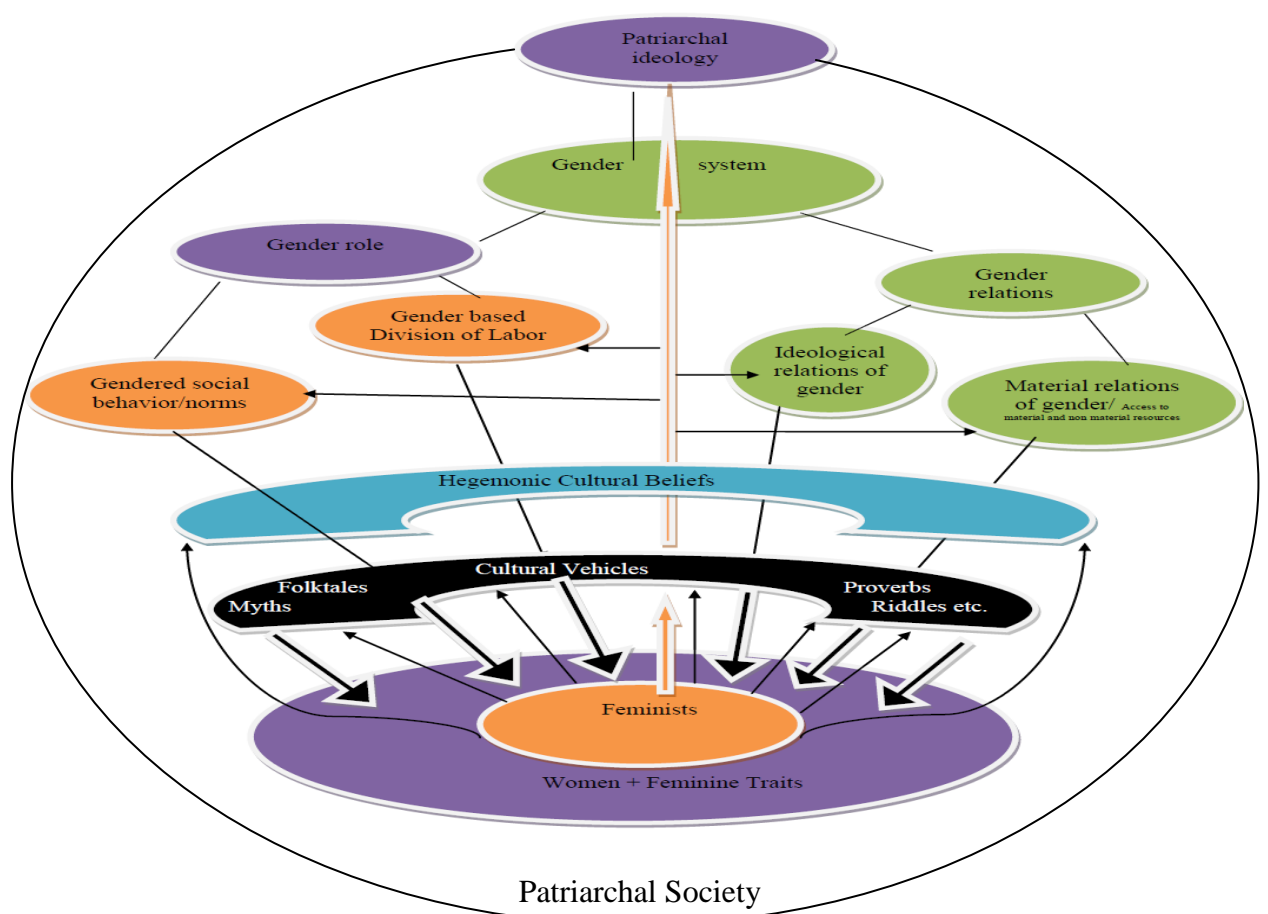


Figure 2. Theoretical Framework, adapted from Eudine Barreitu, 1998

As it can be seen from the diagram, patriarchal ideology dictates the gender system which deals with gender roles and gender relations. The direction of arrows in the diagram indicates the direction of attack and counterattack. Gender systems or roles are learned behaviours or accustomed manners in a given society that condition which activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as male's or female's (Wienclaw, 2011; Beasley, 2005; Crespi, 2003). They (gender roles) compel a society to form a stereotype of what an ideal man and woman should be. It is believed that people learn this "ideal man and woman" from what they observe and hear in their daily lives including what they see in magazines, television shows, advertisements, music, art, and more importantly from different types of verbal arts.

While gender relation comprises a network of power relations with ideological and the material dimensions, gender role involves the gender based division of labour and the gendered behaviour one displays merely because he/she is male or female. The material dimension exposes how women and men gain access to or are allocated power, status, and material and non-material resources within a society (Barriteau, 1998). The ideological dimension, on the other hand, is concerned with the concept of masculinity and femininity, which are sets of qualities, attributes, and roles generally considered typical of, or appropriate to, men and women respectively.

Gender role ideology as its name suggests can be described as the attitudes regarding the appropriate roles, rights, and responsibilities of women and men in a society. The way individuals create gender identities is believed to be shaped by gender ideologies that operate within/under a gender system. Social expectations of an individual and individual's belief of gender identity can play a central role in forming gender ideologies within a given society.

Many researchers have indicated that the material and ideological dimensions of gender relations reinforce each other, and the prevailing patriarchal ideologies are believed to affect women's status in a society and their access to power and material resources (Barriteau, 1998; Nenola, 1999). According to Barriteau an unequal gender relation is a relation of domination, [and this] inequality is rooted in an asymmetry of power that has differential material and ideological outcome. This unbalanced relation of gender is believed to deprive individual's rights because of the absence of gender neutrality.

As to Barriteau, the ideological dimension of gender relations is concerned with the construction of masculinity and femininity. She (1998:191) contended, “The ways in which masculinity and femininity are constructed reveal the gender ideologies operating in the state and society”. Barriteau further stated that the statements of public officials, the social practices of different institutions and the representations in popular culture provide evidence of what is expected of, or appropriate for, both women and men. Similarly, Nenola (1999:21) confirmed that “The roles of men and women in this system do not come about by accident; rather they are learned and internalized both in practice and through concepts and images.”

Being dictated by patriarchal ideology, gender relations and gender roles form hegemonic cultural beliefs. These hegemonic cultural beliefs in turn pass through verbal arts and get strength and legitimization; and these verbal arts substantiate and maintain social norms, diminishing the roles and statuses of women and glorifying that of men in a given society. Nenola (1999:21) argues that various social and individual “practices, the division of labour and its associated tasks, as well as images, the concepts and ideals linked to female and male, are all a part of the traditional culture of any society”. This traditional culture of any society is best preserved and maintained in folklore. Gender inequality and the resulting oppressive treatment of women are, thus, legitimized and maintained, among other things, through folklore in general and verbal arts in particular. While emphasizing this, Nenola (1999: 23) stated:

Folklore, like written expression, can be used to either maintain or challenge the status quo prevailing within a community. In other words, it can be used to express and reinforce acceptance of the dominant norms, concepts and power structures, at which time we can speak of folklore as a tool for consensus.... Folklore both reflects and upholds the integrity of the community and its culture from one generation to the next by transmitting a sense of continuity in terms of values, norms, and social structure.

Having investigated that women are under mistreatment in patriarchal society, and that verbal arts are being used to maintain and perpetuate the prevailing mode of thinking, portraying women in a manner they should not be, feminists have begun to counteract the gender systems reflected in folklore. They have persistently been challenging the prevailing patriarchal ideologies that had been embedded in folklore diminishing the statuses of women in a society by restricting their role to reproduction and the related household chores. While talking about the function of folklore, particularly of proverbs

and jokes, in this respect and the reaction of feminists to the case, Lewis (1974:85) mentions:

But the feminist attack has been largely centered on beliefs and sayings that tend to support and maintain the stereotypes, because these are major, although subtle, ways of inculcating values and enculturating members of society. They have validated and justified woman's role by referring to the past, thus seeking to maintain her role and cultural stability in the present and into the future.

The study of a given society's folklore, therefore, might help one to understand that society's expectation of gender roles and behaviours. Some scholars in the field of folklore have also the opinion that oral literature could be used to analyze gender from different angles. For instance, Brown (1999) mentioned that orality studies have important implications for gender analysis. As a justification for this, it sounds good to take Nenola's (1993:56) statement which says oral literature is solely the property of human beings and "in so far as it is about human beings, it is about men and women and their relations". Many experts have also affirmed that folklore is used to condition women to accept certain attitudes and sex roles and promote unhealthy sex stereotypes. Hence, the researcher believes, an analysis of the meaning and role of folkloric discourse in representing, reproducing and maintaining the gender system in any society from a feminist angle can beautifully indicate the inequality between men and women and answer the remaining research questions raised earlier.

As explained so far, the study focuses on the condition and perception of men and women in society thereby investigating the roles assigned to them, and is grounded in the assumption that women, more than men, generally experience subordination and exploitation by the patriarchal society as reflected in some verbal art forms. In light of this argument, it is possible to guess that the study in hand subscribes to the notion of feminism that pays special attention to women's rights and position in culture and society. Three wings of feminist literary theory, namely Liberal, Marxist and psychoanalytic feminist theories are selected to be used as lenses for viewing the problem and interpreting the data. Besides, an attempt was made to connect the study with social role theory which recognizes the historical division in labour between women and men, who often assume responsibilities at home and outside the home respectively. The theories are

selected for their relevance or appropriateness, ease of application, and explanatory powers while talking about gender roles and the perception of women in a given society.

4.1 Feminism

The term feminism has many different uses and meanings which are often challenging to choose from and use for a specific purpose. Among the many different uses and meanings associated with feminism, one states that it is (thought of as) an ‘intellectual commitment and a political movement’ that works toward justice for women and struggles to end the subordination of women or discrimination against women in all forms (Hooks, 1984; Alvesson and Billing, 1997; Mills, 1995; Castle, 2007; Ruthven, 1984). In other words, it can be said that feminism is based on the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged and have been denied basic human rights when compared with men, and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or indefensible. According to Eagleton (2003:197), “Feminist theories start from the assumption that ‘the personal is the political’ and that all theories about women and gender need to be checked against real-life experiences”. Hence, many feminists argue that women have been oppressed and this maltreatment of women can be evidenced from “... real-life women, that real life conditions are the most important indicator of the status of women” in a given society (ibid).

Feminism is based on the principle that women have innate worth, inalienable rights, and valuable ideas and talents to contribute to the society (Madsen, 2000; Hooks, 1984; Mills, 1995; Wollstonecraft, 1976). Feminist theory is, thus, chosen to be a sound and general framework in which the study in hand can be seen for its proponents raise and address important points related to gender systems and the oppressive treatment of women. Feminist theory seems to be the reflection of the agitation of the female consciousness against the stereotypical male perceptions of female identity and experience. As put in Encarta Encyclopaedia (2009) “Feminism is a collective term for systems of beliefs and theories that pay special attention to women’s rights and women’s position in culture and society” (“Feminism" Microsoft® Encarta® 2009). A number of authors in the field of gender studies have also stressed that feminist theory critically addresses the subordination and domination of women with the aim of seeking an end to it. A good example to mention is Hooks (1984:24), who described feminism as “a struggle to end sexist oppression”.

Furthermore, feminism is viewed as an ideology that disagrees with the political, economic and cultural downgrade of women to positions of inferiority and inadequacy. Even if feminism entirely seems to focus on the maltreatment of women in a society, it does not condemn all men for perpetuating the oppression of women on the whole. Some feminists have the opinion that the patriarchal society also oppresses men in different ways although the degree is not the same as the oppression of women. Concerning this Mills (1995:12) states:

Most feminists 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. Feminists also believe that society is organized in such a way that it works, in general, to the benefit of men rather than women; that is, that it is patriarchal. This does not imply that all men benefit equally from the way that society is structured, since society also oppresses men in different degrees, nor does it imply that all men take part in the continuance of the system, since men can decide to oppose the oppression of other groups. But it does imply that there is a general difference in the way that men and women are treated in society as a whole and in the way that they view themselves and others view them as gendered beings.

Many scholars in the area affirm that feminism is not a single philosophy upon which the proponents come to terms with no difference in opinion. It is said to be an umbrella term which encompasses many viewpoints about women in a society. The proponents differ in their interpretations of women and their oppression, and hence the term cannot be taken as a single philosophical doctrine, or as implying an agreed political program (James, 1998: 576). For example, one of the advocates, Hooks (1984:17) confirmed that “a central problem with feminist discourse has been our ability to either arrive at a consensus of opinion about what feminism is or accept definition(s) that could serve as points of unification.”

Nevertheless, the supporters seem to unite on the conventional male and female role definitions in society. Specifically, it can be said that feminists share a common understanding that women have traditionally been undervalued and denied equal opportunity with men. “Feminists are united by the idea that women’s position in society is unequal to that of men, and that society is structured in such a way as to benefit men to the political, social, and economic detriment of women” (Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009. © 1993-2008). Similarly, Castle, 2007:96) assured “What all of these women have in common is an interest in exposing patriarchal forms of power as the cause of the unequal and subordinate status of women in [many] societies.” Similarly Chafetz (1988:5) as

quoted by Alvesson and Billing ((1997:2) defines a theory as feminist “if it can be used (regardless by whom) to challenge, counteract, or change a status quo which disadvantages or devalues women.” In a nutshell, the ultimate goal of feminism is to transform unjust gender systems in a society, and feminists believe that traditional gender roles are oppressive for women, and the female gender role was constructed as an opposite to an ideal male role, and helps to perpetuate patriarchy.

Even if feminism predominantly focuses on the subordination or oppressive treatment of women in society, it can be said that, it is a multidimensional and somewhat disputable theory on which the proponents have different viewpoints. Overall, as Locke et al. (2009: 171) put it “feminism draws upon a wide variety of theoretical perspectives, some of which are intrinsically women-centred, and others of which draw upon perspectives like liberalism, Marxism, and psychoanalysis”. These three categories of feminism will be discussed in some detail as follows as they are predominantly used as a lens to view or analyze and interpret the existing gender roles and the unfair treatment of women as reflected in the verbal arts of the society under focus.

4.1.1 Marxist Feminism

One of the most dominant literary theories which is mainly concerned with the ideological and material oppression of a dominant economic class over subordinate classes is Marxist literary theory. According to this theory, people are divided into haves and have-nots based on their socio-economic status, in which case the well-to-dos dominate and oppress the others economically, socially, and politically, with women more than men, falling in the ranks of the have-nots (Tong, 2009; Tyson, 2006). A number of studies indicate that the differences created among people due to socioeconomic status is more remarkable than the differences created due to other factors when seen from Marxist point of view. For example, Tyson (2006:54) notes, “From a Marxist perspective, differences in socioeconomic class divide people in ways that are much more significant than differences in religion, race, ethnicity, or gender”.

Marxism in literature can be perceived as an approach that views works of literature or art as the products of historical forces that can be analyzed by looking at the material conditions in which they were formed (Tyson, 2006). It is an ideology that perceives works of literature, in a certain period of time, as the articulations of the dominant class. As Tyson (2006:66) clearly notes:

For Marxism, literature does not exist in some timeless, aesthetic realm as an object to be passively contemplated. Rather, like all cultural manifestations, it is a product of the socioeconomic and hence ideological conditions of the time and place in which it was written, whether or not the author intended it so. Because human beings are themselves products of their socioeconomic and ideological environment, it is assumed that authors cannot help but create works that embody ideology in some form.

Marxist literary theory often shares with feminism a desire to challenge or confront the power structures in modern society. Hence, one of the most important theoretical issues worth raising while talking about gender based division of labour, women's oppression, and class is Marxist feminism. This can be substantiated by the words of scholars like Ferguson and Hennessy (2010:1) which runs as "A good place to situate the start of theoretical debates about women, class and work is in the intersection with Marxism and feminism". According to Madsen (2000:65), "Marxist feminism combines the study of class with the analysis of gender".

Many scholars state that Marxism and feminism complement one another in many ways as both are mainly concerned with oppression and inequality. While Marxist theory states that people are oppressed by the ruling class and that capitalism is the ruling force of society, feminist theory maintains that women are oppressed by a male-driven society. Marxist feminist theory is said to be the extension of the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels on gender, labour and exploitation. As clearly stated in Encarta Encyclopedia, Marxist feminist theory "extends the theories of production expounded by ... Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to an examination of the economic and material exploitation of women, the sexual division of labor, especially in domestic work and childcare, and women's inequality within the workplace" ("Feminism" Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009).

Marxist feminism is, thus, one of the theoretical perspectives which is drawn out of feminism and argues that capitalism is the fundamental cause of women's oppression in patriarchal society. It is a sub-type of feminist theory which is mainly concerned with the social institutions of private property and free market system or capitalism to elucidate and decry gender inequality and oppression. The proponents of the theory such as Marx, Jaggar, Goldman, Robinson, Barrett and the likes as cited in Madsen (2000) and Ramazanoglu (1989) believe that women will remain under oppression so far as an economic system that encourages private property prevails, because they deem that women have been deprived of private property for a long period of time. They argue that the eradication of the private ownership economic system which is dominated by men

will remove all forms of oppression (Chafetz, 2006). According to Donovan (2004), Marxist Feminists struggle for raising awareness of the working class consciousness and encourage women to involve in the working class movement for their emancipation. They focus on the need for women to develop true consciousness of their oppressed position in order to overcome the ideology to serve the ruling class interest.

Marxist feminists believe that the allocation to women of the task of caring for children and performing the bulk of household work leads women to be unable to play full and equal role within patriarchal society. Marx as cited in Ramazanoglu (1989:100) for example “... described women as proletarians at work and household slaves at home” and emphasized that “women’s issues are still class issues”. The proponents of the theory firmly argue that women are either excluded from social life, locked away in the domestic household, or where they are involved in social labour, they are often directed into areas of work closely allied to the domestic economy and its skills (Martha, 2000; Donovan, 2004). They contend that the nature of the work done in the home is generally monotonous, labour intensive and done by women in isolation from others in a similar position, leading to their being separated off from the social nature of work under capitalism, which is essential to the development of the working class as a collective, conscious class capable of carrying out social change. As Locke et al. (2009:171) write:

[Marxist feminists] locate the economy as a primary source of women’s oppression, and are particularly attentive to the ways in which labor is divided into men’s waged production outside the home and women’s unpaid reproduction inside it. They see the traditional family household as propping up an exploitative capitalist system by reproducing wage-earner men and caregiver women, while supporting the wage-earning potential of men by making the care of men and children the responsibility of women.

Marxist feminists argue that women are part of the working class and hence the struggle to overcome capitalism should be paid due attention. For women to be able to improve their social positions and to establish a less exploitative system, they need to cooperate with working class men (Jaggar and Rothenberg, 1993:120). Marxist feminists argue that sexism and capitalism are mutually supportive. They relate capitalism with the oppression of women; that is, they hold the view that women’s oppression increases with the expansion of capitalist mode of production and system of governance (Humm, 1992). The sexual division of labor in the family, where women still (today) seem to do most of the work, contributes to women’s worst situation in the labour market perpetuating and

exacerbating the oppression of women along with other factors in the patriarchal society (Alvesson and Billing, 1997; Chafetz, 2006; Tong, 2009).

As to Marxist feminists, gender oppression is class oppression and the relationship between man and woman in society is similar to the relations between proletariat and bourgeoisie (Delphy (1984) in Tyson, 2006; Madsen, 2000; Tong, 2009). Hence, for Marxist feminists personal identity is barely distinguished from class identity. They see contemporary gender inequality as determined ultimately by the capitalist mode of production. They strongly believe that women's subordination does not lie in their biologically determined sex, but in social relations and the institution of family which is a complex system in which men order women's services. They assert that women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression, which should be maintained as it serves the interests of capital and the ruling class. Alvesson's and Billing's (1997:66) critical observations fully substantiate what has been stated here. It runs:

Some Marxist feminists see capitalism as the root of all social inequalities, and the family as the foundation for women's subordination. Family is believed to serve as a necessary and functional means for the reproduction of labour, ideologically as well as materially and therefore it is in the interest capitalism to maintain the gender division of labour in the family, women's unpaid work being vital for capitalism.

Similarly, Delphy (1984: 60) as cited in Tyson (2006: 98) points out that "Contemporary 'developed' societies . . . depend on the unpaid labour of women for domestic services and child-rearing", which exclude them from the dominion of exchange or "services that are not treated like the jobs people do for money outside their own home and consequently have no value." Delphy contended that women are the subordinates within families and are vulnerable to exploitation/oppression as the lower classes are subordinates and oppressed by the upper classes in a society as a whole. She further noted that "women constitute a separate oppressed class, based on their oppression as women, regardless of the socioeconomic class to which they belong" (ibid).

To wind it up, Marxist feminists contend that the oppression of women is observable in the "labour market, socioeconomic stratification, the domestic division of labor, bureaucratic authority structures, etc" and firmly argue that the abolition of the capitalist profit-driven economy will remove the motivation for sexism, racism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression (Gimenez, 2000:14). They emphasize that there is no equality for women where there is capitalist mode of thinking in the society.

4.1.2 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminists' explanation regarding the link between women's subordination or marginalization and socialization process is another related notion that this study upholds. Liberal feminism has a root in a philosophy which is based on the principle of individual freedom, namely liberalism, and chiefly challenges the oppression, arbitrariness, and misuses of power in every aspect. Liberal feminism generally focuses on the personal relations between men and women as the starting point from which to transform society into a more gender-equitable place (Tong, 2009).

Liberal feminist theory is, hence, another wing of feminist theory that presupposes and argues for the equality of men and women through political and legal reform. Liberal feminists contend that patriarchal society holds the false belief that women are, by nature, less than men intellectually and physically and tend to discriminate against women in different social activities. Liberal feminists believe that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that block women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world and they work hard to emphasize the equality of men and women through political and legal reform (Tong, 2009). Experts in the field state that Liberal feminism observes critically the personal interactions of men and women as the starting ground from which to transform society into a more gender-equitable place (Madsen, 2000).

Among others, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor (Mill), Kate Millett, and Germaine Greer, Betty Friedan and others are considered as the proponents of liberal feminism. According to Kousaleos (1999:21) these "...egalitarian feminists attempted to open up social, sexual, economic, and political positions for women by arguing that culture, not nature, is the determining factor in inequality". These feminists argued that men and women are equal in nature but culturally socialized to behave differently.

These liberal feminists continued the tradition of seeking for women the privileges already enjoyed by men in the patriarchal society. They believed that modifying laws and educating people against misunderstandings and erroneous prejudices would remedy gender discrimination, giving women equal opportunities with men to exercise individual

choices in life, and they sought gender equity through changes in law and childhood socialization.

Wollstonecraft, one of the forerunners of feminists, as cited in Tong (2009), asserted that women have been marginalized in a patriarchal society, and demanded that women deserve the same rights as men everywhere. She stated that contrary to the patriarchal society's mentality, women are rational beings and are equal to men; yet, they have been brought up to be dependent on men and to be concerned only with domestic life and caring for children. According to her, women are not weak by nature and the characteristics attributed to women are not valid expressions of an essential feminine nature but are cultural inventions that men created to serve their own interests.

According to Wollstonecraft as cited in Tong (2009) house wives (some women), in her time, lacked fitness and physical strength mainly because of the fact that they were not allowed to exercise outdoors as men did. They also lacked liberty and virtue because they were not permitted to make their own decisions and were discouraged from developing their powers of reason. She added that men would become weak and pleasure seeking and develop some flawed distinctive qualities if they were confined in the home all the time and being denied to develop their rational powers (Tong, 2009:13-14).

Liberal feminism claims that gendered socialization of children, gender based division of labour, devaluation and low pay for women's jobs, restricted entry into administrative posts, and limitations on reproductive choice are said to be the fundamental sources of gender inequality which should be challenged and eliminated from the minds of patriarchal society. According to liberal feminists' view, women's subordination is attributed to the socialization process that confines women to the domestic household chores, which is devalued for its social and economic benefits. They strongly oppose the patriarchal system that assigns women to limited household chores where they cannot develop their faculty of reason. They maintain that the nature of the domestic sphere limits the scope of women to develop critical thinking and self realization allowing them to concentrate only on daily routine and monotonous tasks. As Cameroon (1992:5) notes:

Sexual division of labour present to some degree in all known societies in which some tasks are women's and others are men's. Men's work is economically and socially valued; women's usually is not. Some feminists have looked particularly

at women's obligation to do domestic work and childcare, suggesting that mothering, apart from its role in restricting women economically, may have consequences for the psychology of women and their children, reproducing the cycle whereby women mother and men do not.

Hence, liberal feminists argue against and resist the traditional gender based division of labour where women are usually obliged to do domestic work and childcare; they demand equal distribution of roles so that women can obtain a fair share of educational, social, political, and economic opportunities.

The proponents of liberal feminist theory focus on asserting the equality of men and women through political and legal reform. The theory is said to be an individualistic form of feminism which emphasizes women's ability to show and maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. With regard to this, Madsen (2000:35) states, "The liberal emphasis on the individual (in contrast with movements such as Marxist feminism that emphasizes collectivity) stresses the importance of the individual and individual autonomy which are protected by guaranteed rights, economic justice and equality of opportunity." Unlike other feminist groups, the slogan of liberal feminists is 'equality' which they think is maintained through legal, political and educational means. They hold the view that women have been deprived of the rights to education, to be seen equal in front of law, and to be involved in decision making arenas. They argue that patriarchal societies do not accept the equality of men and women, and therefore, women in general need to be granted the rights and privileges, by law, that men have gained traditionally. Locke, Vaughan and Greenhill (2009:171) state the importance of the right to education, law and politics to women and the motto of liberal feminists as follows:

They [Liberal feminists] hold that reason and education are primary resources for improvement in the world; therefore, correcting misconceptions about women will improve their lot. Contemporary liberal feminists feel that the rights and privileges traditionally granted to men should be extended to women. They seek change through formal structures like politics, the law, and education, and their watchword is equality.

Liberal feminists have succeeded in shifting the focus which had merely and previously dealt with the legal rights of women on the surface to political, and forced politicians to address concerns to do with women's private lives such as the issues of rape, human trafficking and domestic violence. By shifting the political focus onto the private lives of women, liberal feminists were able to expose the unwanted everyday behaviours

of certain men and brought into question the traditional patriarchal order that has perpetuated the oppression of women.

As other wings of feminists, liberal feminists claim that gender differences are not based in one's biological makeup, and therefore claim that women and men should be given equal opportunity to do something in various sectors. They search for equal rights with men and believe that individuals should be treated in accordance with their talents and efforts as opposed to the characteristics of their sex. In other words, liberal feminists assert that women should not be treated differently under the law, and demand that women should have the same legal, educational and work rights and opportunities as men. They challenge the perception of male authority and seek to eradicate gender based distinctions, and argue that all stereotyped social roles for men and women have to be abolished. Generally, the overall goal of liberal feminism seems to create "a just and compassionate society in which freedom flourishes" and where men and women thrive equally (Tong, 2009: 13).

Some fanatic feminists state that liberal feminism does not seem to have the wish to change a society from the grassroots level, rather it aims at improving the situation within the present system. Moreover, a number of the proponents of other branches of feminism criticize Liberal feminism for failing to address the impact of patriarchal ideology, power structure and the systematic subordination of women in modern society (Tong, 2009). The following topic explores another wing of feminist theory, namely psychoanalytic feminism, which underpins the fundamental idea of this dissertation.

4.1.3 Psychoanalytic Feminist Theory

To begin with, psychoanalysis is a theory that cannot be disregarded in gender study and folklore since it is believed that gender construction is influenced by unconscious and hidden desires, and that verbal folklore seems to have a much more lasting effect on a child's psyche than simply delivering a moral lesson. Psychoanalysis is generally said to be a theory first developed by Sigmund Freud which predominantly focuses on unconscious mental processes and explains the psychological functioning of human personality (Kernberg, 2004). According to experts in the field, psychoanalysis develops a theory of the unconscious that connects male/ female sexuality and personal interpretation together. The theory is said to disclose the ways in which our sense of self, and our loyalties and attachments are influenced by unconscious drives and ordered by

symbolic structures that are beyond the scope of individual agency (Anthony, 2009; Kernberg, 2004; Tong, 2009).

Because of its plentiful theoretical manipulability and powerful diagnosis of our modern cultural complications, psychoanalysis was said to be wholeheartedly adopted by many social theorists, literary critics, anthropologists, feminists and post modernists. Accordingly, feminists are those contemporary theoreticians who have enthusiastically integrated psychoanalysis to explain gender inequality and the exploitation of women in patriarchal societies. Hence, another wing of feminist theory which presumes the oppression of women as if it is rooted within the psychic structures and reinforced by the continual repetition of underlying forces or reiteration of relational dynamics formed in infancy and childhood is psychoanalytic feminism (Chodorow, 1989; Mitchell, 1974; Elliot, 2009; Tong, 2009). The theory is said to be utilized in literature to analyze the author's reflection on women in a particular social construction and era, and how a certain work of art is used to perpetuate gender stereotypes.

Psychoanalytic feminism maintains that gender is not biological but is based on the psycho-sexual development of an individual. As Tong notes psychoanalytic feminists argue that “women’s social position and powerlessness relative to men had little to do with female biology and much to do with the social construction of femininity” (2009:133); they highly object and reject Freud’s proposition that says “Anatomy is destiny.” Hence, the proponents of the theory believe that “... gender identity and hence gender inequity is rooted in a series of infantile and early childhood experiences” (Tong, 2009:129). They explain that gender leads to a social system that is dominated by males, which in turn influences the individual’s psychological aspects of sexual development. Moreover, as Tong (2009: 129) notes “psychoanalytic feminists maintain that the fundamental explanation for women’s way of acting is rooted deep in women’s psyche, specifically, in women’s way of thinking about themselves as women.”

Nancy J. Chodorow, Juliet Mitchell, Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, Julia Kristeva, and Betty Friedan are among the proponents of psychoanalytic feminism. Chodorow who is widely regarded as a leading psychoanalytic feminist theorist (1979:18), as cited in Mciver (2009:13) viewed women’s care for children and protection of other people to be a historical and cross-cultural phenomenon. She particularly paid special attention on the role of a mother in the differential identity formation for boys and girls within the family unit. She repeatedly mentioned that women’s mothering is the cause of male dominance,

and attached this role of women to be the primary cause of the sexual division of labour and of the continued control and dominance of women by men. According to Chodorow, the primary care-giving role of women is the fundamental reason for the oppression of women.

As a result of this, Chodorow highly demanded the change in the social construction of women in general and the sexual division of labour related with mothering in particular. Chodorow as cited by Tong (2009) argues that if the social arrangements that assign women to all child rearing and related activities could be altered, the psychological process creating gender identity, and the devaluing of women might also be altered. For Chodorow as cited in (Mciver, 2009:12) "gendered subjects i.e. boys and girls are produced not on the basis of anatomical distinctions between the sexes rather on the basis of object relationships and cultural construction of family dynamics". Hence, for Chodorow, it is the social and cultural construction of the mother-infant relationship which is vitally important to gender development and the relations between the sexes.

It is believed that women's domestic work and other related duties, more properly household activities limit them not to develop economically and psychologically. Psychoanalytic feminists argue that the more women stay in the home performing monotonous household chores, the more they lose confidence on themselves and become dependent on men who have the social right to do whatever they like. In relation to this Cameroon (1992: 5) stated, "... women's obligation to do domestic work and childcare ...[or] mothering apart from its role in restricting women economically, may have consequences for the psychology of women and their children, reproducing the cycle whereby women mother and men do not".

Luce Iregaray was another famous psychoanalytic feminist (thinker) who holds the view that women's degradation takes place in the form of psychological domination being endorsed through the medium of language. According to her, "women live in a world in which virtually all meaning has been defined by patriarchal language" (Tyson, 2006:101). She further noted that, without realizing, women merely and passively imitate previously spoken ideas that the patriarchal society have forged for their own benefits instead of speaking actively and originating their own thoughts (ibid). To Iregaray, as stated in Tyson (2006:101) "... men have defined femininity in terms of their own needs, fears, and desires." When she concludes her observations of women's submission to men and the role of patriarchal ideology endorsed by language Iregaray in Tyson states:

Caught within patriarchy ... women have only two choices: (1) to keep quiet (for anything a woman says that does not fit within the logic of patriarchy will be seen as incomprehensible, meaningless) or (2) to imitate patriarchy's representation of herself as it wants to see her (that is, to play the inferior role given her by patriarchy's definition of sexual difference, which foregrounds men's superiority) (ibid).

According to Irigaray, due to the dominant patriarchal ideology, men have the authority to name things, explain and rule the world and have the power to control everything. She further noted that "women are merely tokens, markers, and commodities in a male driven economy and function to display men's relations to other men in a patriarchal society" (Tyson, 2006: 102).

Julia Cristeva was considered as another psychoanalytic feminist who believes that women are misrepresented and wrongly perceived as naturally submissive and overly emotional and that they are marginalized and oppressed by the patriarchal society. She argues that biological differences that the patriarchal society believes in have no role in determining one's ability when compared with social differences, and maintains that the society attaches more value to the masculine traits than the feminine ones for no logical reason. Cristeva further stated that it is the social meaning given to sexual difference that oppresses women, and hence the patriarchal language that produces the meaning needs worth scrutinizing.

As put in Tyson (2006:103), Cristeva notes:

If one is born with the biology of a female, one's place in society is accorded fewer rights—particularly the right to own and control one's body sexually, both in terms of the kind and number of sexual relationships one will have and in terms of abortion and contraceptive rights—than if one is born with the biology of a male. In the final analysis, the issue is not how biological difference should be defined; rather the issue is that whatever meaning biological difference may have is instantly consumed, overshadowed, displaced by the social (patriarchal) meaning that accompanies it.

Psychoanalysts believe that stories, mainly folk and fairy tales are symbolic expressions of the inner experience of development in children. They argue that stories connect children to psychological realities and that folktales assist children in their psychosocial and imaginative growth. When traditional stories are told to children, according to them, the symbolic patterns these tales display become manifestations of psychological constructs (Bettelheim, 1977).

By and large, psychoanalytic feminist theory is interested in patriarchy's influence on women's psychological experience and creativity with special focus on the individual

psyche instead of on women's group experience. The proponents of the theory argue that the oppression of women is not limited to the economic, political, and social domains; women's psychological repression at the level of the unconscious is also deemed as part and parcel of their oppression (Tyson, 2006:95).

In general, in an attempt made to review so far, feminist theory is widely used to describe women's oppression, explain its causes and consequences, and prescribe strategies for their liberation. It has also been noticed that even if there are different schools of thought within feminism, all of them base their argument in the fact that the world is socially constructed and that women have been oppressed and treated unfairly in this patriarchal world. In this study, among the different wings of feminism, Liberal, Marxist, and Psychoanalytic feminist models are selected for explicating the gender systems and the oppressive treatment of women as reflected in the verbal arts of in Macha Oromo society. This is because, a number of scholars recommend researchers to use an eclectic approach (different theoretical frameworks) so as to overcome "their own personal biases or ideological blinders" and "explore different ways to make sense of the data" (Given, 2008: 893). According to Given "... exploring research data using a different theoretical lens can be a particularly useful way to examine dissonant or anomalous data"(ibid). Hence, it is with the intention to supplement the limitation of one wing of feminist theory with another and widen the various angles from which feminists view women's problem in a patriarchal society that the researcher is interested to use different theoretical lenses. The next topic briefly presents the explanations forwarded by the proponents of social role theory for the prevalence of gender differences in a given society and other related concepts.

4.2 Social Role Theory

The study in hand also resides in a supporting framework of Social Role Theory which suggests that the social structure is the fundamental force for the gender differences in a given society. The theory appears to relate properly with the current study in that it focuses on interactions between and among individuals (men and women), groups, societies, and economic systems in which people live. It was chosen since it is usually used for studies about sex differences addressing various issues such as aggression, gender roles and stereotypes, leadership styles, societal attitudes, parenting, decision-making, and the likes (Eagly, 1987). As she notes the theory is also among the most influential explanations for why gender stereotypes are confirmed; it puts together a

set of socially appropriate norms and expectations that people adopt as they become socialized. According to this theory, as cited in Alsop et al. (2002:66) "...men and women become masculine and feminine through social conditioning, and we learn the gender role that relates to our biological sex through our interaction with social structures, such as the family, schools, the media, and so on".

Social role theory proposes that one reason why women and men conform to gender stereotypes is because they act in accordance with their social roles, which are often segregated along gender lines (Eagly, 1987). She further noted that women and men behave in gender-typed ways because the social roles that they perform are associated with different expectations and require different skills. Thus, Eagly's (1987) social role theory suggests that the sexual division of labor and societal expectations based on stereotypes produce gender roles, which strongly influence human behaviour.

The theory asserts that the sex-differentiated behaviour can be determined by the division of labour between two sexes within a society. According to this theory, division of labour creates gender roles, which in turn lead to gendered social behaviour. The proponents of the theory argue that labour division is conceptualized to include all activities performed by men and women within a society that are necessary for its existence and sustainability. They claim that the characteristics of the activities performed by men and women became people's perceptions and beliefs of the dispositional attributes of men or women themselves.

Social role theory asserts that male and female human beings behave differently in some circumstances and similarly in others, and it tries to explain the reason behind these behavioral similarities and differences. The theory is said to be formulated as an effort to understand the causes of sex differences and similarities in social behavior. It maintains that men and women act differently in social situations and take distinct roles due to the expectations that society puts upon them. In their explanation of the role of women in different social situations, social role theorists identified that women take on more domestic tasks, often have different occupational roles and that in many occupations, women often have lower status when compared to men.

The advocates of the theory pay special attention to the impact of the distribution of men and women into social roles within societies. According to Eagly, Wood, and Johannesen-Schmidt, as cited in Eagly, Beall, and Sternberg (2004: 270) "The social roles

of women and men cause sex differences in behavior through the mediation of social and psychological processes.” These scholars further maintained that the formation of gender roles, by which people are expected to have characteristics that equip them for the activities typical of their sex is said to be one of these social and psychological processes.

Social role theorists are mainly preoccupied with the notion that one's actions, behaviours, dispositions and desires are determined by a set of specific socially determined roles. They affirm that the differences in the behaviour of women and men that one observes in every society is said to originate in the contrasting distributions of men and women into social roles. As to the proponents of this theory, the fact that every society has a division of labour between the sexes is believed to be a cross cultural and universal phenomenon.

As said by Eagly (1987), gender development has its basis in socialization. Her social role theory suggests that the sexual division of labor and societal expectations based on stereotypes create gender roles. According to Eagly (1987), gender-stereotyped characteristics are distinguished as communal and agentic. Human qualities such as nurturance and emotional expressiveness which are customarily associated with domestic activities, and hence, with women are characteristics of the communal role, whereas assertiveness and independence, commonly associated with public activities, and thus with men are typical characteristics of ‘agentic’ role (ibid). According to her, gender roles highly influence human behavior when the culture of a given society endorses gender stereotypes and form strong expectations based on those stereotypes.

Social role theory suggests that women and men conform to certain gender stereotypes mainly because they act in accordance with their social roles, which are often segregated along gender lines. Men and women behave in different ways because the social roles that they perform are associated with different expectations and require different skills. Accordingly, social role theorists have found out that women are more likely than men to assume domestic roles of homemaker and primary caretaker of children, whereas men are more likely than women to assume roles in the paid economy and the domestic role of primary family provider (Eagly and Wood, 1999; Eagly et al., 2004; Dulin, 2007; Eagly, Wood and Diekmann, 2000).

Social role theorists believe that one's physical size, strength and speed to do something can determine the social roles of men and women. Alice H. Eagly and Wendy

Wood (1999), two well known proponents of social role theory, have argued that the division of labour and the male-advantaged gender hierarchy stem from physical sex differences, particularly women's capacity for reproduction and men's size and strength, in interaction with the demands of socioeconomic systems and local ecologies. As to these scholars, women's reproductive activities play a great role in assigning them to domestic or household chores and opt for activities that people believe would require less speed, less labour demanding, short-distance travel away from home and the likes. Eagly, Beall and Sternberg (2004: 282) also stated, "... men have more status and power than women in societies in which their greater upper-body strength and speed enable them to perform certain physically demanding activities, such as warfare, that can lead to decision-making power, authority, and access to resources."

Social role theorists assert that men and women play different roles in different cultures as these cultures enforce different expectations upon them considering them as a specific part of gender. There are some cultural expectations which give birth to gender specific roles such as women should not be seen with somebody out of kinship or not related in blood and interact with unfamiliar men in some societies. In such situations most of the roles performed by women are related to household chores whereas the major part of the roles performed by men are related to out of home activities such as on-farm agricultural works. The Social Role Theory claims that gender roles are socially constructed and follow social and behavioural norms of the society. It is believed that gender roles in education, agriculture, decision making, home management, and other areas of work are segregated and heavily influenced by cultural, social, and economic characteristics of the community, especially in developing countries.

Social role theorists believe that pressures from families, organizations, media and communities in general cause men and women to behave in certain prescribed ways. Many people prefer to do different kinds of jobs that society expects from them and they conform to stereotypic social roles (gender role beliefs) solely based on their gender and validate them. Concerning this, Wood and Eagly (2002) as cited in Harrison and Lynch (2005) mentioned that men are expected to fulfil the masculine gender roles that reflect agentic qualities and women are expected to fulfil the feminine gender roles that reflect communal qualities. Men and women tend to learn and do distinct roles from the very beginning based on what their society expects from them and thereby perpetuating sex

differences and gender role stereotypes. While explaining this notion further, Vogel et al. (2003:520) state:

As such, women and men behave in gender-typed ways because the social roles that they perform are associated with different expectations and require different skills. For example, because women are caregivers for children and aging parents more often than are men, they more frequently exhibit traditionally feminine behaviors such as nurturance and a concern over personal relationships. Men, in contrast, who are more likely to work outside of the home, more frequently exhibit traditionally masculine behaviors such as assertiveness and leadership qualities.

Overall, it can be said that social role theory is mainly concerned with behavioural sex differences which are said to spring from the distinct social roles residing in men and women. In other words, the theory argues that the behavioural differences we observe between men and women in every society emanate from the cultural stereotypes about gender and the resulting social roles that are taught to young children so as to maintain social norms. The proponents of the theory assert that the behaviour of men and women is predominantly regulated by the stereotypes of their social roles. In most societies, while males are mainly encouraged to develop and conform to social expectations and traits related with independence, assertiveness, competency, aggressiveness and the likes, females are said to develop traits that manifest communal or mutual behaviour, which inhibits their aggression and are usually socialized to be friendly, selfless, dependent, compassionate and so forth (Dulin, 2007; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Eagly and Wood, 1999).

Under this chapter, an attempt was made to establish a vantage point through which the researcher is going to view the problem. In the following chapter, using the three wings of feminist critical perspectives and social role theory discussed above, an attempt was made to scrutinize what verbal arts say about the role and position of men and women in Macha Oromo society as reflected in folktales and proverbs. The chapter presents the actual analysis and interpretation of the data collected from primary and secondary sources.

CHAPTER FIVE: GENDER ROLES AS REFLECTED IN MACHA OROMO VERBAL ARTS

This chapter focuses on gender roles assigned to men and women as reflected in Macha Oromo folktales and proverbs by the society. It presents and discusses the data collected through field observations, interviews, focus group discussions and data obtained from secondary sources. In the discussion, an attempt was made to uncover the underlying gender ideology in assigning the roles ascribed to the characters in the verbal arts. In other words, an attempt was made to uncover society's perception of men and women, the statuses each gender have in the society, the embedded images of men and women in folktales and proverbs and the likes.

5.1 Reproductive Role

5.1.1 Biological and Generational Reproductive Roles

While talking about gender roles, the reproductive role of men and women in a society usually occupies a central place. Reproductive work is a work which is usually considered as crucial to human survival and the maintenance and perpetuation of the labour force (Sikod, 2007; Moser, 1993), yet which is not deemed as a real work in many societies. Ellis (1988) divides the concept of reproduction into three different categories, namely: biological, generational and daily reproduction. As to Ellis, biological reproduction comprises such roles as child bearing and the early nurturing of infants; whereas generational reproduction includes the care, upbringing, and socialization of children. The third concept, daily reproduction refers to the daily maintenance of the household that encompasses daily routines such as cooking, collecting firewood, fetching water, grinding and pounding grain, cleaning the house, washing clothes and the likes (Ellis, 1988). While discussing the reproductive role of women, Moser (1993:29) on her part writes:

The reproductive role comprises the childbearing/rearing responsibilities and domestic tasks undertaken by women, required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. It includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the workforce (husband and working children) and the future workforce (infants and school going children).

Similarly Sikod (2007) asserts that reproductive work involves the care and maintenance of the household and its members including the bearing and caring for children, food preparation, water and fuel collection, shopping, housekeeping and family care. Most of the activities mentioned under this category, except biological reproduction,

are usually monotonous, labour-intensive, and time-consuming in the absence of machines which simplify the jobs, and are mainly considered as the role and responsibility of women and girls. In spite of the fact that they are labor-intensive, since they are not considered as a real work, they are carried out by one woman or very few women in some cases.

The experiences as well as the data collected from the study area indicate that in traditional Macha Oromo society, women perform both productive and reproductive roles that ensure the welfare of their family; men on their part seem to have been preoccupied with productive roles that provide the means for their wives to perform their reproductive roles. In the society under focus, reproductive roles such as child birth, child upbringing, household chores and the meeting of nutritional needs of the family etc are solely considered as women's jobs; and works related to farming such as ploughing, harvesting, looking after cattle and the likes are, on the other hand, deemed as men's work. In the society, the activities that fall under reproductive category are predominantly assigned to women.

When we come to the point, as in many societies in the world, Macha Oromo divides work along sex lines where men embark on tasks that take them outside the home and women mainly carry out tasks restricted to homecare, childbearing and childrearing. A woman who can give birth to a child is highly respected among the Macha Oromo society. A fertile woman is normally praised, respected, and valued in the society. Once she gives birth to a child, she is usually called by the name of her first born child as "*Haadha Abaluu*" <the mother of X>. Similarly, in the society, the father is called by the name of his first born child "*Abbaa Abaluu*" <the father of X>. Here, in many places, if the first born child is female, both the father and the mother are called by her name until they beget a son. Once a male child is born, both of them are called by his name.

The society highly values reproduction and considers giving birth as if it is one of the three most important things in human life. As the following proverb (MOPC-17:1) has it, reproduction (birth), marriage and death are deemed as so vital in the life of a person.

- *Addunyaan waa sadii: dhalachuu, fuudha fi du'a* <The world is about three things: birth, marriage, and death> (MOPC-17:1)

In support of this proverb, as one of the discussants at Bako Tibe (FGDBT- 1) explained:

A person who is not able to reproduce him/her self is a lost person. At the end, his homestead will be taken away; he will not have someone to replace him. He is inherited by other people. Especially, if a person has no son, he should not consider as if he has a homestead. As it is known, women belong to other people; she will not remain at home. So, replacing oneself is not a simple issue as we perceive it on the surface. It challenges oneself at the end.

More importantly, the society expects women to fulfil this very important role (reproductive role); if they need to survive in the patriarchal society, it seems mandatory for women to discharge this responsibility without any precondition. As it is reflected in the proverbs (MOPC-17: 2; MOPC-20: 2), the primary goal of marrying a woman is to get a child and extend the existence of the family in the future and care for them.

- *Dubartii waa lamaaf fuudhu: tokko qoonqoofi tokko hormaataafi* <One marries a woman for two things: feeding and reproduction> (MOPC-17:2)
- *Akka barte niitiin dhirsaa soorti* <A wife feeds her husband as she was trained>(MOPC-20:2)

To the Oromo in general, marriage and then getting a child are deemed as the ultimate goal in life. Marriage which is not accompanied by childbirth darkens the wish and desire of the couple and is usually not long lasting. Many of the society's folktales and proverbs focus on this aspect. This is indicative of the fact that the society expects both men and women to play their role of biological reproduction. The society respects and values a woman who could give birth and has positive attitude towards such kind of fertile woman. They seem to have a good understanding that women could play a primary role in the sphere of reproduction and motherhood. The following proverbs (MOPC-17:3 and 5) are witnesses to these societal beliefs.

- *Waaqa roobuufi dubartii deessurra waa argatu* <One gets something from a rainy sky and a fertile woman>(MOPC-17:5)
- *Niitii deessuu fi maasaa dallaa keessaa hin tuffatan* < A fertile woman and a garden should not be disdained> (MOPC-17:3)

As the society predominantly depends on agriculture for living, they highly value a sky that gives rain; when it rains for them, they can easily till their land; grasses do also sprout for their cattle, and everything becomes green for them. Without rain, it is difficult to survive for the people, their flora and fauna; that is why they value the rainy sky. Similarly, a fertile woman could give birth to children, and the family becomes large. The assumption in the society is that the larger the family the easier the workload, and the better they shield one another, and their homestead. This is consistent with what Wienclaw (2011:156) observed: "...large families were an economic asset because more children meant more workers within the family to plant, cultivate, and harvest. As a

result, the reproductive role and productive work of mothers was valued in such societies.” Thus, the more the number of children a woman has, the better the respect she is endowed with by the society. When they emphasize the importance of marrying a fertile woman, the Oromo people say:

- *Niitii deessuu fi qalbiin kennaa Waaqati.* <A fertile wife and a psyche are gifts of God> (MOPC-17:4)

As the proverbs (MOPC_17: 2, 3, 4, and 5) above indicate, marriage enhances the status of women in the community. It gives them respect and social acceptance. As soon as she gives birth to her first child, a woman’s status changes. She enters motherhood stage and is considered to have fulfilled the main function of marriage that gives her better social status in the community.

Particularly, if a woman is not fertile, she faces lots of challenges in her life. She is perceived as cursed being, unworthy, and unproductive. Unquestionably, her husband can reject her and marry another woman; and she has no equal right and status with those women who could give birth to children. As it is reflected in (MOFT-27), the husband preferred the fertile wife to the barren one; and the barren wife was ignored in spite of the fact that she was younger and more beautiful than the former wife. It is believed that any woman can do the generational and daily reproduction activities; biological reproduction is, however, deemed as one of the most important roles a woman should play to be considered worthwhile by the society. The folktale (MOFT-27) implies that childbearing not only enhances the status of a woman in marriage but also secures it. With regard to this Simon De Beauvoir as cited in Tyson (2006: 97) noted, “... patriarchy tells them that they are unfulfilled as women if they don’t have children, and there is a great deal of pressure brought to bear upon women in order to recruit them for motherhood”.

Furthermore, as implied in the folktale, in order to get acceptance or an emotional response from a man, a woman should be skilled enough. It is believed that a man’s heart cannot be easily appealed to a woman; hence a woman should act as an excellent cook, keep her hygiene, perfume herself, give birth to a child and so forth in order to lure or attract a man into a relationship. Besides, the folktale (MOFT-27), along with (MOFT-13 and 28), mirrors that in traditional Macha Oromo society husbands discard wives that do not meet their demands in every aspect and have the power to change them if they lack some qualities of femininity. In line with this, Charlotte P. Gilman, in her *Women and*

Economics (1898) as cited in Madsen (2000:41) stated, "... men choose women for marriage and reproduction who suit the prevailing patriarchal view of femininity."

If the couple is not able to produce children, the problem is usually attributed to the woman. In the society, while a woman who is not able to give birth to a child is called "*maseena*" (infertile) _ a term that denotes the inability of a woman to reproduce_, there is no special term for a man who cannot reproduce an offspring; and this indicates societal perception of a man that he has no shortcoming in reproduction. Men's barrenness cannot be easily detected. This is because, as most of the folktales (MOFT-1, 2, 22, 25, 26, 30) and a cluster of proverbs under unfaithfulness (MOPC-18) reveal, women are unfaithful to their husbands; therefore, there is a probability for a woman to conceive from another man and deceive her husband that the child belongs to him. The proverbs (MOPC-18: 1 and 2) that say:

- *Abbaa mucaa haadha malee namni hin beeku.* <Only a mother knows the father of a child> (MOPC-18:1)
- *Abbaan niitii beeka abbaa ulfooftee isheetu beeka jedhan.* <The husband knows his wife and the wife knows to whom she conceived> (MOPC-18:2) are witnesses to this argument.

Hence, unlike men, women do not have such a chance as far as the problem of infertility and biological reproduction are concerned.

The early nurturing of infants is also considered as a predominant role of women in the society. It is perceived as improbable for a man to nurture and bring up children in the absence of women. If as a matter of chance a woman dies after giving birth to children, the father immediately marries another woman since he cannot easily perform the role a woman plays in the upbringing of children. The following proverbs (MOPC-20:9 and 10) and folktales (MOFT- 3, 10, 27 and 32) clearly reflect these roles of women.

- *Haati garaa qabdi, abbaan mataa qaba.* <A father touches the head of a child and a mother touches a stomach> (MOPC-20:9)
- *Haati harma guuti malee harka hin guutu.* <A mother's breast may wean, not her hands>(MOPC-20:10)

As the proverb (MOPC-20:9) indicates, while the mother's role in the upbringing of a child is to nurture (feed and fill the stomach of) the child, the father's role is merely to encourage the child that he/she belongs to him (father). As per the culture of the society, the touching of the head by the father symbolizes an encouragement given to the child whereas the touching of the stomach is a symbolic expression of the role of a mother in feeding her child. In a similar manner, proverb 10 (MOPC-20:10) reflects the

role of a mother after weaning (stop breast feeding). This is the reflection of the fact that the mother continues nurturing and caring for the child, which in turn implies that it is women's responsibility to perform the generational reproductive role in the society. With regard to this, Millet (1971) argues that women's reproductive and nurturative role is the cause of their oppression.

As far as my data are concerned, there is no single proverb or folktale which indicates that men do also have an obligation to do what Ellis called the generational reproductive role while discussing gender roles. With regard to this, one of the most prominent Psychoanalytic feminists, Chodorow, maintains that women's domestic responsibilities has a psychosexual basis rather than either a biological or economic basis; she perceived the primary care-giving role of women to be the fundamental reason for the oppression of women, which she judged to be a universal phenomenon. The proverbs also reassure the significant difference that exists between mothering and fathering. Fathering, according to Apter (1985) is merely to be a biological parent where as mothering is more than biological, including associated tasks such as rearing, nurturing, and caring for the child by subordinating one's personal development.

Therefore, the gender roles implied in the proverbs and folktales here remind us of what Nancy Chodorow as cited in Eisenstein, (1979:83) clearly wrote: "Women not only bear children; they also take primary responsibility for infant care, spend more time with infants and children than do men, and sustain primary emotional ties with infants. When biological mothers do not parent, other women ... take their place." Women are not only expected to give birth to children but also need to carry out their generational roles such as to feed, care, teach and bring them up as per societal expectations. According to Chodorow and Dinnerstein (psychoanalytic feminists) "Many of society's views about women's inferiority and men's superiority... are traceable to women's doing all or most of the mothering work in society" (Tong, 2009:138). They argued that both men and women would have gained equal respect in the society had they taken equal responsibility to mother. These feminists added that if boys and girls grow up being exposed to a society where both men and women mother, "they would realize that neither sex is inferior or superior to the other, and that both sex merit equal respect" (ibid).

Despite this fact, the value attached to children brought up by mothers or fathers alone is quite different in the society. While children brought up by mothers or grandmothers alone without a father are deemed to lack some quality that the society

needs, it is considered that there is no problem whether children are brought up by their fathers alone or not. As reflected in (MOPC-1:7) “*Kan haati booqaa qabdu ilmoon balaccuu hin dhabdu*” <A daughter never lacks the white spot her mother possesses> any character deficiency exhibited by a child is linked to the shortcomings of the mother than to the father. Precisely speaking, if children lack some quality, it is usually attributed to their mother or to other close relative on the side of the mother than to their biological father, and this can be vividly observed in the following proverbs.

- *Intalli haadha baddi, ilmi eessuma bada.* <A bad girl results from her mother and a bad son from his uncle>(MOPC-1:6)
- *Intalli akkoon guddifte dudduubaan laga ceeti.* <A girl brought up by a grandmother crosses a river walking backwards> (MOPC-23:6)

In brief, as the proverbs depict, mothers are castigated for their daughter’s wrongdoings in the society. However, where the children succeed in achieving something or do something good, it is usually their father who is exalted for the achievement rather than their mothers.

In a similar manner, marriage and childbirth are emphasized as of paramount importance in the lives of traditional women as reflected in many Macha Oromo folktales. A number of the folktales collected from the study area reveal that women play a vital role in reproduction. For example, as reflected in MOFT-3 (A Man and His Nine Sons), which narrates about the cruelty of women and the importance of positive thinking, it is possible to infer that women play an indispensable role in reproduction. The folktale talks about the wife who gave birth to nine children, and lost all of them owing to her heartlessness. All the sons went to the war front, and while they were coming from the battlefield with victory, a friend of their father gave them the ration that their mother prepared to him to eat on his way; unfortunately the ration was poisoned by their mother, and the children ate it, and all of a sudden died there before reaching home. The husband rejected her on account of her ruthlessness and married other nine women so as to get children, and fathered nine children within a year. Here, in spite of the fact that the folktale was narrated to teach the youth that positive thinking or kindness is good any time, the underlying meaning can also imply that there is no reproduction without women. The folktale is also a reflection of the fact that the society is polygamous and that they need to own a number of children. This can be deduced from the fact that the man rejected his former wife and married nine more women so as to replace his lost children instantly. In the same folktale, her husband’s friend had also a wife, who passed away

without giving birth to any child, and he was preparing to marry another wife so as to get a child. Hence, as the folktales and proverbs reveal, one of the qualities of a good a woman is to give birth to children, nurture, and bring them up as per societal expectations.

In almost all the folktales under study, women do not have any power to claim for their home and property. The folktales indicate that if women make a mistake, it is inevitable that they will be rejected by their husbands. Many research works indicate that such kind of folktales and proverbs have the power to influence women to absorb the social and stereotypical roles embedded in them and to accept the exploitative positions created for them as if it is natural; they teach men to become aggressive and assume dominant positions, and preach women to become devoted and submissive mothers, born to fulfil men's need and interests.

Similarly, in MOFT-29 (The Aborted Wish), the shepherd visualizes to marry a beautiful girl and beget a son (*For a better understanding of the folktales, the researcher recommends to closely read the folktales in detail in the appendix section*). The same folktale does also tell us that the shepherd preferred to buy a ewe for reproduction and to become as rich as his master by owning a number of sheep. Here, it is crystal clear that the shepherd understood that he could not fulfil his desire of becoming rich and getting a child without a female being (woman), who can easily play her role of reproduction as he thought. As in the proverbs, the folktale here also uphold women's role in reproduction and as nurturers of children and husbands. These folktales and proverbs remind us of what feminists claim as the inherent multiple roles of women in reproduction, production and the distribution of wealth, power and responsibility for sustaining human life. Marxist feminists refute this sexual division of labour and consider that gender roles are socially produced and naturalized in the complex system of patriarchal ideology, and "refuse to see anything other than the actual physical process of pregnancy and giving birth as natural" which they even claim it to be subject to social regulations. Here, as we can see from all the proverbs and folktales referred, Macha Oromo society values and respects the biological reproductive role women play.

The themes in the proverbs and folktales are congruent with what Rogers (1980:4) stated as "The most important role for women, defining their entire life, is the bearing and bringing-up of children," and this role that women play in reproduction is one out of a

few things in which women bear good image as reflected in the verbal arts of the society. However, many feminists argue that gendered characteristics, such as women's parenting abilities are truly social products than biological. They claim that mothering skills are not given to women inborn; men can also raise children alone if they learn. The fact that women are better at child care than any man is a mere patriarchal society's assumption (gender role stereotype) which forces women to end up doing most of the physically and emotionally intensive work of bringing up children (Hughes, 2002; Tong, 2009; Friedan, 1963).

As repeatedly stated above, besides biological reproduction, Macha Oromo women do also play a great role in generational reproduction, which includes the care, upbringing, and socialization of children. There are a number of proverbs in Oromo language that emphasizes the notion that mothers play a great role in the socialization of their children and that the behaviour of mothers has a direct influence on the behaviour of their children. The following are few examples.

- *Haadha ilaalii intala fuudhi.* <Examine the mother and marry the daughter> (MOPC-1:2)
- *Hantuutni gumbii uraa haadha jalatti barti.* <A young rat learns how to puncture a granary from her mother> (MOPC-1:4)
- *Waan haati hojjattu ilmoon hin wallaaltu.* <What the mother does, the child is not ignorant of it> (MOPC-1:8)

Through this proverb (MOPC-1:2) the society in the study area teaches the youth who is in need of marrying a girl to consider the disposition of her mother. In order to marry a girl, a young man is usually required to carefully watch her mother's behaviour and deeds not her father's. This proverb indicates that women, particularly mothers should be good themselves and bring their children up properly being a role model. The limitation that children exhibit and any bad habit they are blamed for is exclusively attributed to their mothers, not their fathers. That is to say, any shortcoming or failure on the part of a female child to grasp and adhere to the society's cultural norms is generally attributed to the mother.

Likewise, as reflected in (MOPC-1:4 and 8), the society considers that mothers should play a vital role in shaping their daughters to behave in accordance with the norms of the society. There is an assumption that if a mother is hardworking, well-behaved, generous, and so forth, it is likely that her daughter also possesses these qualities. In a similar manner, the proverbs also warn people that if a mother exhibits behaviours

contrary to societal expectations, there is no reason why her daughter does not behave as her mother.

The message in (MOFT-12) where the daughter cheated her mother and slept with her mother's lover can beautifully reinforce this society's world outlook with respect to the role of mothers in bringing up children in appropriate manner. In the folktale, the girl's mother used to have sexual relationship with another man besides her husband. Her daughter knows this action of the mother very well and having taken the advantage of the go-between, she separated both her mother and her secret lover, and made the man her own. It is under such circumstances that the society uses proverbs such as:

- *Kan haati booqaa qabdu ilmoon balaccuu hin dhabdu* <A daughter never lacks the white spot her mother possesses>”, and
- *Amalli haadhaa hintala hin hanqatu*. <A mother's behavior never fails to reach her daughter> (MOPC-1:1) and the ones mentioned above (MOPC-1:4 and 8).

The content of the folktale and the proverbs cited here substantiate Chodorow's and other psychoanalytic feminist thinkers' idea which states that children are taught “to model themselves and their behaviour after their same-sex parent” (O'Brien, Jodi, 2009:357). Suffice it to say that women in Macha Oromo are depicted as trainers and role models of the young generation, particularly of their daughters. As the folktales and proverbs under focus reveal, women in the society have been considered as the key role players in the teaching of the mores and norms of the society.

Apart from this, the man whose wife died in MOFT-10 immediately married another wife having failed to bring his two children up alone. In spite of the fact that the central idea of the folktale is to condemn cruelty, it is another instance which shows the fact that a man needs a woman for generational reproduction, which is considered as the primary responsibility of women in the study area. Embedded in the folktale is also the message that a woman should be submissive to her husband and serve him and the children if she needs to survive in the society. As reflected in the folktale, if a woman refuses to accept her husband's words and does not behave in a manner he needs, she is always in danger. Thus, telling such kind of folktale to children is one strategy of socializing men to grow up being aggressive and women to be submissive.

5.1.2 Daily Reproduction/Household Chores

As mentioned earlier, daily reproduction refers to the unpaid work performed at home unremittingly in order to maintain a family. It is a work that encompasses daily routines such as cooking, fetching water, cleaning room, washing clothes and dishes, and the likes (Ellis, F. 1988). Moser, C. (1993) used the term physical reproduction for the works that

people carry out in their day to day lives for the maintenance of their family. Lenin (1964:39) as cited in Rogers (1989:21) defined house work as “...the most unproductive, the most barbarous, and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of women.” Moreover, it is usually not considered as a real work and is mainly assigned to women in the study area.

In almost all places in the study area, it is shame for a man to perform this physical or daily reproduction while there are women at home. With regard to this, during the fieldwork, besides his prior experience, the researcher was able to observe the facts on the ground in different districts, and the following extract taken from the FGD held at Bako Tibe (FGDBT-2) clearly shows this society’s attitude towards the daily reproductive role of women.

Akka aadaa keenyaatti, dhiirri hojii mana keessaa hin hojjatu. Oromoon yeroo mammaaku, ‘Abbaan muka alaati, haati utubaa manaati’ jedha. Dhiirri gola keessa ol-deebi’ee hojii dubartii hojjachuun qaaniidha. Dhiirri qonnaa qotuu, horiifi qe’ee eeguu, manaa fi dallaa ijaaruu, bineensa midhaanirraa eeguu fi kkf malee gola keessa ol-deebi’ee buddeen tolchuun, ittoo hojjachuun, buna danfisuun, qoraan coruun, bishaan fiduun isarraa hin eegamu. Dubartiin mataanshee dhiira gola keessa ol-deebi’ee hojii dubartii hojjatu hin jaallattu. Hawwaasa keessattis ni tuffatama. Kabaja hin qabu (FGDBT-2). When translated literally:

According to our culture, a man does not do household chores. The Oromo say, “A father is a tree outside, and a mother is the pillar of a house” to express this notion proverbially. It is shame for a man to do physical reproduction being in the kitchen. A man ploughs land, protects animals and the homestead, builds a house and fence, protects cereals and crops from wild animals and so on; he is not expected to cook food, boil coffee, collect firewood, and fetch water from the river. Women themselves do not like such kind of man. The society also degrades him; he has no respect (FGDBT-2).

As clearly reflected in the extract and the proverb (MOPC-6:1), the society believes in the gender based division of labour with women being allocated to carry out household chores, and men being assigned to works outside of home. If a man tries to be involved in the work that women do at home, it is considered to be out of the norm of the society and results in the loss of his status and respect in the community. In many places, it is not a norm for a man to cook food, clean the room, fetch water from the river and so forth. If a man is found doing such kind of monotonous chores, he is not considered as a real man, and this is in harmony with what Tong, 2009: 36) stated while explaining about liberal feminism. According to Tong:

No matter what group of people is under scrutiny, then, gender-role stereotyping will limit the individual's possibilities for development as a unique self. The woman who displays characteristics her social group regards as masculine will be viewed as less than a real woman; the man who shows so-called feminine traits will be considered less than a real man.

In a similar manner, Alvesson and Billing (2009:50) quoting Shorter (1975) stated:

Within certain areas there were even taboos against the other sex doing the work. Men risked ridicule from women as well as other men, if they did women's work (Shorter, 1975). Besides, prestige was connected to the work men did, and men lost status and power if they did women's jobs. When women did men's work they were not harassed in the same way. However, it was difficult for women to achieve the status connected to men's jobs.

As a result, men in the study area do not need to help women in the daily reproduction; they do not even want to be in a kitchen or be near a hearth. Hence, it is possible to guess that the traditional role of women in Macha Oromo society is closely linked to the concept of women as maids, procreators and homemakers. As a result of these vital roles and others that men do not want to be involved in, women particularly mothers are viewed as homemakers and the pillars of the family, and this ideology is apparent in the following proverbs (MOPC-6:12 and MOPC-10:2).

- *Haati utubaa manaati.* < A mother is the pillar of a house > (MOPC-6:12)
- *Nyaanni soogidda malee, manni dubartii malee hin bareedu.* < A house without a woman is like a diet without salt > (MOPC-10:2)

Through these proverbs, the society is telling that homes are associated with women, and that life without them is boring. A woman is metaphorically depicted as a pillar, one of the most important components of the traditional home of the society which holds up the entire house. In short, according to the message in the verbal arts of the society, a home without a woman is unimaginable for a man.

Besides the message in the (FGDBT-2) above, the fact that a man does not need to be involved in works in the kitchen is vividly reflected in MOFT-24 (Name in the Kitchen) as follows. The folktale is about a newly married husband and wife. While her husband was lying in the bed, his wife woke up early to make coffee. She carried out all the processes needed to make coffee in the kitchen, and added the flour in the water boiled in the croak. Soon she went out of the kitchen to chop a piece of firewood to roast some peas that are served with coffee. When she returned in the kitchen, she saw the coffee bursting, and she emotionally called out her husband for help; yet she managed to settle the coffee before his arrival. She repeated the same action another day, and her husband

warned her, “Don’t call my name time and again in the kitchen; you will spoil it with a charcoal,” and this is usually supported by a number of proverbs, one of which says “*Dubartii wajjiin yoo xabatan harka daakuun nama qabdi*” <If a man plays together with a woman, she spoils him with a flour on her hand> (MOPC-31:2) The folktale and proverb here imply that it is considered shame for a man to do household chores, and clearly tells us that it is a woman who is primarily engaged in domestic work including food preparation, making coffee, fetching water, collecting firewood, washing, grinding, and so forth. It is also the reflection of the weight that the society gives to household chores in particular and other works that women do in general.

Leave alone doing domestic chores at home, a man is not allowed to sit near a fireplace (in the kitchen) in many places in the study area. In many places, sitting near a fireside to warm oneself at home and working in a kitchen is conventionally associated with women and is deemed inappropriate for men in the society. Moreover, a woman is not allowed to carry “*eelee*” (a flat cooker) and pass near a man in any case without letting its edge touch a ground. In order to carry and move past a man, a woman has to bend down and let the edge of the cooker touch the ground; unless and otherwise the man especially the husband may break the cooker in her hand for it is usually associated with disrespecting or degrading his status. It is also believed that a man gets weaker if a woman carries and moves past a man without letting the edge of the cooker touch the ground. This clearly shows the extent to which the patriarchal ideology is mistreating women, and how much they are socialized to fulfil men’s needs and interests.

There are also a number of proverbs that reinforce the stereotype of women as a subordinated group whose main role in life is a domestic servant at their home. The cluster of proverbs below reveal that women not only carry out the role of nurturing infants but also their husbands and other male members of the family—an ideology which is apparent in the following cluster of proverbs.

- *Akka barte niitiin dhirsa soorti.* <A wife feeds her husband as she was trained> (MOPC-20:2)
- *Dubartii jechaan harka, saree jechaan sagaleedha.* <A woman means her hand and a dog means its voice>(MOPC-20:5)
- *Dubartiin ofii qooqxee dhirsa soorti jedhan.* <Women feed their husbands being empty for themselves> (MOPC-20:6)
- *Hamma beektu niitiin dhirsa soorti.* <A wife feeds her husband to the extent she knows>(MOPC-20:11)
- *Ofttoon nadheenii kan dhirsaaf keessu nyaatti.* <A selfish woman eats what she keeps for her husband>(MOPC-20:13)

- *Boosettiin dubartii mana galgala axoofiti*. <An unclean woman cleans her room at dusk> (MOPC-20:4)

By using these proverbs, the society is confirming that it is the role of a woman to feed her husband. As the proverbs show women are largely responsible for feeding husbands and other male members of the household as well. A husband is not expected to prepare food and serve himself and other members of the family while there is a woman at home; he is criticized by the community if he is found cooking food at home, and people call him “*hiriyaa dubartii*”(a woman’s peer) which is considered as a big insult for a man in the study area. The proverb also bears the idea that she must be socialized (trained) from the very beginning to feed her husband in a good manner. Likewise, the third and the fourth proverbs (MOPC-20:5 and 13) do also imply that a woman should act as the servant of her husband. The ‘hand’ in proverb (MOPC-20:5) symbolizes a woman’s skill of cooking food, telling women to be good at cooking food and serving her family members. A dog that cannot bark properly in times of difficulty and a woman who cannot prepare food in a good manner are considered worthless in the society. The society expects women to stay at home cooking, cleaning, and caring for children. They have to be submissive to men especially to their husbands. Being generous is also another quality that a woman should possess in the proverb (MOPC-20:13). The proverb warns that a woman is not expected to eat the food that she prepares to her husband and keeps for him in case he is not at home. If she does so, she is labelled as selfish and uncaring, qualities which no one needs to be associated with.

Cleaning a room is another role that a woman is expected to carry out in the society. This is evident in the proverb (MOPC-20:4) and folktale (MOFT-13), which tell the audience that a woman should keep the cleanliness of both herself and her home. According to the message in the proverb and the folktale, a woman should wake up early in the morning, clean the room and prepare breakfast while her husband is sleeping. In any case, a man is not expected to wake up early in the morning and do household chores while his wife is sleeping. As reflected in the folktale (MOFT-13), it seems that a man marries a woman to carry out such kind of household chores. In the folktale, the husband divorced his wife because she refused to cook him food and clean the room. This indicates that it is the primary responsibility of women to do household chores and act as servants of men at home. According to Liberal feminists, particularly, Friedan (1963), house work is devalued and makes women dependent on men since the work is usually considered outside the meaningful sphere of public economic production.

The folktales and proverbs collected from the study area reinforce the stereotype of women as a subordinated group whose main role in life is to be a domestic servant to their spouse. This stereotyped role of men and women lead the society to repudiate the contributions of women in the productive arena and to ridicule men who involve themselves in household chores and care for children. According to the message in the proverbs and the folktale, a woman should be smart at carrying out her domestic responsibility, accept completely what her husband tells her and be submissive if she needs to survive in the society in general and in her home in particular with a good image.

The messages in the verbal arts here are congruent with what Marxist feminists say while explaining women's labour and patriarchal ideology. According to this wing of feminists, the home or family is a site where female oppression begins and where men begin to exercise power over women; home is the place where a woman is degraded and reduced to servitude and considered as a mere instrument for the production of children and carrying out domestic chores (Walby, 1990). Similarly, one of the fans of Marxist feminist thinkers, Gilman, (1898) as cited in Madsen (2000: 86) assert that "It is women's economic dependence inside marriage, the unpaid and so devalued work they perform in the home, that determines women's subordinate social status". These Marxist feminists believe that the source of women's oppression lies in their role in the family as a reproducer of labour power for capitalism and in women's unequal role inside the family.

The society's perception of women as a mere servant of men and the fact that a woman should be good at daily reproduction is also reflected in MOFT-28. The folktale clearly indicates that there is gender-based division of labour in the society; and it is a true reflection of social role theorists' premise which confirms that society has shared expectations about men and women which form male gender roles and female gender roles respectively. In the folktale we see that men are involved in works outside of home and women are mainly allocated to carry out household chores. The wife of the householder in the folktale was rejected on account of her inability to cook food for the labour force in the field, and this strengthens the society's perception of women that they should be skilled enough in cooking food if they need to exist in man's world. This perception of the society is also closely linked to the arguments of social role theorists which state that women are more likely than men to assume domestic roles of homemaker and primary caretaker of children, and that men are more likely than women to assume roles outside of home.

Daily reproduction as the primary role of women is not only reflected in the folktales and cluster of proverbs mentioned above. There are also many proverbs that bear this message. To mention few:

- *Dhibeen niitii garbicha nama gooti.* <A wife's illness makes one a slave>(MOPC-30:1)
- *Dubartiin keessummaa hin qabdu.* <A woman as a guest is never treated> (MOPC30:2)
- *Durbii fi gundoon hin teessu.* <A girl and a plate should never take rest>(MOPC-30:3)

In the first proverb (MOPC30:1), the speaker sounds a man who has been being served by a wife and who has never experienced works that women do. The proverb is employed under the context where a man is obliged to do household chores especially when a wife is either deceased or becomes ill and where there is no any female human being at home to do the monotonous chores. By implication, the speaker is telling us that his wife has been in a state of servitude, and that he has been living comfortably, which in turn shows the inequality of men and women in the society. The proverb assures liberal feminists' claim which asserts that women live in a male biased world where all traditional discourses about women and men are asymmetrical. Liberal feminists criticize the patriarchal society for considering the unpaid housework to be the sole job of women. According to Friedan (1963), for example, this unpaid housework makes women dependent on men and devalued, since their work is outside the meaningful sphere of public economic production.

In a similar manner, the central idea of the proverbs (MOPC-30:2 and 3) is that women should embark on any job wherever and whenever it may be; they should never think of being treated as a guest and rest while there is something to be done. A woman is expected to do both household chores and works in the field even if she is a guest to the host. Contrary to this, there is hardly any proverb and folktale that the society uses in order to indicate that a man should never be treated as a guest. Through the proverbs, the users are socializing girls to become hard workers and to become ready to serve men in their lives. Hence, one can easily deduce that the proverbs are gender-specific and reveal women's labour exploitation by the patriarchal society.

As clearly reflected in the verbal arts, traditional Macha Oromo follows a rigid division of household tasks between men and women. While it is generally considered (it is) the duty of women to carry out tasks taking place within the family compound, men seem to be preoccupied with tasks taking place outside the family compound. The verbal

arts witness that women in Macha Oromo do all the household chores. It is expected of them to look after and attend to every detail of the household chores. Marxist feminists argue that the strict division of labour that makes reproductive work women's work is a consequence of capitalism; and they try to provide evidences from pre-capitalist societies where such rigid divisions did not exist (Moser, 1993:29). According to this wing of feminists it is the sexual division of labour in productive and reproductive work that makes women unequal to men and allows capitalists to exploit women's unpaid labour.

In general, in Macha Oromo, the female sex has been stereotyped to such an extent that their primary role is to carry out reproductive activities (biological, generational and daily) in the society, which most men usually do not want to associate themselves with. The verbal arts perpetuate the long-standing belief that women are supposed to collect fire wood, fetch water from the river, clean the room, cook in the homes, serve their husbands, care for their babies, and wash the clothes of their families. Contrary to this, they preach men not to be involved in household chores and inculcate in the minds of the society that men are culturally prohibited to perform indoor activities deemed appropriate to women. To this end, Liberal feminists observed that the patriarchal society unreasonably and wrongly deems that it is appropriate for women to engage only on those jobs associated with the traditional feminine personality.

5.2 Productive Roles

The productive role of men and women is another concept worth looking in relation to gender role as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo. Productive work is a work which many people perceive as a real work, and which “involves the production of goods and services for consumption and trade (farming, fishing, employment and self-employment)”(Sikod, 2007: 64). It is a work done by both men and women with the aim to “generate an income from which a family could live”, and includes both market production with an exchange-value and subsistence/home production with actual use-value (Tong, R. (2009:13). In Macha Oromo society, different types of activities are generally allocated to men and women within the family in terms of subsistence production and production for the market.

Productive works are usually related to the production of goods for consumption or the generation of income through work within or outside the home (Moser, 1993; Madsen, 2000; Adu-Okoree, B. I., 2012). In the culturally prescribed gender-based

division of labour, it has generally been assumed that men are involved in productive activities and women are responsible for domestic works. Due to this oversimplified conceptions and other similar factors, the role of women in productive activities is usually unrecognized; it is usually invisible and less valued than men's productive activities.

A number of research works indicate that the recognition of women's productive role not only improves their position and status in their household but also significantly reduces the mental torture and physical assault they usually experience at home. Hence, it is believed that women's participation in productive activities has the potential to bring about a significant change in their lives as well as in the reduction of violence against them at home (Dobash, R.E. & Dobash, R. 1992; Gelles, R. 1980; Kornblit, A. 1994; Adu-Okoree, B. I., 2012).

In Macha Oromo society, men have more visible and recognizable productive roles than women. Women in Macha Oromo society are taught to consider themselves inferior to men, and they are mainly recognized for their reproductive activities even if they also embark on productive activities; men, on the other hand are usually socialized to carry out merely productive activities. Wives are expected to remain submissive to their husbands and fulfil their desires, and daughters are mainly socialized to grow being subservient to their fathers and sons at home. Such patriarchal norms and attitudes are usually supported, reaffirmed and reinforced by verbal arts as we shall see in detail below.

The fact that men are the primary breadwinners in the society and that they are normally productive forces are reflected in the FGD held at Bako Tibe (FGDBT-2) mentioned previously. In a similar manner, one of the participants in the FGD held at Jimma Arjo (FGDJA-1) confirmed that men and women have different roles in the society, and that men are usually involved in productive activities while women do both the productive and reproductive activities, yet barely recognized. Here is the snippet of the information the researcher extracted from the discussion:

....Dhiirri hojii akka qonnaa qotuu, buna fi biqiltuu garaagaraa dhaabuu, jala ciruu, xaafii haamuu, dha'uu, qulleessuu, horii eeguu, horii bituufi gurguruu fi kkf hojjata. Dubartiin immoo hireen ishee gara caalu hojii mana keessaa hojjachuudha. Yeroo nuti warri dhiiraa bakkeedhaa hojjanee gallu waan nyaatan nuuf qopheessu. Isaani taa'anii nyaatu jechuu miti. Bakkeedhaasi haramaa haramuu jira; meesaa meesuun jira; kan haamame walitti qabuun jira;

qe'ee keessa kan akka sunqoo, shunkurtii, qullubbii, barbaree, raafuu, timaatimii, booyinaafaa isaantu qotata. Indaaqqoofaas isaantu horsiisa....

Men do jobs like plowing, planting coffee and other seedlings, weeding, harvesting teff, winnowing, buying and selling cattle, and the likes. Women's share of work is mainly household chores. When we men come from the field, they prepare food for us. It does not mean they simply sit and eat. In the field, there is compacting (preparing land for sowing 'teff'), weeding, collecting the harvested crops and cereals, and doing works in the garden such as planting different kinds of spices, onions, garlic, peppers, cabbages, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and so forth. They do also rear chicken.

Here, it is not only the gender based division of labour that we realize from the extract but also the discussants' perception of women and their work. As it is clearly raised and entertained in the discussion, women are involved in both household and outdoor activities whereas men basically carry out works in the field, which are not monotonous and have relatively more leisure time. The researcher's experiences and field observations do also confirm that both men and women participate in productive activities; however, women's work is usually degraded and is accompanied by a number of proverbs as we shall see in detail below. The productive roles that women are engaged in, as it is possible to see from the focus group discussion (FGDJA-1), includes compacting, weeding, collecting the harvested crops and cereals, planting different kinds of fruits and vegetables, rearing chicken, and the likes. Hence, it is possible to say that most of the necessities for survival in the study area are produced by women in their residence.

Women do also generate income by selling milk and milk products, chickens, eggs, firewood, vegetables, and they do also perform works such as spinning, knitting, quilting, and so forth. They usually sell these products and purchase some housewares and other materials that they cannot easily produce in their home. Going to the market and buying materials such as kerosene, salt, and various foodstuffs and/or spices are primarily considered as women's role in the family.

The folktales and proverbs collected in the study area do also reflect this productive role of men and women in an unambiguous way. For example, in MOFT-6, in which the monkeys are personified, the she-monkey was weeding in her garden as a farmer while the he-monkey was wandering in search for food and female. The he-monkey pretended that he was so rich and seduced her by telling her that she could simply sit and eat in his home without working, and told her to accompany him. Being

convinced, she followed him and later suffered a lot. Here the she-monkey (which represents a woman) was producing something in her garden may be for use at home or to sell and generate income. In the folktale, she is portrayed as an independent farmer who struggles to lead her subsistence life by weeding in her garden, a role which is usually assigned to women besides reproductive role in the study area. The folktale clearly shows that women not only do household chores being confined at home but also are engaged in field works (productive work) that contributes a lot to the economy of the society. Even though the underlying message of the folktale is the fact that women are short-sighted and can be cheated easily, it is usually employed to warn individuals that there is no place where a person merely sits and eats without working; and this is evident from the fact that the foolish she-monkey was caught in somebody's garden and beaten seriously at the end.

In a similar manner, in MOFT-8, besides the daily reproductive roles such as washing clothes, fetching water from the river and the likes mentioned in it, there is a woman who weeds in her garden and whom the girl called out for help. As in MOFT-6, the folktale here reveals that in agricultural production, weeding is mainly perceived as one of the jobs that women do in the field besides the household chores they are usually preoccupied with. While the girl and the woman in the folktale are portrayed as weak creatures who cannot save and help themselves in times of difficulty, the boys (men) are portrayed as those who can swim, shoot, and do other things and rescue life. By implication, despite their lack of strength to help each other, the folktale reflects that women are also productive members of the society.

Productive activities such as ploughing land, sowing, harvesting, keeping cattle, selling domestic animals, earning money being employed, and the likes are mainly perceived as men's role in the society. This is evident in most of the folktales collected in the study area including in MOFT-7, 9, 13, 15, 22, 28, 31, 32 and so much more. For example, in MOFT-7, the three boys attended different fields of study and became a doctor, a pilot and an expert in telecommunications. They earn their livelihood being employed in government institutions; however, the girl they wanted to marry had no educational background. It is believed that this kind of folktale has the power to perpetuate the age-old belief that considers men as breadwinners and women as dependants and subservient to men. As clearly depicted in the folktale (MOFT-7), in traditional Macha Oromo society, girls/women seem to be predestined to serve men or born to be confined at home and serve men from childhood. When the male children are

schooled and encouraged to study and assume different roles in the community, the daughters are socialized to help their mothers with household chores. In brief, women are disadvantaged when compared to men in virtually all aspects of life because of the long-standing sex role stereotypes printed in the minds of the patriarchal society.

The girl's parents seem to have been influenced by the society's perception of women and overlooked to send her to school. In the study area, it is usually said proverbially, "*Lukkuun balaliiteefi durbi baratte eessayyuu hin geessu*" <If a hen flies, it does not go far, so does if a girl learns>(MOPC-24:6). This is one of the proverbs which show the prejudiced attitude of the patriarchal society towards women and the widely held belief of traditional Macha Oromo society. The proverb undoubtedly has the potential to discourage girls not to go to school and pursue their education as their male brothers do. Through such kind of proverbs and folktales, the society indoctrinates girls from an early age to ignore learning and concentrate on reproductive roles which give them recognition in the society. The proverb may also propagate the notion that going to school for girls is not so profitable as being trained to carry out domestic chores and that they should concentrate on trivial matters that attracts men's attention. This mode of thinking which discourages women's education and denies their equality is highly criticized by John Stuart Mill and other Liberal feminists. According to Mill and her allies, males still tend to have generally higher social status than women in many societies and confirmed that education is a valuable tool in the battle against this gender inequality.

In MOFT-9, it is indicated that the mother and her daughter seem to have been preoccupied with daily reproduction (household chores) while the two boys are engaged in outdoor productive activities such as ploughing land and keeping cattle. The fact that the central idea of the folktale is to inform people that praying to God saves one's life and that matricidal attempt results in destruction, embedded in the folktale is, however, the gender based division of labour that indoctrinates women to confine themselves in monotonous household chores and men to works in the field.

As indicated in MOFT-28, while clearing and preparing land, ploughing, sowing, harvesting and winnowing are considered as men's primary roles, weeding is again considered as the activity to be done by women in agricultural production. Besides weeding, however, the woman in the folktale is also required to help her husband in harvesting and winnowing the wheat in the field in addition to the household chores that

await her at home. Hence, similar to other folktales, this folktale again confirms that women are involved in both productive and reproductive activities; they are not culturally prohibited from doing works that are deemed as men's work in the society. However, embedded in this folktale is the idea that the woman has no power and right to claim for the product; her husband was depicted as if he can manipulate the family's property without her consent.

The folktale (MOFT-28) mirrors that women are not equal in status to men in traditional Macha Oromo society as the resources of the family are under the total control of men. If he needs, the man can sell the product and exchange with anything that he thinks is appropriate to himself without considering his wife's needs and interests. Therefore, as the folktale has it, women are not considered equal to men even though they can do both reproductive and productive works inside and outside of home, especially in agricultural production. With regard to this, Marxist feminists have asserted that "women's move into the productive workplace had not made them men's equals either there or at home" (Tong, R., 2009: 96).

There are also a number of folktales that indicate the engagement of women in both productive and reproductive roles in traditional Macha Oromo society. One folktale worth mentioning here is MOFT-32 entitled Role Exchange in which a husband and a wife exchanged their usual activities to see whose job is truly tiresome. At the beginning of the folktale, the husband complained that his wife used to do the simple indoor chores while he used to do the difficult and tiresome works in the field. Upon elders (reconcilers) interference and recommendation, the two exchanged their roles to prove whose work was truly tiresome. At the end, while the wife was able to discharge the productive activities in the field properly, the husband was unable to do even half of the household chores the wife had been doing before; as a result he apologized to her and the elders for blaming her of doing simple works being indoors, and admitted that the work a wife does at home is truly monotonous and tiresome.

The folktale under focus manifests that there is clear cut division of labour between a man and a woman in the study area; and that a man has limitations in doing household activities while a woman can do both productive and reproductive activities. It also reflects that the actual role of the two in the society has more of psychosocial basis rather than biological one; this is because both the man and the woman in the folktale

were able to do each other's perceived job though the man's performance was below average, maybe because he had not been accustomed to doing household chores before.

It is also possible to deduce from the same folktale that the husband in particular and the society in general has wrong perception about women's reproductive role at home. What a woman does at home (the generational and daily reproductive roles) is normally perceived as if it is so simple and not worth considering in spite of its arduousness and its contribution for the smooth running of the lives of the family in particular and the community in general. Moreover, the folktale is a real manifestation of the fact that rural men do not demand to do the monotonous reproductive and domestic roles at home that are generally perceived as merely women's work. Over all, hidden in the folktale is the idea that rural women's domestic work is tiresome, repetitive, and time consuming; and this is in harmony with what Barbara Rogers, 1980:151) notes, "If there is one broad generalization that one can make about rural women, it is that their 'non-farm' work is strenuous, takes enormous amount of time, and is absolutely essential to the survival of the family concerned". Generally, besides the roles mentioned in different folktales mentioned above, the researcher's experience and field observation witnesses that women in the study area are mainly responsible for taking care of small livestock, production and marketing of butter, cheese, and vegetables. It is also common to see them being engaged in non-farm income generating activities such as petty trading, local beer brewing, "katikala" (alcohol) making, spinning, knitting, pottery, and the likes. In extreme poverty cases, rural women, unlike men, collect firewood from a forest and walk long distances, carrying on their back, to sell to town dwellers in the study area. In brief, Macha Oromo women carry much of the burden of reproductive work in addition to their productive activities; they have longer working hours when compared with men.

Apart from this, besides their indication of women's daily reproductive roles, the following proverbs are evidences for women's exploitation of labour or maltreatment with respect to productive work in the family in particular and the society in general. Some of these proverbs are:

- *Dubartiin keessummaa hin qabdu* <A woman as a guest is never treated>(MOPC-30:2)
- *Durbii fi gundoon hin teessu* <A girl and a plate should never take rest>(MOPC-30:3)
- *Humna durbaafi wadala harree osoo manaa hin bahin saammatu*<One uses women's and jackasses' energy before they leave home> (MOPC-30:6)

If one uses the first two proverbs (MOPC-30:2 and 3) in a context where a person is engaged in a productive activity such as preparing land for sowing, weeding, harvesting, winnowing, milking, spinning and the likes, it means that a woman should extend her hand and share the burden of the job. The proverbs here indicate that it is not normal for a woman to sit idle while there is work to be done both inside and outside of home irrespective of the situation she is in; she has to be busy at work and should never expect rest and treatment as a guest. Of all, the third proverb (MOPC-30:6) reveals women's maltreatment and the biased attitude of the society towards women in the study area. It is generally thought that a girl will not stay in her parent's home forever; she will be married and taken away to serve her husband and his family. Proverbially, the society says, "*Dhiira ofif dhalchu, durba ormaaf dhalchu*" (One fathers a son for oneself and a daughter for others) (MOPC-27:7) which also shows the value the society attaches to men and women in the sphere of patriarchy. Thus, the proverb (MOPC-30:6) dictates her family that they should exploit her labour properly before she leaves their home in marriage. As a result of such kind of proverbs and folktales which shape the society's worldview, women in the study area usually suffer from an uneven distribution of workload in the society when compared with men. While discussing the general situation of women in Ethiopia, Country WID Profile (Ethiopia), conducted by JICA (1999: 2-3) stated:

In addition to farming operations, threshing, milling, cooking, collecting of wood and water and domestic chores are deemed to be female work. Women are heavily burdened due to their triple gender roles. In agriculture peak seasons, women are found to be working more than double the hours of men. In most rural communities, the task of fetching water and collecting fuel wood is the sole duty of woman, assisted most of the time by her girl child, which take long hours due to the present ecological conditions.

Marxist feminists such as Juliet Mitchell and Alison Jaggar attributed this kind of women's oppression to capitalism and patriarchy. According to Jaggar as cited in Tong, R. (2009: 113) while "capitalism oppresses women as *workers*,... patriarchy oppresses women as *women*, an oppression that affects women's identity as well as activity".

In spite of their engagement in various activities and their enormous contribution to the economy of the society, the patriarchal ideology embedded in the folktales and proverbs are usually used to discourage women to involve themselves in productive

activities, and degrade their work. This is clearly revealed in the following cluster of proverbs:

- *Dubartiin hojii manaa malee kan alaa hin tolchitu.* <Women may nicely do indoor chores but not outdoor ones>(MOPC-40:1)
- *Hojiin dubartii fi udaan hindaanqoo burree hin dhabu .* <Women’s work and chicken’s excrement never lack black and white spot> (MOPC-40:2)
- *Lafa waalluun baay’attu raafuun hin bilchaatu.* <Too many cooks spoil the broth> (MOPC-40:3)

As the first proverb (MOPC-40:1) indicates, the society seems to value women only for their reproductive roles rather than for productive works that are conducted out in the field. The proverb is reflection of the society’s attitude towards women; it discourages women’s endeavour to be engaged in productive activities in the field and belittle their contribution to the economy of the country in general and the society in particular. Through the use of such kind of proverb, the patriarchal society indoctrinates women to concentrate on household chores that they are usually praised for and ignore outdoor activities.

Similarly, the second proverb (MOPC-40:2) clearly shows that the society devalues women’s work and considers it as if it always lacks quality. As the proverb indicates, the productive role women play in the society is devalued, and their reproductive role seems to be recognized. In the context where the proverb is used, “black and white spot” here indicates the inconsistency, worthlessness and the poor quality that something has because of its performer or producer. In the proverb, women’s work other than household chores was implicitly compared with chicken’s excrement, which is worthless and/or rubbish. The use of such kind of proverb can force women to suspect the quality of their works and obliges them to feel inferiority whereas it makes men feel proud of being born male and inculcates them with a sense of superiority, widening the gap or inequality between men and women considerably. With regard to this, Frieze et al. (1978) as cited in Derlega and Janda (1986) confirmed that men tend to overestimate their abilities while women tend to underestimate their abilities, although they may have equal abilities and do things equally because of sex role stereotypes.

Likewise, in the third proverb (MOPC-40:3), the society seems to downgrade women’s skill of cooking cabbage when seen from the surface, and their lack of agreement while doing something together. Literally, the proverb is translated as “*Where there are too many women, cabbage is not cooked well*”. The cooking of cabbage seems

to be used intentionally in the proverb because it is considered so simple to cook it when compared to cooking other things. The assumption that women cannot do this simple thing together properly is a real manifestation of the patriarchal society's perception of women in general and the disapproval of their work in particular. Unlike in many parts of the world, the cook in this case totally refers to women, and thus, the proverb implies that women do not agree on what they do together, presumably showing the rivalry among them and the wider discrepancies in their skill of doing something.

Through the use of such kind of proverb, the patriarchal society inculcates the inaccuracy of women's work in the mind of the target audience and inevitably poses difficulty on them to rely on one another and to lose confidence in what they do together without the involvement of men. Juliet Mitchell, one of the proponents of Psychoanalytic feminism argued that the way the patriarchal ideology constructs each gender's psyche should be changed so as to liberate women from being perceived as less valuable in the society. As clearly stated in Tong (2009:112-113), "Because of the ways in which patriarchal ideology has constructed men's and women's psyches, women would probably continue to remain subordinate to men until their minds and men's minds had been liberated from the idea that women are somehow less valuable than men."

In general, the folktales and proverbs collected from the study area that focus on men and women seem to legitimize and strengthen the long-standing gender based division of labour between the two, dictating men to be engaged in outdoor, productive activities and women to be involved in both indoor and outdoor chores, more properly reproductive and productive activities. From the analysis and interpretation of folktales and proverbs made so far, while there seems to exist cultural prohibitions for men to help women in the monotonous domestic chores, there are no indications that prevent women from doing the productive roles men usually do in the field. Thus, besides reproductive activities, rural women in the study area do also carry out productive activities such as raising chickens, milking cows, making butter and cheese, pottery, spinning, knitting and various kinds of agricultural works in the field.

The folktales and proverbs under scrutiny propagate the misconception that men are born to work outdoor and productive activities and women for indoor and unproductive activities. Despite their engagement in both productive and reproductive activities, women do not seem to have been recognized in works related to outdoor activities by the

patriarchal society; the society perceives women's productive work to be of less quality and worthless. On the other hand, women seem to have been valued for their reproductive roles, which many research works affirmed that they are backbreaking and diminish their status to servitude.

5.3 Decision Making Role

So far, an attempt was made to investigate the productive and reproductive roles played by women and men in a household as they are reflected in the verbal arts of the society under focus. In addition to these two major roles, men and women are expected to play other roles that are socially assigned to them. Hence, in this section, the role and responsibility of men and women with respect to decision making both in the household and in the public as reflected in the folktales and proverbs of the society will be examined.

To start with its definition, decision making is the process of deciding or making choices about something important; it is a judgment that one makes on important matters after thinking and talking about what is the best thing to do. A person is said to have a decision making power when he/she has an influential voice and final say on things to be decided. Playing the role of decision making is usually taken as an indicator of one's status in a society. Hence, the participation of men and women in decision making on equal basis is said to be vital in every society. In order to create an egalitarian society in the future, thus, it seems mandatory to avoid biases that relegate one gender in favour of another in decision making, and work towards eliminating traditional beliefs that uphold the supremacy of the patriarch as a sole decision maker. In line with this, United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women in an article Published to promote the goals of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action in 1997 stated, "Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning" (1997: 13).

The patriarchal ideology is one of the big factors that influence decision-making in the household. Cultural vehicles such as folktales and proverbs promote the patriarchal ideology and legitimize the traditional role of men and women in decision making in the household and public arenas. Making decision has been conceived of as a sole authority of masculine concept. Women's possibility to take part in decision making seems to be

confounded by sex role stereotypes, which presupposes that they lack the drive, knowledge, and skill required for making decisions.

There are various reasons why women are relegated in decision-making matters in the society. According to the culture of Macha Oromo society, decision-making has traditionally been considered as a male prerogative; it is considered as a process whereby elders, mainly composed of men participate on because of the experiences and knowledge they are presupposed to have and other male stereotypes associated with them (see subsection [6.7] for the details of the society's perception of women relevant to this topic).

In the society, women's role in decision-making is discouraged by customs that give power to men. It is deemed that women lack the necessary knowledge, wisdom and responsibility for capable decision-making. Society's norms and customs which are embedded in the verbal arts, thus, deny women's involvement in decision making on matters deemed important in the community in general and in the household in particular. The folktales and proverbs collected from the study area propagate the image that men are better decision makers than women. For example, it is commonly said:

- *Dubartiin hammam bektuyyuu murteen kan dhiiraati.* <However knowledgeable a woman may be, the final decision rests on a man> (MOPC-19:1)
- *Dubartiin murtii hinbeektu.* <Women donot know making decisions >(MOPC-19:2)
- *Murtiin dhumaafi qe'een kan dhiiraati.* <The last decision and a homestead belong to a man>(MOPC-19:3)

As it is clearly indicated in the first proverb (MOPC-19:1), even if a woman may have the necessary knowledge on an issue, the society seems to have relegated a woman and bestowed the power to make the final decision upon a man. According to the proverb, women cannot make decisions however knowledgeable they might be. Similarly, the second proverb (MOPC-19:2) manifests that the society has a firm stand not to involve women in decision making processes. The expression seems more of a justification for why women are usually not invited in decision making issues. It is an instance of sex role stereotype in which the society upholds the presupposition that women do not know how to make decisions. The third proverb (MOPC-19:3) also shows the prejudiced attitude of the society towards women with respect to decision making and ownership. In the proverb, the society seems to have vested the overall authority to make the final say on important matters and the right to own a homestead in a man to the neglect of a woman.

These kinds of proverbs are mostly used to deny women the chance to participate on important matters concerning family and the society at large.

Apart from these proverbs, there are also a number of folktales that perpetuate the prevailing patriarchal ideology which hinders women from taking part in decision making. As in the proverbs, the folktales collected from the study area portray men as the sole decision makers in the family and community at large, and depict women as if they do not have any role in decision making. For example, in MOFT-3, where the family had nine children, the government asked only the husband (man), not the wife (woman), to send the children to the war front for defending the country. In almost all cases, in Macha Oromo, men are the heads of the family and are, therefore, the principal decision-makers in the household. The man in the folktale, for example, was given due consideration to decide on the fate of his children. However, as reflected in the folktale, let alone on other issues, the wife was portrayed as a person who has no right on her own children; it is without her consultation that the children were taken to the war front. This clearly manifests the patriarchal society's sex role ideology which isolates women from participating on decision making on mere subjective basis. Discussion or consultation with a woman so as to make decision is usually discouraged in the society. This is apparent from the following proverbs.

- *Namni dubartiin mar'ate nama qilleensaan mar'atedha.* <A man who discusses with a woman is like someone who shares his idea with air> (MOPC-24:7)
- *Namni dubartiin mari'atee fi namni qilleensatti hirkate tokko dha.* <A man who discusses with a woman is like someone who leans on air>(MOPC-24:8)

As the proverbs indicate, a man is not required to discuss with his wife so as to take action or make a decision on important matters in the society. The proverbs are used in a context where a person wants to express women's untrustworthiness especially on matters that require confidentiality before taking action or making decisions. Such kinds of proverbs are believed to have a potential impact on the target audience in keeping the status quo prevailing in the society with respect to involving women in decision making. In general, the proverbs reveal the status ascribed to women in the patriarchal society on issues that require secrecy in decision making.

In a similar manner, in MOFT-7 the three youths asked the father to give his daughter in marriage to one of them. In the folktale, the decision to give or not to give the daughter to the youths entirely fell on the father to the neglect of the mother. Likewise, in MOFT-8, the decision to allow the girl's marriage to one of the rescuers rested entirely on the father and the elders, who are composed of men as per the tradition of the society. In

both folktales, the girls are portrayed as if they have no right to choose and decide for themselves the person to whom they are going to be married. Such folktales mirror the idea that in Macha Oromo society men view themselves as masters over their wives, and that they do not feel the need to consult women in matters pertaining to the family. The folktales reaffirm the prevailing patriarchal ideology that considers decision making as a male prerogative. The folktales tell us that men are granted with the authority to make decisions on behalf of women; they mirror the persisting inequality between men and women in decision-making and the long-standing patriarchal view of women in the society.

In traditional Macha Oromo society, the mother has usually no voice to allow or forbid the marriage of her daughter. Even nowadays, in the countryside, the trend in the society is that the father along with other elders makes decisions on issues related to marriage without involving the mother. A girl who does not have a father, that is whose father died, is usually a victim of abduction; no one will ask the mother to give the daughter in marriage formally. This is clearly reflected in the proverb (MOPC-27:13) that the society uses in its daily communication.

- *Intala abbaa qabdu mareen mana, kan abbaa hinqabne mareen ala*<The girl who has a father, the discussion is at home, and the fatherless outside>(MOPC-27:13)

This proverb is used in a context where people talk about marriage and is usually forwarded as a piece of advice to encourage a boy to abduct the girl than go through the formal marriage process (in case the girl has no father). In the proverb, one can easily see how the society perceives women and treat young girls who have no father. The proverb considers women as powerless creatures who entirely depend on men to live peacefully in the community.

The fact that women have no say in the family with respect to marriage is also reflected in MOFT- 23, a humorous tale where the boy wanted to get married to his grandmother. In the folktale, the boy repeatedly asked his father to the neglect of his mother to facilitate conditions for the marriage. The boy in the folktale was depicted as if he has the power and right to decide for his future spouse unlike the girls in MOFT (7 and 8) who were represented as voiceless creatures to whom their fathers should decide on their behalf. There is no instance in the folktale where both the father and the son

attempted to involve the wife (mother) to take part in decisions related to the marriage. Embedded in the folktale is, therefore, the persistent exclusion of women from decision making and the dominant position of men in the society to decide on family affairs. Many research works indicate that in every society, both the existing sociocultural set-ups and the resultant male bias are said to be responsible for the exclusion of women in the decision-making processes at the household level in rural areas.

MOFT-31, entitled “From Ambition to Great Loss” is another folktale in which one can easily observe that men are the only decision makers on every affair and resource in the household. The folktale characterizes the man (husband) as an autocratic householder who has the power to decide everything for him without consulting his wife. As indicated in the folktale, the woman has no place in the decision-making about the family farm, in terms of what is to be grown and its marketing. Besides, the folktale mirrors the woman as if she has no control over the money to be obtained from selling the cereal, as shown in the following extract.

The husband told her, “I will clear the forest near the river, plough the land and sow wheat, and you will weed it; when it is ripe we will harvest and winnow together.” The husband continued and said, “With its product, I will buy a pregnant horse; and when the horse begets a foal (young horse), I will tie to your millstone.”

As it is possible to see from the folktale, the ambitious man (husband) had decided everything alone first and let the wife know the decisions at the end. When the woman told him that she would ride on the horseback he had decided to buy the time she wanted to visit her parents, he refused to allow her. Thereafter, she became very angry and began to insult him, as a result of which she lost her life at the end. The wife in the folktale is depicted as helpless and voiceless house servant who is born to accept and live according to her husband’s wish. The folktale inculcates in the minds of the target audience that women are weak, and therefore should obey their husband’s unrestricted order without any complaint. By using such kinds of folktales, the community has been socializing women from an early age to exclude themselves from decision making and refrain from considering themselves equal to men. The verbal arts confirm that women in a patriarchal society like Macha Oromo are voiceless, and their accomplishments are given little attention or omitted all together.

Generally speaking, the folktales and proverbs mentioned above indicate that the prevailing style in decision-making among Macha Oromo society seems to be of masculine quality. In the society, when decision making is required, there is a trend to think of a man and a tendency to alienate a woman. Feminists object to this kind of prejudice towards women and strive to eliminate factors that contribute to the continued systemic subordination of women in a society. Particularly liberal feminists contend that gender prejudice is based around individual ignorance, and hence advocate education as a valuable tool to combat discrimination that results from it (ignorance). Apart from this, as stated in ‘A Community Training Manual’ (2007:64) prepared by UNDP under the title of “Indigenous Women and Decision Making”, women’s lack of exposure and the burden of household chores they are usually preoccupied with are considered as important factors for the relegation of women in decision making in their society. As explained in the manual:

It is obvious that women are generally overburdened with domestic work. Thus, they do not have the time to participate in meetings or to go to other places for exposure programmes. These are venues that can provide the space for women to express their views and to have a say in decisions that affect women and the society. If this situation is not changed, then the present and next generation of women will continue to be discriminated and will not attain positions of decision making in society.

In general, in a patriarchal society such as Macha Oromo, the decision making role at home and in major socio-cultural affairs is usually left to men; it is up to women to be abided by the decisions set by men. The society believes that a woman’s place is in the home and that she has a very specific set of tasks contrary to a man who is seen as the ‘natural’ head of the family being endowed with the right to make decisions on family and community affairs. Verbal arts particularly folktales and proverbs propagate the notion that men are the sole decision-makers on both family and community matters while portraying women as if they lack some qualities related to decision making by birth. As reflected in the verbal arts, women do not hold positions of power in traditional Macha Oromo society; their participation in decision making in both private and public spheres is limited. Many feminists, however, contend that the equal participation of women in decision making and in different sectors of social strata can play a major role in improving the living conditions of women and the family as a whole.

5.4 Leadership or Administrative Role

Another issue (that is) worth considering while discussing gender role in a society is to explicate the role of men and women with respect to management or leadership positions. Many scholars have defined leadership as a process in which a person motivates and inspires other groups of people towards a common goal, and a leader as a person who is often followed, because he/she is respected for hard work, integrity, ideas, and commitment (Jones and Pound, 2008; Denmark, 1993). In leadership, thus, one member of a group influences and controls the behaviour of the other members towards some common goal (Denmark, 1993).

In many traditional societies, assuming leadership positions both at home and in the public domain has been perceived as a sole right of men. Women have not been given opportunities to become leaders at home and in the community because of sex role stereotypes which presupposes that they lack the drive, aggression and ability to assume leadership positions (Spence and Hemlreich, 1972; Schein, 1973). In accordance with this, Alvesson and Billing (2009:79) also stated:

Many socially important jobs have traditionally been given a masculine flavour. Management and leadership are regularly viewed as socially constructed in masculine terms in many countries and organizations, making it difficult for a female manager to balance between being seen as a competent manager/leader and as sufficiently feminine not to be viewed as breaking with gender expectations.

Thus, as in the case of decision making, unlike men, women are still unrecognized in managerial or leadership positions both at family and community level as reflected in Macha Oromo verbal arts. As the verbal arts reveal, there is a strong gender gap in the society in terms of managing or leading a family as well as a country.

Macha Oromo is a society characterized by the dominant male headed, extended family form. As we tried to see earlier, in traditional Macha Oromo family, the status of women is considered low both in private and public arena. Men are the head of the family, and enjoy all the decision making and leadership privilege over women. The folktales and proverbs that the people in the study area use mainly show that men are there in the society to rule. All the administrative and decision making roles are left to men as if they are granted in nature. Men are believed to be good leaders and administrators when compared to women, who are perceived to lack the necessary skill on matters regarding the administration of the family and community at large.

In Macha Oromo society, women tend to be deprecated and relegated in managerial or leadership roles on family affairs. The role of managing and leading a group (be it family, community or country) has traditionally been associated with masculinity rather than femininity in the society. The society seems to have bestowed the role of managing family to men rather than women. Folktales and proverbs collected from the study area cast men as the right people for leadership and women as inappropriate individuals for the position. According to the culture of the society, it is not normal to let women exercise authority over men, an ideology which is apparent in the following proverbs.

- Aangoon dubartii gorroo duubatti <Women's power is behind a salon/in a kitchen> (MOPC-5:1)
- Dhalaan nama hin bulchu dhiiratu nama bulcha <Women never govern but men do>(MOPC-5:2)
- Mana dubartiin bulchitu ulfina hin qabu <A house administered by a woman has no respect>(MOPC-5:3)
- Mootummaan dubartii karra cufaatti oolcha <Women's administration leaves the gate of the pen closed for the whole day> (MOPC-5:6)
- Namni niitiin bulu bahee olla hin bulu <A man administered by a wife won't stay a night in the neighborhood>(MOPC-5:5)

All these proverbs are used in a context when people talk about a woman who is in an administrative or leadership position. They are sorts of comments forwarded to demean the role of women in administrative position and are indications of men's unwillingness to accept women's domination or leadership at all spheres. The wide use of these proverbs reflects the unwillingness of patriarchal society, more specifically men, to accept women's equality in leadership positions and shows that they want to maintain their dominance within the society and the household. As many feminists argue, considering women incapable, incompetent and inferior to men and denying them of opportunities to take part in high status positions such as leadership merely because of sex role stereotypes will have certainly a detrimental effect on a country striving for development.

The first proverb (MOPC-5:1) implies that women should be confined to works related to household chores (domestic roles) instead of trying to come out to assume leadership positions out in the public domain. By default, the proverb together with the second one (MOPC-5:2) grants the right and authority to assume leadership position to men who do not want to be involved in domestic chores. Likewise, the third proverb (MOPC-5:3) demeans the role women play to administer their home, and propagates the

notion that no one respects a house ruled by women, thereby confirming the traditional gender roles where males dominate and females play a subservient role. In Macha Oromo, thus, women are usually encouraged to be limited only to domestic activities and they are deemed as unable to lead a family or a community however knowledgeable they might be. It is generally believed that women lack the necessary knowledge or expertise to lead a family or a community; thus, they are not usually welcomed in leadership positions in the society. It is commonly said that:

- “*Beekumsi dubartii fi karaan jaldeessaa bowwaa nama buusa*” <Women’s knowledge and monkeys’ trail lead one to an abyss> (MOPC-42:2).

This proverb carries the message that women should not assume leadership positions as their knowledge or expertise to lead somebody was deemed unreliable. In the proverb, women’s knowledge was metaphorically compared to monkeys’ trail whose destination is an abyss, symbolizing a bad place where a man should never go. Thus, if one follows monkey’s route, it undoubtedly takes him/her to an abyss, a place deemed worthless to go; likewise, as stated in the proverb, if one trusts women’s knowledge and expertise and follows her (is led by her), he/she will end in a bad destination. Feminists object to such patriarchal society’s ideology which belittles the role of women in leadership positions and argue that “women are full human beings” capable of leading their family, community and the country “in the full range of human activities - intellectual, political, social, sexual, spiritual and economic” (Cleage, 1983:28).

The fourth proverb (MOPC-5:6) also carries negative connotation as far as women’s administration is concerned. The proverb is normally used to mean that (when in position) women are autocratic and unconcerned for others. In rural areas, it is unethical to keep the pen (corral) closed for long in the morning; it means the owner is unconcerned for the livestock in it that are unable to speak and express their problems. The livestock in a pen need to be free early in the morning so that they graze in the pastureland; the closing of the pen for the whole day, therefore, means a complete dictatorship, and shows the autocrat’s lack of concern for others. Implied in the proverb is that women are poor administrators when compared to men, that is to say men are wiser and better skilled in management or administration.

The society expects a woman to be caring, sensitive and compassionate; therefore, becoming autocratic and aggressive towards others is considered as violating social norms, and people find it difficult to accept a woman who displays such kind of

leadership styles that are usually associated with men. According to Riger (2000:110), “People tend to devalue women who act autocratically relative to the evaluation of their male counterparts; [a woman] who uses an authoritative leadership style violate people’s belief that a woman should be interpersonally oriented and sensitive.”

The fifth proverb (MOPC-5:5) has also similar connotation with the rest of the proverbs in the group. According to the proverb, a person who is administered by his wife has completely no freedom to stay even a single night out in his neighbour’s home. Embedded in the proverb is the notion that men want freedom to become as they like, and women want to control them. The proverb is, hence, used to imply that a wife should never dominate her husband and rule over him. As we can see, these proverbs are there in the language to maintain the prevailing patriarchal status quo, advocating for men to occupy the dominant positions in society. The proverbs mostly reflect that women are less knowledgeable than men, and hence perpetuate the notion that they are inappropriate for leadership roles. Suffice it to say that leadership is traditionally viewed as a masculine concept, and women should violate the traditional sex role expectation to enter this male-dominated area. In line with this, Alvesson and Billing (2009:63) noted “For a woman to become a top manager, it is then necessary to transcend the normative (ideas about) women’s roles because of the incompatibility between management and what is stereotypically ascribed to women”.

Apart from these proverbs, there are also a number of folktales through which the society inculcates the youth to consider leadership as a sole role of men. For example, in MOFT-2, it was the man who had been ruling the country before the woman (queen) poisoned and killed him for her own sexual desire case. After killing the king, the queen assumed the role of leading the society for a few years; yet she could not properly manage as her initial intention was not to rule the country in a better manner. In the folktale, she was portrayed as lustful, unfaithful, cruel and weak queen. In other words, the queen in the folktale is depicted as if she was obsessed only with her sexual gratification, lacking a sense of duty and rational thinking to shoulder social and political responsibilities.

The life of the queen ended badly when she plotted to change the bodyguard she had preferred to live with instead of the king at the beginning. Having heard her plot to change him with another bodyguard, her former preferred sexual partner and bodyguard assassinated her and began to lead the country in a better manner as stated in the folktale.

In one way or another, the folktale perpetuate the notion that women are not good leaders when compared to men; it portrays women as if they lack the required knowledge and skill to assume leadership positions and strengthens the traditional sex role stereotypes that favours men in administrative positions. Along the lines of this societal perception, Psychoanalytic feminists argue that early infantile childhood experiences are the cause of society's privileging things "masculine" over things "feminine" (Tong, 2009).

The assumption that women are not well-suited when compared to men for leadership roles is also reflected in MOFT-14. In the legend, the queen was depicted as a weak leader who lacks some qualities that are necessary to lead the community in a proper manner. The queen in the legend seems to have used her authority unwisely; she was portrayed as pitiless, unconcerned, and completely dictatorial. Almost all her orders and decisions do not seem to have been well thought over and have reasonable background. For example, the killing of all the elders in her territory and her ambition to have a house that suspends on the air and a horse that flies in the sky shows her lack of concern for the people and irrationality. The fact that all her orders and decisions are unreasonable can be proved as she instantly changes her mind when people ask her to show them first how to do something as in the case of laying a foundation for building a house suspending on the air. In brief, the queen in the legend was represented as unwise, dictatorial, pitiless, and irrational leader.

Generally, the image of the woman in the story, Akkoo Manooyee, seems the standardized image of Macha Oromo women with respect to administration. The story portrays her as cruel, helpless, politically naive and vulnerable person; she was also constructed as a person lacking some special human qualities required for assuming political leadership including vision, commitment, self-control, strength, and rational judgment. Thus, the queen's rule in the legend was distorted and symbolized by cruelty, arrogance and irrational deeds. As the legend witnesses, women in the society are perceived as inadequate, incompetent and inefficient with respect to leadership while men are mostly considered as successful, efficient and competent in leadership positions. This kind of folktale is believed to have a profound and enduring effect on the social and psychological development of the young generation; they urge the target audience to develop stereotypes that may take long time to remove from the mind.

The fact that leadership is considered as a masculine concept among Macha Oromo society is also reflected in MOFT-19. In the folktale, the leader of the community was a king; he was said to have a high respect from the people he used to lead. He was depicted as kind and venerable leader. The folktale does not say anything about his weakness in leading the community. The virtuousness of his leadership style can be deduced from the fact that people respect him and wish to provide him gifts; for example, had he had a problem in his administration, the woman would not have taken the hide of the tiger to him. There was no complaint on his administration; presumably it is because, unlike women, men are presupposed to have the necessary skill and knowledge to lead the community in a better manner.

The woman in the folktale is, however, portrayed as a kind of person who is unable to distinguish the living from the dead. Besides ignorance, she was depicted as a weak creature unable to defend herself from being devoured by the tiger. Such kind of folktale undoubtedly reinforces the long-standing belief that considers women as dependent, weak and inferior members of the society. It might also deteriorate women's self-esteem and affect their confidence to assume leadership roles. Feminists strongly object stereotypes that diminish the status of women in the society and patriarchal views that deny the equality of men and women on mere subjective basis. Liberal feminists, for example, argue that "Together, women and men might be able to develop the kind of social values, leadership styles, and institutional structures needed to permit both sexes to achieve fulfilment in the public and private world alike"(Tong, 2009:30).

Furthermore, in almost all the folktales selected for analysis, men occupy the dominant or leading positions both in the household and in the community. For example, in MOFT-18, although the wife was depicted as more hardworking than the husband, it seems that the husband has a dominant position in the family when compared to the wife. The husband in the folktale was depicted as a householder with unlimited power over his wife. He used to order her to do everything for their livelihood including productive and daily reproductive activities while letting himself free to enjoy in the town. The wife in the folktale was, however, depicted as a woman born to obey the order of her husband and live serving him without any complaint. The woman in folktale was beaten severely by her husband for her failure to prepare him food on time and trying to act against his expectation. In the society, as reflected in the folktale, women are punished if they fail to comply with patriarchal expectations and "the most severe punishment is meted out to the

woman who threatens patriarchy ...violates patriarchal gender roles so unabashedly...” (Tyson, 2006:127). The folktale faithfully mirrors the male dominated society’s attitude towards women and their oppressive treatment in the community.

Generally, in traditional Macha Oromo society, the business of managing the family and leading a country was predominantly perceived as a man’s role. The folktales characterize men as better chiefs, kings, managers, councillors, and householders for the most part; on the other hand, they mainly characterize women as poor, dependent, inefficient and incompetent leaders with respect to leadership or administration. A child brought up being inculcated with such kind of folktales and proverbs might develop the general feeling that women are unfit for leadership positions at all levels, from the family and community to the national and international levels. In short, most of the folktales and proverbs selected for analysis here strengthen and perpetuate the patriarchal society’s sex role stereotype that considers women as inappropriate for leadership roles when compared to men. Seen from a feminist perspective, the verbal arts discussed under this section witness that women in the society have been maltreated by men to the extent they take it for granted as they are succumbed to patriarchal ideology and other related social norms.

5.5 Protective Role

Protective role, here, is used to mean the act of a person in which he/she makes sure that somebody or something is not harmed or maltreated. It is the act of providing help to a person and defending one’s territory from an enemy. In talking about protective role, thus, there is an assumption that the stronger protects the weaker or the one who has the necessary talent stands beneath the weak or the unfit to ensure its existence. Accordingly, one of the most common beliefs that many people hold about the role of men and women in society is that “Women are the weaker sex and need to be protected” (Wienclaw in The Editors of Salem Press, 2011:15).

In Macha Oromo, as reflected in the verbal arts, men’s role, both at home and in the public, is more of protecting the family from external influence than doing household chores including nurturing and taking care for the children. According to the dominant patriarchal society’s ideology, the only existence of the father is deemed more than enough for the children. The existence of a father provides dignity for the children, especially for girls who experience both domestic and external violence in their lives. The absence of a father or a big brother has a great impact on the lives of children in

patriarchal society like Macha Oromo. Children without a father or big brother are usually exposed to violence and remain unprotected, and the impact goes to the extent of spoiling their reputation in marriage. Two proverbs (MOPC-27:13 and MOPC-27:17) worth mentioning in this case are the ones which say:

- *Intala abbaa qabdu mareen mana, kan abbaa hinqabne mareen ala* <The girl who has a father, the discussion is at home, and the fatherless outside> (MOPC-27:13), and,
- *'Utuun abbaa qabaadhee silaa cidhi kun kooti.'* *jette haftuun* <'Had I had a father, this wedding would have been mine,' the spinster said> (MOPC-27:17).

As implied in the proverbs (MOPC-27: 13 and 17), the existence of a father is more important than the existence of a mother in marriage. For example, as stated in the proverb (MOPC-27:13), there is no father means there is no one to protect a girl from being abducted. In other words, as the proverb implies, no one is afraid of a girl who has no father to protect her. When she is ready for marriage, the person who needs her is not expected to marry her formally through discussions and negotiations. He could finish it himself outside together with his friends without considering her mother. He can abduct her forcefully as she has no one to protect her. In short, the proverb is used to mean that people usually take advantage of an unprotected person.

Unlike in (MOPC-27:13), the idea in the proverb (MOPC-27:17) is that the society assumes a girl who has no father as someone who has no one to be afraid of and that she grew up exercising her free will (without control) which is contrary to societal expectations. The girl in the proverb was left without marriage because of the absence of a father. She has no father means she did not grow up properly under control and protection, and hence she has high probability of being seduced easily or she has been presupposed that she entertained her life before marriage which is considered as violations of the society's norms and values. As a result, many people do not need such kind of a girl merely owing to the presupposition or the bad reputation usually associated with a girl grew up in the absence of a father.

Nevertheless, if a girl has a father or a big brother, she is usually free from external violence. According to the culture of the society, men are usually portrayed as protectors of women and children. A girl is respected and no one dare abuses her if she has a father or a big brother at home; and hence she lives peacefully and cheerfully as indicated in the following proverb.

- *Intalli abbaa qabdu qananiitee bulti.* <A girl who has a father lives cheerfully> (MOPC-27:14)

From such kind of proverb, one can easily guess the importance attached to a father in the society in protecting the children and the homestead from external pressure. The proverb is a true reflection of the fact that in Macha Oromo culture a woman is of secondary importance to a man in protecting her children from external violence. The patriarchal society believes that women are weak and, therefore, should depend on a man for protection and guidance. A woman who usually tries to stand by herself without depending on a man for protection is normally considered as a boss of herself, which is contrary to societal expectation. In connection with this Madsen, D. (2000:83) witnessed, “The independent woman, the woman without male protection, is shunned and reviled.” In the society, a woman is expected to be fearful and submissive to a man; she should be docile, humble and modest, and should not try to display qualities considered typical of men such as self-reliance and boldness or aggressiveness.

Consequently, women are generally considered as open to danger and dependent on the male members of the society for survival. Along the lines of this argument, Majstorović and Lassen (2011:212) confirmed, “The long standing sexist viewpoint that women are weak and need to rely on men’s strength and wisdom for happiness in life is prevalent in numerous linguistic instances.” Hence, no matter how small or weak a man may be, he is more respected and feared in the society when compared to a woman. In the society, it is usually said:

- *Abbaan xiqqoo hin qabu.* <There is no little father>(MOPC-27:2)
- *Dhiirri fi ibiddi xiqqoo hin qabdu.* <A male and a fire can never be little>(MOPC-27:8)
- *Dhirsii xiqqoo hin qabu.* <There is no little husband>(MOPC-27:9)

As shown in the proverbs, men in Macha Oromo community are considered superior to women. Thus, the proverbs are used to indicate that men are more respected than women to safeguard a family; they show the importance the society attaches to men while talking about gender role with respect to safeguarding. For example, in the proverb (MOPC-27:8), a male is metaphorically compared to fire. As it is known, a small fire can bring about a big destruction; it can devastate huge amount of property if not taken care of properly. Thus, fire is conceived as dangerous and is not normally considered as small or little to change a course of action in the society. Similarly, a man is feared in the society as he can risk his life to protect himself and his family members from danger. In order to maintain his reputation, therefore, a man is expected to face danger or adventure with a sense of confidence and fearlessness. In short, according to Macha Oromo culture,

men are considered more important than women to take the role of protecting family members from danger. The proverbs are, thus, used to indicate that men are stronger than women in combating or defending oneself and one's territory from an enemy. In the society, it is believed that men are supposed to be aggressive, fearless and imperil their lives in order to protect their family members from danger.

In addition to proverbs, folktales are other vehicles through which the society conveys the message that women are weaker than men and need to be protected. In the society, women are portrayed as being in need of constant guidance and protection from men as reflected in many folktales. For instance, in MOFT-17, when the man left for the war front, the responsibility to look after the woman (mother) was left to the son. The folktale characterizes a man as sole decision maker, protector, and upholder of family pride and honor. Hence, in the folktale, protecting both the country and the family from an external enemy seems to be the role of a man to the neglect of a woman. As reflected in the folktale, the woman was depicted as a weak person who is not able to defend herself and the family from danger in the absence of a man. In connection with this, Madsen, D. (2000:124) stated, "Within a centralized, hierarchical society, groups are divided into 'masculine' and 'not masculine', [and] power is centralized and focused in the masculine ruling class, with the 'not-masculine' requiring protection, control, [and] guidance".

Similarly, in MOFT-8, in which the river overflowed and took away a young girl to an island in the middle of the lake while she was washing clothes, a woman is portrayed as somebody who lacks some qualities to save herself from danger in the absence of a man. In the folktale, while women are characterized as weak creatures who are unable to save themselves and help each other in times of difficulty, men are given the picture of strength, boldness and talent. In the folktale, the male characters are not only cast as capable to swim, play musical instrument, brave to shoot and kill an enemy but also as saviours and protectors of women. In the society, it is generally believed that women, as a sex, are weaker than men in many ways and thus normally need the protection of men. According to Levorato, A. (2003) this kind of patriarchal belief is prevalent in many genres of oral literature, especially in folktales where women are constantly represented as helpless and dependent while men as brave rescuers and protectors. Reciprocally, for protecting or rescuing women, men usually require them to give up and fulfil their interests. For instance, in the folktale (MOFT-8), the rescuers

demanded the father to give them the girl (his daughter) in marriage for saving her life (protecting her from being attacked by the crocodile). Likewise, in MOFT-7, the three educated boys required the father to give them the girl in marriage in return for saving her life (healing her from being died of snake poisonous). In sum, a man as reflected in Macha Oromo folktales, demand something from a woman or her family for protecting her from danger, and she unwillingly sacrifices herself reciprocally. Pertaining to this, Madsen, D. (2000:124) attested, “In return for this protection, the feminine serves the interests of the male: nature sacrifices ‘herself’ to culture”. Similarly, Rowbotham (1973:62) observed, “The woman essentially serves the man in exchange for care and protection”.

MOFT-2 is another folktale in which one can easily observe the social belief that deems women unequal to men in playing the role of protecting something from danger. In the folktale, both before and after the king’s death, the bodyguards were all men. After the death of the king, the queen opted for a muscular, young man to act as her chief bodyguard and protect her from an enemy; there is no indication in the entire tale where a woman was chosen to act as a bodyguard to both the king and the queen. As reflected in the folktale, the society seems to have a belief that men are more active and more reliable than women to guard very important figures such as a king or a queen from an attack. In brief, in the folktale, as said earlier, men are considered more valuable than women in protecting somebody or something from an enemy.

Apart from this, as reflected in MOFT-3, the role of defending a country from an enemy seems to have completely relied on the shoulders of men than women. In the folktale, the government asked the man (husband) to send all his sons to the war front so as to fight and defend its sovereign state. The boys in the folktale are depicted as brave warriors who successfully gained victory over their enemies. There is no instance in the folktales and proverbs collected from the study area in which women are considered equal to men and recruited to participate in warfare. The folktale mirrors as if only men can engage in warfare so as to defend one’s territory. The message in the folktale, thus, reinforces the age-old patriarchal belief that reduces women to a much lower status and that considers them as unfit to stand shoulder to shoulder with men and fight against an enemy.

Generally speaking, as in any other Oromo clans, in Macha Oromo, men are in total control of every activity. In the society, only men can engage in warfare, and take part in

defending the homestead, community and the country from an enemy. Thus, warfare and protecting the community from an enemy is deemed as exclusively a masculine domain. To be precise, as they are perceived as weak and unfit for such kind of activities, women are totally excluded from participating in warfare and all activities connected with the defense of the community. According to Eagly and Crowley (1986), in many societies people believe that men should protect the weak and defenceless and be courteous and protective to subordinates, particularly women. This is what is clearly reflected in the verbal arts of the society under focus. Many feminists, however, assert that men tyrannize over women rather than loving and protecting them as they claim to do.

Over all, as reflected in the verbal arts, in traditional Macha Oromo society, the fate of a woman seems to have been under the protection of a man; her responsibilities are considered as handling household tasks, working on a farm for family maintenance, and producing children for extending generation. Women are generally perceived as weak and dependent on men for their overall protection, including that of their rights. The discussion made so far tells us that (as in any male dominated society), Macha Oromo uses a lot of verbal arts (particularly proverbs and folktales) to support male chauvinism in which women are described as subordinate to men in every aspect requiring overall protection. In the society, as the verbal arts witness, the female sex has been looked down on by their male counterparts; men seem to have been enjoying the privilege of superiority over women.

CHAPTER SIX: BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS AND RECURRENT IMAGES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN MACHA OROMO VERBAL ARTS

In the foregoing discussion, an attempt was made to deal with one aspect of gender role, which is the gender based division of labour. However, as it is known, gender role is not only about gender based division of labour; it is also about behavioural norms considered socially appropriate for men and women in a given society. This second aspect which is the gendered social behaviour expected of men and women as reflected in the folktales and proverbs of the society under focus will be presented as follows.

6.1 Aggression versus Docility

Even if defining aggression and docility is beyond the scope of this study, let us begin this section by providing relevant definitions forwarded by scholars in the field of psychology to enable readers grasp the way these two terms are used in here. Accordingly, aggression is defined as a behavior that pushes somebody to make assaults or take an offensive action on others embracing both verbal and physical actions such as the act of insulting, teasing and beating others (Baron, 1977; Berkowitz, 1964). Bhatia (2009:14) also defines aggression as a “Forceful physical, verbal or symbolic action.” In many disciplines, the term is used to “characterize the acts of individuals and of social group [and stands] for acts (threats, blows, etc.) and for a readiness to initiate an act (assertiveness, forcefulness, combativeness, belligerence)” and the likes (Silverbergan d Gray, 1992:3). Many studies have indicated that the traditional male role encompasses norms of chivalry as well as aggressiveness (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). According to these two scholars, the male gender role includes norms encouraging many forms of aggression.

Docility on the other hand is a term that is used to indicate quietness, compliance or passivity. Most of the time, the term is used synonymously with submissiveness, which is normally understood as the behavior of a person when he/she is willing to accept somebody else's authority and willing to obey them without any question. It is a behavior mainly expected from a woman of any age in the study area. A man with this characteristic is usually condemned and considered to have lacked one of the qualities of male human beings.

Traditionally, Macha Oromo women were supposed to be submissive to their husbands and the verbal arts collected from the study area emphasize the importance of female submissiveness and docility, aggravating and perpetuating their perceived oppression in the society. As the verbal arts witness, women are trained to be dutiful and expected to be submissive to their husbands. In the society, the beliefs and attitudes conveyed in many verbal arts are usually associated with power for each gender in the family and community. Men are depicted as more powerful, whereas women are mostly portrayed as weak and meek who are destined to depend on men for survival.

Many folktales and proverbs collected from the study area affirm that a man is a woman's protector; traditionally the society believes that a man is the head of the house, and therefore a woman should show utmost respect to him. The prevailing perception is that a woman has to be docile and abstain from causing any trouble if she needs to be protected and survive in a man's world. The folktales and proverbs emphasize that one of the qualities of a good woman is docility. As a result of this, women tend to repress themselves and are forced to become passive.

Men in the society are generally expected to be more aggressive than women from an early age and are socialized to dominate women and other men. Men and women are not expected to behave in a similar manner as per the norm of the society; they are socialized from the very beginning to behave in accordance with their sexes and carry out roles assigned to them. Therefore, the difference in sex between individuals and the roles they are assigned to carry out results in the difference in their social behavior. Pertaining to this, the proponents of Social Role Theory assert that gender differences are socially constructed, and the origin of sex differences in social behaviour lies in the differential distribution of the sexes into different roles. Correspondingly, sex differences in aggression are supposed to result from the roles men and women are required to perform in the society; hence, men become more aggressive than women because men are usually assigned into higher social roles with more power and resources, presumably requiring more dominance and aggression (Eagly, 1987).

In Macha Oromo society, young boys are socialized to be aggressive and uncaring to women beginning from their childhood. On the other hand, young girls are socialized to be docile and obey the authority of men since an aggressive woman is not needed in the society. These qualities have been being taught to young children through folktales

and proverbs since time immemorial. For instance, in MOFT-1, owing to her deviation from societal norm, the woman was punished severely by her husband. The woman in the folktale does not seem docile and it seems that she refused to live being submissive to her husband. As a consequence, the man, as reflected in the folktale, became very angry at his unfaithful wife and amputated her hands, blinded her and told her to leave his home. The folktale does not say anything about what happened to the man thereafter for his aggression towards his wife.

Similarly, in MOFT- 33, in which a boy insisted to marry a girl brought up by an aggressive woman who dominates her husband, and as a result of which his parents refused to let him marry her for fear of acquiring her mother's behaviour can be a good manifestation of the fact that the society expects men to be aggressive and women to be docile. In the folktale, while the boy was glorified and praised for being aggressive and able to correct his wife's behaviour, the woman was blamed for being assertive and for not bringing up her daughter in a manner the society needs.

In a similar manner, MOFT-18 stereotypes men as aggressive and indoctrinates women to be docile so that they live peacefully with their husbands. In the folktale, while the man was portrayed as if he could live in his home freely without any question, ordering his wife to do everything he needs, the woman was depicted as helpless who should live according to the will of her husband. She was beaten severely for not being docile and failing to prepare him food and claiming to accompany him to town to have her dinner with him. In the folktale, the woman was punished for being assertive and claiming for her right whereas the man did not experience anything indicating that it is a norm in the society to be aggressive towards women who do not obey their husbands. If the wife does not accept her subservient role and is not properly submissive, the husband exercises his authority being aggressive to her as reflected in the folktale. Many wings of feminists argue that domestic violence such as the one mentioned in this folktale create a climate of fear and powerlessness that limits women's freedom of action and controls many of the movements of their lives. Marxist feminists, for example, assert that "The image of an independent woman who perceives herself to be the equal of her husband is profoundly subversive and consequently cannot be permitted in a patriarchal society" and thereby suffer from punishment (Madsen, 2000: 86).

Moreover, in MOFT-11(The Selfish Wife and Her Silly Husband), the wife experienced domestic violence for cheating her husband and failing to live as per the norm of the society. The folktale is about the woman who had been cheating her silly husband, giving him simple food without butter regularly and eating with butter for herself (telling him that it is water). Upon being advised to eat with her by his friend, the man discovered that she had been cheating him for long and beat her severely with a whip, blooded her and told her to leave his home. In the folktale, while the husband, in spite of his silliness, was able to investigate a problem through consultancy, the wife remained his victim. The folktale implies that no matter how clever a woman may be, she is not equal to men and lacks strength to resist men's aggressiveness. It also implies that it is a norm for a man to be aggressive towards a woman when she fails to live as per his expectations.

In the society, unlike a man, if a woman tries to be aggressive instead of being docile, the end result would be catastrophic to her. This is evident in MOFT-2, where the queen killed the king, married his bodyguard and tried to divorce him again to marry another bodyguard. The woman in the folktale seems to have an aggressive quality; she poisoned the food and killed the king; she also began to nag and act against her new husband (the bodyguard). The woman in the folktale is portrayed as cruel, wicked, helpless, irrational and vulnerable who lacks the strength, commitment, and self-control required of a leader. Having been bored of her nagging and discovering that she was acting against him, the man assassinated her and become the king of the country. Through this folktale, the society indoctrinates the youth that an aggressive behavior is desirable for a man, not for a woman. The implication is that women should be docile if they need to survive in a patriarchal society; aggression does not seem to be a good quality that a woman should possess. Supporting this stereotype, Baumeister and Vohs (2007:934) stated, "... the trait submissive is more likely to be inferred from a corresponding behavior when the target person is female than male because submissive is part of the female gender stereotype". Similarly, in his study of "The Social and Ethno-Cultural Construction of Masculinity and Femininity in African Proverbs", Jeylan (2005:72) argued that "... African proverbs perpetuate gender legacies and ideology; they associate maleness with respect, firmness, or strength, while associating femaleness with meekness, indignity, inconsistency, and powerlessness".

The violent actions of men we read about in the folktales are meant to maintain hegemonic masculinity which is the gender practice that guarantees the dominant social position of men and the subordinate social position of women in the society. According to Connell (1987:183-87) hegemonic masculinity tends to be characterized by power, authority, aggression, and technical competence. Connell also points out that while few men actually enact hegemonic masculinity, it remains the dominant concept by which many men and boys continue to measure themselves.

Apart from these folktales, there are also a number of proverbs that the society uses to encourage men to be aggressive to women. For some men in the society, beating a wife is considered as an acceptable means of displaying manliness, which is echoed by proverbs such as:

- *Dubartii fi harreen ulee jaallatti.* <A woman and a donkey, the more you beat them the better they become>(MOPC-33:3)
- *Dubartiifi harree ba 'aatu sirreessa.* <It is a load that corrects a woman and a donkey>(MOPC-33:4)
- *Dubartiifi harree uleetu deebisa.* <It is a stick which corrects a woman and a donkey> (MOPC-33:5)
- *Dubartiin dhugaa qabda yoo jedhan ni boossi.* <Women lament if (they are) told that they are right>(MOPC-33:6)
- *Dubartiin tola hin jaallattu.* <Women do not like being unchallenged>(MOPC-33:7)
- *Dubartiin urursarra kaballaa jaallatti.* <Women like to be slapped than to be lulled>(MOPC-33:8)
- *Harki taa 'u deega jedhee jaarsi jaartii haboote.* <Having said a still hand brings forth poverty, the old man hit his wife>(MOPC-33:9)
- *Kan dandeessu dhaani jennaan gowwaan galee niitii reebe.* <Upon told to beat whomever he can, the foolish went home and beat his wife> (MOPC-33:10)

These proverbs are mainly employed in a context when people talk about correcting an aggressive woman who does not live as per societal expectations. The proverbs, in one way or another, imply that a man should be aggressive enough to correct the behavior of a woman. The proverbs seem to suggest that domestic violence (such as beating or hitting, slapping and challenging a woman) is an acceptable method of maintaining control over women in the society. The assumption is that the more aggressive a man is to a woman, the better she would become and respect him. The verbal arts dictate how men and women should behave in their intimate relationships emphasizing that it is a norm for a man to punish a woman to correct her behavior as per societal values. The proverbs seem to encourage men to be aggressive whereas they

persuade women against this same behavior. With regard to this, social-role theorists suggest that “the male gender role, despite encouraging aggressiveness overall, imposes limits on aggressive behavior and that the female gender role, despite discouraging aggressiveness overall, may in its modern form encourage self-assertive behaviour” (Eagly and Valerie, 1986:325).

The above proverbs reveal not only the importance of aggression towards women but also the attitude of society towards males and females in the society. It must be born in mind that through these proverbs, the society is socializing male children to be more aggressive than female ones. The proverbs attest to the long standing belief that a woman is expected to be docile and timid when compared to men in the society. Being encouraged by these kinds of verbal arts and believing that it is a legitimate practice, a husband uses battering as a mechanism to confine his wife to the home and to keep her under his dominance, preventing her from becoming an assertive woman who could play a prominent role in the society. According to Kelly (1988) such acts of violence can traumatize women psychologically and physically.

As repeatedly stated above, the verbal arts (particularly folktales and proverbs) teach women to exhibit submissiveness and shyness. While the proverbs seem to influence men to become aggressive, they condemn and warn women with this same quality as reflected in the following proverbs. Women are expected to be quiet and always ready to do what other people want them to do without expressing their own opinion. If a woman deviates from the norm and tries to be assertive and bold, she is not chosen by men for wifehood. For example, it is said:

- *Dubartiin nama qoccoltuu fi manni dhimmisu tokko.* < A nagging woman and a leaking roof are the same> (MOPC-21:1)
- *Durbi hamtuun dubartii hamtuu taati.* <A vicious girl becomes a vicious woman> (MOPC-21:2)
- *Gursummaan gaafa eerumte moonyee qoraafu waggaasaatti ollaa qoraafu.* < A spinster who fumigates a mortar/pounder on her marriage day will fumigate neighbors a year later>(MOPC-21:3)
- *Namni niitii hamtuu keessummaa fudhee hingalu.* <A man who lives with a vicious wife never takes a guest to his home>(MOPC-21:4)
- *Niitii hamtuun dhirsa ofii qaanessiti.* <A vicious wife humiliates her husband> (MOPC-21:5)
- *Niitii hamtuun yeroo abbaan warra bakkee galu gadi baatee ala teessi.* <A vicious woman leaves home and sits outside when her husband comes from outside>(MOPC-21:6)

- *Niitiin dhiirsa mootu ollaa horii hin gootu.* <A woman that dominates a husband will not value her neighbors>(MOPC-21:7)

The first proverb (MOPC-21:1) equates a nagging woman with a leaking roof. It is employed when people want to talk about a woman who does not live as per the will of her husband. Whatever he does and however he beats his wife, a man is not labeled as nagging in the society. There is also no such proverb that the society uses to express this reality. This indicates that the proverb under focus is sexist and is employed in a patriarchal mindset society. Similarly, the second proverb (MOPC-21:2), warns a young woman not to be violent and aggressive in the society with the implication that a man does not need such a woman to live with (for a wife). The proverb is employed in a context when a person wants to talk about the behavior of a girl who slightly deviates from the norm and tries to be aggressive like her male partners. Using such kind of proverbs, the society indoctrinates young girls to be docile and submissive so that they would be valued and get acceptance.

Likewise, (MOPC-21:3) warns a woman to be docile and silent on her wedding day. In the society, it is shame for a girl not to marry on time. If she fails to get a partner for marriage at the right time, she is labeled as “haftuu” (spinster). It is believed that this kind of girl remained unmarried for long because it is considered that she lacked some qualities appropriate for a woman in the society; thus, she suffers a lot psychologically for everybody deems her that way. To get married on time is, thus, considered as indispensable for girls since it frees them from stereotypical images a spinster is usually associated with. Hence, a betrothed girl waits her wedding day enthusiastically and with suspicion for it may also be cancelled without her consent which is apparent in the proverb that follows.

- *Ani heeruma koo kana koora gidduu gahu malee hin amanu, ' jette intalli.* <“I do not believe my wedding until I sit on a saddle,’ the girl said>(MOPC-14:1)
A spinster thinks that everybody talks about her failure to get a husband. Here, it should be born in mind that it is not common to talk about a man (bachelor) who remains unmarried for long in the society either using proverbs or folktales. If a spinster is lucky and succeeded in getting a husband at a time, she will get relief and expresses her feeling proverbially as:

- *Har'allee waa'ee kiyya hindubbatani jette haftuun heerumtee jedhan.* <A spinster got married lately and said, "No one talks about me today," it is said>(MOPC-13:1).

Therefore, it is expected from this kind of girl to be docile and silent on her wedding day as indicated in (MOPC-21:3). It is believed that a bold woman like the spinster in the proverb is a threat not only to the utensils at home but also to her neighbors; thus, the proverb is a sort of warning to a woman who does not live according to societal expectations. In the society, a woman is expected to be timid, modest and docile at any time. Many feminists, however, object to these kinds of societal attitudes for they discourage women and authorize men. For example, Tyson (2006:88) asserted that "It is important to note, too, that the patriarchal concept of femininity—which is linked to frailty, modesty, and timidity—disempowers women in the real world".

In a similar manner, in the society, a bold and assertive woman who dominates her husband is considered as a threat to her neighbors, too, as reflected in (MOPC-21:7). A woman who is not docile and does not live as per societal expectations is not considered worth to her husband, his guests and neighbors as reflected recurrently in the cluster of proverbs cited above (MOPC-21:4, 5, 6, and 7). The recurrent use of such kind of sexist proverbs by the society inevitably forces women to remain silent and live under the control of men. Contrary to women, the use of such kind of proverbs gives men freedom to live according to their will and without worrying much about their personality in the society. The central idea of the proverbs discussed above faithfully concurs with what Jeylan W. Hussein observed in many African proverbs. According to him (2005:70), "In Africa, proverbs are used to instigate men to power and control. ... becoming lax towards women and allowing them some sort of freedom is disadvantageous" as reflected in many African proverbs.

The society uses different mechanisms to keep women under their control, one of which is circumcision. The act of circumcision is deeply rooted in the culture of the people. Uncircumcised women are not considered good in the society for two main reasons. For one thing, it is believed that uncircumcised women break utensils deemed important in the house all the time. Secondly, there is a belief that uncircumcised women have strong sexual feeling which surpasses that of men's. As a result, unless they are circumcised, the society believes, women do not become faithful to their husbands and wander here and there to fulfill their ostensible sexual feeling. Hence, circumcision is

carried out to reduce their apparent sexual feeling and to make them docile and increase their social acceptance. Here is one proverb worth quoting in this case:

- *Bori tolinnaaf intala dhaqna qabu* <The girl is circumcised for the betterment of her future>(MOPC-38:2)

The other mechanism in which the society keeps women under the patriarchal control is by preaching men to train their wives from the very beginning of their relationship. The following proverbs, for example, are widely used to advise the male members of the society on how to socialize women so as to attain docility.

- *Durbaa fi jiboota garaa duwwaa leenjisu.* <Girls and bullocks are better trained (with) empty stomach>(MPOC-34:1)
- *Nadheeni fi fardeen ganama leenjii tolchu.* <Women and horses should be trained well early> (MPOC-34:2)
- *Nadheeniifi fardeen ganama baddi.* <Women and horses become bad early>(MPOC-34:3)
- *Niitii fi farda abbaatu leenjifata.* <It is the owner who should tame his horse and his wife as he wants> (MPOC-34:4)
- *Niitiifi jiruu ganama mo'atu.* <A wife and a job are better overcome early> (MPOC-34:5)
- *Niitiifi sangaa fardaa abbaatu fe'ata.* <It is the owner who loads a wife and a stallion> (MPOC-34:6)

These proverbs are employed in a context when people want to talk about the importance of handling women properly early in life so as to attain dominance over them. In the proverbs, women are considered as the sole property of men who should be tamed like domestic animals for ease of control. They are silenced and are represented as a possession, voiceless and often slaves who should live as per the will of men. According to the perception of the society, qua reflected in the proverbs, as it is deemed important to train bullocks, stallions, and other domestic animals from the very beginning to handle and use them throughout their lives, it is considered equally important to train girls and wives as early as possible so as to keep them under control. In the proverbs, the mandate to train both the animals and women was given to the owners (men) implying that women like the animals are the property of men and not vice versa. Feminists view these kinds of proverbs as androcentric for they wholly focus on men to the neglect of women for no fundamental reason. The purpose of using these kinds of proverbs is to socialize men and women to live as per the prevailing social norms which deny gender equality in the society.

Besides the messages in the verbal arts we discussed so far, the researcher, above and beyond his prior experience, was able to witness from the discussants' mouth that aggression is a quality considered worth to a man whilst docility is deemed as desirable to a woman. The following extract taken from the FGD held at Jimma Arjo (FGDJA-1) clearly shows this society's perception of a man and a woman in the study area.

Elaamee mucaa koo, Oomoon yerro mammaaku "dubartiin tola hin jaallatu jedha". Si tokko tokko dubartiin yoo quufte namarra bahuu barbaaddi. Yeroo kana egaa kan dhiirri qixashee itti agarsiisuu qabu. Dubartiin baadiyyaa waan dhirsi ishee jedhu ni dhageessi; kan magaalaa sintu beeka. Duri akka jedhanii, dubartiin dhirsa darbee darbee ishee hin habootneyyu hin jaallatu jedhama. Kun dhugaadha. Inni ani jedhuu, erga abbaan manaa ishee hin reebbanne eenyutu ishee abboomareehii? Dubartiin abbaa manaa ishee reebuun qaanidha; hin dandeessusi. Kan niittiin isaa isa reebdu bahee dhiiraa wajjin oola moo hin dhiisaa? Kun isaaf qaaniidha. Dubartii dhugaan kan waan abbaan manaashee jedhu dhageessu dha. When translated literally:

Listen, my son. There is an Oromo popular saying, which runs, "Women do not like being unchallenged." Sometimes women get satisfied and want to control you. It is this time that a man should show her who she is (it implies that he should beat her). Women in the countryside obey their husbands; it is you who know about those who live in the town. Long ago people say, a wife does not like a husband who does not occasionally beat her. This is true. What I say here is, "Who should beat and control a wife if a husband does not do that?" For her, it is shame and impossible to beat a husband. Where is a husband going to stay being beaten by a wife? Do men allow him to accompany them? This is shame to him. A true woman is the one who listens to the heart of her husband and abides by his words.

Here, the traditional role of women as submissive and their inferior status to their husbands and the association of aggression to masculinity and docility to femininity is vividly demonstrated in the discussion. The verbal arts also witness that there is significant male dominance and aggression toward females in Macha Oromo society. Men in the society are constantly advised to tame insolent girls from the very beginning so that they become docile and fit for marriage; and in extreme cases they are made to lose their self-worth to the benefit of the patriarchy.

Generally speaking, in the society, men are expected to be tough, violent, and aggressive; whereas women are expected to be smooth, caring, and submissive. As the verbal arts witness, qualities such as aggressiveness, violence and boldness are considered more desirable to men than to women. The researcher believes that the folktales and proverbs children listen, read and retell in the course of their upbringing forces them to acquire and enact the behavior depicted in them (verbal arts). The verbal arts glorify men and stereotype women as mere servants born to fulfill the wishes and interests of men

being docile and mute. In the society, women are expected to be docile, modest, and shy in front of men and they grow up being socialized by their elders using folktales and proverbs. It is not proper for a woman to speak loudly, assertively, and argue against men wherever and whenever it may be. With regard to this, liberal feminist, Mill (1975) asserted that men do not want solely the obedience of women, but they also want their sentiments.

A close look at the verbal arts discussed in this section forces one to dare say that women are the site upon which men's pain and anger are dislodged without any permission. Feminist theory in domestic violence (aggression towards women) emphasizes gender and power inequality in opposite-sex relationships. Feminists argue that for too many women, the home is a place dominated by fears of domestic violence and abuse, where women and children are the victims of male aggression (Eagleton, 2003:15). Eagleton also stressed that aggression serves to perpetuate the structures of authority that contain, confine, and silence women within the domestic domain. Many other feminists also argue that violence is socially produced and often legitimated culturally. According to them, aggression is not a 'natural' expression of biological drives or innate male characteristics; it is rather a socially constructed and learned behavior that one acquires after birth gradually. Kate Millett, for example, considers gender differences to have "essentially cultural, rather than biological basis" that result from differential treatment (1971: 28–9). Suffice it to say that the folktales and proverbs under consideration seem to reinforce women's subordination in the society and socialize them into subordinate social roles urging them to acquire the traditional feminine roles such as passivity, docility or submissiveness and the likes and preaching them to remain in servitude.

6.2 Trustworthiness versus Unreliability

In this thesis, the term trustworthiness is used to refer to the behaviour of a person which one can rely on since he/she is believed to be good, honest and sincere (Colquitt et al., 2007; Butler & Cantrell, 1984). It is one of the yardsticks of virtuousness expected from any human being. It is usually considered as a moral value or a quality that is morally good or virtuous. Unreliability stands opposite to the term and is used to describe the unpredictability of a person. An unreliable person is erratic and is difficult to depend on. Trustworthiness can be proved by fulfilling an assigned responsibility and by not

letting down expectations. Some scholars in the field of psychology state that trustworthiness can be achieved by consistently telling the truth, keeping promises and commitments, maintaining confidentiality, refraining from stealing or cheating, following the rules, choosing to do the right thing and so forth (Flores and Solomon, 1998). Hence, a trustworthy person carries out his/her responsibility confidentially and with integrity. Having said this, let us now proceed to see how Macha Oromo men and women are represented in terms of trustworthiness and unreliability in some folktales and proverbs collected from the study area.

In Macha Oromo, as in any human society, trustworthiness is considered as one of the qualities of a good person; hence, the society expects both men and women to have this quality. As reflected in a number of proverbs, however, while women are treated with a lot of suspicion, men are depicted as reliable and trustworthy. In other words, in the society, there is a tendency to consider women as unreliable or untrustworthy and men as more reliable. Some proverbs portray women as if they can never be trusted, and unable to keep secrets. For example, it is commonly said:

- *Amanteen durbaatiifi amanteen arrabaa tokko.* <Trusting a girl and a tongue are the same> (MOPC-24:1)
- *Durba manatti midhaan alatti hin abdatani.* <A girl at home and a crop in the field should not be trusted>(MOPC-24:2)
- *Durbaa fi foonitti hin boonan.* <One never boasts of having a girl and flesh>(MOPC-24:3)
- *Intala warratti, midhaan baalatti hin abdatan.* <A girl to a family and unripe crop in the field should not be trusted>(MOPC-24:4)
- *Kan durbaan boonee fi kan bosoqqee dhaabbate tokko.* <Whoever is proud of a girl and planted ‘bosoqqee’ (a useless plant that withers easily) is the same>(MOPC-24:5)

The first proverb (MOPC-24:1) is employed when a person wants to describe a situation in which a girl betrays either her parents or her boyfriend for a certain purpose. As clearly depicted in the proverb, trusting a girl is equivalent to trusting one’s tongue. The implication is that as a tongue can sometimes slip (slip of the tongue) and forces us to make mistakes in what we say, there is no guarantee that a girl is reliable. The proverb is, hence, used to warn people not to trust women in general and girls in particular. More specifically, men are warned that women should be treated with caution for they are untrustworthy as the proverb has it.

Similarly, the second and fourth proverbs (MOPC-24:2 and MOPC-24:4) talk about the unreliability of girls in the society and the untrustworthiness of unripe crops in the field. As a crop in the field is very likely to be affected by wild animals, heavy rain (storm), strong wind and the likes, farmers usually do not trust their crops out there until they harvest, winnow and take it to their store at home. Likewise, a girl is not trusted since she is not meant to stay for long at home and protect her family's homestead. She could be married legally and leave the home or be abducted and taken away. She is also perceived as a person who brings shame or disgrace to the family unless she gets married on time. Thus, similar to unripe crops in the field, the proverbs assert that girls are not considered as worthy of trust in the society. In short, the proverbs portray women negatively and the message contained therein perpetuates the marginalization of women and relegates them to 'functional objects' and forces people to consider them as the "Other". With regard to this, Cixous (1983), French feminist, contended that the position of women as negative or other is essential to keeping the phallogocentric social order running.

The fact that the society does not consider women as worthy of trust is also reflected in other proverbs such as (MOPC-24:3 and MOPC-24:5). As clearly mirrored in (MOPC-24:3), a person is advised not to boast of having a girl and flesh, connoting that girls and one's flesh are not trustworthy for they let down the owner one day. The society has the philosophy that human flesh i.e. the physical aspect of humanity (as opposed to the soul, mind or spirit) is not worth trusting since it can fade away in the course of time. There is also a tendency to associate fathering a daughter with planting "bosoqqee" (a kind of flowering plant that withers easily and deemed good for nothing) in the society as reflected in MOPC-24:5). By the same token, there is a tendency to lose confidence in girls and consider them worthless for a family as they desert their family and go away to live with their husbands after marriage.

There are also a number of proverbs that the society uses in their daily communication to assert that men are more reliable than women in every aspect. For instance, as mirrored in the following cluster of proverbs, when compared to men, women are usually considered as untrustworthy in some aspects of human life.

- *Lukkuun balaliiteefi durbi baratte eessayyuu hin geessu.* <If a hen flies, it does not go far, so does if a girl learns> (MOPC-24:6)

- *Namni dubartiin mar'ate nama qilleensaan mar'atedha.* <A man who discusses with a woman is like someone who shares his idea with wind>(MOPC-24:7)
- *Namni dubartiin mari'atee fi namni qilleensatti hirkate tokko dha.* <A man who discusses with a woman is like someone who leans against air>(MOPC-24:8)
- *Niitii fi qawween kan abbaa bira jiruuti.* <A wife and a gun belongs to the nearby person>(MOPC-24:10)
- *Qilleensiifi dubartiin tokko.* <Women, like weather, are unpredictable>(MOPC-24:11)

The proverb coded (MOPC-24:6) indicates the society's lack of trust on women whether they learn and become knowledgeable or not. The proverb seems to have a strong psychological impact on a female child who wants to go to school and learn like her male child counterpart. It discourages female children not to pursue their education symbolically associating their destination to the ability of a hen to fly, which of course cannot fly too far and too high like other bird species. When seen from a feminist angle, it is possible to say that the proverb is sexist for there is no legitimate reason why the society compares the learning of female children to the flying of a hen while there is no equivalent proverb to express the destination of male children (boys) after education in the same way. With regard to this, while talking about the role of proverbs in maintaining the prevailing tradition, Schipper (2006:20) stated, "... preaching the preservation of such a gender gap on the basis of relatively insignificant bodily differences, proverbs have reinforced the prevailing hierarchies and established rigid images of what it means not to be a man but a woman, thus legitimizing accessory roles in life for both sexes".

Proverbs coded (MOPC-24:7 and MOPC-24: 8) do also talk about the unreliability of women in keeping secrets, warning men not to share (discuss) their ideas with them. These proverbs depict women as if they are incapable of keeping secrets and are used to advise men to refrain from trusting them no matter how the issue concerns them. In the proverbs, women's unreliability in keeping secrets was compared to sharing one's idea to wind and leaning against air. As a person cannot claim for confidentiality by sharing his/her idea to wind since everybody can get access to it, discussing an important issue with women is also the same as the proverb (MOPC-24:7) has it. As a result, women in Macha Oromo seem to have been denied access to important information merely on account of the society's perception of them as untrustworthy. Likewise, proverb coded (MOPC-24:8) compares the unreliability of women in keeping secrets with leaning against air for support, which is practically impossible. There are also instances when the society compares women with weather as clearly reflected in (MOPC-24:11). In

the proverb, the untrustworthiness and changeability of the behaviour of women (as the society perceives) is compared to the difficulty of predicting the weather condition of some areas which could be sometimes hot or cold and other times windy or rainy and so forth. The proverb is mainly employed to warn women that they should learn to keep secrets in order to get acceptance by the society.

In a similar manner, a great deal of folktales collected from the study area depicts women as untrustworthy and as people who cannot discharge their responsibility with reliability and efficiency when compared to men. A good example is the folktale entitled “The Brother and the Sister” (MOFT-17) in which the young son was chosen to look after the mother and the property at home when the husband left for the warfare. The folktale depicts the mother as untrustworthy and unreliable person to look after the homestead, and the responsibility to care for the family was given to the young son to the neglect of the mother. In the same folktale, while the daughter was also portrayed as untrustworthy and as a person who sided the enemy to kill the son, her brother was depicted as innocent, merciful and reliable person. The girl in the folktale was easily seduced and being convinced to cheat her brother and handed him over to the enemy to her own advantage. In general, the folktale confirms the long-standing societal belief which considers women as unreliable beings not worth trusting as we have seen in the foregoing proverbs.

The societal perception of women as unreliable creatures was also depicted in MOFT-2 (The Unfortunate Queen), where the queen killed the king to live peacefully with the bodyguard who would gratify her supposedly strong sexual feeling. In the folktale, the queen, regardless of her status, stood in contradiction to the king (her husband) who used to love her, and she plotted to kill him by poisoning the food. Having killed her innocent husband (king), she began to live with the bodyguard, whom she later betrayed again in search for another man. The queen in the folktale was not only portrayed as unfaithful creature but also as unreliable and untrustworthy person.

The other folktale which portrays women as untrustworthy is MOFT-5. In the folktale, the lady tried to cheat her brother by hiding his bars of salt in another place and filling the granary, where he had kept his worth in her home, with a number of stones. Through such kind of folktales and other genres of verbal arts, the society indoctrinates men to take care of women seriously and warns to treat them with suspicion, portraying

them as if they cannot be trusted even to their brothers. The folktale mirrors the deep-rooted cultural prejudice prevalent in the society which usually borders on misogyny.

Apart from this, there are large numbers of folktales that the society recurrently uses to talk about the unreliability of women. The folktale about the cruel stepmother who killed her innocent stepchildren mercilessly (MOFT-10), the folktale about the selfish wife and her silly husband (MOFT-11), the folktale about the girl and her mother's lover (MOFT-12), the story about the burnt lover (MOFT-22) and the likes are all preoccupied with depicting women as unreliable beings not worth trusting. By using such kind of verbal arts, the patriarchal society has been demeaning women and maintaining the dominance of men over women for a long period of time. In spite of the fact that language is always in a state of flux, many verbal arts particularly folktales and proverbs that revolve around men and women have retained the old tradition and maintained the age old belief of the society in which women are not deemed equal to men. The verbal arts seem to have played a great role in convincing women to think of themselves as inferior and men to assume themselves as superior and flawless individuals perpetuating gender inequality in the society. Psychoanalytic feminists believe that such kind of gender inequality comes from early childhood experiences, which lead men to believe themselves to be masculine, and women to believe themselves feminine.

6.3 Faithfulness versus Infidelity

For the purpose of this thesis, the term faithfulness is used to mean the behavior of a person in which he/she remains loyal to a partner without having any sexual relation with somebody else other than his/her own spouse. On the other hand, infidelity is used to describe the act of not being faithful to a sexual partner_ either to a husband or a wife. The term is synonymously used with inconstancy, disloyalty, unfaithfulness, betrayal, adultery and the likes. In the society, while infidelity is highly condemned, being faithful to a partner is praised. Hence, the society expects both men and women to be faithful to one another. Many folktales and proverbs collected from the study area emphasize the importance of being faithful to a partner and mirror how much disastrous it would be if someone particularly women are found to be involved in sexual affairs other than their own partners/husbands.

Portraying women as unfaithful and untrustworthy individuals is prevalent in numerous Macha Oromo verbal arts. As we shall see in detail below, many folktales and

proverbs depict women as untrustworthy, weak and easily seduced persons who merely live for their sexual gratification. For example, the society's perception of women as unfaithful to their sexual partners is depicted in the proverb that runs as follows: "*Niitii fi qawween kan abbaa bira jiruuti*" <A wife and a gun belong to the nearby person> (MOPC-24:10). This proverb is used in a context when one wants to imply that women are unfaithful to their partners. The proverb depicts women as untrustworthy and as people who cannot honor a promise. As the proverb indicates, if a husband is not around her, a woman takes the advantage to be with another man for sexual affairs. The comparison made with a gun in the proverb mirrors societal perception of women as dangerous to men if not properly handled implying that (in fighting) a person nearby a gun makes use of it to hurt the other far from it. Hence, the proverb not only depicts women as adulterous but also as dangerous to men if not properly handled with constant supervision and demands them to fulfil patriarchal expectations at the expense of their own well-being by limiting their relationships with other men.

Furthermore, Macha Oromo proverbs tend to describe women as unfaithful to their partners. This is clearly spelled out in the following cluster of proverbs.

- *Abbaa mucaa haadha malee namni hin beeku.* <Only a mother knows the father of a child> (MOPC-18:1)
- *Abbaan niitii beeka abbaa ulfooftee isheetu beeka jedhan.* <The husband knows his wife and the wife knows to whom she conceived>(MOPC-18:2)
- *Haati hattuun ilmoo hin amantu.* <A thief mother does not trust her daughter>(MOPC-18:3)
- *Niitiin dhirsa mootu ganda bulti.* <A wife who dominates a husband stays in the neighborhood at night> (MOPC-18:4)
- *Qamaleen somboo bartee fi nadheen ijoollee barte tokko.* <A woman accustomed to a youth and an ape accustomed to an oak are the same> (MOPC-18:6)
- *Sanyoo argatee dhirsa jibbite.* <(She) hated a husband having obtained a lover> (MOPC-18:7)
- *Reefuu tola jette niitiin dhirsi duunaan sanyoo isheetiin, jedhan.* <"It is more convenient now," the woman said to her lover, upon her husband's death>
- *'Yoo dhirsi argamesi sanyoon rakkoodha,' jette intalli.* <'It is difficult to get a lover even if a husband is found,' the girl said> (MOPC-18:8)

As repeatedly stated above, in these proverbs, women are represented as promiscuous, adulterous and unfaithful members of the community. In line with this, in his study of Oral Narratives as Ideological Weapon for Subordinating Women, Abraham Alemu stated that "... women are portrayed as deceitful and unfaithful to their husbands and as irresponsible and lustful creatures obsessed only with their sexual gratification"

(2007:72). The above proverbs are employed to teach women the importance of fidelity, self control and respect to men in the society. The society expects women to be faithful and submissive to men. Talking about the infidelity of men is not widely observed in many verbal arts collected from the study area; men seem to be excused if found to be involved in such kind of activity. Hence, the proverbs are sexist and seem to have been used for long by patriarchy so as to keep women under control.

As in the foregoing proverbs, many folktales collected from the study area also mirror that women are untrustworthy, and hence warn men to be suspicious about them. A good example is the folktale entitled “A Husband and His Unfaithful Wife” (MOFT-1) where the husband acted as a beggar in his own home at night and discovered that his wife has sexual relationship with another man. The folktale portrays the woman as if she is not good, sincere, and honest to her husband; she was depicted as if she is harmful and deceitful, too. The moral lesson behind the folktale is, of course, condemning unfaithfulness and to teach women to be faithful to their husbands in the society. It is a way of indoctrinating the youth that the end result of being unfaithful to a man leads to unnecessary catastrophe. However, the embedded image in the folktale may force men to suspect women every time they show unusual behavior and lead them to keep women under their control for fear of their alleged dishonesty.

Similarly, MOFT-2 in which the queen poisoned food and killed the king so as to strengthen the sexual relationship she had with the bodyguard seems to teach men to be cautious of women for their seeming unfaithfulness. Her untrustworthiness is also shown later in the folktale that she again wanted to abandon the bodyguard opting for another man. Upon being told by his friend that the queen was ready to reject him, the bodyguard assassinated her and became king of the country. The folktale portrayed the queen as promiscuous and licentious while depicting the king and the bodyguards as honest and faithful to her. The folktale mirrors that no matter how great a woman may be, she cannot escape from the eventual outcome of unfaithfulness which could be loss of life or brutal torture.

In a similar manner, a number of the folktales collected from the study area revolve around the unfaithful nature of women and the resulting consequences. Women from all corners of life (including the educated, the illiterate, wives of farmers and other laymen, wives of priests, kings and other leaders and so on) were also represented in the

folktales as dishonest to their partners. Folktales numbered (MOFT-6, 12, 22, 25, 26, 30) and many others all depict women as unfaithful and warn men to suspect them in their relationship as husband and wife. In most of the folktales, while the husbands/men were depicted as trustworthy and faithful, the wives/women were portrayed as licentious and dishonest to their husbands. The folktales are mainly used to teach about the importance of being faithful to one another and to condemn adultery in the society thereby showing the ultimate consequence of being involved in such kind of deeds. However, they seem to portray only women as deceitful, adulterous and unfaithful creatures who merely live for their sexual gratification, advising men to keep them under their custody.

In the verbal arts examined so far, women seem to be the “Other” who are defined in relation to men. It seems that it is normal for a man to do and behave the way he likes; he is depicted as the standard against which women should be measured. The untrustworthiness of women as depicted in the verbal arts seems to emanate from the patriarchal mind which wants to keep women under the control of men. A number of feminists argue that men make their behavior the norm for all people forgetting that these norms are themselves harmful to everybody. Supporting this idea, de Beauvoir observes:

Humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him. She is not regarded as an autonomous being ... She is simply what man decrees ... She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her. She is incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the absolute - she the other (1949:15-16).

On the whole, as both the folktales and proverbs reveal, Macha Oromo society does not seem to have confidence in women and are afraid of them for trickery, insincerity and dishonesty. The verbal arts assert as if women cannot prove trustworthy refraining from saying anything about men with respect to this quality in most cases. The messages that these verbal arts carry with regard to trustworthiness properly resembles with what Minh-ha (1997:28) observed: “African folklore abounds with stories and proverbs whose moral is to caution men against women’s supposedly most treacherous shortcoming: their indiscretion. ‘... do not trust her’ remains, for example, one of the best advice a man can give another man”.

According to feminist literary theory, which was used as an approach in this study, the images emanating from the verbal arts mirror the attitude of the society towards men and women as folklore in general and verbal arts in particular are reflections of the

society that create and use them. “... it is assumed throughout that folktales, irrespective of their sources, are a true reflection of aspects of the life, culture and history of the society in which they flourish” (Azuonye In Furniss and Gunner, 1995:66). The folktales and proverbs confirm that the relationship between a husband and a wife persist only if the wife remains faithful to him and reproduce only his legitimate heirs as many Marxist feminists argue (Tong, 2009).

6.4 Cruelty versus Kindness

OALD (2010) defines cruelty as “the behaviour that causes pain or suffering to others, especially deliberately”, and kindness as “the quality of being kind to treat somebody with compassion and consideration”; it is the quality of being humane to others. According to Trice (2011:1), “... cruelty is an excess [unrestrained behaviour] in human life that harms and even annihilates well-being”. For the purpose of this paper, thus, while cruelty is used to mean the deliberate infliction of mental or physical pain upon others, kindness or humanity is used to refer to the behaviour of a person in which he/she treats somebody humanly or with consideration (ibid). According to McDougall (2001:152), in many societies, “...it is wrong to tell a lie, to steal, to deceive, to be cruel; it is right to be honest, kind, or generous; and the voice of society, with its irresistible prestige...”. Hence, as in many cultures and religions, in Macha Oromo, cruelty is strongly condemned and concern for others is highly valued.

The society’s disapproval of cruelty and appraisal of humanity is usually inculcated in the minds of people through folktales and proverbs. Since people in general and women in particular are expected to be kindhearted and caring, many folktales and proverbs in Macha Oromo characterize them to show the ultimate destination of being cruel to others. In many verbal arts, women are depicted as pitiless and unsympathetic, and their representation in this way seems to be done intentionally to make them feel ashamed of their apparent cruelty and force them to refrain from it so that they would get acceptance in the society. The following cluster of proverbs collected from the study area, for example, mirror that women are unsympathetic in their actions.

- *Aduun galgalaa fi dubartiin namaa hin naatu.* <A sun at dusk and a woman never feels pity for others>(MOPC-8:1)
- *Gayyaan garaa hin laaftu.* <A stepmother never feels pity>(MOPC-8:2)
- *Haadha hormaa fi waaqa bonaatti ija hin baasan.* <One never looks at a mother of another and a winter sky (for help)> (MOPC-8:3)

- *Haati buddenii fi aduun saafaa tokkodha.* <A stepmother and a blazing sun are the same>(MOPC-8:4)
- *Haati hormaa nama hin dhahin.* <The mother of another should never beat> (MOPC-8:5)
- *Haati nama hin dhalin nama hin dhahin.* <A mother who did not give birth (to oneself) should never beat> (MOPC-8:6)

The first proverb (MOPC-8:1), as it is clearly stated, compares women with the sun at dusk. It is employed when people want to talk about something or somebody in need refuses to give help, especially in times of difficulty. In the countryside, there are times when people/farmers need the sun for their job; hence, they hate the setting of the sun especially when they are being motivated and do their work enthusiastically. When the sun sets, it becomes dark and they are forced to stop their job unwillingly. Albeit they need it highly, the sun at dusk inevitably sets at its time pitilessly and it becomes dark forcing them to stop their job. Likewise, the society thinks that women are pitiless and do not easily give a hand when people need them. This is the analogy between the sun at dusk and women for the society. As reflected in the proverb, like the sun at dusk, women in the study area are portrayed as if they do not feel pity and never regret for their unkindness.

The second proverb (MOPC-8:2) is an assertion of societal belief and attitude towards stepmothers. Women, particularly, stepmothers are usually blamed for their pitilessness in the society. While it is common to find many proverbs and other genres of verbal arts that depict stepmothers in such a way, it is difficult to find proverbs that bear the same image for stepfathers. In the society, men seem to be excused for their wrong doings. This is an indication of the fact that the society believes in hegemonic masculinity which guarantees the dominant social position of men, and the subordinate social position of women. Many feminists argue that the differences in male and female beliefs, attitudes and behaviour are mainly learned and the results of socialization. The natural factors are negligible when compared to the psychological, social, and cultural factors that contribute to the differences between the two.

There are also times when the society considers women with an extremely severe and a blazing sun as clearly reflected in MOPC (8:4). As the proverb has it, similar to the blazing, pitiless sun (an inanimate object), women, mainly stepmothers, are considered as merciless beings born without any feeling of sympathy. The societal perception of women as unsympathetic beings is further reflected in proverbs coded (MOPC-8:3, 8:5, and 8: 6) above. As in the comparison made between a stepmother and a blazing sun in MOPC

(8:4), the analogy of the mother of another and a winter sky in MOPC (8:3) seems to be made intentionally to slander women's image in the society. The majority of the people in the study area is agrarian and mostly depends on rain for its livelihood. The society believes that it is the "Waaqaa" (God) who dwells high above in the sky that gives them rain during summer season; and no matter how one looks at the sky during winter season, it is improbable to get rain for cattle and vegetation. Hence, looking to the sky in winter to get rain has no use; a winter sky is not kind to give rain (in the study area). The proverb is, therefore, used to imply that a woman (particularly the mother of another) like the winter sky is mean and pitiless; she is depicted as unkind towards someone in need.

Similarly, in the other proverbs, a mother of another (a mother who does not give birth to oneself) is mirrored as unfeeling, ruthless and hardhearted. Besides their implication of ruthlessness, the proverbs bear the meaning that mothers do not regard other's children equal to their own, implying that women are unjust in their treatment of individuals. The proverbs are sexist for they associate the attribute of ruthlessness only with women to the neglect of men. Unlike the numerous proverbs that approve women's cruelty, it is difficult to find any proverb that refers to men as cruel and that underestimate or portray them negatively in the society.

There are also a number of proverbs that are slanderous in nature and slur only women to the neglect of men that the society in the study area uses. Here are few examples worth mentioning:

- *Garaa jabina akka haadhakee, gootummaa akka abbaakee qabaadhu.* <Be cruel like your mother and brave like your father's> (MOPC-7:1)
- *Sareen fira namaati, nadheen dina isaa ti.* <A dog is the friend of a man and a woman is his enemy> (MOPC-8:8)
- *Mootummaan dubartii karra cufaatti oolcha.* <Women's administration leaves the gate of the pen closed for the whole day> (MOPC-5:6)

In Macha Oromo, as in many societies everywhere, bravery is praised and cruelty is condemned. Awkwardly, in the society, there is a tendency to associate good qualities such as courage, kindness and so forth with men and bad characteristics such as cruelty, unfaithfulness and so forth with women as boldly reflected in MOPC (7:1). In this proverb, leave alone other women, one's mother herself is depicted as if she is cruel and unkind to people in the study area. Nevertheless, the number of proverbs that portray

mothers positively is by far larger than the number of proverbs which portray them negatively as we shall see in detail below.

In some extreme cases, there are times when people use proverbs like (MOPC-8:8) to indicate that dogs are better companions of men than women. In the proverb, a woman is depicted as an enemy and less useful than a dog to a man. People in the study area use the proverb in various contexts to imply that women are cruel, hostile and untrustworthy.

The society's perception of women as cruel is also reflected in MOPC (5:6) – *“Women's administration leaves the gate of the pen closed for the whole day”*. The farmers in the study area mainly lead their livelihood by farming and herding cattle. The cattle are kept in the corral/pen around a homestead especially at night. Unless one discloses the corral and lets them out in the morning, the animals do not have any means to escape from it and go to the pastureland. Keeping the cattle in the corral for the whole day is just like imprisoning the cattle for no mistake, which is a cruel act. Thus, besides depicting women's inability in management or leadership, the proverb symbolically reveals that women are cruel in their actions towards animals, too. In order to balance such kind of negative images imposed on women, some feminists advise women to stereotype men in a manner they are portrayed. For example, Irigary (Psychoanalytic feminist), as quoted in Tong (2009:157) recommended, “...in their efforts to be themselves, women should mime the mimes men have imposed on [them]; women should take men's images of women and reflect them back to men in magnified proportions”.

In addition to proverbs, Macha Oromo folktales do also seem to be preoccupied with depicting women as cruel and unsympathetic members of the society. The cruelty of women is, thus, one of the most pervasive themes one can identify in folktales told by Macha Oromo society. For instance, the woman (queen) in MOFT-2 was depicted as pitiless and unfaithful to the king. Unlike the queen, the king in the folktale is, however, portrayed as merciful, sympathetic and humane. After poisoning the food and killing the king mercilessly, she began to live with the bodyguard to gratify her seemingly strong sexual desire. She also wanted to eliminate the bodyguard with whom she had sexual affairs in search for a better sentry though she was preceded and killed at the end. The folktale seems to be employed to warn women not to go beyond what is socially or morally acceptable and to teach them the consequence of being cruel to others in the society and inculcate the notion that they should remain submissive to men in their lives.

Likewise, the stepmother in MOFT-10 was mirrored as unsympathetic and a callous killer; she killed her stepchildren mercilessly for no reason in the absence of her husband. The fact that her husband killed her in retaliation at the end, he was characterized as sympathetic and kind to his children. In many folktales, unlike mothers, women as stepmothers are stereotyped as sadistic, harmful, unjust and unkind to stepchildren. In the society, it is also widely believed that stepmothers abuse their stepchildren by refusing to give them food and letting them do too much work. Because of such kind of negative and distorted images, children in the study area do not usually feel comfortable with their stepmothers; any single and simple mistake stepmothers do is seriously taken and easily magnified because of the stereotypical attitude implanted in their mind.

The story about queen “Akkoo Manoyee” (MOFT-14) is another folktale in which women are characterized as cruel human beings when compared to men. The story tells how the queen in particular and women in general behave when they are in position. The queen was depicted as cruel, unsympathetic, irrational and unfair leader. She exterminated all the senior citizens from her land on the pretext of making people revolt against her. She used to order men to do everything she could imagine. All the woman (queen) did was give out orders and mete out punishment mercilessly if things did not suit her. She was portrayed as reckless leader and a callous killer, who does not care about other people’s suffering.

People in the study area do also have a story that characterizes women as if they are crueler than men. In an attempt to determine who is crueler between the husband and the wife, the chief in MOFT-34, for example, ordered both of them secretly and independently to cut off the head of one another and demanded them to bring the neck to him. While the husband refused to do so, the wife beaded her husband and brought the neck to the chief. Having discovered that the lady was crueler than the man, the chief felt pity to the husband and punished the wife. In a similar manner the story about the brother and the sister (MOFT-17) in which the sister became the friend of a wizard and facilitated conditions for the wizard to kill her brother depicts women as (if they are) crueler than men. The boy in the folktale is characterized as (if he is) humane and considerate to the girl while she is depicted as inhuman and ruthless. He refused to kill his sister and also rescued her in spite of the fact that she sided with the wizard and made it kill him.

Apart from this, there are numerous folktales that portray women as if they are cruel and lack the quality to feel sympathy to somebody else in the society. Among these, the folktale about the man and his nine sons (MOFT-3) in which the mother poisoned the food and became the cause for the death of her children, and the story about the wife of a priest (MOFT-26) in which the lady made the priest cut off the scrotum of the sheep mercilessly to save her lover could be mentioned from the data in hand. The fact that men are also depicted as pitiless in few folktales (for example, in MOFT-2, 10, 22, and 25) their cruel acts seem to be reasonable when compared to that of women's; as implied in the folktales, men become cruel in revenge or retaliation for the supposed mistake women usually make against them. In many folktales, thus, women are stereotyped negatively as cruel members of the society; men, on the contrary are depicted as merciful and sympathetic in most of them. The folktales seem to attest to the traditional beliefs about a man as flawless and a woman as evil members of the society. Such mechanism of "Negative stereotyping is an effective way of silencing women and leads to the creation of an image of a powerless, submissive and inferior group" (Abudi et al., 2011: 66).

In general, as the verbal arts embody, cruelty is one of the most pervasive and popular motifs ascribed to women in Macha Oromo society. The verbal arts are basically employed to teach moral lessons and enable the target audience to refrain from such unwanted behaviours condemned in the society even if they emphasize the cruelty of women to the neglect of men. They are used as a reprimand for everyone particularly a pitiless woman to do away with her behaviour so that she can get acceptance in the society. The recurrent depiction of women in such a way, however, forces people to believe that they (women) are truly crueller than men and urges them to imagine that cruelty is one of the stereotypical images of feminine behaviour; it also creates suspicion between the two and spoils their mutual friendship.

6.5 Generosity versus Stinginess

Generosity is "the fact of being generous or willing to give somebody money, gifts, time or kindness freely" (OALD, 2010). In other words, generosity is the behaviour of a person in which he/she provides moral, material, financial and psychological support to somebody in need freely (Wright, 2001). Stinginess is the antonym of generosity and refers to the behaviour of a person in which he/she is unwilling to give assistance to somebody in need freely (OALD, 2010). Hence, in this paper, generosity is used to refer

to the habit of giving or the quality of being kind to somebody else whereas stinginess is used to mean its opposite. Generosity is one of the qualities considered virtuous in the society; a person who is generous is highly appreciated and respected in the society contrary to a person who is stingy and unkind.

When generosity or kindness is raised as an issue or topic of discussion between individuals, many people usually think of a mother rather than every woman or man in Macha Oromo society. Good qualities such as nurturing, tolerance and generosity are mainly associated with one's mother rather than every woman. Thus, a woman has positive image and is praised mostly when she is perceived as one's mother; people in the study area consider one's mother as if she is compassionate, tolerant and generous as depicted in the following cluster of proverbs.

- *Haadhaafi lafatu nama danda'a.* <A mother and a land tolerate everything>(MOPC-6:7)
- *Haati harma guuti malee harka hin guutu.* <A mother's breast may wean, not her hands>(MOPC-6:9)
- *Haati iyyeettii hin qabdu.* <There is no destitute mother>(MOPC-6:10)
- *Haati nama hin hattu, kan qabduyyuu namaa laatti.* <A mother does not deceive, she even shares what she owns> (MOPC-6:11)

As we can see here, the kindness of a mother is expressed in various ways in the proverbs. The society philosophizes that a land is tolerant, generous, and uncomplaining. They believe that it gives them water, fruits, crops and vegetables; it does not also complain whether one steps on it, till it, and dig it. In a similar manner, as the proverb (MOPC-6:7) has it, a mother is considered as tolerant, kind and accommodating. Her generosity is also mirrored in the other proverbs; for example, as reflected in (MOPC-6:9), her kindness to her children persists even after she weans. It is also believed that there is no destitute mother (MOPC-6:10) which implies that a mother never lacks something to give to her children. If she does not have anything to provide, she gives affection and encouragement to her children. No matter how poor she may be, a mother does not make an attempt to deceive and take the property of others as indicated in (MOPC-6:11). In general, the image of a woman as a mother is relatively positive, and hence being a mother is a source of great respect and satisfaction for the Macha Oromo women.

Nevertheless, there are some proverbs that are used to downgrade mothers themselves and portray them negatively while ignoring and covering the follies and wrongdoings of fathers. For example, it is commonly said:

- *Haadha gaariirra bara gaarii wayyaa.* <A good epoch is better than a good mother>(MOPC-7:2)
- *Haadha keessa nadheeni, adurree keessa bineensaa.* <Behind a mother is womanish, and behind a cat is wildness>(MOPC-7:3)
- *Haadha keessa nadheeni, addeesa keessa dukkanaa.* <Behind a mother is womanish, and behind a moon is darkness>(MOPC-7:4)
- *Kan gabaan namaa gootu haati namaa hin gootu.* <A mother cannot provide what a market can provide>(MOPC-7:5)
- *Mana haadha koon dhaqa jettee goraa bira hin darbin.* <Do not overlook strawberry even if you are going to your mother's home>(MOPC-7:6)

Even though women as mothers are respected and valued by many people in the society, there are also times when they are treated scornfully as the above proverbs witness, posing difficulty to boldly conclude by saying mothers' image is totally positive when compared to other strata of women. In (MOPC-7:2), for instance, the speaker is emphasizing the significance of a good time/epoch in one's life than a good mother. The content of the proverb resembles in meaning with idea that the use of opportunity at its right time surpasses the contribution of a mother in the life of an individual. Why a mother is mentioned in the proverb to the neglect of a father is ambiguous; yet it obliges one to generalize that the proverb is sexist and employed in a patriarchal society to devalue the role a mother or a woman can play in the society in general and in the life of an individual in particular.

Likewise, in (MOPC-7:3) and (MOPC-7:4), contend that even if a mother has a good place in the heart of the speaker, he/she seems to have suspected her of danger, showing the perception of the society towards women. In the society, as reflected in the proverbs, there is a tendency to suspect mothers themselves claiming their background as women who are usually stereotyped as weak and unreliable. As a cat is usually traced to her wild species such as a tiger and a lion, the society, using the proverb (MOPC-7:3), traces mothers to women who are supposed to be weak. The association made between a mother and a moon in (MOPC-7:4) is also used to advise a person to suspect and warn him/her not to trust women. Traditionally, it is believed that the moon is so weak to give light when compared to the sun; there are also times when she disappears and leaves people in dark/problem being unable to overcome darkness. The proverb is, therefore,

used to express that any woman including a mother is weak and not worth trusting. As the darkness sometimes overcomes moonlight, a mother may also become weak like any woman because she is deemed to possess stereotypical feminine qualities as the proverb implies. There are also times when a mother is unnecessarily compared to a market to show that she is not able to provide everything that one can get from the market as indicated in (MOPC-7:5). The last proverb (MOPC-7:6) is employed in a context when a person is going in a forest (where wild strawberry is found abundantly) to visit his/her mother located at a far distance; it is used to advise a person to collect and eat the strawberry even if he/she is going to eat something from his/her mother's home implying that either there is a probability not to find anything to be eaten there or the mother herself might not give generously even though it is available.

The proverbs are totally sexist since there is hardly any proverb in which men in general and fathers in particular are portrayed negatively the way mothers or women are portrayed. One can also dare say that the society is patriarchal and misogynist where qualities conventionally thought to be appropriate for women are selectively overemphasized, criticized, condemned, and expressed proverbially by hiding men's follies for no legitimate reason.

People in the study area use several proverbs in order to emphasize the importance of generosity and condemn stinginess particularly for women. Meanness or stinginess is normally criticized and women in the study area are warned not to be stingy enough especially to their husbands as it is evident/ reflected in the following proverbs.

- *Ofittoon nadheenii kan dhirsaaif keessu nyaatti.* <A selfish woman eats what she keeps for her husband>(MOPC-20:13)
- *Aannan dhirsaaif kaahan afuura hin galchan.* <One doesn't leave open the milk kept for a husband>(MOPC-20:1)
- *Ofittoon dhirsa koo hin jettu.* <A selfish woman never says 'for my husband'>(MOPC-20:12)
- *'Akkas nyaatanii dhirsa hinyaadani,' jette niitiin.* <'One does not think about a husband having eaten like this,' the woman said>(MOPC-41:1)
- *Dubartiin ofii qooqxee dhirsa soorti jedhan.* <Women feed their husbands being empty for themselves>(MOPC-41:2)
- *Dubartiin sabbata ishee nyaatti.* <Women should never eat to their fill>(MOPC-41:3)

In Macha Oromo society, the responsibility to prepare food and serve the family normally lies on the shoulder of the wives. It is also her duty to milk cows and churn it so

as to make butter and cheese, keeping some amount of the raw milk to her husband and children as implied in (MOPC-20:1). Besides, as indicated in (MOPC-20:12 and MOPC-20:13), a woman is expected to prepare food and keep it safely until her husband arrives from outside; she is not expected to eat the food prepared for him no matter how hungry she may be. If she does so for any reason, she is blamed for selfishness and inconsiderate.

In the society, a woman is also not expected to eat to her fill and voraciously however hungry she may be. She is expected to think of her husband and her children who are supposed to be unable to prepare food for themselves. As clearly contained in (MOPC-41:1), if a woman eats too much, (it is believed that) she does not think about her husband; that is, if she eats to her fill, she will be inconsiderate and neglectful. In short, the society presumes that it is not feminine to have a healthy appetite. Such kind of proverb is used to indoctrinate wives to be careful when they eat food and warn them not to eat to their fill and prioritize the needs of others, especially their husbands. In some other proverbs like (MOPC-41:2 and MOPC-41:3), a wife is advised to be empty for herself and feed her husband and children; she is usually advised to give priority to other members of the family when dining together. Overall, the proverbs seem to preach wives to sacrifice themselves to the well being of their husbands.

The proverbs here are used as instruments by which the society tries to persuade women to forget themselves and live to satisfy their husbands or the needs of the patriarchy. They indoctrinate women to see themselves as born to serve men, without choices and destined to live their lives in exactly the same way their ancestors had been living. Pertaining to this societal perception, liberal feminists such as Wollstonecraft as cited in Tong (2009:16) contend that “To treat someone as a mere means [qua reflected in the cluster of proverbs above] is to treat her as less than a person, as someone who exists not for herself but as an appendage to someone else”. According to feminist analysis, such kind of gender relations, in which a woman is indoctrinated to deny her self-worth and perceived as inferior and subordinate to a man is exploitative and oppressive (Tong, 2009).

There are also other proverbs that indoctrinate women to give priority to their children and other members of the family and warn them to restrict themselves when eating food let alone other times but during pregnancy, too. For instance, it is commonly said:

- *Haati nyaattuun ilmoo hin guddiftu.* <A greedy mother never brings her child up>(MOPC-41:4)
- *Kan ulfaan daakuu nyaattu gaafa deesse daaraa nyaatti.* < One who eats flour during pregnancy will eat ash after delivery>(MOPC-41:6)
- *'Kan kanarraa fayyaan ha nyaatu' jette jaartiin bixxillee kudhan fixxe jedhan.* < “Let the healthy man eat the remaining,” the woman said having finished ten loaves of bread>(MOPC-41:5)
- *Nadheeniifi fardeen kan itti kennan nyaatti.*<Women and horses eat what they are given>(MOPC-41:7)

These proverbs are normally used to instil generosity in the minds of women and to limit their needs and live in accordance with patriarchal expectations. An ideal woman for the society is the one who is less interested in fulfilling her needs and desires and discharges her wifely and motherly duties faithfully. She is not expected to eat to her fill/satisfaction and should not complain about the food she eats no matter how small or non-nutritious it may be as implied in the proverbs. With the help of such kind of proverbs, the patriarchal society brainwashes women to accept and comply with the generalizations and stereotypical images adopted in the long run as part of the custom of the society. In line with this, many feminists contend that by echoing crude generalizations recurrently in such a way, the society imposes its beliefs on women and urges them to accept and live as per its expectations denying their real identity.

In addition to proverbs, the society also uses folktales to inculcate the importance of generosity in the minds of its members especially in women. For example, in MOFT-10, the woman was punished at the end not only for her pitilessness but also for her ungenerous behaviour; she was characterized as if she is not so kind to her stepchildren. Hence, failure to tolerate the difficulty of job at home and being ungenerous to others, as reflected in the folktale, results in severe punishment for women in the society. A number of folktales collected from the study area do also echo this same motif. In MOFT-11, for example, the woman was characterized as deceptive, selfish and stingy and was punished for it. In the folktale, the woman was portrayed as if she was merely concerned with her own interests and needs to the neglect of her husband. At the end, in spite of his foolishness, the husband succeeded in identifying that his wife was stingy and had been deceiving him for long; as a result, he beat her with a whip severely and ordered her to leave his home and let her go to her parent's home.

Being generous is rewarding and increases one's reputation in the society. This is evident as reflected in MOFT-16, in which the boy accompanied a woman who was going

to her home having completed her duty from the market. The woman in the folktale was depicted as generous and helpful. She treated the boy openhandedly; she provided him everything he needs freely; as a result, the boy asked her younger daughter for marriage so as to strengthen his relationship with the family. In a similar manner, the woman in MOFT-27 was able to maintain her marriage and attract her husband because of her generosity and submissiveness. Besides her cleanliness, had not she been generous and submissive to him, her husband would not have returned to home since he had already decided to live with his newly married wife.

Thus, as contained in the folktales, while generosity builds one's reputation, stinginess spoils it and results in punishment especially for women in the study area. Overall, the folktales implicitly urge that besides other qualities, a woman is expected to be generous and avoid stinginess so as to exist in a man's world. Here, it is important to note that the verbal arts discussed in this section are sexist in nature and depict a patriarchal ideology in which only women are criticized and ridiculed for no fundamental reason when seen from a feminist angle.

6.6 Rationality versus Irrationality

For the purpose of this thesis, rationality is defined as the ability “to think clearly and make decisions based on reason rather than emotions” (OALD, 2010). Irrationality is its opposite and is used to describe behaviours related to foolishness, illogicality, silliness and the likes (ibid). Statt (1998:76) also defines the term irrational as “something that is inconsistent with logic or reason”. As to many psychologists a rational person is believed to have ample information and has no cognitive limitation in his/her mind. Thus, if a person is able to think logically and reasonably or clearly and sensibly, he is said to be rational. Contrary to this, an irrational person is a person who is not thoughtful and is not able to understand something easily and interpret it from a logical perspective.

Thus, among human beings, while rationality is commended and chosen, irrationality is condemned and avoided. Supporting this notion, Audi (1999:772) stated, “...for any action, belief, or desire, if it is rational we ought to choose it; [and]...although there are conflicting substantive accounts of irrationality, all agree that to say of an action, belief, or desire that it is irrational is to claim that it should always be avoided.”

In Macha Oromo society, as reflected in many folktales and proverbs, there is a tendency to associate a behavior related to rationality with men and irrationality with women. Put in other words, while men are thought to be rational beings in the society, women are usually deemed as irrational beings. For example, as indicated in the following proverbs, women are depicted as if they are irrational and are not able to differentiate between two clearly distinct things.

- *Dubartiin addressa guyyaa seeti.* <Women confuse moonlight with a day> (MOPC-22:1).
- *Dubartiitti gaaddidduun duumessa fakkaata.* <Women confuse a shadow with a cloud> (MOPC-22:2).
- *Ijoollee fi nadheen ona dura itti quufan yoomuu quufa se'u.* <Children and women are always mindful of the good old days> (MOPC-42:9)

As clearly reflected in the first two proverbs (MOPC-22:1 and MOPC-22:2), women in the society are considered as if they are foolish enough to the extent that they cannot identify moonlight from a day and cloud from shadow. By employing such kinds of proverbs in various contexts, it seems that the patriarchy facilitates preconditions for ease of management and to ultimately achieve control over women. In whatever context they are used, the proverbs do not praise women, they rather connote that women, when compared to men, are irrational and hence lack the quality to think sensibly. When seen from a feminist angle, therefore, the proverbs are totally sexist and misogynist for it crudely generalizes that women lack the ability to differentiate such simple things. Why only women are referred in the proverbs to the neglect of men itself, according to feminists, can label the society to be patriarchal and phallogocentric. Thus, a patriarchal and phallogocentric society like Macha Oromo uses such kinds of proverbs to disparage women's ability and belittle their knowledge in order to bring about the feeling that they are not equal to men. The messages embedded in the proverbs here resemble what Schipper (2006:40) noted in her study of proverbs about women. According to her, many proverbs tell us that "Men's heads are associated with brains, intelligence, wisdom and talents, while women in general, and wives in particular, are mainly associated with feelings, emotions, lack of logic and irrationality".

Furthermore, there are many proverbs that are commonly used to discourage women and spoil their image in the general public. For example, it is widely said:

- *'Dhirsa koon miidha,' jettee niitiin goondaarra teesse.* "I hurt my husband," the wife said, sitting on a colony of ants> (MOPC-23:3)

- *Dubartiin machoofte corroqa qaqqaammatti.* <A drunk woman sits near a puddle to heat herself>(MOPC-23:4)
- *Hin bari'u seetee udaan mantti hagde.* <Having thought the daybreak will not come, she defecated at home>(MOPC-23:5)
- *Intalli akkoon guddifte dudduubaan laga ceeti.* <A girl brought up by a grandmother crosses a river walking backwards>(MOPC-23:6)
- *Jaartiin mana ijaaraniif quncee dhowwatti.* <An old lady refuses to give a rope when people make her own house>(MOPC-23:7)

As repeatedly stated earlier, the above group of proverbs are employed in various contexts so as to ridicule and demean women, and presumably keep them powerless in the society. As it is evident from the surface, the proverbs are employed from a phallogocentric point of view. The proverbs consider women as if they are irrational in what they do and do not know the pros and cons of their deeds. For instance, in (MOPC-23:3), the woman/wife is depicted as if she is unconscious and unable to distinguish between something harmful and beneficial. When seen from a feminist perspective, the proverb is misogynist and is mainly used to downgrade women's intellectual capacity; there is no way in which a woman hurts a man/a husband being stung by a colony of ants unless she is unconscious and unable to think that it is not her own body. If the wife in the proverb has said it so, it means that she had been made to assume the part of body that the ants sting does not belong to her, but her husband's, which in turn shows her perceived oppression in the society. Hence, the proverbs in this category are rather about verbal assaults employed to make women feel ashamed of their activities and convince them believe that they are not equal to men with the ultimate goal being putting them under control.

In a similar manner, the rest of the proverbs in the group seem to be employed to belittle women, make them feel ashamed of their actions and keep them silent in the society. In the proverbs, women are depicted as childish, insensible, unwise and reckless. Pertaining to this, Jeylan (2004:121) also investigated that there are [many] proverbs in the Oromo society that “portray women as less mature, less important, irrational, and [subordinate] group of people” and that belittle them and perpetuate their subordinate position in the society. Depicting women negatively in such a way could be largely attributed to the negative perception of women in the society. Hence, the purpose of using these kinds of slanderous sayings on the part of the society seems to perpetuate the myth that women are less intelligent than men in every aspect and to keep them under the domination of men.

The depiction of women as irrational beings in the proverbs widely used by Macha Oromo society seems endless. Besides portraying them as irrational, the following group of proverbs are usually used to slander women and distort their reputation in the community. For instance, it is commonly said:

- *Jiidha hindhabin jette niitiin dhirsatti fincooftee jedhan.* <‘Be wet all the time,’ a woman said, urinating over her husband>(MOPC-23:8)
- *Kan caamaan soqolattu gaafa roobu qullaa buufti.* <A lady who pulls her dress up in dry time will go bare when it rains>(MOPC-23:9)
- *Kan qullaa kaattera kan ibsaa ofitti qabdu.* <Besides rising naked from bed, she shines light on herself> (MOPC-23:10)
- *Nadheen dhirsa mootu mataa namaatti fincoofti.* <A wife who dominates a husband urinates on the head of others>(MOPC-23:11)
- *Reefuu ta’e jette niitiin daaratti fincooftee.* <‘It is better now’, the woman said, having urinated at ash>(MOPC-23:12)
- *‘Reefuu natti ifa,’ jette jaartiin mana gubdee jedha.* <‘It is brighter now,’ the old lady said having burnt her house> (MOPC-23:13)
- *Situ fide jette jaartiin injiraan ciniintee jedhan.* <‘It is you who did it first,’ the lady said, having bitten a louse> (MOPC-23:15)

As one can easily see from the surface, the proverbs in this group are vilifying and target only women, especially those who refuse to comply with the expectations of the society. In traditional Macha Oromo society, it is considered shame for a woman to urinate close to a man, pull her dress up, rise naked from bed, and so on. Therefore, the proverbs seem to be employed so as to forewarn those who try to act against these traditional norms by slandering them. Such kinds of vilification which emphasizes only the negative qualities of an individual undoubtedly humiliates the victim and has the power to keep him/her under control and speechless. According to Tong (2009:115) women who were brought up in such kind of society usually “feel so unsure of themselves that they hesitate to express their ideas in public for fear their thoughts are not worth expressing; ...worse, when women do express their thoughts forcefully and with passion, their ideas are often rejected as irrational or the product of mere emotion”. Thus, it seems mandatory to maintain conformity to accepted patterns of behavior for women so as to escape from vilification and live peacefully in the society.

The perception and belief that women lack the capacity to reason as soundly as men is also reflected in a number of folktales widely told in the study area. One of these folktales is the one entitled as “The Perceptive Brother and His Sister” (MOFT-5). In the folktale, the sister who got married to a certain man and had a child made an attempt to

cheat and take the property of her brother. In return, her brother devised a mechanism and easily fooled her and succeeded in getting back his property with less difficulty. In the folktale, while the man (her brother) is portrayed as rational, hardworking and perceptive, the lady (his sister) is depicted as deceptive, malicious and irrational. The creativity and ability of the man to reason so as to get back his possessions surpassed the ability of the woman who attempted the property of her brother as reflected in the folktale. According to Tyson (2006:88) "... whenever patriarchy wants to undermine a behavior, it portrays that behavior as feminine" for a certain effect.

By the same token, in MOFT-6, the he-monkey who symbolizes a man was able to outsmart the she-monkey who basically represents a woman and fulfilled his desires. In the folktale, in spite of her industriousness, the she-monkey was depicted as irrational and completely dull; she could not understand her silliness even after being caught and badly treated by her avengers. On the other hand, although he was lazy and vagrant, the he-monkey was portrayed as cunning and opportunistic. He took advantage of the woman's foolishness and achieved his objective. The folktale mirrors that when compared to a man, a woman is rationally and morally deficient.

A person who is irrational or foolish (be it a man or a woman) is highly ridiculed in the society. Since a foolish person is liable to be affected in various ways, the society expects everyone to be rational and clever. This is evident as reflected in MOFT-11 and MOFT-15. In MOFT-11, for example, the husband was being cheated on account of his foolishness. However silly he was, the husband was able to investigate that his wife had been cheating him for long as a result of which he revenged at the end, showing that no matter how foolish a man may be, he is perceived to be better than a woman in the society. Likewise, in MOFT-15, both the husband and the wife are depicted as irrational beings and suffered from the consequence at the end. Nevertheless, the woman in the folktale seems more foolish than the man as she lost her precious life for failing to rationalize on the problem, which by implication shows that a foolish behaviour results in catastrophe.

Apart from this, in MOFT-19, too, the old lady was devoured by the tiger for her recklessness. She was portrayed as if she could not identify the dead from the living. In the folktale, the woman threw a stone and struck a dead tiger lying on the road that passes through the forest (on the first day) and thought that she killed it herself. The other day,

she came across a tiger that was lying on the road, now alive, and threw a stone at it again. Being provoked by her action, the tiger, then, sprang and devoured her immediately. The folktale thus characterizes the old lady as weak and irrational creature lacking essential human qualities to save her life. The tendency to associate women with weakness and irrationality and men with strength and rationality seems cross-cultural and worldwide. According to the observation of many feminists, Tong (2009:201), for example, "...qualities such as autonomy, rationality, physical strength, and fairness or justice are associated with "masculinity," whereas qualities such as connectedness to others, emotionality, physical weakness, and caring were associated with "femininity".

The ingrained attitude of the patriarchy towards women seems to have been effected by the use of the kinds of folktales discussed in here. From the folktales we have discussed in this section alone, it is possible to deduce various kinds of gender-stereotypes; while men are stereotyped as strong, active and rational in most cases, women are typecast as weak, passive and irrational. The verbal arts especially those which focus on men and women seem to have been used to legitimate traditional gender ideologies prevalent in the society since time immemorial. In most of them, women are portrayed as naive, irrational and unintelligent members of the society. The depiction seems to have been made intentionally to remark the myth that men are more powerful than women, or to pronounce that women are not equal to men. Surprisingly, there are many people in the study area who still argue that traditional beliefs about gender should be preserved and that men and women should behave distinctly and keep their place in the society. When seen from a feminist angle, men or the patriarchy deploy verbal arts of the sort we discussed in this section in various contexts mainly to suppress women and not to lose their social standing.

6.7 Knowledgeability versus Ignorance

OALD (2010) defines knowledgeability as the fact of possessing or knowing a great deal of knowledge, awareness or intelligence, and ignorance as its antonym. Ignorance, thus, refers to lack of knowledge and is synonymously used with illiteracy, obliviousness, unawareness and witlessness. It seems vital to see how men and women in the society are perceived in terms of these two qualities as there are numerous folktales and proverbs in which they are embodied. One can argue that the message the verbal arts bear about knowledgeability and ignorance is believed to have a big impact on its

member's self-esteem. While being portrayed as knowledgeable is believed to have a positive effect on how one perceives him/herself, being portrayed as ignorant might lead to deteriorating one's self-confidence.

One of the mechanisms through which the patriarchy dominates women and reduces their status in the society seems by depicting men as more knowledgeable than women and as if they lack the necessary knowledge to do something. Numerous verbal arts collected from the study area reveal the patriarchy's denial of approving women's knowledge, presumably to keep them apart from major sociocultural, economic and political affairs. Here are some proverbs worth mentioning as an evidence for this argument.

- *Beekumsi dubartii abbaa manaa oliiqe, boolla nama buusa.* <A woman's knowledge that surpasses her husband's throws him into gully> (MOPC-42:1)
- *Beekumsi dubartii fi karaan jaldeessa bowwaa nama buusa.* <Women's knowledge and monkeys' trail lead one to an abyss> (MOPC-42:2)
- *Beekumsi dubartii gomjii bira hindarbu.* <The knowledge of a woman does not go beyond a stove>(MOPC-42:3)
- *Bekumsi dubartii akka fincaanshee jala yaa'a.* <A woman's knowledge flows under like her urine> (MOPC-42:4)
- *Dubartiin beekaa deessi malee beektuu hin qabdu.* <Women have no knowledge, but give birth to a knowledgeable man>(MOPC-42:6)
- *Dubartiin dheertuu malee beektuu hin qabdu.* < There never exist knowledgeable woman but tall one> (MOPC-42:7)

Here, in all the proverbs, the patriarchal society using these proverbs seems to have undermined and neglected the knowledge women may have to do something to the preference of men since time immemorial. By default, that is, the other sides of the proverbs imply that, unlike women, men are the sole producers and custodians of knowledge. The images in the proverbs are reflections of the attitude of the society towards women and the long-standing patriarchal ideology which considers women as subordinates. They seem to have been using such kinds of sayings to maintain patriarchy and limit women's role in the society in every aspect of life including leadership and decision making. Generally speaking, since decision-making and leadership are often left to men, who are presupposed to have the necessary knowledge, experience and wisdom, women are usually not considered in it no matter how the issue concerns them owing to their perception as ignorant and incompetent. Feminists argue that the absence of women from positions of power and decision-making in their household and the community at large because of traditional feminine stereotypes reinforces their exploitation and deprivation.

There are also a number of proverbs that depict women as if they lack knowledge to do something when compared to men in the society. Some of these are:

- *Beekte jennaan niitiin qeesii kitaaba dhiqxe jedhan.* <The priest's wife washed a bible when told she is knowledgeable>(MOPC-23:1)
- *Ijoollee fi nadheen ona dura itti quufan yoomuu quufa se'u.*<Children and women are always mindful of the good old days> (MOPC-42:9)
- *Dubartiin lama hin beektu, tokko hin wallaaltu.* <Women do not know two (things) and are not ignorant of one (thing)> (MOPC-42:8)
- *Dubartii beektuun manashee ijaarti; wallaaltuun manashee diigdi.* <A knowledgeable woman builds her house, and the ignorant demolishes it> (MOPC-42:5)
- *Hin bari'u seetee udaan manatti hagde.* <Having thought the daybreak would not come, she defecated at home>(MOPC-23:5)

As reflected in (MOPC-23:1), the woman is depicted as if she is silly and has no know-how or common sense to visualize what will happen when a book is washed. The proverb also implies that one is not expected to extol a woman for her knowledge since she feels that she has an exaggerated worth or ability which in turn may lead to destruction. Similarly, in (MOPC-42:9), women are compared to immature children who lack the ability to perceive and explain something from a logical perspective. The woman in the proverb is portrayed as if she lacks understanding and is completely obsessed with the good old days. Whoever she may be, perceiving a woman as if she is immature and incompetent is a common belief in Macha Oromo society. Likewise, as one can easily see from the surface, (MOPC-23:5) is a mere slanderous expression used to harm women's reputation. Here, it is worth to mention that it is shame to defecate at home or in their huts for Macha Oromo society; traditionally indoor toilets are not common in the society. If one is found defecating in the house as per the culture of the society, he/she is deemed as either stupid or coward. Thus the proverb considers women as if they are unwary, oblivious and short-sighted. Seen from a feminist perspective, the recurrent deployment of such kinds of proverbs in various contexts can gradually erode women's self-worth and thereby spoil their social standing.

Unlike in other proverbs, in (MOPC-42:8), the patriarchy seems to give credit to women's expertise that enables them to do 'one thing', not two things. According to my informants, this 'one thing' refers to women's ability to cook food and serve men. As repeatedly explained under women's daily reproductive roles (subsection 5.1.2), preparing food and serving the family entirely rests on the shoulders of women; in various Macha Oromo settlement areas, it is considered shame for a man to cook food while there

is a woman at home. Hence, as implied in the proverb, it is women's expertise to prepare food that is mostly given credit by the patriarchy. The following two proverbs widely used by the society could reinforce the central idea of the proverb (MOPC-42:8) besides my informants' explanation.

- *Dubartii waa lamaaf fuudhu: tokko qoonqoofi tokko hormaataafi.* <One marries a woman for two things: feeding and reproduction> (MOPC-17:10)
- *Dubartiin qoonqoo tolchiti malee dubbii hin tolchitu.* <Women sweeten food but not speech> (MOPC-20:7)

The society expects its members to be knowledgeable and wise enough and condemns those who are ignorant as reflected in (MOPC-42:5) even if it hardly recognizes women's knowledgeability. In the proverb, the society seems to advise women to be wise and farsighted so that they could overcome temporary problems and maintain their homes. Women in the society, therefore, do not easily divorce their husbands and demolish their house since they are usually labelled as ignorant and intolerant if they do so as implied in the proverb. Apart from lack of knowledge and wisdom, a woman who divorces her husband and demolishes her house is also stereotyped as faithless and usually not welcomed even by her mother as reflected in (MOPC-5:1) and (MOPC-5:3) below.

- *Intala abbaa manaa biraa baate, haati booyicha hin dhageessu.* <A mother does not listen to the daughter who left her husband>(MOPC-35:1)
- *Niitiin baate amalli lama.* <A wife divorced has two behaviors>(MOPC-35:3)

Therefore, wives in the society hardly think about divorce in whatever way their husbands mistreat them mainly for fear of the stereotypes associated with a divorced woman including foolishness, faithlessness, witlessness, ferocity and the likes.

It is not only expertise that women in the society are perceived to lack but also psyche or consciousness which enables them to be aware of what is going on around them as is reflected in the following proverbs.

- *Dubartiin qalbii tokkitti qabdi, isayyuu tokko dhungatan harkaa baddi* <Women have only one psyche, and they lose it upon being kissed once> (MOPC-51:1)
- *Nadheen akkuma harmishee rarra'u qalbiin isheesi rarra'a.* <Women's psyche hangs down just like their breasts>(MOPC-51:2)
- *Nadheen qalbii hin qabdu.* <Women have no psyche>(MOPC-51:3)

These proverbs are mainly used in discourses related to gender and when the speaker wants to imply that women are less conscious than men. As reflected in these proverbs, the patriarchy considers women as forgetful and weak creatures who need not be considered equal to men as far as consciousness is concerned. The proverbs are used to

disparage and belittle women's mindfulness and to implicitly assert men's potentials. As a result of the dominant patriarchal ideology which is perpetuated by such kinds of proverbs, men in the society usually assume themselves to be more knowledgeable and conscious than women. However, feminists "don't agree that such differences as physical size, shape, and body chemistry make men naturally superior to women: for example, more intelligent, more logical, more courageous, or better leaders" (Tyson, 2006:86).

In addition to proverbs, the patriarchy also uses folktales to downgrade women by portraying them as ignorant and unintelligent members of the society. Thus the tendency to associate men with mindfulness and women with obliviousness is also widely observed in folktales. For example, in MOFT-16, in which a strange boy accompanied a woman who was returning from a market to her home and was treated in a courteous manner and later asked to marry her younger daughter, the way the boy and her son and the mother and her daughters are characterized in terms of their mental ability can beautifully show how the society perceives men and women in a different way. In the folktale, the son was able to analyze and interpret the adventures of the strange boy while his mother was in a worry being unable to visualize the boy's intention. Hence, while the son and the strange boy are depicted as intelligent and insightful, the mother and her daughters are portrayed as feeble and unperceptive.

Correspondingly, MOFT-20 is another folktale in which only men are portrayed as if they are adventurous, skilful and able to change a certain course of action. The folktale is about the three knowledgeable men who assembled the fossils of a lion and brought it to being again. The folktale thus characterizes men as if they are visionary and have an exceptional natural ability to do something. On the contrary, MOFT-19 (as we have seen earlier) characterizes the old lady as if she is ignorant and unable to distinguish between the dead the living tiger. When we compare the two folktales (MOFT-19 and 20), it is possible to guess how the patriarchy has been viewing men and women in the society in terms of their mental ability. As implied in the folktales, the society perceives men as the sole producers and custodians of knowledge.

In MOFT-7, too, while the three young men compete to become more knowledgeable than the other, the girl they wanted to marry was depicted as a person who does not care about education or knowledge. The father in the story wanted a person who is more knowledgeable to give his daughter as a wife without caring much about his daughter's knowledgeability. While the three boys attended their education and graduated in different fields, the girl remained illiterate as reflected in the folktale. The three boys

thus became experts in their fields of specialization and helped the girl who was bitten by a snake though the chance to marry her was given to one of them. As the folktale has it, the patriarchal society of Macha Oromo had been discouraging young girls not to go to school and become as knowledgeable as men. The proverb that runs as follows is also used to discourage young girls not to pursue their education equal to young boys, which in turn shows their perceived oppression.

- *Lukkuun balaliiteefi durbi baratte eessayyuu hin geessu.* <If a hen flies, it does not go far, so does if a girl learns>(MOPC-24:6).

Another folktale in which one can read the attitude of the patriarchy towards men and women is “The Aborted Wish” (MOFT-29). In the folktale, the shepherd was depicted as visionary and knowledgeable, but with a bad luck. He is also portrayed as a person who hates ignorant, lazy and foolish people. Apart from this, MOFT-14 overemphasizes the capabilities and potentials of the old man to the neglect of the queen. The man in the tale was depicted as extremely knowledgeable and as a person with many abilities who surpasses the queen and other men. As reflected in the story, he used to advise people what to do when the queen had been ordering them to do difficult jobs beyond their ability unwisely. Such kinds of folktales can potentially reinforce sexism and gender stereotypes in which women are usually deemed as less intelligent than men.

In general, many folktales and proverbs collected from the study area signify the prejudice and hostility toward women in social discourses. They equate femininity with weakness and masculinity with strength and encourage women to tolerate familial abuse. Using the verbal arts the patriarchy indoctrinates women to be docile, faithful, kind-hearted, dutiful and so forth. The verbal arts scrutinized here seem to be appropriated by men with the intention to uphold the prevailing traditional gender roles and keep their social status in the community. In spite of the fact that there exist strong and knowledgeable women nowadays, they have continued to be viewed as a weaker sex and the patriarchy looks down on them due to the prevailing patriarchal ideology propagated through the verbal arts. To wind it up, despite the struggle to revive women’s image and achieve gender equality by different bodies, the ingrained misogyny and phallogocentric attitudes seem to remain persistent problems in Macha Oromo society as reflected in the verbal arts.

6.8 Compliance versus Obstinacy

In social psychology, compliance is taken as “a form of yielding to group pressure where there is a change of behaviour but without any underlying change of attitude” (Statt, 1981: 29). On the other hand, obstinacy is the act of refusing to change one’s mind/idea or disagreeing with other people’s wishes or refuse to accept their suggestions (OALD, 2010). While compliance is associated with conformity or obedience, obstinacy is usually linked to stubbornness, disobedience, unreasonableness, inflexibility and the likes. The two terms have a lot to do in describing the behaviour of a person. A person who usually complies with the norm of a society is appreciated and rewarded; on the other hand, a person who is obstinate is underrated and is usually meted out with punishment.

In Macha Oromo society, people are not required to be stubborn whether they are males or females. A person is basically expected to comply with the existing social norm; if he/she defies and tries to counteract the standard pattern of behaviour, he/she is labelled as deviant. In the society, as in any patriarchal society in which men are deemed as the most powerful members, there is a tendency to consider men as the custodians of the norm of the society.

Before going to the main point, it seems important to present the norm of the society which both men and women are expected comply with as reflected in the verbal arts with special focus on what is expected of women apparently. To begin with, a norm is conceived as a standard pattern of behavior that is deemed normal in a society; it is a cultural product which represents one’s basic knowledge of what others do and what others think that they should do; it embraces the values, customs, and traditions of a given society (Bicchieri and Muldoon, 2014). Social norms specify what is acceptable and what is not in a society. Many scholars assert that conformity to a norm attracts approval and its transgression leads to disapproval resulting in punishment; thus people usually conform to social norms since they do not want to be discredited and punished. Norms, thus, have the power to govern individuals' behavior in a society.

One of the mechanisms by which social norms are enforced is through the use of verbal arts. As it is known, verbal arts are used to preserve a given society’s memory of past events and to reflect on the well established social norms. Social norms with the help of verbal arts are believed to dictate people how to behave, what to do and not to do, when and where it is appropriate to say certain things, to discuss certain topics or wear

certain clothes, and when it is not. The patriarchy in the study area use verbal arts and other aspects of tradition to justify male chauvinism and to maintain its long-standing tradition.

As repeatedly stated earlier, verbal arts have the ability to reveal the cultural values, social mores, and group norms of the people. The following clusters of proverbs, thus, have a lot to tell us about the norm of the society in general and how women should behave in the society in particular to some extent.

- *Akka duraatti dhiisnee akka durbaatti ciifne jedhan.* <We slept like a girl, forgetting as we are accustomed to> (MOPC-38:1)
- *Durbi garaan ciiftee fi hoolaan albaate warraaf baate.* <A girl that sleeps facing down on her stomach and a sheep that expels watery feces are worthless to their owners>(MOPC-38:3)
- *Gaafa harreen loon dura galtuu fi nadheen dhiira dura raftu gaarii hin ta'u.* <The day a donkey comes home ahead of a cow, and a woman goes to bed before a man is not good> (MOPC-38:4)
- *Intalli bara egeri maraattu barana soqolatti.* <A girl that will become mad next year shows her lap/dresses scantily this year>(MOPC-38:5)
- *Intalli siiksitu warra hin hiiksitu.* <A girl that whistles will dishonour her family one day>(MOPC-38:6)
- *Kan caamaan soqolattu gaafa roobu qullaa buufti.* <A lady who pulls her dress up in dry time will go bare when it rains>(MOPC-38:7)

The proverb coded (MOPC-38:1) is usually employed by a man in a context when he is in trouble. When seen from the surface itself, the proverb tells us that there is a manner in which a girl sleeps. As implied in the proverb, (MOPC-38:1), a girl is not expected to sleep freely or the way she likes as per the norm of the society. For example, she is not allowed to sleep with her belly touching the mattress on bed or on the ground/ in the field (MOPC-38:3). If a girl is found lying on the ground facing down (with her stomach touching the ground), she is considered as worthless to her parents. She is also not expected to sleep on her back with her legs wide open as she likes. Moreover, it is also not a norm for a woman to sleep while a man is awake and is doing something at home as depicted in MOFT-13 (The Shameless Bride). In the folktale, the newly married wife was portrayed as careless and lazy; she is also characterized as disrespectful and deviant as a result of which her husband divorced her and married a new wife. As implied in the folktale, a woman is expected to be dutiful and hard-working so as to be acceptable in the society. On the other hand, there are no such restrictions for male human beings in the society; a man can lie or sleep as he wills everywhere.

Besides, a woman is not expected to go to bed ahead of a man in the society no matter how exhausted she may be. This is evident as reflected in the proverb coded (MOPC-38:4). As the proverb has it, it is considered as a bad luck if a donkey comes home ahead of a cow and a woman sleeps before a man. Thus it is expected of her to wait patiently until a man goes to bed to sleep. Put in another way, it is not a norm for a woman to sleep before a man in the society; she has to accomplish every household routine and go to bed later than a man. Apart from this, a woman is also not expected to dress the way she likes; she is usually expected to dress in a way that fully covers her body. It is not a norm for a woman to pull her dress up, wear miniskirt that shows her lap and the likes at any circumstance as clearly depicted in (MOPC-38:5) and (MOPC-38:7). If she tries to deviate from this norm, she is labelled as mad and made an outcast. Moreover, as reflected in (MOPC-38:6), the norm of the society does not allow a woman to whistle; whistling is a male characteristics. A woman who attempts to whistle like a man is usually not welcomed by the patriarchy; particularly if a girl tries to whistle, she is supposed to dishonour her family in the future.

As per the norm of the society, chastity is another very important quality that a woman is expected to fulfil. The ultimate goal of imposing restrictions on women particularly with respect to wearing clothes, manner of walking and sleeping and the likes) is to help them keep their chastity. From a man's perspective, for women, wearing scantily and beautifying themselves exposes them to be easily seduced by others and endangers them to the risky desires of other men which ultimately leads to the loss of their chastity. Thus in the society, women are repeatedly warned to keep their chastity both before and after marriage. While they are usually expected to be soft-hearted in rendering other services, women are normally urged to be hardhearted as far as chastity is concerned as reflected in the following proverbs.

- *Gara-laafettiin garaa qullaa hin eerumtu.* <A soft-hearted girl won't get married empty womb> (MOPC-29:1)
- *Ija-laafettiin obboleessaaf ulfoofti.* <A shy girl conceives from her brother> (MOPC-29:2)
- *Intala dura sirbaan jajan booda ulfaan jaju.* <A girl appreciated for her singing before will be blamed for pregnancy later> (MOPC-29:3)
- *Intalli garaa laaftu obboleessa isheerraa ulfoofti.* <A soft-hearted girl gets pregnant from her brother> (MOPC-29:4)
- *Kokkoolfaa ulfooftee boowaa deessi.* <Women laugh on conception and cry on delivery> (MOPC-29:5)

All these proverbs are employed to encourage girls to abstain themselves from sexual intercourse before marriage; they urge girls to be hardhearted and maintain their chastity. Unlike for a man, a woman's chastity is considered as one of the most important qualities in the society. Besides these proverbs, young girls in the study area are also indoctrinated to keep their chastity using folktales. For example, the central idea of MOFT-21 is merely to teach young girls to avoid sexual intercourse before marriage. As reflected in the folktale, one can easily guess how much value or emphasis was given to the virginity of girls upon marriage. Men are not that much discouraged by the society to abstain themselves from sexual intercourse. They are rather advised to have an experience on how to deal with a woman before they get married. This tendency to urge women, not men, to keep their chastity seems universal. According to Schipper, M. (2006:184), "...such references to restriction, control and, indeed, self-control, do not address men but women... the bulk of proverbial lessons regarding chastity and decency are commandments directed to women and not men". She further observed that "Those recommended restrictions for women are quite the opposite of the messages addressed to men, which brim with stimulating activities and freedom of movement in the public domain and the world at large" (2006:300).

Hence, in any arena, women are expected to obey or comply with such kinds of societal norms in one way or another so as not to suffer from the consequences. If they tend to deviate from the norm, they are usually labelled as bad and treated badly by the patriarchy. For example, as clearly reflected in (MOPC-33:1) below, women in general and girls in particular are labelled as bad if they are not ready to accept the advice of their elders and comply with the norms of the society. The proverb is sexist since it only talks about how a bad girl feels when she is advised to the neglect of a bad boy; it is not common to come across proverbs addressing boys and telling people how they feel when advised. Embedded in the proverb is that a girl is considered good when she totally accepts the advice of elders and lives as per the norms of the society being submissive.

- *Badduun intalaa yoo gorsan hin mufatti.* <A bad girl gets annoyed when advised> (MOPC-33:1)

Moreover, a number of proverbs collected from the study area emphasize that women in general and girls in particular are so obstinate by nature and refuse to comply with the standard pattern of behaviour and are explicitly marked as 'bad' girls and are seriously criticized for their behaviour. This fact that the patriarchy perceives women as deviant and stubborn is vividly reflected in the following two proverbs.

- *Dubartii fi jallinni waliin dhalatu.* <Women and stubbornness are born together>(MOPC-47:1)
- *Hamii fi jallina dubartii hin gorsani.* <One never advises women how to backbite and deviate>(MOPC-47:2)
- *Gadheen niitii dhirsaa hamatti.* <A bad wife backbites her husband>(MOPC-48:1)

These proverbs are usually used in a context when women slightly deviate from social norms or refuse to comply with the generally accepted standards of the society. Particularly, the second proverb (MOPC-47:2) is used to mean that women know from the very beginning (by nature) how to backbite and deviate from the social norm, implying that it is useless to advise them how to do these simple things. The proverbs are, thus, indicative of the fact that women become the focus of gossip and derision if they do not conform to social expectations. Through the use of proverbs like:

- *Hima didduun du'a hin diddu.* <She who fails to accept advice will confront death>(MOPC-47:3)

women are repeatedly warned to accept the advice of their elders and live according to the norm of the society. As clearly indicated in the proverb, failure to accept advice and deviating from the social norms leads to the loss of their life. Hence, so as not to confront the worst in their lives, they are obliged to comply with the prevailing traditional norms of the society whether they like it or not. When seen from a feminist angle, the proverbs in here are misogynistic and used by the patriarchy to downgrade women and make them feel ashamed of their personality and thereby to deny their equality to men.

Apart from these proverbs, there are a number of folktales that depict women as deviant members of the society who deserve punishment for their behavior. For instance, in MOFT-18 (The Aggressive Husband), the wife tried to act against the norms of the society and was punished by her husband. The lady in the folktale could not get time to prepare food and serve her husband owing to the bulkiness of work she was required to carry out. While she was normally expected to be dutiful and tolerant, she wanted to act like her husband who usually enjoys himself by going to the town. In MOFT-13, too, as explained earlier, the lady was punished for failing to comply with the norms of the society and disobeying the commandment of her husband. Through such kinds of folktales, the patriarchy inculcates in the mind of women that it is even shame not to obey the commandments of men (husbands) and live as per the norms of the society. precisely speaking, the folktales imply that a woman is expected to comply with the norms of the

society and live being obedient to her husband no matter how 'bad' he may be. She is recurrently advised to tolerate her husband in spite of his problems using proverbs like:

- *Jaarsa ormaa gaariirra jaarsa ofii hamaa wayya.* <One's own bad husband is better than someone else's good husband>

MOFT-11 is another folktale that the patriarchy in the study area uses to characterize women as selfish, deviant and problematic. In the folktale, the wife cheated her silly husband and used to provide him a poor quality food giving priority to herself, which is against the norms of the society. While the norm in the society is that a woman is expected to be concerned, kind, faithful, and submissive, the lady in the folktale deviated from this norm and was made to suffer from the consequence. As reflected in the following proverbs, it is not acceptable for a woman in the study area to give priority for herself and forget her husband and child as far as food is concerned.

- *Dubartiin ofii gooqxee dhirsa soorti jedhan.* <Women feed their husbands being empty for themselves> (MOPC-20:6)
- *Ofittoon dhirsa koo hin jettu.* < A selfish woman never says 'for my husband'>(MOPC-20:12)
- *Ofittoon nadheenii kan dhirsaa keessu nyaatti.* <A selfish woman eats what she keeps for her husband>(MOPC-20:13)
- *'Akkas nyaatanii dhirsa hinyaadan,' jette niitiin.* <'One does not ponder a husband having eaten like this,' the woman said> (MOPC-41:1)
- *Dubartiin sabbata ishee nyaatti.* <Women should never eat to their fill> (MOPC-41:3)
- *Haati nyaattuun ilmoo hin guddiftu.* <A greedy mother never brings her child up> (MOPC-41:4)

Thus in spite of his silliness, the husband in the folktale (MOFT-11), having made advantage of the norm of the society, sought advice from his friend and punished his wife for her supposedly deviant behaviour. As implied in many verbal arts of the society, there is a tendency to depict women negatively as such or characterizing them to have bad qualities and punishing them so as to indoctrinate the norm of the society. In general, the verbal arts discussed here reflect the social values and norms need to be adhered so as to benefit men than women. They condition women to behave in certain ways and encourage them to conform to established cultural norms either by rewarding or punishing for their behaviour. According to feminists, these verbal arts and the messages associated with them are products of patriarchal ideology, which "has a pervasive, deeply rooted influence on the way we think, speak, see ourselves, and view the world in which we live" (Tyson, 2006: 92-3).

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

The main purpose of the study was to examine gender roles as reflected in the verbal arts and thereby investigate the exploitation of women in Macha Oromo society from a feminist standpoint. The study specifically examined Macha Oromo folktales and proverbs and attempted to uncover how gender is constructed in them and how these verbal arts are used to perpetuate the traditional gender based division of labour in the society with respect to productive, reproductive, decision making, leadership and protective roles. In addition, an attempt was made to examine the behavioural expectations and the recurrent images of men and women as reflected in the verbal arts and how they have been used to maintain patriarchy.

Accordingly, the verbal arts confirm that women and men have different positions and statuses within the household and out in the public sphere. As indicated in many folktales and proverbs, the main economic activity of Macha Oromo society is agriculture and men have more control over the resources. In the society, there still exists traditional gender based division of labour. A woman's place is normally perceived to be in the home as wife and mother doing monotonous household chores while the man's place is perceived to be in the public sphere being engaged in works to be performed out of the door (outdoor activities).

Women do the bulk of the work in and out of the home. Indeed, the researcher's own experience witnesses that women's roles around the house are still extremely laborious and monotonous. As there is no electricity in the countryside, meals are always made on fire using firewood in a traditional manner; water is fetched from the river far away; firewood is collected from the forest; raw materials/food items are bought from a market after long journey and so forth. Besides, making coffee, nurturing and caring for children, weeding in the field, washing clothes and utensils, grinding, milking, cleaning the room, and planting vegetables are still considered as women's primary roles. Men, on the other hand, usually plough land, sow seeds, harvest and winnow crops and cereals, erect houses, protect the family and the property, take bigger animals to the market for sale and the likes; yet women are frequently called upon to give assistance when the need arises especially in agricultural activities thought to be done by men.

An attempt made to explicate the verbal arts so far also reveals that women do the lion's share of unrecognized labour within households and also participate on the works in the fields whereas men participate only on works outside of the home. A number of the folktales and proverbs with human characters assign women to carry out roles and discharge responsibilities related to household chores. Despite the fact that women are performing tiresome activities and longer hours than men, the society does not believe that they are accomplishing useful tasks; rather it is believed that women are idle and economically dependent on their husbands.

Moreover, the society expects women to be the primary nurturers in the family and the main caretakers of children whereas men are normally expected to protect the family from danger, be involved in more productive activities, and manage the family by assuming leadership roles and the likes. Thus, the gender system reflected in the verbal arts seem asymmetrical, favouring and glorifying men over women in decision making, leadership, protective and productive roles. The society, as reflected in the verbal arts accord the highest status and esteem to men rather than women. The verbal arts also assert that women should not be extolled whatever they do and however generous they may be.

In Macha Oromo culture, a woman who is not productive or fertile is not accorded any respect. The gender roles reflected in the verbal arts examined so far are still extant and recurrent among the Macha Oromo. There is clearly a connection between the work men and women do at home and out in the field practically and the gender roles reflected in the verbal arts. That is to say, the facts on the ground in the society and the embedded messages that the verbal arts bear with respect to gender role resemble each other to such a very great extent. Many folktales and proverbs clearly reflect the traditional gender based division of labour in the society and the belief systems noticeable in these verbal arts still remain almost the same till today. Here, it should be noted that in a society where there is gender based division of labour, as a number of scholars argue, people usually tend to ignore the other's job and become reluctant to collaborate in what they do which really has a big impact on the overall development of a country.

The folktales and proverbs examined so far attest to the age old belief that women lack the physical and mental strength required to hold positions of authority and leadership in their society. In Macha Oromo society, as reflected in the verbal arts, greater status and power are conferred to men than to women. Many folktales seem to propagate

the common belief that the society holds about some women as cruel, unfaithful, lustful, and dangerous to men. In other words, men and women are usually pressurized to ruminate and behave in certain ways in the society. Accordingly, as reflected in the verbal arts, for Macha Oromo patriarchy, an ideal woman is one who is docile, shy, faithful and subservient to men. On the other hand, using these verbal arts, the society does not seem to induce men to acquire these qualities. Hence, many Macha Oromo verbal arts are deeply gendered in a manner hostile to women.

The verbal arts which focus on men and women have been used to enshrine the values of patriarchy and diminish and disregard feminine qualities in general and women's role in particular. Thus it can be said that the patriarchal ideology prevalent in the verbal arts is still used to justify and maintain the subordinate status of women in the society. It has been found out that the verbal arts dictate Macha Oromo women to be dutiful, helpful, kind, and compassionate. In many folktales, women are usually made to play roles deemed to be evil or morally wrong in the society and immediately punished for their wrongdoings.

A closer look at the gender roles in the verbal arts reveals that the female sex has been maltreated for a long period of time in the society. In the family, a wife is regarded as a chattel, whereas a husband is normally considered as head of the family and owner of every bit of economic resources. As reflected in the verbal arts, women have been denied of equal rights and participation in the social, economic and political affairs of the society. They seem to rely on men for everything (especially mentally and economically) and surrender to patriarchal consciousness because they are fettered by its (patriarchal) ideology and other social norms that give little room for their freedom. Therefore, the ongoing maltreatment and inequality of women in the society can be attributed to the mindset reflected in the folktales and proverbs and to the socialization process in the family.

It has been found out that Macha Oromo verbal arts are embedded with images that primarily urge men and women to conform to well-established behavioral norms, emphasizing virtues such as docility, kindness and generosity for women, and aggression, trustworthiness and courage for men. The attitude or perception of the society towards men and women as reflected in the verbal arts and the facts on the ground in the society resemble each other to such a very great extent; women are still viewed as irrational, cruel, and deceptive while men are viewed as strong, rational, wise and sympathetic. The

society's condemnation and discouragement of unwanted behaviors such as cruelty, infidelity, stinginess, irrationality, deceit, obstinacy and the likes are beautifully reflected in the verbal arts even though some of these behaviors are associated with women rather than men, degrading and distorting their image.

The analysis and interpretation made so far revealed that the use of folktales and proverbs has become the mechanism through which the patriarchal society controls and limits women's participation to domestic spheres relegating them not to take part in decision making, leadership or administration and some productive roles. Their purpose, besides entertainment, is clearly to show gender inequality by glorifying the lives and roles of men in the society and depicting women as if they cannot survive unless they depend on men. The society is using the verbal arts as an ideological tool so as to regulate the roles and behaviour of its members and to make power asymmetries between men and women look natural and to force the society to accept the inevitability of this gender inequality.

In general, Macha Oromo women have low status in the society and are in a disadvantageous position in every aspect due to the prevailing tradition of the society that gives priority to men. They usually do not participate in decision making with men and are usually expected to be loyal and good servants in the society. The folktales and proverbs (especially those centred on men and women) have not been adapted to what the time needs at the moment. They still teach the youth that men are expected to be autonomous, assertive and possess aggressive behaviour whereas women are expected to be dependent, generous, docile and timid. The verbal arts indoctrinate the recipients with the notion that women are not equal to men, and mainly endorse women to be confined to works related to reproductive roles and urge them to play a subservient role both in their families and in the society. They dictate women to conform to stereotypical notions of female behavior so as to escape from punishment and live peacefully in the patriarchal society.

Macha Oromo society is characterized by a patriarchal social structure that presumes the unequal power relations between men and women. These unequal power relations in which men dominate women in every aspect is inculcated in the minds of the people with the help of verbal arts. Thus women are not supposed to complain against male authority, and about the problems they face in the society and the injustice meted out to them. The verbal arts were found to reinforce patriarchal ideology in which men

and the masculine qualities are valued and women and feminine qualities are undermined. Suffice it to say that the folktales and proverbs discussed in this dissertation show that Macha Oromo is a phallogentric society_ a society which shows a preference for traditionally masculine qualities rather than traditionally feminine ones.

When seen from a feminist angle, the gender systems reflected in Macha Oromo verbal arts are unfair and oppressive to women and that women are obliged to conform to these oppressive gender roles mainly because of patriarchal ideology that is well established in the society. To put it in a nutshell, Macha Oromo men's and women's role in the labour process, decision making, leadership and in many other social activities has been recognized as legitimate and natural rather than as a mere customary practice adopted by the society in the course of time. The verbal arts scrutinized so far seem to have been propagating, validating, and maintaining the prevailing gender system and the traditional gender based division of labour among the society.

7.2 Recommendations

In an attempt made to examine the verbal arts, it has been found out that women have been treated unfairly for a long period of time by the patriarchal society; they have been relegated to lower positions in social, economic and political affairs mainly because of the ingrained gender stereotypes and patriarchal structures that gives priority and value to men. The patriarchy has been using verbal arts, particularly folktales and proverbs, to instill its ideas, values, morals and the likes in the minds of its members. The mindset reflected in folktales and proverbs and the socialization process in the society seem to have perpetuated the traditional gender role stereotypes and thereby the perceived maltreatment of women. It should be born in mind that the efforts some institutions and organizations make to achieve gender equality are improbable without removing the traditional sex role stereotypes from the minds of the current generation. Hence, it is crucial for the young generation to be conscious and cautious about what is spoken by way of proverbs and folktales since these genres especially those which focus on men and women “reflect a life style that may have served the earlier generation well but would be considered outmoded or even dangerous today” (Okpewho, 1992:115).

Unlike in older times, the channels through which the society indoctrinates their children with their values, norms, beliefs and the likes have been changed quite

differently; long ago when schools and mass media have not been widespread, children used to learn their society's gender roles from their families and the images they acquire from the different oral arts they are told by their elders. However, now days, besides the above channels, children learn their gender roles from the different forms of verbal arts they learn at schools/read from books and from various radio and TV programs and so forth. It is believed that the verbal arts that the current generation read from books play an influential role in perpetuating the traditional gender stereotypes prevalent in the society. Therefore, curriculum designers and those who collect and publish these genres of folklore without any edition should be sensitive to the gender biases or the implications of the images of men and women contained therein the verbal arts.

As the data in hand reveal, still now, there is a tendency to consider women as weak and unknowledgeable members of the society who are unable to discharge social responsibilities related to leadership, decision making and the likes due to the prevailing gender role stereotypes. Women are still required to carry out the monotonous household chores and remain submissive to their husbands; they are also viewed as less important and usually approached with suspicion. However, this mode of thinking, which the verbal arts propagate, is creating a big problem in the lives of many people; unlike in older times, there are frequent conflicts between spouses and the divorce rate also seems to be rising tremendously. Presumably, the problems could be attributed to men's expectation of women and women's awareness of their rights and the impact of patriarchal expectations in their lives. The current and the coming generation are, therefore, expected to avoid sexist and misogynistic attitudes and unnecessary traits which are often associated with women.

As in the older times, women still play a crucial role in the nurturing and upbringing of their children in the society. They are the ones who primarily take the responsibility to socialize their children to behave the way the society expects them. While they urge their daughters to help them in monotonous household chores, they usually give freedom for their sons to go out and play with their peers, which in turn leads to women's perception of themselves as subordinates and unequal to men. The youth (men) in the society still consider cooking food, collecting firewood, fetching water from the river, caring for children and the likes as an exclusive role of women because of their socialization. Therefore, mothers are required to treat their children (both male and

female) equally and socialize them to carry out every activity without any prejudice and help them develop the habit of doing everything regardless of their gender.

Men in the society still believe themselves to be superior to women and usually want to maintain their monopoly of positions of economic, political, and social power; they want women to remain under their domination being powerless and dependent on them. This mentality will inevitably lead to social unrest in the future when more and more women become aware of their rights and began to ask for equality. Thus the researcher strongly urges men to keep away sexism and traditional patriarchal notions in which women are undermined, and instead develop and embrace the belief in gender equality without any precondition.

Lastly, I would like to urge the youth to abstain themselves from using the verbal arts which are pregnant with gender biases and designed to distort women's image; it seems wise to consider these verbal arts as outdated and instead adapt and uphold verbal arts in which both men and women are equally portrayed without any prejudice for the well-being of everyone.

Suggestions for Further Research

In this study, an attempt was made to investigate gender roles and the perception of women as reflected in the verbal arts of the Macha Oromo from a feminist standpoint. It has been found out that Macha Oromo verbal arts are embedded with images that primarily urge men and women to conform to well-established behavioral norms and are used to propagate, validate, and maintain the prevailing gender system and the traditional gender based division of labour among the society. While it seems relevant to deal with, the current study has not made an attempt to examine whether there is any relationship between the embedded images in the verbal arts and the risk taking behaviours perpetuated by these verbal arts among men in the society. The study, thus, could be further developed to investigate the role verbal arts play in encouraging masculinity behaviours and the risks associated with them in the society nowadays. The researcher feels that the images of men reflected in the verbal arts could be the cause to provoke them to take risks that harm themselves as well as women (that we commonly observe from mass media now a day).

In the current study, the researcher merely intended to examine how gender roles are indoctrinated by means of verbal arts particularly through folktales and proverbs in

Macha Oromo society. However, the research could have been conducted by comparing the gender roles reflected in the verbal arts with those depicted in written literature or other media. Hence, by narrowing its scope, one could further develop the research to a comparative study between the gender roles reflected in the verbal arts and those depicted in novels, short stories, poems or dramas. By way of doing this, the would-be researcher could see whether there is any significant change in the depiction of men and women in the two genres vis-a-vis gender roles. Besides, the research could enable one to see whether the present authors are propagating and perpetuating the traditional division of labour between men and women in the society or not as in the case of verbal arts.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Folktales

MOFT-1: A Husband and His Unfaithful Wife

Long ago, there lived a husband and a wife. Both of them were farmers, and they lived together peacefully for many years. Once in their life, the wife began to show unusual behavior. Even if she used to prepare him food as usual, she refused to eat together with him. She also began to nag him day and night, and sometimes she began to stay the whole day out wandering in the village. As a result, her husband began to investigate the cause for her unusual behavior in spite of the fact that he could not identify it easily.

One day, he decided to seek for advice from his friend about the issue, and he went to his friend's home and told the case one by one to him. His friend became very surprised and told him that it is a simple issue and promised him that they could investigate together in a short period of time. He advised the husband to tell his wife that he would leave the home for about a week to visit his relatives who live at a distant place. He also informed him to ask her to prepare a ration that he would eat on his way. At last, he told him to take the food that she would prepare him and come to his home saddling his horse.

The husband did everything that his friend told him. He went back home and told his wife that he would go and stay the whole week in his relatives' home, and asked her to prepare him food. As soon as she heard this, she became very happy and began to prepare him food. While she was preparing him food, he went to the field and brought the horse to saddle. She immediately brought the food she prepared to him and told him that he could stay for more than a week if he needed. Then the husband saddled his horse and changed his clothes and left the home for his friend's residential area. When he reached there, his friend welcomed him and they stayed together chatting until dusk. At last, his friend advised him to return to his home by dyeing himself with charcoal and wearing dirty clothes that beggars wear and act as a beggar and beg her to stay the night at his own home.

Having been convinced by the advice, the husband began his journey back home wearing dirty clothes and dyeing himself with charcoal. He reached his home and begged her to provide him leftovers and asked her to stay the night around the home as it got darker and darker. She provided him with the leftovers and allowed him to stay the night at her home. He thanked for her kindness and stayed the night there watching what was going on.

After a while, a man (her lover) arrived at home and asked her who the poor man sitting outside was. She replied him that he was a beggar and wanted to stay the night at home because he could not go further as it got darker. Her lover asked her to bring him some food, and she told him that it was not ready. She told him, "I was waiting for you to slaughter one of the lambs at home for us". Then her fellow caught one of the best lambs at home and slaughtered it with the help of the pseudo beggar, and gave the meat to her. She prepared a nice food from the meat and they enjoyed their dinner together feeding each other and giving the beggar their leftovers. The pseudo beggar refused to eat on the pretext that he did not like meat. The wife together with the lover made merry eating the food and drinking 'farso' <local beer>. At night, they slept together telling the beggar to watch out and tell them if anything strange might come around.

At about midnight, having checked that they had finished their affairs, the pseudo beggar (husband) took a knife and went to the bedroom and beheaded the man (her lover) and hid his head in the granary while she was in a deep sleep. When she was awake, she saw that the bed was full of blood and her lover had no head. She was surprised at the case and she immediately took the corpse outside, dug the ground in the back yard and buried it. In the morning, the pseudo beggar acknowledged her and went back to his friend's home.

After a day, her husband (the pseudo beggar) came back home on the pretext that the horse refused to go forward. Then, the wife welcomed him and told him that one of the lambs was lost, and tried to lie him that it was probably eaten by a tiger. He listened to her and calmed her down saying that it would happen in life. While they were talking to each other, a cock crowed repeatedly and unusually, and she asked her husband what was going on. Her husband told her, "The cock was saying that a corpse was lying in the backyard and its head was in the granary." He asked her to go and check the head in the granary and approve it. She went to the granary and saw that the head of the man was in

the granary. Meanwhile, the husband became very angry at her deed and amputated her hands, blinded her and told her to leave his home, it was said.

MOFT-2: The Unfortunate Queen

A long time ago, there lived an old king and a beautiful young queen. The king used to love the queen, and he did not use to let her go out for fear of being seduced by his bodyguards. He was so weak that he could not fulfill her sexual desires; as a result, she was bored of living with him and began to seek for another man with whom she could enjoy her life. She wanted to discuss the matter with one of the bodyguards she had been dreaming to be with.

One day, when the king went to visit another place, she called that bodyguard and raised the issue to him. She invited the bodyguard to eat and drink and stay the night with her. That night she enjoyed life with the guard; she told him that she would poison the food she would prepare to the king and kill him so that she would live peacefully with him (the guard) for the rest of her life. The next day, when the king arrived from the visit, she did as she plotted. The king passed away and she told people that he had been poisoned during the visit. The people lamented and buried their beloved king who is known for his sympathy and mercifulness. After a few days they appointed her as their queen and heir of the king. She accepted cheerfully and began to lead the country for few days.

After a few days, she appointed the guard (her lover) as chief of the bodyguards and required him to accompany her everywhere she would go. She enjoyed life with the bodyguard (lover) in such a way for a few years. During her reign, so many people suffered a lot as she had been preoccupied by beautifying herself and enjoying life with her lover forgetting her main business. As a result, lawlessness became rampant in the country.

A few years later, she became bored of this bodyguard and began to nag him day and night. She wanted to change him with another younger, muscular, bodyguard. She told the secret to the new bodyguard, and he in turn told his best friend about the case. Meanwhile the former bodyguard (the chief) heard the plot and wanted to discuss the issue with her. She refused to talk to him, and even required him to leave the compound the next day. That night the chief (her bodyguard and lover) organized the rest of the bodyguards and told them to be ready to lead the country with him as of the next day. He

assassinated the queen and declared himself that he was the king of the country then after. A few months later, he married a very beautiful, young lady and began to lead the country in a better manner, it was said.

MOFT-3: A Man and His nine Sons

Long ago, there lived a man who had nine sons. The man had a friend whom he used to trust more than anybody else. His friend's wife passed away without giving birth to any child, and he was preparing to marry another woman. Once, in their life, their neighboring country waged a war on their country, and the government asked the man to send all his sons to the war front. The man unwillingly sent his sons to the war front, but advised them to fight bravely and return home with victory. Their mother prepared them a ration, and saw them off lamenting on the farewell.

After a few months, the man asked his friend for advice on what to do for all his sons who went to the war front. His friend advised them (husband and wife) to pray to 'Waaqa' <God> together, and not to think negatively all the time and to do good things for people if they needed to see their sons alive after the war would be over. Then they accepted the advice and began to pray for them day and night and did everything as his friend told them for a while.

A few months later, his friend whom he used to trust very well came to his home and told him that he would go to a far place to make fortune before he would get married to the second wife. Then his friend ordered his wife to prepare him a ration that his friend would eat on his way. The wife was tired of making food all the time and decided to hurt his friend. Thus, having prepared the food, she poisoned it and gave it to her husband to deliver to his friend. Unknowingly, her husband took the ration and delivered it to his friend. Thanking for their kindness, then, the man took the food and went the journey without tasting it.

While he was going to the place he had planned to make fortune, he came across the nine sons of his friend on a river while they were coming home after the war was over. There he greeted them and distributed the food that he was given by their parents. He had no idea that the food was poisoned and as a matter of chance he had not tasted the food. Then the nine sons all ate the food to their fill happily, and after a few minutes all of them fainted and died there.

The voyager was astonished by the incidence and immediately returned home and told his friend what had happened. He said, “I came across your sons on my way to the place I was going to make fortune, and distributed the food you gave me around a river while they were coming back home. They ate the food and immediately all of them fainted and died there. The people around helped me and we buried all of them there. I just came back to let you know it and express my condolences.

Having heard about the death of his sons, the man became very upset and began to investigate what put his children to death. He knew that there was poison at home, and he immediately went to check its presence. He could not find any poison in its place, and asked his wife who took it. She admitted that she added some poison to the food she prepared to kill the man for nothing. Immediately, the man beat her severely and told her to leave the home. She left his home and went back to her family. At last, his best friend soothed him and advised him to marry other nine wives to father nine sons within a year. His friend and the neighbors helped him to marry nine wives within a week and he succeeded in fathering nine sons in a year’s time, it was said.

MOFT-4: Mother-in-law and son-in-law

Long ago, there lived a husband, a wife and her mother. They used to live together in a hut and they did not have any relationship with their neighbors. The mother-in-law used to nag her son-in-law day and night. She used to advise her daughter to isolate herself from neighbors; she repeatedly told her daughter not to cooperate with anyone in the village. As a result, they did not use to visit their neighbors, work with them, even did not use to participate on the funeral ceremony of their neighbors when it happened. Being angry at their behavior, their neighbors abandoned them. Because of his mother-in-law, the husband became a social outcast. Hence, they had been leading their life lonely being isolated from social life owing to the lady.

Once in their life, a malarial epidemic broke out in the village and unluckily the lady (mother-in-law) became extremely sick and died of it. Meanwhile the husband and wife began to cry seeking help from their neighbors. Unfortunately, since their neighbors were very angry at them before, they did not show up to help them in crying and dispose the corpse. The couple began to offend each other and began to yell at one another for failing to get help from their neighbors at this crucial time. The husband muttered that it was owing to her behavior that they could not get help in times of difficulty. The wife, on

her part, blamed him for the problem created. As they could not find anyone to help them in carrying the corpse, dig the ground and bury the corpse, they decided to dispose of the corpse themselves.

Having lost any alternative, the couple agreed to put the corpse on the back of the donkey and took it to the cemetery. Putting the corpse on the donkey's back, they began the journey to the cemetery. As soon as they reached there, the husband began to dig the ground alone while she was watching out the dead body on the donkey's back. After a while, the husband ordered her to go back home and prepare him food, telling her that he would bury her mother and would come home as soon as he would finish. She agreed and returned the home leaving the dead body on the donkey's back and her husband at the cemetery.

After a while, the husband finished digging the ground and wanted the donkey to untie the coffin and put the corpse in it. However, the donkey had already disappeared in the forest taking the corpse and left for an unknown place. In spite of the fact that he searched everywhere, he could not find the donkey.

Then he returned home and began to eat the food that his wife prepared. As soon as he arrived at home and began to eat the food, the donkey appeared carrying the corpse. Meanwhile the husband called out his wife from the kitchen and told her that her mother was so bad to him both when she was alive and after death. Soon he drove the donkey to the cemetery and buried his mother-in-law cursing, it was said.

MOFT-5: The Perceptive Brother and His Sister

Once up on a time, there lived a man who used to lead his life by working as a daily laborer. He was single, and used to receive a bar of salt as a wage in return for his daily work. Since he did not have enough space at his home, he used to store his bars of salt at his sister's home.

His sister was married to a certain man; she had only one child to whom she gave birth not long ago. Gradually, the bars of salt he used to accumulate at his sister's home filled the granary. As a result, one day he wanted to take some of them to a market, and asked his sister to wait for him at home the next day to give him the bars of salt. However, she wanted to take his property by fooling him. She collected a number of stones from the field and filled the granary with the stones putting the bars of salt in a big

box around the bedroom. She waited for him and soon she saw him coming at a distance, she left the home to fetch water from the river. On her way to the river, she told him to collect his bars of salt from the granary and told him to wait for her waiting after the child till she would return and continued her journey to the river.

Her brother reached home, and when he opened the granary, he found a number of stones rather than the bars of salt he expected. Thereafter, he immediately recognized that it was she (his sister) who did like that, and he devised a mechanism by which he would get back his bars of salt. Then he went to the nearby forest and caught the young of a monkey and put in the bed taking the child to his uncle's home.

When she came back home from the river, she found the young of the monkey in the bed instead of her child. Meanwhile she began crying having thought that the child was truly converted to a monkey. Sarcastically, her brother also began to cry saying that his bars of salt were converted to stones. She heard him while he was crying to his bars of salt and soothed him that they were in the big box around the bedroom. At last, he became very happy and calmed her down and told her that her child was in his uncle's home. Thereafter, he decided not to trust any woman including his mother, it was said.

MOFT-6: The Foolish She-monkey

Once up on a time, there lived a he-monkey who had no wife. He was poor, too. One day, while he was wandering in search for food and female, he came across a she-monkey who was weeding in her garden alone. Her husband died a year before; she was alone.

Then, the he-monkey approached and asked her, "Why do you suffer that much (weeding alone) while it is possible to sit and eat without any work?" The she-monkey inquired, "How and where is it possible to sit and eat without working?" The monkey told her that he had lots of property that was suffice not only for her but also for others. In reality, he even had nothing to eat for himself.

He persuaded her to accompany him to his home through the forest. She was convinced and followed him. He mated her in the forest and told her to stay there for some days. She agreed but asked him to give her something to be eaten as she was too hungry. Being on the tree, he showed her a certain rich man's compound and told her that it belonged to him. He, then, told her to go and take some food and bring some for him.

Supposing that it was truly his own compound, she went to the compound to eat some food. There, the owners caught her and beat her seriously. She cried and called out to him why he was keeping quiet while they were beating her. Meanwhile, he ran away and escaped leaving her in the hands of the enemy, it was said.

MOFT-7: Who Should Marry? [A]

Long ago, there lived three young men in a country. Three of them wanted to marry a beautiful girl that lived in their neighboring village. The youths asked her father to give his daughter to them. The father, with no doubt, promised to give his daughter to the one who was more knowledgeable than the other.

Having heard this, the youths went to school to prove that one was better than the other. After a few years, they completed their education and returned to their hometowns having acquired three different skills. One of them studied medicine and became a medical doctor, and the second became a pilot, and the third one graduated with a job related to telecommunications and became an expert in the field.

Three of them were employed in their respective field of institutions; and they wanted to ask again the father to evaluate their knowledge and give them the girl. While they were planning to ask the father, the girl they had been competing on to marry was stung by a snake in the countryside and was suffering a lot.

Meanwhile, the telecommunications expert phoned and heard that she was seriously sick. After that, he told the remaining two young men about her sickness. Eventually, the pilot took his plane and went to the countryside and brought her to a hospital where the third person (doctor) works. In the hospital, the doctor treated her (gave her appropriate medicine) and she recovered from her illness.

Thereafter, the three young men inquired her father to evaluate their knowledge and skills and give to the one who was better than the other as promised. Meanwhile the father, together with other elders, asked them to narrate their roles in healing his beloved daughter. The expert in the field of telecommunications told them (father and elders) that he phoned and heard that she was sick and informed the remaining two. “Had not I phoned and heard about her illness, she would have died without any treatment,” he said, and claimed he would deserve to marry her.

The pilot, on his part said, “As soon as I heard about her illness, I took the plane, arrived at her place, and took her to a hospital.” “Had not I taken her to a hospital, she would have died there; so it is me who should marry her,” he added.

The doctor, on his part said, “It was me who cured your daughter; both of them had not done anything special in curing your daughter. If I were not in a hospital and did not recommend the right medicine, she would die of the poisonous of the snake; so it is me who should marry her.”

Having listened to their narrations, the father and the elders made the following decision. “Had not the telecommunications expert first heard about the girl’s illness and reported soon, both the pilot and the doctor would not have helped her. Therefore, the one who heard about the sickness of the girl first should marry her; and let the pilot be her goodwill elder brother and the doctor be her goodwill younger brother.”

MOFT-8: Who Should Marry? [B]

Long ago, there lived a beautiful girl. One day, this girl went to a river to wash clothes there and fetch water. Suddenly, the river overflowed, and she fell into the river. She was slightly left from being drowned; and the river took her to the nearby lake and threw her out on a small island in the middle of the lake.

Since she did not know how to swim, she called out to a certain lady who was weeding in the field around the lake for help. The lady did not know how to swim, too; and she told her to stay there for a while until she would go to the village and call for someone who could help her. After a while, she went to a village and called for a boy who can swim and rescue people.

The boy arrived at the lake and told her that there was a dangerous crocodile in the lake, and informed her that he would not swim and rescue her until the crocodile would be shot dead. Then the boy went to call out for another boy who had a gun so that he would shoot and kill the crocodile.

The boy who had a gun arrived and saw that the crocodile was so far away from the shore of the lake, and told them that his gun cannot kill it at a far distance. Consequently, they began to search for a mechanism in which they could bring the crocodile closer to the shore. Immediately, the boy who could swim told them that a

crocodile usually enjoys listening to music, and hence told them to call for a boy who could properly blow 'ulullee' (a folk musical instrument which resembles an oboe).

After a while, the player of the 'ulullee' arrived and began blowing it. Meanwhile, the crocodile began to swim closer to the shore to listen to the music. Then the boy who had the gun shot and killed the crocodile. After that the boy who could swim entered the lake and swam towards the girl and rescued her.

At the end, the three boys wanted to marry the girl and began to quarrel over her, saying, "Hadn't I done like this, she could have been in danger." The boys asked her father to give them for marriage one by one. The father discussed the issue with the elders in the neighbor and decided to give in marriage for the 'ulullee' player. The elders (including the father) commended the swimmer to be the girl's first goodwill brother, and the boy who shot and killed the crocodile to be her second goodwill brother, it was said.

MOFT- 9: Matricidal Attempt

Once upon a time, there lived two boys and a girl. The siblings had a mother, but they did not have a father. Their mother used to stay at home and cook food for them while the girl used to collect firewood, fetch water, grind grains and cereals and other similar things. The boys, on their part, ploughed land and kept cattle.

Their mother used to pray all the time being indoors after completing her daily routine. Their sister died suddenly, and the family could not easily find somebody who would help them with the household chores.

The siblings worried a lot about their mother for she refused to go out of home and collect firewood and fetch water from the river after the death of their sister. Then the siblings discussed together on what to do about their mother. They said, "If we tell her to leave our home and ask her to go to another place, our neighbors may deem us as if we hated our mother." "Therefore, we should behead and hide her somewhere," they agreed. Meanwhile a small child from a neighbor heard this conspiracy and told his mother.

The child's mother was a good friend of the lady and she told her about the case and asked her to leave the home as soon as possible. The mother of the siblings, however, declined to accept her advice and told her that she would accept the punishment if it was from Waaqa <God> and continued praying being indoors.

Thereafter, one night the siblings decided to behead their mother, and agreed that one of them should wait for people from outside in case she would cry, and the other should enter the home and behead her. After that the elder one entered the home to behead his mother and while he was searching for a knife, a python sprang from under the wall and swallowed him. The younger brother waited for a long period of time and called out for his elder brother. When he lost any response, he entered the home to check what happened. Meanwhile the python also swallowed him and the mother was left without being touched.

Then the mother said, “How on earth people plot to kill their mother who carry them in her womb for about nine months and bring them up breastfeeding?” *“Waaqayooof waan hin danda’amne hin jiru; ani nan hafe isaan hindhumani”* <There is nothing impossible for God; now I am save, and they perished> she added, it was said.

MOFT-10: The Stepmother and Children

Once upon a time, there lived a husband and a wife who had two children. One day, the wife became sick and died unexpectedly. After some times, the husband married another wife and brought to his home. He did not tell her that he had two children from the former wife. The new wife arrived at home and saw the children. She asked him, “Whose children are they?” The man responded, “They are mine.” Then, she told him that she would not live with him unless he cast them out.

The next day, she went to the river to fetch some water warning the man, “I do not want to see these children when I come back from the river.” The man nodded his head and said, “That is all right; I shall cast them out.” But he did not really want to miss his children.

He devised a mechanism in which he would keep the children at home for some days. Soon, he put the children in the granary and ordered them not to speak any word for some days. He promised that he would provide them food in the granary as much as possible. When she returned from the river, he wanted to fool her and said, “I have abandoned the children. “Some minutes before your arrival, the god of my father also told me to reject the children; the god also told me that he is living in the granary and needs to be fed three times a day.”

“He warned me to give him food three times a day,” he added. The man warned his wife not to look in the granary for some five days. “Very well,” said the wife being happy having thought that her wish was supported by her father’s-in-law spirit and began to throw some food in the granary three times per day.

One day, the new wife went to a certain woman’s home to get her hair made. While they were gossiping there, the newly married wife said, “My husband has taken his children away from me and I have no one to take care of.” “But he told me to give his father’s god, who lives in the granary, some food three times a day,” she added.

The woman with whom she was talking to told her that her husband was fooling her. She told her that he was making her feed his children in the granary; and advised her to check whether it was true or false. As she was advised, the stepmother immediately went to the granary and discovered the children inside. Soon she boiled water and spilled in the granary and killed the two children there. The husband arrived and discovered that his children were killed, and he in turn killed the new wife in retaliation, it was said.

MOFT-11: The Selfish Wife and Her Silly Husband

Long ago there lived, a silly farmer who married a clever wife. Having observed her husband’s stupidity, the wife cheated him several times. She used to prepare food and eat alone most of the time. One day she prepared ‘shiro’ and gave him to eat while she melted some butter to eat with for herself later. She used to cheat him that she preferred to eat with clear water than with ‘shiro’. She repeatedly cheated the man by saying, “I do not like to eat with ‘shiro’ but with clear water”.

One day, her husband went to visit a friend and told him that his wife did not like to eat with ‘shiro’ except clear water.” Then his friend asked him, “Have you checked whether it is truly water or not?” “Of course not,” the silly man responded. “Listen, my friend, your wife is deceiving you!” After all, when she will tell you, “I dine with this water”, you do also say, “I too will dine like you with this water, and eat what she eats,” his friend advised.

That day, he came back home mumbling, “very well, my friend has given me a good advice!” His wife, believing it was like the other days, melted some butter for herself and served the “shiro” to her husband. She said: “I will eat my bread with this water” and she started to eat. He too said: “I will also eat with you.” “How would I ever

eat this ‘shiro’ while you eat with water all the time?” he added and began to eat with her. He dipped his bread in the dish and realized that it was butter indeed as his friend told him.

Soon he caught his wife and began to beat her with a whip. When her whole body began to bleed, he left and let her go. After that day onwards, he told her to leave his home and go to her parents.

MOFT-12: The Girl and Her Mother’s Lover

Once upon a time, the woman was weeding in the garden while her daughter was preparing food inside the house. Meanwhile, the lover of the mother came and entered the house. He asked the girl, “Where is your mother?” She told him that she was weeding in the garden.

Then the man requested her to call for him. The girl called her mother and told that her secret man had arrived. The mother became happy and told her to go to the river and fetch some water from the river so that she would be free. Returning home, the girl, however, told the man to accompany her to the river and wait for her there.

The man went to the river with his lover’s daughter. When they reached near the river, the girl told the man that her mother was waiting for another lover. The man became very angry and wanted to go back immediately and see the reality. Soon the girl embraced the man and kissed him once. Then, the man took her to the nearby forest and slept with her.

After she returned from the river, the girl told her mother that the man hated her. She said, “The man told me that he came to inform you that he did not need you.” Finally, the mother became angry and said, “Who begged him to come first?” it was said.

MOFT-13: The Shameless Bride

Long ago, there lived an old lady who had a son. Since she was getting older and older, she needed someone to help her with the household chores at home. She told her son to search and marry a girl who is clever at work. Then, the boy found a beautiful girl and sent two elders to the girl’s parents to ask their daughter for him. When the wedding day had come, the boy, being accompanied by his friends, went to the bride’s home and brought her home.

After they stayed together for a short period of time, he discovered that she was a kind of girl who does not like to work. One day, he went for farming in the morning while she was sleeping. When he came back in the afternoon, he observed her lying on the bed again. The other day, he went for hunting while she was sleeping. He again found her lying on the bed without preparing anything for him. He became angry and asked her why she did not prepare him meal until then. She responded, “There is your mother for that; I have not also eaten anything yet; you had better ask her.” Then the boy decided to divorce her and marry another girl. His mother, however, cooled him down, and promised to advise her so that she would correct her behavior.

His mother advised her time and again, but there was no change in behavior with the bride. Then the mother devised a strategy in which she would initiate the bride to work. She said to her son, “Tomorrow morning, I will wake up early and start cleaning the room; meanwhile, you do also wake up and pretend you will help me: this time she feels shame and stand up to clean the room herself.” “Let us try it if you say so,” the son said.

The next morning, the boy and his mother tried the tactic while she was sleeping. They began to converse loudly to one another, “stop”, “No,” “I’ll clean; a man does not clean a room; etc”. The wife heard them and said, “Keep quiet, do not shout at me; I am sleeping.” “If you need, clean the room turn by turn; one of you today and the other tomorrow,” she added. Finally, having lost his patience, the boy divorced her and married another hardworking girl, it was said.

MOFT-14: Queen Akkoo Manooyyee

Long ago, there lived a queen named Akkoo Manooyyee. It was said that she had unlimited power and was highly dictatorial. During her reign, people had suffered a lot, as she used to order them to do everything including the impossible ones. She used to enjoy challenging people, and as a result, people became restless under her dictatorial regime. Even though the elders advised her not to behave unusually, she neglected their advice and continued her deeds.

Later, the elders began to advise the people not to accept her orders. As a result, she hated the elders and wanted to exterminate all those who try to divert her work scheme. One day, she ordered the people to summon the elders and kill all of them in her territory. The people agreed and killed the elders in the country. However, one of the

elders begged them not to kill him so that he would be a ‘medicine’ (helpful) for them in times of difficulties. The people agreed and kept him secretly without telling Akkoo Manooyyee.

After a while, Akkoo Manooyyee ordered the people to cover the land in her territory with blue color. Then the people went to the remaining elder and asked what to do. The elder advised them to burn all the vegetation on the ground at night and show her in the morning. The people did burn the vegetation and showed her in the morning. “Who told you to do so?” the queen asked them. “We did it ourselves,” the people said.

Then the queen ordered them to build a house for her, suspending on the air. Having been confused, the people again went to the elder to seek for advice. Then the elder told them to collect all the materials for making a house and make it ready. “After that, call her and ask to lay a foundation for her house, as it is the owner who first lays a base for his/her house, as per the culture” he said. The people did as the elder advised them. As she realized that it is impossible to make a house on the air, she told them to leave and go back to their homes.

The next day, she summoned the people and ordered them to search and bring her a horse that can fly in the sky like a bird. The people asked her, “From where can we get this flying horse, our queen?” “Explore the entire world and bring to me; I cannot tell you where such a horse is found,” she responded. Then the people thought over it and went to the elder for advice again.

The elder advised them to go to a desert, catch a zebra and bring to her. “After that, you put the queen on the back of the zebra, tie her down on it and leave; soon the zebra will run away and take her to the desert,” he said. The people went to a desert and caught a zebra and brought to her home as they were told by the man.

They showed her the zebra and told her that it can fly; they saddled the zebra and took her and put on its back and tied her down on it and left it. Meanwhile, the zebra became so nervous, ran away through a desert and killed the queen, it was said.

MOFT-15: The Foolish Husband and Wife

So many years ago, there lived a husband and a wife. They were so foolish and poor that many people in their area make fun of them. They had only one ox. One day, they were invited to eat dinner at their neighbor’s home.

On the invitation date, they went to their neighbor's house and ate 'ittoo lukkuu' (chicken). They had never eaten such a food before; and hence they enjoyed it very much. After they finished eating the 'ittoo lukkuu'(chicken), they began to inquire their host about the food. They asked about the name of the food, what it was made of, and how to prepare it.

The wife of their neighbor (host) replied to their questions one by one. The foolish man's wife asked, "From where can we get the chicken? And how much does it cost?" As she knew that they had only an ox, their host replied, "You can buy it from a market; it costs only an ox."

Then the foolish wife persuaded her foolish husband to sell the ox and buy a chicken so that she would make a similar dish the next day. The man agreed and took the ox to the market the next day. Many people asked him to buy the ox, but they were confused as his answer was a bit vague to them. When people in the market used to ask him, "How much is your ox?", he used to respond saying "It is a chicken." As a result, many people laughed at him having thought that he was not normal. At last a certain man discovered that he was foolish and brought a chicken to him and required him to give him the ox. Then the man took the chicken and gave his client the ox and went back to his home.

He reached home and gave the chicken to his wife and ordered her to make the kind of food they had eaten from their neighbor's home the previous day. While she was making the chicken, he went to a nearby 'katikala'(local drink) house to drink and enjoy. When she finished preparing the chicken, she called him out from the 'katikala' house and told him to watch out around the home till she would go to a river and fetch water. On her way to the river, a certain man came to her and asked where she was going. She replied to him that she went in short of water at home while making chicken, and then she was going to fetch water from the river.

As soon as she passed him to the river, the man quickly went to her house and ate all the chicken she prepared and left immediately. After a few minutes, the husband and the wife came back home together and when they looked in the cooker, nothing was there in it except some flies on its edge. They became very angry at the incident having thought that it was eaten by the flies.

In retaliation, the husband began to kill the flies. While trying to kill the flies, he broke a number of utensils made of clay at home. First, he saw the flies on the cooker and seized a stick and broke the cooker in an attempt to hit the flies. Secondly, he saw a fly on the pot and hit it; the fly escaped and the pot was broken again. Then the fly sat on the kettle and he hit it and killed, but the kettle was also broken. At the end, one of the flies sat on his wife's forehead. The wife pointed to the fly on her forehead with her finger and asked him to hit the fly. Soon the man seized an axe so as to hit the fly on her forehead. The fly escaped, but he severely hit his wife's forehead with an axe and killed her there, it was said.

MOFT-16: The Younger Daughter

Long ago, there lived an old lady in the countryside. She used to live alone as her husband died in the war front; she had two daughters and a son. One day while she was going back home from the market, she came across a gentle boy. This boy asked her where she was going. She replied that she was going to her home from the market. The boy begged the lady to accompany her home as his parent's home was so far and that he could not reach on time. She agreed and they continued the journey chatting together.

On their way, they came across a number of cattle with different colors. Some of them were white and others are black. The boy asked the lady, "Among these cattle, which ones are large in number: the whites or the black ones?" The lady replied that the white ones are greater in number. They passed the cattle on their way and continued their journey.

Once again the boy asked the lady, "Mother, among those cattle, which ones are large in number: heifers or bullocks?" The lady replied, "The heifers are large in number." After a long journey, they arrived at her home, and the lady ordered her daughters to make coffee for the guest. Soon they made coffee and of the two daughters, the elder one stood to serve him the coffee in a big cup. However, the boy refused to take from her and stared at the younger one. After that the younger one tried to give him the coffee in a small cup; now he accepted from her and drank the coffee cheerfully.

At night, their mother ordered them to prepare dinner and serve the guest. The daughters prepared the dinner and the younger one again made him wash his hands and served him the food. Then the boy once again accepted and ate the dinner. After the dinner, the lady ordered her daughters to wash his legs and arrange the bed for him to

sleep. The younger one washed his leg and showed him the bed. He slept peacefully and stayed the night there.

In the morning, the daughters prepared breakfast, woke him up and served him. Having eaten the breakfast, the boy acknowledged the lady for her kindness and told her that he wanted to leave for his parent's home. Before leaving, he punctured (made a small hole in) the ground in seven different places with his spear and showed to the younger girl and left.

As soon as he left, the girl showed the holes to her mother, and the mother was surprised at his deed and worried a lot in case it was malevolent to the family. She told her children, "Yesterday, while we were coming home, we came across a number of cattle and he asked me, 'which of these cattle are large in number: the white ones or the black ones?'" I responded, "The white ones are greater in number." Once again he asked me, "Of those cattle, which ones are greater in number: bullocks or heifers?" I replied, "The heifers are greater in number." "If you had observed him, he refused to accept and drink coffee from the elder daughter in a big cup, but he accepted and drank the coffee from the younger one in a small cup. Today, he punctured the ground in seven different places and showed to the younger sister and left home." "What a malefic person did I bring to my home?" the mother muttered.

While she was in a worry, her son encouraged her and tried to interpret the incidence as follows. He said, "The boy does not seem so bad to us as you may think. His question about the number of white and black cattle may be simply about your children. For example, my younger sister and I are relatively "white", and our elder is almost black. So we are large in number, and your response was right.

His question about the number of heifers and bullocks still looks about us. You have more girls than boys. Heifers and bullocks meant daughters and sons. Your response was still right. He refused to accept the coffee from our elder meant that he did not need the elder one; this implies that he needed to marry the younger one.

Finally, he punctured the ground in seven different places may mean he would come after seven days/ a week. Having listened to him, the lady was highly astonished by her son's interpretation and began to wait for its realization. After a week, the boy sent elders to her home and asked to marry the younger daughter as per the culture of the society, it was said.

MOFT-17: The Brother and the Sister

Narrated by Tesfaye Chibsa

Source: <http://www.ethiopianfolktales.com/oromia/176-the-brother-and-the-sister>

Once upon a time there was a man, his wife and his son. One day the man was leaving for war, although his wife was pregnant.

So he called his son and said, "I have a great task for you. While I'm away it's your responsibility to look after your mother, [the cattle and the homestead]. But when she gives birth, I want you to do something for me. Look at the child and if it's a daughter, if it's a girl, kill the child and bring me her blood to the war front. However, if it's a male child, I want you to kill the black sheep and bring me its blood."

He made the son promise this and left for the war front.

After some time, the mother gave birth to a female child. Now the boy immediately liked his sister and didn't want to kill her. So he cut the black sheep and took the blood to the war front and lied to his father, saying his mother had given birth to a boy.

Then he went back and lived with his mother and sister; the father stayed at the battlefield for many years.

But one day the father was coming back and the son heard about this.

So he went to his sister and warned her.

He said, "Be careful. When our father comes he mustn't realise that you are his daughter. Therefore don't call him daddy or dad to show your affection, simply call him father, like any of the village children would, so he won't know you're his daughter."

So when the father came back he greeted him and called him father. Then he went back to the hut and put his sister on the back of a mule and rode away, saving the sister's life.

And they went and lived in a forest which had lots of wizards in it. The brother killed a lot of the wizards, but some remained. So they lived in the hut in the forest for a long time. One of the wizards used to come over to their house.

Gradually, he began courting the sister, and he said to her, "Marry me."

And the sister said, "You know that's not allowed in our culture: you've got to ask my brother for my hand in marriage."

But the wizard knew that nobody would allow their child or sister to marry a wizard.

So he kept coming again and again and saying, "You know your brother will never allow me to, therefore we must kill your brother and then get married."

Eventually she agreed and asked him what she should do. He said that she should pretend to be sick and should say to her brother that she needs wizards' food to become better. And then they would see what they could do about it.

So when her brother came home he found his sister sick and he asked her what he should do, and she said the only thing that would cure her was wizards' food. So he got up and went looking for the wizard. But on the way he found another wizard. And the other wizard warned him that if somebody was asking for wizards' food there was something evil going on, and they probably wanted to kill him.

So the wizard said, "Even if they do kill you, make them promise that they will tie you onto the mule's back and let you go out into the barley field."

In the meantime, the wizard had gone back to the sister and told her what to do.

So when the brother came back, the sister ate the wizards' food and said, "Now I'm OK, let's play a game."

And the brother said, "What sort of game do you want to play?"

And the sister said, "First, tie me to the central pillar."

Then she said, "Your turn."

And this time she tied him to the central pillar of the hut.

And she called the wizard and said, "Here he is, now you can kill him."

And the brother said, "First promise me that once I'm dead, you'll tie me on to a mule and let the mule go free in the barley field."

And they decided that once he was dead, there was nothing he could do. So they killed him and put him on to the mule's back and let the mule go with his rifle.

Now the other wizard saw the mule and the body and the rifle in the barley field, so he took them all home and he put the body back together and he breathed life into the brother's body and the brother came back to life.

And he gave him his rifle and said, "Look, now I've saved you."

And the brother took the rifle and killed the wizard. Then he took his sister on a mule and brought her back to his parents' village and he said, "This is my sister – I saved her life but she killed me."

MOFT-18: The Aggressive Husband

Once upon a time there lived a husband and a wife; they used to live on the outskirts of a town. The husband was so harsh that he used to order his wife to do everything that was needed for their livelihood. He used to drink alcohol from dawn to dusk in the town while she used to work in the field during day times and cook food in the morning and at dusk. As a result, she used to gnash her teeth at him, and one day she decided not to prepare any food for him and wanted to check what would happen if she refused to prepare food and serve him.

One day, the husband came back home from the town at dusk and required her to give him dinner as he was so hungry. He asked her, "Haven't you prepared any food yet today? I am so hungry and I want to eat and sleep on time." She replied, "I was weeding the crops in the field, and haven't made it ready yet." Then he stormily complained, "I will go back to town and eat from there if it takes you so long time to prepare; did not I tell you many times to make my dinner ready when I come back home from outside?" "I just came back home from the field a few minutes before your arrival; wait for me only for five minutes," she said trembling.

The husband became happy and muttered, "If the dinner can be ready in five minutes time, I will wait for you." "Let me wait here," he said, "and sat on the table outside." After five minutes, she came out washing her face and wearing her clothes." He looked at her fiercely and asked what the matter was. She replied, "Didn't I tell to you to wait for me for five minutes? I did not say I will prepare food in five minutes; I meant I would wash my face, wear my clothes and accompany you to the town so that we eat our dinner together." Finally he became very angry for being cheated, and beat her severely and went back to town alone to eat his dinner, it was said.

MOFT-19: The Woman and a Dead Tiger

Once upon a time, there lived a woman whose house was near a king's palace. The king was highly respected among his people and was adored for his kindness. One day, while she (the woman) was returning from the market, she saw a dead tiger lying on the road in the forest. She did not realize that the tiger was dead. She threw a stone at the dead tiger and hit it. Since it was dead the tiger did not respond. She collected some stones from the ground and struck it several times.

Later, she thought that she killed it and came close to the tiger and took it in her hands. "I shall give it to the king", she said. She made her husband skin it and brought the hide to the king. "I have killed a tiger alive and I have brought the hide to you," she said. The king gave her clothes, sheep and oxen in return.

A week later, she came across another tiger, alive now, lying on the road in the same forest. She said to herself, "I shall kill this one again and take the hide to the king as before." She collected some stones and began to throw at the tiger. Meanwhile, the tiger became angry at the lady, sprang up and devoured her, it was said.

MOFT-20: The Three Knowledgeable Men

A long time ago, there existed three famous and knowledgeable men in a country. It was said that no one in the world were more knowledgeable than them. One day, they discussed together and decided to migrate to another country being bored of living with ignorant and illiterate people in their country.

While they were migrating, they came across a forest. They continued their journey in the forest and in the middle came upon a dead lion whose bones, skin and mane are scattered on the ground. They watched the different parts of the dead lion carefully and began to wonder on how to bring the lion to being. One of the three men contemplated, "I can easily assemble different parts of its bone together." And the second one envisaged, "If you are able to assemble the bones together, I can provide the lion with its flesh and sew a skin for it." "If you two can really do all these things, I can provide the lion with a spirit and make it breath and bring back to life," the third person assured.

While they were discussing the issue in the forest, a certain illiterate man appeared and asked them what they were doing standing near a dead lion. They told him that they were discussing to bring the dead lion to existence. Then the illiterate man nodded his head and said, "I will sit here and watch how you will bring a dead lion to live again." After a while, the first man began to put the different bones of the lion in their right places.

As soon as he finished assembling the bones together, the second man began to attach flesh to it and sewed a skin to it. The illiterate man was astonished by their deeds and asked them in case it can devour them after coming to being. The three men laughed at him and said, "How something that we make in our hands devours us?" "Anyhow, it is better to be careful," the illiterate man commented and told the third person to wait for him until he would climb up a tree.

They made fun of him at the moment and told the third person to provide the lion with spirit. The third person mysteriously breathed the air into the lion's mouth and suddenly the lion sprang and devoured him there. The lion also ran and attacked the remaining two men and put them to death. After a short period of time, the lion left the area, and the illiterate man descended from the tree, went back to his home and told the story to people, it was said.

MOFT-21: Marriage Without Virginity

Once up on a time, there lived a rich man who had only one son. The son had reached the age for marriage. As a result, his father wanted him to marry a girl. His father together with other elders began to search for a girl that was suitable to his son. The elders suggested three girls out of their kinship.

The father was attracted towards one of the three girls and told his son that he should marry her. However, he warned him, “If the girl (whom you marry) is not virgin, you will not inherit my property.” “In order to tell me that the girl you will marry is virgin, you wear a white cloth and go out that night,” the father told his son. “That time, I will fire a bullet in the sky to congratulate you and the neighbors,” he added.

The boy agreed and the father made arrangements for the marriage. On the night of the wedding day, the boy slept with the bride and discovered that she was not virgin. He became very angry and immediately sent her back to her family. After a short time, his father made arrangements for marriage with another girl. This time again, he was not successful; she was not virgin. He became so embarrassed and generalized that it was his fate. He sent her back to her family again. For the third time, he told his father to make arrangements for another girl to marry. His father agreed and made arrangements for marriage as usual.

At last, the boy became lucky; the girl he married was then virgin. This time, he wore a white cloth and appeared to his father in the morning. His father became very happy and fired a bullet in the sky, and summoned the dwellers of the village, and slaughtered an ox and made them eat and drink. Finally, the boy succeeded in inheriting his father’s property by marrying a virgin girl, it was said.

MOFT-22: The Burnt Lover

Once up on a time, there lived a husband and a wife. They had only one ox. The wife had a secret lover beneath him (her husband). She likes her lover more than she does her husband. One day, she wanted to send her husband to the market and stay the day with her lover. She had also the intention to feed him (lover) beef. Thus, she said to her husband, “Yesterday, I heard people saying the hide of an ox was sold worth 2000 birr.” “I think you had better slaughter our ox and take its hide to the market so as to duplicate our ox,” she added.

At that time, the whole ox itself does not cost more than 500 birr. “That is really good news, we can buy four oxen with that money,” the foolish husband said. Without any hesitation, he slaughtered his only oxen and took its hide to the market. When he took the hide to the market, he could not find any one to ask him. Everybody began to laugh at him since it is not common to sell a hide at that time. That day, his wife passed a good day with her lover; she prepared beef and ‘faros’ – a local beer – and beautifully enjoyed the day with her lover.

At the end, while returning home, the husband saw a certain man coming out of the house and entering an empty granary to hide himself. He kept quiet, entered his house and sat down. The wife asked him why he did not sell the hide. “It is not a hide which costs 2000 birr today, it is the ash of the granary,” he responded. “I will burn it and take its ash to the market,” he added. Then, he took the fire and burnt the container and her lover together. Later, he caught and stabbed her with a knife. While he was struggling to kill her, the neighbors came and helped her to escape, it was said.

MOFT-23: Marriage to Grandmother

Once up on a time, there lived a husband and a wife. They had two sons and two daughters. The husband’s father died many years ago and his mother was alone thenceforward. One day, one of the sons told his father that he needed to marry. He said to his father, “Dad, I need to marry and lead my life like you. So I ask you to help me and facilitate conditions for me for the marriage.”

His father listened to him and tried to advise him that he was not big and strong enough for marriage. He said, “You have to at least wait until your elder sister gets married.”

“You are so young and small and cannot manage to live with a woman after marriage,” he added. The boy, however, stubbornly insisted on asking his father to help him in the marriage. Then the father said, “If you insist, I will search for you; just wait for a few months.”

The boy became happy and said, “No, dad. You do not need to search for me; I have already got a woman that I loved and decided to marry.” Are you sure?” the father inquired.

“Yes, dad. I know her very well starting from my babyhood; she has been grateful to me for a long period of time.

“That is really good; by the way, who is she? Do I know her?” the father asked.

“Yes, dad; you know her very well. She is my grandmother,” the boy replied.

Then the father became angry and shouted, “How on earth do you claim to marry my mother?”

“What is the problem? You have also married my mother,” the son grumbled, it was said.

MOFT-24: Name in the Kitchen

Once up on a time, there lived a husband and a wife. They had not got any child as they were married a short time ago at the time. One day, in the morning while the husband was lying on the bed, she woke up early to make coffee.

She washed the coffee beans, roasted and ground it to flour and made ready to boil. She washed a crock or coffee pot and put it on a stove. When it boiled, she added the coffee flour in it, and went out to chop a piece of firewood for roasting peas to serve with the coffee.

While she was outside of the kitchen, the coffee boiled and began to burst/spilt over the fire in the stove. She came in and saw the coffee while it was bursting, and she emotionally called out her husband to come out hurriedly. As soon as he came out, she managed to settle the coffee on the stove and apologized for waking him up.

Another day, again, while she was making coffee, the crock (coffee pot) became so hot and the coffee in it began to split over the fire in the stove. She again called her husband to come out hurriedly. This time, she again managed to settle the coffee boiled.

Then the husband came out and told her, “Don’t call my name time and again in the kitchen, you will spoil it with a charcoal”, it was said.

MOFT-25: Raw Meat for the Ancestors’ Ghost

Once up on a time, there lived a husband and a wife. The wife had a secret lover. One day, on a certain holiday, the husband went out to slaughter an ox with his partners and bring his share to home. Using this opportunity, the wife called her lover to home to enjoy for a while.

While they were on their affair, the husband came back unexpectedly carrying the meat. Meanwhile the man (lover) heard his voice from outside and quickly entered a granary to hide himself.

The husband entered the house and put down the meat on the table and called his wife to bring him a few pepper to eat with the meat. She brought him the pepper and sat down near him to taste the raw meat. After a few minutes, while they were eating, she took some of the raw meat and threw in the granary so that their ancestors' ghost who may live in the granary would also taste the meat.

Having finished eating the raw meat, she took the dish away to wash it. Meanwhile, the husband suspected and went to the granary to check in case there was somebody in it. As he suspected, he saw a certain man eating the raw meat thrown to him being in the granary.

In a little while, he called out his wife and asked her to bring him boiled water in a big vessel. When she brought the boiled water to him, he told her to put down and mockingly said, "Our ancestors' ghost should eat a well cooked meat." Soon he beat her seriously and threw her in the granary, and spilt the boiled water over them and killed them there, it was said.

MOFT-26: The Wife of the Priest

Many years ago, it was said that a priest had a wife who was not faithful to him. The wife had a secret lover from outside and one day she appointed him to come early in the morning on Sunday when her husband would go to church to pray. That day, she woke up early and told the priest (her husband) that it was getting too late to go to church.

Having thought that it was true, the priest woke up hurriedly and went to the church to pray. As soon as he left the house, his wife's fellow rose from where he lurked and knocked at the door. The wife of the priest who had been waiting for him opened the door and let him enter the house. When the priest reached the church, there was no one around; it was almost midnight. He immediately returned home to sleep for a while and saw his wife while she was preparing porridge for her lover. The lover saw the priest and quickly hid himself under the bed.

The priest entered the house and informed her that she woke him up before the usual time. She apologized to him and said, "I heard the cock crowing and thought that it

was time to wake up.”Although she was preparing the porridge for her secret lover, she lied to him that she was making the porridge for him so that he would eat on his breakfast. “That was really very kind of you, my darling,” the priest said, and went to lie on the bed. Then she made it ready to serve him on the bed and told him to stand and sit. She knew that her secret lover was under the bed.

Then and there having fed her husband once with a spoon, she slowly seized her hand full of porridge under the bed for her secret lover. Soon, her fellow thought that the priest was seizing his hand to catch him, he sprang and lifted the bed up and the priest became shocked and fell over. The candle also fell over and it became dark. After that the man ran and hid himself under the sheep. Later, having thought that it was a devil, the priest followed him to his place spraying water in the house.

There he caught somebody bending down naked in the middle of the sheep and caught its scrotum and called his wife to come and hold it until he would go and bring a knife to cut with. Then she came and held for a while and let him escape, holding the scrotum of a sheep. The man (her lover) again went and hid himself under the bed. Unknowingly, the husband came and cut the scrotum of a sheep.

Soon the sheep fell over and bleated; and the wife told him to slaughter it immediately before it would die. The unfortunate husband slaughtered and gave the meat to his wife to prepare and serve him. Finally, she prepared a good meal and served him. Her husband ate and went to the church again. After that she gave the remaining meal for her lover, and slept with him till the morning, it was said.

MOFT-27: The Preferred Wife

Many years ago, there lived a man who married a wife who did not take care of herself, children and the materials at home. It was said that she did not like to wash herself, her clothes, the children and clean the utensils. The husband lived with her for some years and he began to complain about her problem related with hygiene.

One day, he decided to change her with another wife. After a few days, he brought a new wife home and began to live with her. The new wife was younger and more beautiful than the former one; yet, she had also a problem related to cleanliness. Although he lived with her for many months, she had not conceived at all; as a result the man began to worry incase she was a barren. The old wife had three children, some cows and the new one did not have anything at the moment. The former wife told her relative and close

friend that her husband ignored her and married another young wife for a reason she did not know.

As she knew her problem from the beginning, her relative advised her to wash herself, her clothes, the children and perfume herself and the utensils very well all the time. Besides, she told her to prepare a good meal and feed him to his fill. “Arrange the bed and make it ready the way it attracts him,” she added.

The old wife did everything as she was told and began to wait for her former husband patiently. One day, the husband came home and told her that he needed some cows for the new wife. He entered the house and saw that everything at home was changed. He was surprised at what he saw in the house and the change he observed in his former wife. The former wife invited him to lie on the bed and take rest for a while uncomplainingly.

The husband entered the bedroom and observed that it was perfumed and everything in the house attracted him. Finally, being attracted by the change, the husband apologized and told her that he adored her more than his new wife. Then after both began to live together happily ignoring the new wife. Having waited for a few weeks, the new wife learnt that the man did not need her; and finally went back to her family, it was said.

MOFT-28: The Lucky Beggar

Once upon a time, there existed a woman whose husband died and used to lead her livelihood by begging wandering in the countryside. Once she came across a certain house and saw a lady sitting uncomfortably outside the home and said, “I am poor; please extend me your hands, by the name of God.”

The lady was alone and told her to keep quiet as she was in trouble herself, and told her, “Let God give to you, please go away.” The beggar watched around the house with wonder and saw that her homestead was full of crops and cereals, and asked the lady, “What is your problem? Your house is surrounded by crops and cereals, and you look a wealthy woman; there are also traces of cattle in the area.” “Why don’t you thank God and throw a little to me?” she added.

The lady listened to her and replied, “We have ‘daboo’ (labour – a group of people who come together and help each other manual work) today, and I do not know how to cook food and feed the labour.” The beggar was a bit surprised and asked her,

“Are you sure you do not know how to cook food?” The lady angrily replied, “I have told you; I cannot cook food properly especially for a large group of people.”

Meanwhile the beggar said, “What can I help you then? I am wondering in the village to beg. I would have helped you, but if I stay here with you, I will not get anything.” Soon the lady became happy and asked, “If you can cook food for our labour, you should not worry for your today’s begging; I will do that for you.” They agreed and the beggar started to cook food while the respected lady went to beg something for the poor woman.

After a few minutes, the husband came home from the field to take some seed to scatter over the land ploughed. He asked the beggar who was cooking food in the kitchen where his wife had gone. The beggar replied to him, “She told me to prepare food for the labour and went in the village to beg something for me.” The husband became very angry and told the poor woman, “Let her continue begging; please keep on preparing the food to my labour.”

After a few hours, the labourers had finished their work and came home and ate the food the poor woman prepared to their fill. They praised the lady who prepared that kind of delicious food for them. After the labourers finished eating their meal and began to play, the wife arrived from begging. The husband saw her outside and told her to go away and continue in her begging. He told her not to come back to his house again, and made the beggar his wife and began to live with her happily thereafter, it was said.

MOFT-29: The Aborted Wish

Long ago, there lived a shepherd who used to keep sheep for a rich man in the countryside. It was said that even if he was so poor, he used to live happily. The reason behind his happiness was the fact that the owner of the sheep used to give him raw butter in addition to his salary. The shepherd used to accumulate the butter in a big pot, and he gradually succeeded in filling the pot with the butter.

One day, after taking the sheep to their hut at dusk, he began to envisage about his life in the future. He was standing near the pot in which he had been accumulating butter. He saw that the butter in the pot was heated and melted. He asked himself, “What shall I do with my butter in the pot? Now, I have accumulated it to the extent that the pot can accommodate.” He thought over it for some time and visualized, “I have to sell it and buy ewe.” “The ewe will give birth to another ewe, and again the young of the ewe

will also give birth to another ewe, and gradually I will have a number of sheep and become as rich as my master,” he said to himself.

He continued to envision, “After I become rich, I will be respected in the area, and will marry a beautiful girl; and I will beget a son.” He added, “I will take my son to school and he will learn and become knowledgeable, and I will give him half of my sheep; but if he becomes ignorant and foolish, I will beat him with this kind of strong stick and break his leg.” All of a sudden, he struck the pot with the stick in his hand and broke it, and the butter splashed over dust. At last, he stood there being confused for a while and soon cried loudly in despair, it was said.

MOFT-30: The Coward Husband

Once upon a time, there lived a husband and a wife. The husband was so coward that many people in the neighbourhood used to make fun of him by lurking under a shade and scaring him most of the time. As a result, his wife used to downgrade and offend him by insulting.

However, he used to love his wife and always suspected her of having secret relationship with other men in the neighbour. Thus, he used to follow her everywhere she would go. In spite of his cowardliness and suspicion, she used to like his cleverness in his daily activities. She used to enjoy working with him in the field, and would prepare him food after the work in the field had been completed.

As he suspected, his wife had a lover from another place. Since he (her husband) was so clever in watching out her deeds all the time, she could not find any alternative to pass even a day with her lover. One day, however, she devised a mechanism in which she could pass a night with him. She convinced her lover that her husband was so coward and was afraid of everything. She told him, “Tomorrow, I will make ‘farsoo’ (local beer) and tell my husband to slaughter a lamb for us; so you have to come at night when it gets dark.”

“When you come around,” she advised him, “you have to lock the door from outside and knock at it and ask him to come out to fight. You should also call him out loudly changing your voice and roaring like a lion and warn him of cutting his genitals, and chopping other parts of his body to pieces.” “Meanwhile I will begin to tremble and pretend that I heard from neighbours that such kind of harsh people have come to our village and began to kill many individuals; that time he will begin to tremble himself,”

she assured him. “After that I will tell him to hide himself in another room and then we can stay together and enjoy for a while,” she added.

The wife continued her advice and said, “I will give you the meat of the lamb he will slaughter for us and the local beer and beg you not to kill me, and you pretend to hurt me if I do not tell you where my husband hide himself.”

The wife’s lover agreed and came home at night the next day. He did everything that his lover advised him before. He came home, locked the door from outside and began to roar like a lion. He warned everybody in the home to come out and got its genitals cut, and threatened them that he would chop their body into pieces. In the mean time, the wife told her husband to hide himself and warned him that she had heard such a case from neighbours the night before. She convinced him that she heard from neighbours that the man did not hurt women. Having thought that it was true, her husband quickly hid himself in another room.

Then the man (her lover) banged on the door, unlocked it, and entered the house and frightened the wife to show him where her husband hid himself. She pretended that he went to a far place that day to salute his relatives. She deceitfully begged him not to kill her and promised that she would give him meat and local beer. She invited him to sit down and gave him the lamb and the local beer she prepared before. He sat down, ate the meat, drank the beer and went to the bedroom. There they enjoyed for a while, and he left the house warning to tell her husband to wait for him at home another day, it was said.

MOFT-31: From Ambition to Great Loss

Long ago, there lived a husband and a wife. They did not use to talk about their affairs and it was said that they used to nag each other all the time. Unusually, one day the husband wanted to change their manner of living and decided to share about his long term plan to her. The husband told her, “I will clear the forest near the river, plough the land and sow wheat, and you will weed it; when it is ripe we will harvest and winnow together.” The husband continued and said, “With its product, I will buy a pregnant horse; and when the horse begets a foal (young horse), I will tie to your millstone.”

The wife in her turn said, “That is good; sometimes I will visit my relatives on the horse back.” Meanwhile the husband became angry and told her that he would not allow anybody to be on the pregnant horseback. He told her that she would not ride his horse.

The wife, on her part became nervous and said, “If that is the case, you will not tie the foal to my millstone.”

Soon both of them became very angry and they started to insult each other. Having found it difficult to bear her insult, the husband hit her very badly and in a while he killed his wife, it was said. Cf. Harrabni nadheeni lafee nama cabsa. <Women’s affront cracks one’s bones>

MOFT-32: Role Exchange

Once upon a time, there existed a husband and a wife who used to live in the countryside. They were farmers and they used to practise mixed farming. While the husband used to do outdoor agricultural related activities such as clearing the land, ploughing, harvesting, winnowing, looking after cattle, fencing, keeping crops and cereals from enemies and the likes, the wife, on her part, used to do household tasks such as making ‘buddeena and ittoo’ <Ethiopian cultural food (staple)> baking bread, milking cows, making coffee, cleaning the house, fetching water from the river, collecting firewood, looking after children, and sometimes go to the field and help her husband in preparing the land for sowing, in weeding, collecting the crops and cereals to the place where they would be winnowed and so forth.

One day, the husband got tired and came back home from the field and yelled at his wife that she would stay indoors, and earn her livelihood easily while he used to work hard outside from dawn to dusk in strong sunlight. He told her, “I always do hard work in the field, but you stay indoors under the shade of the house, and eat with me.” The wife also became angry and told him, “What I do at home is not less than your field work; my work is harder than yours.” Since she spoke to him angrily, he became nervous and beat her and knocked her to the ground. After a while, their neighbours arrived having heard her crying and helped her to escape to her family’s home.

The next day, the elders brought the wife to her husband’s home for compromise. The elders asked both of them to tell them the cause of their conflict in black and white to help them make a fair judgement. The husband told the elders that she would stay indoors all the time and did not do as hard work as he used to do. He complained, “Sometimes when I come from the field, she will not bring me something to be eaten on the spot; that is why I became angry and beat her emotionally.” The wife, on her part, told them that she was tired of doing all the household chores. She said, “Besides the household chores,

I go to the field and help him all I can; and I have never asked him to help me with the household chores even for a day.”

The elders listened to their arguments, and told them to exchange their roles and see for a while to check whose job is more tiresome and routine. The couple agreed and the next day the wife fed the oxen, drove them to the field, and began to plough the land, while the husband stayed at home to clean the room, fetch water, milk cows, cook food, look after children and the likes. After a few hours, the wife came home to have her breakfast; but the husband had not prepared any food yet. She left it and went back to the field to plough.

Having ploughed all day, in the afternoon, she completed the day’s work and released the oxen, took them to the grazing land and went back home. When she reached home, her husband was not at home. He still had not prepared any food for her. He gave the little food he prepared in the morning to the children; even they had not eaten to their fill. The room was not cleaned, the cows were not milked, and there was no water at home. She asked her children where their father had gone. They told her that he had gone to the forest to collect firewood. Before he arrived, she cleaned the room and made some food and waited for him. As soon as he arrived, she asked him why he had not prepared any food until then. He looked at her tenderly and begged her to forgive him for all his wrong doings. He also went to the elders and told them that he had made a mistake and wanted their forgiveness. Finally, the elders advised him not to treat her badly like that thereafter and wound up their negotiations by saying, “Niitiin utubaa manaati” <A wife is the pillar of a house>”, it was said.

MOFT-33: From Aggression to Docility

[Once up on a time, there lived a couple. They had a son who who is at his puberty stage and ready to marry.] As per the culture of the society, when a person wants to marry a girl, he considers so many things. The Oromo say, “Look carefully the ground and build a house.” Likewise, in marriage, it is said, “Examine the mother and marry the daughter.” Sometimes it is better to look at her background especially of her family when to marry a girl. A man can, of course, correct his wife in the long run.

For example, there lived a husband who married a harsh wife. This wife used to dominate her husband. She used to order him to do everything both at home and in the field; as a result, his friends used to make fun of him. The couple had a very beautiful

girl. The girl was also so harsh that she did not use to obey her father's commands. Another man had a son whose age was at the right time for marriage. The son told his father, "I would marry the daughter of Mr. X." "I want you to facilitate conditions to me for marriage by going to her parents," he said. The father refused and said, "No my son, her mother is so harsh and she dominates her husband; she is not a good wife; and do not forget that it is said, 'Examine the mother and marry the daughter.' I don't let you marry the daughter of Mr. X; you cannot manage her as required. I heard a lot about her and her mother's behaviour and know how they are too bad to a man. She will not be a good wife to you; I would rather search for you whose mother respects her husband and is deemed well in our culture," he added.

The boy insisted and told his father that he loved her so much and would not marry another girl other than her. He told him, "I marry her daughter, not the mother"; and he reassured him that he knew how to correct her behavior and dominate her after marriage. Since he refused to listen to his advice and highly demanded to marry the girl, the father agreed and facilitated conditions for him together with other elders unwillingly. As soon as he married the girl, the boy began to think over how to dominate and make her docile for the future. He decided that he should show her his aggressiveness on animals so that she would be afraid of him and obey his order. As he planned, one day, soon a chicken entered a room, he threw a spear in his hand and bored into it while she was watching. Then, he caught the chicken and slaughtered it and asked her to make food from it, locally named "Ittoo lukkuu" <chicken>. She was astonished at his mercilessness and was afraid of him. As he ordered her, she made the food and served him.

Another day, while they were sitting together outside their home to sun themselves, he threw a spear and bored into a dog that came near to them. Meanwhile, the wife trembled with fear and retreated him for a while, and murmured, "What kind of harsh man I am living with!" The third time, when a cow came near their home, he ran after her and broke her horns with a big stick. This time, the wife concluded that he would not leave her alone unless she would obey his orders. Thenceforth, she became docile and began to live peacefully with him without any nagging. After a few years, the new couple summoned their parents for invitation. His father-in-law was surprised at the way his daughter used to behave at home obeying her husband's order and asked his son-in-law on how he managed to dominate her. The son-in-law replied, "Nadheeni fi fardeen

ganama leenjii tolchu” meaning <Women and horses should be trained well early>, it was said.

MOFT- 34: Husband and Wife: Who is Crueller?

Once upon a time, there lived a husband and a wife who used to quarrel every time. One day, they accused each other of being cruel and brought the case to a local chief. The wife told the chief that her husband beat her and the children cruelly all the time and sometimes boast that he was not afraid of anyone in the village.

The husband, on his part, told the chief that she was the harshest, stupidest and cruellest of all the women. He added that she nags him day and night and sometimes seizes a knife to kill him. The chief listened to the couple and asked them to come to him for advice turn by turn. He wanted to check who is right and devised a means of checking it. First he told the husband to cut off his wife’s neck and bring to him so that he would give him his daughter and a certain plot of land. He also promised the wife that he would marry her and make his own if she cuts off her husband’s neck and bring the head to him.

The husband thought over it and refused to do so and kept quiet. The wife, however, one day, gave him a poison with a local drink. The husband drank it and died soon. Then she cut off his neck and brought the head to the chief. As soon as he saw the head of the man, the chief got shocked and became very sympathetic to the man. Soon, he ordered his guards to whip her 40 times and to take her out of his sight.

Appendix B: Proverbs

MOPC- 1: Mother's Influence on Daughter

1. Amalli haadhaa hintala hin hanqatu. <A mother's behavior never fails to reach her daughter>
2. Haadha ilaalii intala fuudhi.<Examine the mother and marry the daughter>
3. Haati waan baratee, intalli waan agarte. <The mother acts as she accustomed to and the daughter as she saw from her mother>
4. Hantuutni gumbii uraa haadha jalatti barti. <A young rat learns how to puncture a granary from her mother>
5. Intalli haadha baddi, ilmi eessuma bada. <A bad girl results from her mother and a bad son from his uncle>
6. Kan haadhatti barte amaatiitti jedhan. <She who habituated to a mother takes (the behavior) to mother-in-law>
7. Kan haati booqaa qabdu ilmoon balaccuu hin dhabdu. <A daughter never lacks the white spot her mother possesses>
8. Waan haati hojjattu ilmoon hin wallaaltu. < What the mother does, the child is not ignorant of it>

MOPC- 2: Father's Influence on son

1. Abbaan daadhii dhugeef ilma afuurri/afaan hin urgaahu. <The father drank mead doesn't mean the son's breathing smells good>
2. Akka taate haa taatu, ilmi abbaatti ha baatu. <Whatever it may be, let the son resembles his father>
3. Ilmi abbaa fakkaata. <The son looks like his father>
4. Ilmi abbaan abaare gufuu teessu dheessa. <The son whom his father curses, retreats a stump>

MOPC- 3: Courage

- Abidda dubartiin qabsiifte hin dhaamu. <A fire set by a woman can never be extinguished easily>
- Dhiirri fi ibiddi xiqqoo hin qabdu <A male and a fire can never be little>
- Dhiirri xiqqoo hin qabdu. <There is no little man>
- Dhirsi xiqqoo hin qabu. <There is no little husband>
- Kan dubartiin ergite du'a hin sodaatu. <He who is sent by a woman is not afraid of death>
- Kan dubartiin ergite woraabessa hin sodaatu. <He who is sent by a woman is not afraid of a hyena>
- Lunny kan haadhaati. <The coward belongs to his mother>

MOPC- 4: Women as Sources of Problem

1. Abidda dubartiin qabsiifte hin dhaamu. <A fire set by a woman can never be extinguished easily>
2. Akkoon namaa hin taane ollaan gargar nama baafiti.<An unsuitable grandmother disconnects one from neighbors>
3. Amaatiifi gingilchaan waan baastu hin dhabdu.<A sieve and a mother-in-law do not fail to distinguish something>
4. Bakka waalluun baay'attu raafuun hin bilchaatu. <Where there are many women, cabbage is not cooked well/Too many cooks spoil the broth>

5. Ibiddi nadheeniifi ijoolleen qabsiifte hindhaamu. <A fire set by women and children will not be put out easily>
6. Kan dubartiin ergite du'a hin sodaatu." <He who is sent by a woman is not afraid of death>
7. Lafa dubartiin baay'atte wacatu baay'ata. <Where there are many women, there is noise>
8. Mana dubara sadii dhadhaan hinbarakatu.<Butter will not stay long in a house of three girls>

MOPC- 5: Women and Administration/Power

1. Abbaa manaa gowwaan haadha manaan bula. <A foolish husband is managed by his wife>
2. Abbaa manaa gowwaan haadha manaan bula. <A foolish husband is managed by his wife>
3. Aangoon dubartii gorroo duubatti <Women's power is behind a salon/in a kitchen>
4. Dhalaan nama hin bulchu dhiiratu nama bulcha. <Women never govern but men do>
5. Mana dubartiin bulchitu ulfina hin qabu. <A house administered by a woman has no respect>
6. Mootummaan dubartii karra cufaatti oolcha. <Women's administration leaves the gate of the pen closed for the whole day>
7. Namni niitiin bulu bahee olla hin bulu. <A man administered by a wife won't stay a night in the neighborhood>

MOPC- 6: Mother's Image (Positive)

1. Abbaan muka alaati, haati utubaa manaati. <A father is a tree outside, and a mother is the pillar of a house>
2. Dheebuu duumessaa keessaa fi badiin haadhaa namatti hin dhagahamu. <One never feels thirsty in a cloudy day and considers the fault of a mother>
3. Duuti haadhaafi bakkeen ciisichaa bulan nama quuqa. <Mother's death and a bad bed depress one gradually = a heavy loss and discomfort are gradually felt>.
4. Duuti haadhafi harrabni gadheen nama quuqa hafti. <Mother's death and a bad insult leaves one depressed forever>
5. Garaan haadhaa garaa buqqeeti.<The womb of a mother is like that of a gourd>
6. Haadha dhabuu mannaa haadha dhabduu wayya. <(It is) better to have a poor mother than miss her>
7. Haadhaafi lafatu nama danda'a. <A mother and a land tolerate everything>
8. Haadhaafi lukkuu hin dhaanani. <One's mother and a hen should never be beaten>
9. Haati harma guuti malee harka hin guutu. <A mother's breast may wean, not her hands>
10. Haati iyyeettii hin qabdu. <There is no destitute mother>
11. Haati nama hin hattu, kan qabduyyuu namaa laatti. <A mother does not deceive, she even shares what she owns>
12. Haati utubaa manaati. < A mother is the pillar of a house>
13. Hamtuu haadha ofii amaatiin hin jijjiiran. <No matter how harsh she may be, a mother is never exchanged to a mother- in- law>

MOPC- 7: Mother's Image (Negative)

1. Garaa jabina akka haadhakee, gootummaa akka abbaakee qabaadhu. <Be cruel like your mother and brave like your father'>

2. Haadha gaariirra bara gaarii wayyaa. <A good epoch is better than a good mother>
3. Haadha keessa nadheeni, adurree keessa bineensaa. <Behind a mother is womanish, and behind a cat is wildness>
4. Haadha keessa nadheenii, addeesa keessa dukkanaa <Behind a mother is womanish, and behind a moon is darkness>
5. Kan gabaan namaa gootu haati namaa hin gootu. <A mother cannot provide what a market can provide>
6. Mana haadha koon dhaqa jettee goraa bira hin darbin <Do not overlook strawberry even if you are going to your mother's home>

MOPC- 8: Stepmother, Mother-in-law and Others' Mothers

1. Aduun galgalaa fi dubartiin namaa hin naatu. <A sun at dusk and a woman never feel pity for others>
2. Gayyaan garaa hin laaftu. <A stepmother never feels pity>
3. Haadha hormaa fi waaqa bonaatti ija hin baasan. <One never looks at a mother of another and a winter sky (for help)>
4. Haati buddenii fi aduun saafaa tokkodha. <A stepmother and a blazing sun are the same>
5. Haati hormaa nama hin dhahin. <The mother of another should never beat>
6. Haati nama hin dhalin nama hin dhahin. <A mother who did not give birth (to oneself) should never beat>
7. Hamtuu haadha ofii amaatiin hin jijjiiran. <No matter how harsh she may be, a mother is never exchanged to a mother- in- law>
8. Sareen fira namaati, nadheen diina isaati. <A dog is the friend of a man and a woman is his enemy>

MOPC- 9: Wives' Image

1. Jaartiin dhirsaaaf kafana. <A wife is a garment for her husband>
2. Niitii fi eeboo hin ergisani. <One never lends a wife and a spear>
3. Niitii gaariin dhirsaaaf kafana. <A good wife is a garment for a husband>
4. Niitiin utubaa manaati. <A wife is the pillar of a house>
5. Qotiyyoo malee niitii walii hin ergisan. <One never lends a wife but an ox>
6. Surree fi niitii wajjin kufu. <One falls over together with trousers and a wife>
7. Mana onaa mannaa niitii ontuu wayya. <(It is) better to have a poor wife than an empty house>

MOPC- 10: Women's Image (Positive)

1. Dubartiin mala hin dhabdu. <Women are tactful>
2. Nyaanni soogidda malee, manni dubartii malee hin bareedu. <A house without a woman is like a diet without salt>

MOPC- 11: Surrogates

1. Dubartii fi kopheen jijjiiran tolti. <Women and shoes become better when changed>
2. Dubartiin irratti fuudhaan malee hin kaatu. <Women never become active unless one marries over them>
3. Nadheen ulee eebooti, yoo cabde ni jijjiiramti. <A woman is like a handle of a spear; if she is broken, she will be replaced>

MOPC- 12: Who should dominate?

1. Dhirsi niitii sodaatu ilma hin dhalfatu. <A husband who is afraid of his wife cannot father a male child>

2. Nadheen dhirsa mootu mataa namaatti fincoofti. <A wife who dominates a husband urinates on the head of others>
3. Niitiin abbaa warraa hin qabnee fi fardi takkaallaa hin qabne tokko. <A woman without a husband and a horse without a shackle are the same>
4. Niitiin abbaa warraa mootu booyicha fardaa dhaqxi. <A wife who dominates a husband goes to the funeral of the horse>
5. Niitiin abbaan warraa mana hin jirre, du'a gahuu fardaa dhaqxi. <A wife whose husband is not at home goes to (attend) the funeral of a horse>
6. Niitiin dhirsa mootu ollaa horii hin gootu. <A woman that dominates a husband will not value her neighbors>
7. Niitiin dhirsa mootu soqolattee gandarra kaati jedhaan. <A woman who dominates her husband wanders in the village turning her dress up>
8. Niitiin dhirsa mootu ganda bulti. < A wife who dominates a husband stays in the neighborhood at night>

MOPC- 13: Marriage, Divorce and its Consequence

1. Har'allee waa'ee kiyya hindubbatani jette haftuun heerumtee jedhan. <A spinister got married lately and said, "No one talks about me today," it is said>
2. Hintala duubaan dhaqxe warri keessaa hin qabu. < The parents disregard the girl who went to the boy's home for marriage (without their consent)>
3. Intalli marii malee eerumte marii malee baati. <A girl married without consent leaves her new home without consent>
4. Kan teessee fincooftu kan manaa baasu kan teessee hagdu fuudha. < One who divorces a woman who passes out her urine squatting, will marry the one who defecates sleeping>
5. Lafti abbaa hin qabnee fi dubartiin dhirsa hinqabne tokko.<A field without owner and a woman without a husband are the same>
6. Mana galgalaaf ijaarratu, niitii bultiidhaaf fuudhu.<One constructs a house for an evening and marries a woman to live with (forever)>

MOPC-14: Marriage and its place in society

1. Ani heeruma koo kana kooraa gidduu gahu malee hin amanu,' jette intalli. <"I do not believe my wedding until I sit on a saddle,' the girl said>
2. Har'allee waa'ee kiyya hindubbatani jette haftuun heerumtee jedhan. <A spinister got married lately and said, "No one talks about me today," it is said>
3. Intala abbaa manaa biraa baate, haati booyicha hin dhageessu. <Her mother won't listen to the daughter who left her husband>
4. Jaarsa ormaa gaariirra jaarsa ofii hamaa wayya.<One's own bad husband is better than someone else's good husband>
5. Niitiin dhirsa malee hin miidhagdu. <A wife never looks nice without a husband>

MOPC- 15: Gender and Jealousy

1. Dubartiin irratti fuudhaan malee hin kaatu. <Women never become active unless one marries over them>
2. Jaarsa jaartiin inaaftuu fi manni dhimmisu tokko. <A leaking roof and a jealous wife are the same>

MOPC- 16: Extolment

1. Baredde jennaan hintalli ija babaafte. <The girl opened her eyes wider and wider when told she is beautiful>

2. Dhirsa kabaju haati manaa garaashee keessa taajjabdi. <When the husband respects his wife, she, in her heart, criticizes>
3. Intala dura sirbaan jajan booda ulfaan jaju. <A girl appreciated for her singing before will be blamed for pregnancy later>
4. Intala haati jajju hin eerumtu. <The girl whose mother praises won't get married>
5. Intala haati jajju ollaan dhuufuu jaja. <The daughter whose mother praises, neighbors praise for her fart>
6. Intala warri jajan ollaan dhuufuu jaja. < A girl whom parents admire is blamed for fart by neighbors>
7. Niitii abbaan warraa leellisu itilleetu mucucaata. <The bedding slips from the wife (that) a husband extols>

MOPC-17: Reproductive Role

1. Addunyaan waa sadii: dhalachuu, fuudha fi du'a. <The world is about three things: birth, marriage, and death>
2. Dubartii waa lamaaf fuudhu: tokko qoonqoofi tokko hormaataafi. <One marries a woman for two things: feeding and reproduction>
3. Niitii deessuu fi maasaa dallaa keessaa hin tuffatan. < A fertile woman and a garden should not be disdained>
4. Niitii deessuu fi qalbiin kennaa Waaqati. <A fertile wife and a psyche are gifts of God>
5. Waaqa roobuufi dubartii deessurra waa argatu. <One gets something from a rainy sky and a fertile woman>
6. Ana taasuun da'e jettee niitiin. < "I bore a child owing to my strength," the wife said>

MOPC-18: Unfaithfulness

1. Abbaa mucaa haadha malee namni hin beeku. <Only a mother knows the father of a child>
2. Abbaan niitii beeka abbaa ulfoofttee isheetu beeka jedhan. <The husband knows his wife and the wife knows to whom she conceived>
3. Haati hattuun ilmoo hin amanti. <A thief mother does not trust her daughter>
4. Niitiin dhirsa mootu ganda bulti. <A wife who dominates a husband stays in the neighborhood at night>
5. Niitii fi qawween kan abbaa bira jiruuti. <A wife and a gun belong to the nearby person>
6. Qamaleen somboo bartee fi nadheen ijoollee barte tokko. <A woman accustomed to a youth and an ape accustomed to an oak are the same> condemned
7. Sanyoo argattee dhirsa jibbite. <(She) hated a husband having obtained a lover>
8. Reefuu tola jette niitiin dhirsi duunaan sanyoo isheetiin, jedhan. <"It is more convenient now," the woman said to her lover, upon her husband's death>
9. 'Yoo dhirsi argamesi sanyoon rakkoodha,' jette intalli. <'It is difficult to get a lover even if a husband is found,' the girl said>

MOPC-19: Decision Making

1. Dubartiin hammam bektuyyuu murteen kan dhiiraati. <However knowledgeable a woman may be, the final decision rests on a man>
2. Dubartiin murtii hinbeektu. <Women donot know making decisions >

3. Murtiin dhumaafi qe'een kan dhiiraati. <The last decision and a homestead belong to a man>

MOPC-20: Women and Household Chores

1. Aannan dhirsaaf kaahan afuura hin galchan. <One doesn't leave open the milk kept for a husband>
2. Akka barte niitiin dhirsa soorti. <A wife feeds her husband as she was trained>
3. Bakka waalluun baay'attetti raafuun hin bilchaatu. <Too many cooks spoil the broth>
4. Boosettiin dubartii mana galgala axoofiti. <An unclean woman cleans her room at dusk>
5. Dubartii jechaan harka, saree jechaan sagaleedha. <A woman means her hand and a dog means its voice>
6. Dubartiin ofii qooqxee dhirsa soorti jedhan. <Women feed their husbands being empty for themselves>
7. Dubartiin qoonqoo tolchiti malee dubbii hin tolchitu. <Women sweeten food but not speech>
8. Gadi badiin nadheenii kan dhirsaa keesse nyaatti. <A demented woman eats what she keeps for her husband>
9. Haati garaa qabdi, abbaan mataa qaba. <A father touches the head of a child and a mother touches a stomach>
10. Haati harma guuti malee harka hin guutu. <A mother's breast may wean, not her hands>
11. Hamma beektu niitiin dhirsa soorti. <A wife feeds her husband to the extent she knows>
12. Ofittoon dhirsa koo hin jettu. <A selfish woman never says 'for my husband'>
13. Ofittoon nadheenii kan dhirsaaf keessu nyaatti. <A selfish woman eats what she keeps for her husband>

MOPC-21: Submissiveness

1. Dubartiin nama qoccoltuu fi manni dhimmisu tokko. <A nagging woman and a leaking roof are the same>
2. Durbi hamtuun dubartii hamtuu taati. <A vicious girl becomes a vicious woman>
3. Gursummaan gaafa eerumte moonyee qoraafu waggaa qoraafu. <A spinster who fumigates a mortar/pounder on her marriage day will fumigate neighbors a year later>
4. Namni niitii hamtuu keessummaa fudhee hingalu. <A man who lives with a vicious wife never takes a guest to his home>
5. Niitii hamtuun dhirsa ofii qaanessiti. <A vicious wife humiliates her husband>
6. Niitii hamtuun yeroo abbaan warra bakkee galu gadi baatee ala teessi. <A vicious woman leaves home and sits outside when her husband comes from outside>
7. Niitiin dhiirsa mootu ollaa horii hin gootu. <A woman that dominates a husband will not value her neighbors>

MOPC-22: Foolishness

1. Dubartiin addressa guyyaa seeti. <Women confuse moonlight with a day>
2. Dubartiitti gaaddidduun duumessa fakkaata. <Women confuse a shadow with a cloud>

3. Ijoollee fi nadheen ona dura itti quufan yoomuu quufa se’u. <Children and women are always mindful of the good old days>

MOPC-23: Ignorance/irrationality

1. Beekte jennaan niitiin qeesii kitaaba dhiqxe jedhan. <The priest’s wife washed a bible when told she is knowledgeable>
2. Boosettiin yeroo isheen nyaattu hinargani waan isheen nyaatte argu. <One does not see when an unclean woman eats, but what she eats>
3. ‘Dhirsaa koon miidha,’ jettee niitiin goondaarra teesse. “I hurt my husband,” the wife said, sitting on a colony of ants>
4. Dubartiin machoofte corroqa qaqqammatti. <A drunk woman sits near a puddle to heat herself>
5. Hin bari’u seetee udaan manatti hagde. <Having thought the daybreak would not come, she defecated at home>
6. Intalli akkoon guddifte dudduubaan laga ceeti. <A girl brought up by a grandmother crosses a river walking backwards>
7. Jaartiin mana ijaaraniif quncee dhowwatti. <An old lady refuses to give a rope when people make her own house>
8. Jiidha hindhabin jette niitiin dhirsatti fincooftee jedhan. <‘Be wet all the time,’ a woman said, urinating over her husband>
9. Kan caamaan soqolattu gaafa roobu qullaa buufti. <A lady who pulls her dress up in dry time will go bare when it rains>
10. Kan qullaa kaattera kan ibsaa ofitti qabdu. <Besides rising naked from bed, she shines light on herself>
11. Nadheen dhirsaa mootu mataa namaatti fincoofti. <A wife who dominates a husband urinates on the head of others>
12. Reefuu ta’e jette niitiin daaratti fincooftee. <‘It is better now,’ the woman said, having urinated at ash>
13. ‘Reefuu natti ifa,’ jette jaartiin mana gubdee jedha. <‘It is brighter now,’ the old lady said having burnt her house>
14. Si’achan nama ta’aa jette jaartiin gabaa keessatti albbatee. <‘I am not worth hereafter,’ the old lady said, having defecated in the market>
15. Situ fide jette jaartiin injiraan ciniintee jedhan. <‘It is you who did it first,’ the lady said, having bitten a louse>

MOPC-24: Untrustworthy

1. Amanteen durbaatiifi amanteen arrabaa tokko. <Trusting a girl and a tongue are the same>
2. Durba manatti midhaan alatti hin abdatani. <A girl at home and a crop in the field should not be trusted>
3. Durbaa fi foonitti hin boonan. <One never boasts of having a girl and flesh>
4. Intala warratti, midhaan baalatti hin abdatan. <A girl to a family and unripe crop in the field should not be trusted>
5. Kan durbaan boonee fi kan bosoqqee dhaabbate tokko. <Whoever is proud of a girl and planted ‘bosoqqee’(a useless plant that withers easily) is the same>
6. Lukkuun balaliiteefi durbi baratte eessayyuu hin geessu. <If a hen flies, it does not go far, so does if a girl learns>
7. Namni dubartiin mar’ate nama qilleensaan mar’atedha. <A man who discusses with a woman is like someone who shares his idea with wind>
8. Namni dubartiin mari’atee fi namni qilleensatti hirkate tokko dha. <A man who discusses with a woman is like someone who leans against air>

9. Namni durba dhasheefi namni soogidda nagadu tokkodha. <A person who fathered a daughter is like a person who merchandizes salt>
10. Niitii fi qawween kan abbaa bira jiruuti. <A wife and a gun belongs to the nearby person>
11. Qilleensiifi dubartiin tokko. <Women, like weather, are unpredictable>

MOPC- 25: Inaccuracy

1. Dubbiin dubartii fi udaan indaaqqoo burree hin dhabu. <Women’s speech and chicken’s excrement never lack black and white spot>
2. Durbaa fi foonitti hin boonan. <One never boasts of having a girl and a flesh>
3. Hojiin dubartii fi udaan hindaanqoo burree hin dhabu. <Women’s work and chicken’s excrement never lack black and white spot>

MOPC-26: Worthlessness/Valuelessness

1. Haati durba qofaa warra kaan biratti hin kolfitu. <A mother of only daughters does not laugh in front of others>
2. Ilma haati guddiftee fi intalli akkoon guddifte horii hin ta’an. <A son brought up by a mother and a daughter brought up by a grandmother are not worthy>
3. Nadheeni fi fardeen galgala baddi. < Women and horses become useless at old age>
4. Namni durba dhasheefi namni soogidda nagadu tokkodha. <A person who fathered a daughter is like a person who merchandizes salt>
5. Taa’uu mannaa durba dhalchuu wayya. <Fathering a daughter is better than sitting idle>

MOPC-27: Men’s Value

1. Abbaa kufaan ilmaan ka’a. <A weak father is backed up by his son>
2. Abbaan xiqqoo hin qabu. <There is no little father>
3. Bara duuti hammaate haadha ilma tokkootu bade. <When death becomes rampant, the mother of a (one) son remains in danger>
4. Biyya dhiirri hin jirre haftuutu garmaama. < A spinster strolls in a country where there is no man >
5. Biyya jaamaan baay’atutti inni ija tokko qabu mootidha. <In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king>.
6. Biyyi dubartii abbaa manaa isheedha. <A woman’s homeland is her husband>
7. Dhiira hata’uu diinqaa haqufa’u,’ jette niitiin. <’Let him be male and cough in the bed room,’ the woman said>
8. Dhiira ofiif dhalchu, durba ormaaf dhalchu. <One fathers a son for oneself and a daughter for others>
9. Dhiirri fi ibiddi xiqqoo hin qabdu <A male and a fire can never be little>
10. Dhirsi xiqqoo hin qabu. <There is no little husband>
11. Dhirsuma hata’u, diinquma hataa’u,” jette jaartiin jedhan. < “Let him be a husband (by name) and sleep in the bedroom,” the old lady said.
12. Haati manaa dansa jennaan, yoo dhirsa qabaatte jedhan. <Up on being pronounced ‘A wife is good only when she has a husband’ it is said>
13. Hammam qal’aturree dhiiratu mirga rafa <No matter how thin he may be, a man sleeps on the right side>
14. Intala abbaa qabdu mareen mana, kan abbaa hinqabne mareen ala. <The girl who has a father, the discussion is at home, and the fatherless outside>
15. Intalli abbaa qabdu qananiitee bulti. <A girl who has a father lives cheerfully>

16. Intalli abbaan daanyaa, karaarraa namaaf hin gortu. <A girl whose father is a judge never gives way for others>
17. Nama Waaqayyo eebbisetu ganamaan ilma godhata <A man blessed by God fathers a son early>
18. Utuun abbaa qabaadhee silaa cidhi kun kooti jette haftuun. <‘Had I had a father, this wedding would have been mine,’ the spinster said>
19. Ilma gadhee dhalchuu mannaa durba dhalchani soddaatti hirkachuu wayya. <Instead of begetting a bad son, it is better to beget a girl and rely on a son-in-law>

MOPC-28: Harrassment

1. Asheetaa fi bareeda bira hin darban. <One never avoids a sweet corn and a beautiful girl>
2. Dubartii fi udaan xiqqoo hin qabdu.<There are no little feces and little women>
3. Dubartiin xiqqoo hin qabdu. <There is no little woman>
4. Durbaa bareeddu fi hagadaa bira hin darban. < A beautiful girl and sugarcane are not overlooked >

MOPC- 29: Chastity

1. Gara-laafettiin garaa qullaa hin eerumtu.<A soft-hearted girl won’t get married empty womb>
2. Ija-laafettiin obboleessaaf ulfoofti. <A shy girl conceives from her brother>
3. Intala dura sirbaan jajan booda ulfaan jaju. <A girl appreciated for her singing before will be blamed for pregnancy later>
4. Intalli garaa laaftu obboleessa isheerraa ulfoofti. <A soft-hearted girl gets pregnant from her brother>
5. Kokkoolfaa ulfooftee boowaa deessi. <Women laugh on conception and cry on delivery>

MOPC-30: Women’s exploitation

1. Dhibeeti niitii garbicha nama gooti. <A wife’s illness makes one a slave>
2. Dubartiin keessummaa hin qabdu. <A woman as a guest is never treated>
3. Durbii fi gundoon hin teessu. <A girl and a plate should never take rest>
4. Gaafa harreen loon dura galtuu fi nadheen dhiira dura raftu gaarii hin ta’u. <The day a donkey comes to home ahead of a cow, and a woman sleeps before a man is not good>
5. Garbittiin gargaarsa argatte majii dhoksiti. <A maid servant who gets some help, hides a millstone>
6. Humna durbaafi wadala harree osoo manaa hin bahin saammatu.<One uses women’s and jackasses’ energy before they leave home>

MOPC-31: Daily reproduction

1. Bori hinbeekneen dubartii qodaa bukoon ishee sagali.<A short sighted woman owns nine dough containers>
2. Dubartii wajjiin yoo xabatan harka daakuun nama qabdi. <If a man plays together with a woman, she spoils him with a flour on her hand>
3. Haadha manaa malee abiddi hinboba’u. <Fire never burns without a wife>

4. Intala daakuu beektu daakuu hin hatan. <It is impossible to steal flour from a girl who knows how to grind well>
5. Mana maa hin harre jennaan borullee anatu hara jettee niitiin. <Upon being asked why she didn't clean the room, the wife replied, "it awaits me tomorrow, too">

MOPC-32: Dependency/weak

1. Dubartiifi namni bishaan keessaa harka qabaa barbaaddi. <A woman and a person in an overflowing river needs support> cf a woman and a crocodile
2. Dubartiin dhiira malee akka maasaa midhaan maleeti <A woman without a man is like a field without crops>
3. Dubartiin dhirsaa hin qabnee fi maasaan midhaan hirra hin jirre tokko. <A woman without a husband is like a field without crops>
4. Dubartiin mana hin qabdu, mana dhirsaa bulti. <Women do not have their own homes; they live in her husbands'>
5. Intala abbaa qabdu mareen mana, kan abbaa hinqabne mareen ala. <The girl who has a father, the discussion is at home, and the fatherless outside>
6. Intali abban daanyaa, karaarraa namaaf hin gortu. <A girl whose father is a judge never gives way for others>
7. Intalli abbaa qabdu qananiitee bulti. <A girl who has a father lives cheerfully>

MOPC-33: Violence against women

1. Badduun intalaa yoo gorsan hin mufatti. <A bad girl gets annoyed when advised>
2. Deemtu hin deemti malee niitii miilla hin dhiqani. <One never washes his wife's leg, she can desert if need be>
3. Dubartii fi harreen ulee jaallatti. <A woman and a donkey, the more you beat them the better they become>
4. Dubartiifi harree ba'aatu sirreessa. <It is a load that corrects a woman and a donkey>
5. Dubartiifi harree uleetu deebisa. <It is a stick which corrects a woman and a donkey>
6. Dubartiin dhugaa qabda yoo jedhan ni boossi. <Women lament if (they are) told that they are right>
7. Dubartiin tola hin jaallattu. <Women do not like being unchallenged>
8. Dubartiin urursarra kaballaa jaallatti. <Women like to be slapped than to be lulled>
9. Harki taa'u deega jedhee jaarsi jaartii haboote. <Having said a still hand brings forth poverty, the old man hit his wife>
10. Kan dandeessu dhaani jennaan gowwaan galee niitii reebe. <Upon told to beat whomever he can, the foolish went home and beat his wife>

MOPC-34: Socialization/taming

1. Durbaa fi jiboota garaa duwwaa leenjisu. <Girls and bullocks are better trained (with) empty stomach>
2. Nadheeni fi fardeen ganama leenjii tolchu. <Women and horses should be trained well early>
3. Nadheeniifi fardeen ganama baddi. <Women and horses become bad early>
4. Niitii fi farda abbaatu leenjifata <It is the owner who should tame his horse and his wife as he wants>

5. Niitiifi jiruu ganama mo'atu. < A wife and a job are better overcome early>
6. Niitiifi sangaa fardaa abbaatu fe'ata. <It is the owner who loads a wife and a stallion>

MOPC-35: After Divorce

1. Maqaan baatee fi niitiin baate hin deebitu. <A wife departed and a bad reputation should never return>
2. Niitiin abbaa warraa hin qabnee fi fardi takkaallaa hin qabne tokko. <A woman without a husband and a horse without a chain are the same>
3. Niitiin baate amalli lama. <A wife divorced has two behaviors>

MOPC-36: Men and Outdoors

1. Abbaan manaa gurri ala. <A husband's ear is pinned to outside>
2. Abbaan muka alaati, haati utubaa manaati. <A father is a tree outside, and a mother is the pillar of a house>
3. Akka dhiiraafi akka miillaa hin beekan. <A male and a leg are unpredictable>
4. Alaa hamma arbaa manaa hamma garbaa. <(He's) like an elephant outside, and like a slave at home >

MOPC-37: Women and Indoors

1. Durbi fi adurreen dhoksaa jaallatti. <A girl and a cat are better kept in hidden places>
2. Hoolaa fi dubartiin dahoo jaallatti. <Women and sheep like hidden place>
3. Niitii hamtuun yeroo abbaan warra bakkee galu gadi baatee ala teessi. <A violent woman leaves home and sits outside when her husband comes from outside>
4. Niitiin adeemsa guddattu, mana ormaa keessa gubatti. <The wife who frequents wandering, burns in somebody's house>

MOPC-38: Social norms and values

1. Akka duraatti dhiisnee akka durbaatti ciifne jedhan. <We slept like a girl, forgetting as we are accustomed to>
2. Bori tolinnaaf intala dhaqna qabu <The girl is circumcised for the betterment of her future>
3. Durbi garaan ciiftee fi hoolaan albaate warraaf baate. <A girl that sleeps facing down on her stomach and a sheep that expels watery feces are worthless to their owners>
4. Gaafa harreen loon dura galtuu fi nadheen dhiira dura raftu gaarii hin ta'u. <The day a donkey comes home ahead of a cow, and a woman goes to bed before a man is not good>
5. Intalli bara egeri maraattu barana soqolatti. <A girl that will become mad next year shows her lap/dresses scantily this year>
6. Intalli siiksitu warra hin hiiksitu. <A girl that whistles will dishonor her family one day>
7. Kan caamaan soqolattu gaafa roobu qullaa buufti. <A lady who pulls her dress up in dry time will go bare when it rains>

MOPC-39: Women and Speech

1. Akka feeteen dubartii akka feete dubbatti.<An uncontrollable woman speaks as she likes>

2. Akkatti barteem dhirsa nagaa gaafatti. <She greets her husband as used to do>
3. Dubartiin qoonqoo tolchiti malee dubbii hin tolchitu. <Women sweeten food but not speech>
4. Dubbiin dubartii fi udaan indaaqqoo burree hin dhabu. <Women's speech and chicken's excrement never lack black and white spot>
5. Durbi mammaaktee fi hoolaan albaate warraa baate. <A girl who uses proverbs (in her conversation) and a sheep that expels watery feces are worthless to their owners>
6. Harrabni nadheeni lafee nama cabsa. <Women's affront cracks one's bones>
7. Ofjajjuu nadheeni manni ona. <A boasting woman's house is empty>

MOPC-40: Women's Work/Degrading women's work

1. Dubartiin hojii manaa malee kan alaa hin tolchitu. <Women may nicely do indoor chores but not outdoor ones>
2. Hojiin dubartii fi udaan hindaanqoo burree hin dhabu. <Women's work and chicken's excrement never lack black and white spot>
3. Lafa waalluun baay'attu raafuun hinbilchaatu. <Too many cooks spoil the broth>

MOPC-41: Proverbs related with Dining

1. 'Akkas nyaatanii dhirsa hinyaadani,' jette niitiin. <'One does not think about a husband having eaten like this,' the woman said>
2. Dubartiin ofii qooqxee dhirsa soorti jedhan. <Women feed their husbands being empty for themselves>
3. Dubartiin sabbata ishee nyaatti. <Women should never eat to their fill>
4. Haati nyaattuun ilmoo hin guddiftu. <A greedy mother never brings her child up>
5. 'Kan kanarraa fayyaan ha nyaatu' jette jaartiin bixxillee kudhan fixxe jedhan. <'Let the healthy man eat the remaining,' the woman said having finished ten loaves of bread>
6. Kan ulfaan daakuu nyaattu gaafa deesse daaraa nyaatti. <One who eats flour during pregnancy will eat ash after delivery>
7. Nadheeniifi fardeen kan itti kennan nyaatti. <Women and horses eat what they are given>

MOPC-42: Are Women Knowledgeable?

1. Beekumsi dubartii abbaa manaa oliiqe, boolla nama buusa. <A woman's knowledge that surpasses her husband's throws him into gully>
2. Beekumsi dubartii fi karaan jaldeessaa bowwaa nama buusa <Women's knowledge and monkeys' trail lead one to an abyss>
3. Beekumsi dubartii gomjii bira hindarbu. <The knowledge of a woman does not go beyond a stove>
4. Bekumsi dubartii akka fincaanshee jala yaa'a. <A woman's knowledge flows under like her urine>
5. Dubartii beektuun manashee ijaarti; wallaaltuun manashee diigdi. <A knowledgeable woman builds her house, and the ignorant demolishes it>
6. Dubartiin beekaa deessi malee beektuu hin qabdu. <Women have no knowledge, but give birth to a knowledgeable man>
7. Dubartiin dheertuu malee beektuu hin qabdu. <There never exist knowledgeable woman but tall one>

8. Dubartiin lama hin beektu, tokko hin wallaaltu. <Women do not know two (things) and are not ignorant of one (thing)>
9. Ijoollee fi nadheen ona dura itti quufan yoomuu quufa se'u.<Children and women are always mindful of the good old days>

MOPC-43: Men's Perception of Women

1. Beerrii fi fardi waan kennaniif nyaatti. <A woman and a horse eat what they are given>
2. Dubartiifi harreen waan itti fe'an baatti. <A woman and a donkey carry what they are loaded with>
3. Dubartiin dhiira deessi malee dhiira hin geessu. <A woman gives birth to a man, but she is not equal to him>
4. Dubartiin furdoo malee guddoo hinqabdu. <Women could be bulky, but not great>
5. Dubartiin sabbata ishee nyaatti. < Women should never eat to their fill>
6. Harreen mooraa hinqabdu mooraa loonii galti; nadheen mana hinqadu mana dhiiraa galti. <A donkey has no compound of her own but lives in a cow's; a woman has no home of her own but lives in her husband's>
7. Kan hanga ofii beektu dhiiraan qixxee hin teessu. <She who knows her level does not sit beside a man>

MOPC-44: Men's preference of women's size

1. Dubartii dheertuun dhuma dhangaa hin beektu. < A tall woman does not know the finishing of a special meal>
2. Dubartii dheertuun dhuma midhaanii hin beektu. < A tall woman does not know the finishing of kernel in a silo>
3. Dubartiifi okkoon jilbaa gaditti. <A woman and a walking stick should be held below a knee>
4. Jaartii fi irfiin kan ofii gadiiti. <A wife and a plough handle are best when they are short>
5. Niitii gabaabduu fi maasaa qe'ee abbaa hiretu argata. <It is one who allocates that gets a short wife and a wide plot of garden >

MOPC-45: What are women compared with?

1. Dubartii fi duudaan tokko. < Woman and deaf are the same>
2. Dubartii fi fardeen ganama baddi. <Women and horses become dangerous if not properly handled early>
3. Dubartii fi harreen ulee jaallatti. <A women and a donkey like (being beaten by) a stick>
4. Dubartii fi saree dhaltuun tokko. <A woman and a bitch are the same>
5. Dubartii fi udaan xiqqoo hin qabdu. <Women and feces can never be little>
6. Dubartiifi harreen tokko. <A woman and a donkey are same>
7. Dubartiin dhiira malee akka maasaa midhaan maleeti<A woman without man is like a field without crops>
8. Dubartiin dhirsa hin qabnee fi maasaan midhaan hirra hinjirre tokko. <A woman without a husband is like a field without crops>
9. Lafti abbaa hin qabnee fi dubartiin dhirsa hinqabne tokko.<A field without owner and a woman without a husband are the same>

MOPC-46: Cunning/Cheating

1. Jaartiin aannan barte ammaa amma gaggabdi. <An old lady accustomed to drinking milk faints time and again>

2. Lama nan suufan,” jette jaartiin qullubbii hattee jedhan.<“I will not be smelled twice,” the old lady said having stolen a garlic>

MOPC-47: Stubbornness/obstinacy

1. Dubartii fi jallinni waliin dhalatu. <Women and stubbornness are born together>
2. Hamii fi jallina dubartii hin gorsani. <One never advises women how to backbite and deviate>
3. Hima didduun du’a hin diddu. <She who fails to accept advice will confront death>

MOPC-48: Backbiting

1. Gadheen niitii dhirsa hamatti. <A bad wife backbites her husband>
2. Hamii fi jallina dubartii hin gorsani. <One never advises women how to backbite and deviate>
3. Har’allee waa’ee kiyya hindubbatani jette haftuun heerumtee jedhan. <A spinster got married lately and said, ”No one talks about me today,” it is said>
4. Icciiitii dhirsaa fi niitii mata dhooftuutu beeka.<It is the hairdresser who knows the secret of a husband and a wife>
5. Salphoon nadheeni dhirsa hamatti. < A shameful woman backbites her husband>
6. Surree hin afatan niitii hin hamatan. < One never spreads trousers to sleep on and backbite a wife>

MOPC-49 Cleanliness

1. Intala bareedduu koomee miillasheetiin beeku. <A beautiful girl is known by the heel of her foot>
2. Nadheen boosettiin ofiin of gattee dhirsatu nagate jetti.<An unclean woman blames her husband neglecting herself>

MOPC-50: Hopelessness

1. ‘Ani heeruma koo kana koora gidduu gahu malee hin amanu,’ jette intalli. <’I do not believe my wedding until I sit on a saddle,’ the girl said>
2. Lama nan suufan,” jette jaartiin qullubbii hattee jedhan.<“I will not be sniffed twice,” the old lady said having stolen a garlic>
3. Si’achan nama ta’aa jette jaartiin gabaa keessatti albbatee. <‘I am not worthwhile hereafter,’ the old lady said, having defecated in the market>

MOPC-51: Women’s psyche

1. Dubartiin qalbii tokkitti qabdi, isayyuu tokko dhangatan harkaa baddi. <Women have only one psyche, and they lose it upon being kissed once>
2. Nadheen akkuma harmishee rarra’u qalbiin isheesi rarra’a. <Women’s psyche hangs down just like their breasts>
3. Nadheen qalbii hin qabdu. <Women have no psyche>

Appendix C: List of Informants

No	Name	Sex	Age	Kebele	Woreda	Province
1	Abadir Jemal	M	60	Alle Sardo	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
2	Abdu Mohammad	M	55	Dembi Gobu	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
3	Alami Galata	F	60	Nagasa	Guto Gida	East Wollega
4	Alemayehu Arfasa	M	62	Dembi Dima	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
5	Alemayehu Surra	M	55	Jarso Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
6	Alemitu Wodajo	F	45	Shobbe	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
7	Ararso Irgate	M	33	Dembi Dima	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
8	Asfaw Sori	M	95	Guto Gida	Guto Gidda	East Wollega
9	Ayana Lami	M	70	Qitesa	Guto Gidda	East Wollega
10	Badiru Chali	M	40	Abalo Suta	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
11	Balay Esata	M	67	Qitesa	Guto Gidda	East Wollega
12	Banti Kumara	M	67	Marech Mikael	Gimbi	West Wollega
13	Bari Likke	M	25	Nagasa	Guto Gidda	East Wollega
14	Baritu Dabala	F	61	Oddo	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
15	Bashira Hunduma	M	56	Lalisa Sariti	Gimbi	West Wollega
16	Belay Asfaw	M	46	Nagasa	Gutu Gidda	East Wollega
17	Birhanu Sutuma	M	40	02	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
18	Bisinge Negeri	F	70	Jarso Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
19	Buzunesh Ebba	M	50	Kombo	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
20	Dagafa Amanu	M	48	03	Gimbi	West Wollega
21	Dassee Sura	F	68	Wayyu kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
22	Debela Boda	M	67	02	Nekemte	East Wollega
23	Desalegn Kuma	M	45	Ulmayi Chala	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
24	Desta Merga	M	38	01	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
25	Dinagde Ganfure	M	71	Bildimma Darru	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
26	Dinsiri Marga	F	58	Bachara	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
27	Diriba Negeri	M	65	Lalo Abayi	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
28	Diro Gelaw	M	39	01	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
29	Dungo Asafa	F	54	Ulmayi Chala	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
30	Dula Alemayehu	M	31	Wayyu Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
31	Ejeta Bechera	M	81	Jarso Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
32	Gadisa Hordofa	M	45	Dembi Dima	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
33	Gadise Negera	F	55	Ulmaayi Chala	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
34	Galane Bekama	F	44	Dembi Gobu	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
35	Gari Mossisa	M	74	Shoobee	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
36	Getahun Wodajo	M	63	Jarso Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
37	Gete Abdi	F	65	Jarso Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
38	Gobana Katama	M	56	Ulmayi Chala	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
39	Gudina Gemechu	M	80	Nagasa	Guto Gidda	East Wollega

40	Gurmessa Dilala	M	78	Jarso Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
41	Isa Sheyimam	M	45	Abalo Suta	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
42	Itefa Terfa	M	68	Jarso Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
43	Jemal Kedir	M	50	Abalo Suta	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
44	Kulani Kumbi	F	55	Lalisa Sariti	Gimbi	West Wollega
45	Kumara Adugna	M	62	03	Gimbi	West Wollega
46	Kumashi Gudata	F	38	Dembi Dima	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
47	Kumbe Wodajo	F	44	Wayyu Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
48	Marartu Tafara	F	57	Ulmayi Chala	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
49	Milki Kajela	F	56	Marech Mikael	Gimbi	West Wollega
50	Mima Mohammed	F	36	Abalo Suta	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
51	Mizanu Kamiso	M	75	07	Guto Gidda	East Wollega
52	Mulgeta Jaleta	M	64	03	Gimbi	West Wollega
53	Mulugeta Raggasa	M	77	Ulmaayi Chala	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
54	Negash Midheksa	M	36	Wayu Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
55	Rebuma Gudina	M	25	Kombo	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
56	Sefu Basha	M	64	Dembi Gobu	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
57	Shamsu Nuru	M	33	Abalo Suta	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
58	Shashitu Surra	F	65	Lalo Abayi	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
59	Shibiru Chala	M	65	Bari Abo	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
60	Shunde Dibaba	F	40	Madalle	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
61	Suphaa Awaji	M	63	Madaallee	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
62	Sutume Gadisa	F	45	Bari Abo	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
63	Takka'a Ababa	M	58	Kombo	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
64	Takle Tasgara	M	76	Lalisa Sariti	Gimbi	West Wollega
65	Tamire Adugna	M	47	Wayyu kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
66	Tamiru Tola	M	45	Marech Mikael	Gimbi	West Wollega
67	Tarafaa Firrisa	M	54	Haro Gafare	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
68	Taresa Adugna	M	66	Dembi Dima	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
69	Tarfasa Chala	M	60	Bari Abo	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
70	Tariku Mitiku	M	48	Wayyu kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
71	Teferi Abdi	M	45	Jarso Kiltu	Jimma Arjo	East Wollega
72	Warite Shuma	F	48	Sombo	Bedele	Ilu Abba Bora
73	Yadata Badhasa	M	70	Bari Abo	Bako Tibe	West Shewa
74	Yeshi Yadeta Tenkii	F	60	Charri	Guto Gidda	East Wollega

Appendix D: Leading Questions for FGD and Interview

1. Who does the household chores? <Cleaning room, fetching water, grinding, cooking, washing dishes, collecting firewood etc?> (Men, women, or both?)
2. If men/husband, why? If women/wives, why?
3. If men/husbands do household chores (cook food, grind, fetch water from the river etc?), what would happen?
4. Who does most of agricultural activities in the field? Men, women or both? (Plowing, weeding, harvesting, winnowing etc?)
5. How do people perceive men/women in this area? Who is given more value? Why?
6. Some people use proverbs like ----- to indicate the role of men and women in the society. Do you agree with it? If yes/no, explain.
7. Can you provide such kind of proverbs about men and women, which are widely used by people in this area?
8. Some people narrate folktales like ----- to indicate the role of men and women in the society. Do you agree with the message in this folktale? If yes/no, explain.
9. Can you tell us similar folktales which are widely told in this area?
10. Some people make fun of jokes like----- to say something about men and women. What about you? Have you ever used/heard such kind of jokes in this area? Can you tell us some jokes about husbands and wives that people use in this area?