

**The Impacts of Harmful Traditional Practices on  
Women's Socio-Economic and Political Activities:  
The Case of Pastoral Women in Hamer Woreda,  
South Omo Zone, SNNPRS**

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of Arts Degree in Rural Development**

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**Addis Ababa,  
Ethiopia  
July/2012**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Dissertation in titled.....

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.....  
.....

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## **I. LIST OF ACRONYMS**

CC: Community Conversation

EPaRDA: Ethiopian Pastoralist Research and Development Association

FDRE: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FGDs: Focus Group Discussions

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation

GO: Governmental Organization

GTLI: Global Team for Local Initiatives

HEW: Health Extension Worker

HTPs: Harmful Traditional Practices

IAC: Inter African Committee

IGAs: Income Generating Activities

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

NGOs: Non Governmental Organizations

NPEW: National Policy on Ethiopian Women

NPPE: National Population Policy of Ethiopia

PCDP: Pastoralist Community Development Project

SCN: Save the Children Norway

SNNPRS: Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State

TGE: Transitional Government of Ethiopia

UNFPA: United Nations Fund for Population Agency

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

WHO: World Health Organization



## **II. LIST OF GLOSSARY**

Aleko: A Cabbage like plant and scientifically named Moringa Tree

Borde: Alcoholic Drink made from Sorghum or Maize

Hamer: Name given for definite ethnic group with typical identity characteristics

Kebele : The lowest Administrative Unit

Region: An Administrative Unit above the level of District

Shoforo: Tea or Coffee like drink prepared from coffee coat

Tej Bet: A place where alcoholic drinks made of honey can be sold

Woreda: A Sub-District level Administrative Unit

Zone: A District level Administrative Unit

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## ***Annex-I***

***Dear/Sir,***

This is a research to be carried out as a partial requirement for a master degree in Rural Development. The program has been launched by ***Indira Ghandi National Open University (IGNOU)*** in collaboration with ***St. Marry University College***. You are kindly requested to participate in key informant interview organized on issues related to the impacts of harmful traditional practices on the socio- economic and political activities of Hamar women in South Omo Zone, Ethiopia. The data you would like to provide will be kept confidential and all the information gathered will be used only for the purpose of this study. Thank you for your consent to participate in the study.

### ***Interview Guide for Widowed and Married Women***

1. Can you tell me about yourself: age, marital status, educational background, religion and so on (socio-demographic variables)
2. How did you get married, and how did you choose your spouse?
3. How do you explain your relationship with your spouse (Gender relation)?
4. How do you understand gender division of labour? Does the Hamar community legitimize gender division of labour? If so, can you state the reasons?
5. What are your roles and responsibilities in the household and in the field?
6. What are the roles and responsibilities of men?

7. Who has more decision-making power over household issues? You or your spouse?
8. If your spouse exercises more power in household decision-making, why do you think this occurs?
9. Do you have access to and control over household resources? If your answer is no, why?
10. Do you think community elders and clan leaders legitimize gender division of labour? If they do so, can you explain their roles?
11. Do you have any painful life experience caused by your sexual identity? If your answer is yes, can you tell me the story?
12. Do you have the right to sell properties like oxen, goats and sheep? If no, why?
13. Do you have exclusive rights over certain types of resources? If yes, can you explain that?
14. Do you utilize modern health care services? If no, why?
15. How do you explain HTPs?  
  
Do you have any life experience resulting from vulnerability to HTPs?
16. Do you think that you were deterred (prevented) from social, economic and political activities because of HTPs? If yes, can you explain it?
17. Do you think women can assume political leadership in Hamar community? If no, please discuss the issue in relation to your own experience?
18. Did you have opportunities for skills training by the government or NGOs? If so, discuss the type of training you received and the benefits you gained for self and wage employment.
19. Who do you think has more access to skills training opportunities, you or your partner? If your answer is your partner, can you state the reasons for that?

**Thank You!**

## ***Annex- X***

### ***Case Study Guide for Married Women and Men Groups***

The following components serve as bases for case studies, which could provide further information on women's status within the community and associated abuses.

### ***Case Study Guide for Isolated and Poor Women***

1. Demographic characteristics; name, age, marital status, number of children, etc
2. How and when you got married?
3. What is your livelihood/means of income?
4. If you have no regular income, who is supporting you?
5. If widowed, with whom are you living?
6. How does the community perceive you after the death of your spouse?
7. Do you equally participate with your mates in social events? If no why?
8. What bad incidence did you face so far and how did you manage it?
9. If the community isolates you, why does it happen so? Who is responsible for this?
10. Any painful life experience to share? Please explain

### ***Case Study Guide for Men with Authoritarian Characters***

1. Demographic components: name, age, sex, marital status, etc
2. When and how you got married?
3. How many wives do you have?
4. Why do you want to add more wives?

5. How do you perceive gender relations in Hamar?
6. Who has more power to decide on household and community issues? Why?
7. What do you think about people's perception that women are born to serve men?
8. Do you allow your wife/wives/ to share ideas concerning family issues? If no why?
9. Do you believe dowry gives special rights to men? Please explain
10. Do you support interventions to balance gender equality in Hamar? If no, why?
11. Any idea regarding gender relations in Hamar... please explain

# ANNEX-XI Case Study Guide for Married Women and Men

## GroupS

### ዝርዝር ጥናት ባላቸው ለሞቱባቸውና ለተገለሉ ሴቶች

1. እድሜ፣ የትዳር ሁኔታ፣ የቤተሰብ ብዛት
2. መቼና እንዴት ትዳር መሰረቱ?
3. ዋና መተዳደሪያዎ ምንድን ነው?
4. ቋሚ የገቢ ምንጭ ከሌለዎ ተጨማሪ ድጋፍ ከየት ያገኛሉ?
5. ባለቤትዎ በህይወት ከሌሉ አሁን ከማን ጋር ይኖራሉ?
6. ከባለቤትዎ ሞት በኋላ ኅብረተሰቡ ለእርስዎ ያለው አመለካከት ምንድን ነው?
7. በማህበራዊ ክንዋኔዎች ከወንዶች ጋር እኩል ተሳትፎ አለዎት? የለኝም ከሆነ ለምን?
8. በህይወትዎ አስቸጋሪ ሁኔታ ገጥመዎት ያዉቃል? አዎ ከሆነ መልስዎ ችግሩን እንዴት ተወጡት?
9. ህብረተሰቡ የሚያገልግል ከሆነ ይህ ለምን የሆነ ይመስለዎታል? ሃላፊነቱስ የማን ነው ይላሉ?
10. ተጨማሪ ሃሰብ ካለዎት

### ዝርዝር ጥናት ለአካባቢ ሽማግሌዎች

1. እድሜ፣ የትዳር ሁኔታ፣ የቤተሰብ ብዛት
2. መቼና እንዴት ትዳር መሰረቱ?
3. ስንት የትዳር አጋር አለዎት?
4. ከአንድ በላይ ካገቡ ብዙ ሚስት ለማግኘት ለምን አስፈለገዎት?
5. የወንዶችና ሴቶችን አጠቃላይ ግንኙነት እንዴት ይመለከቱታል?
6. በቤተሰብና ከአካባቢ ጉዳዮች ላይ የበለጠ የመወሰን መብት ያለው ማን ነው? ለምን?
7. በሃመር ብሄረሰብ ሴቶች የተፈጠሩት ወንዶችን ለማገልገል ነው የሚለውን አባባል ይቀበሉታል?

8. ባለቤትዎን በቤተሰብ ጉዳይ ላይ ሃሳብ እንድትሰጥ ያበረታቷል? አይደለም ከሆነ ለምን?
9. ጥሎሽ ለባል የተለየ መብት ይሰጥልብለዉ ያምናሉ?
10. የጾታ እኩልነትን ለማስጠበቅ የሚደረገዉን እንቅስቃሴ ይደግፋሉ? አልደግፍም ከሆነ ለምን?
11. ተጨማሪ ሃሳብ ካለዎት



## ***Annex-XII***

### ***Observation Guide for women's overall situation in the community***

The researcher will investigate the following phenomenon and use the data for further analysis and interpretation in systematically presenting findings of the study and drawing conclusions.

1. Division of labour and workload
  2. Women's rights to property ownership and decision making power
  3. Women and Girls' participation in community meetings
  4. Women and Girls' Enrolment and Retention in Schools
  5. Women's access to and utilization of modern health care services
  6. Women's leadership role in their locality
  7. Concerning table manner, who is served first and last and why?
  8. Women whipping as honour to the jumper during bull jump ceremony
  9. Husbands' treatment of their wives and relationships between the two sexes
  10. Why few women are labelled "Mingi" (socially out casted)
  11. Physical and verbal abuses by men against women
  12. Girls' marriage with old men
  13. Women's prohibition to share the same dish with their husbands and its justification
- etc

## Annex-XIII Observation Guide for women's overall situation in the community

### እይታ/ምልከታ/ የሴቶችን አጠቃላይ ሁኔታ በተመለከተ

1. የስራ ክፍፍል
2. የሴቶች የንብረት ባለቤትነትና የማዘዝ መብት
3. የሴቶች በማህበረሰብ ነክ ጉዳዮች የመሳተፍና ሃሳብ የመስጠት ሁኔታ
4. የሴቶችና ልጃገረዶች የትምህርት ተሳትፎ
5. የሴቶችና ልጃገረዶች ዘመናዊ ህክምና አገልግሎት የመጠቀም ዝንባሌ
6. የሴቶች የአመራር ሰነድነት ተሳትፎ
7. በቤተሰብ ውስጥ የአመጋገብ ስርዐት ምን ይመስላል?
8. የሴቶችና ልጃገረዶች ግርጌያ
9. የባልና የሚስት አጠቃላይ ግንኙነት
10. ሴቶች መቼና ለምን ሚንጊ ይባላሉ?
11. የሴቶች አካላዊና ስነ ልቦናዊ ጥቃት
12. የልጃገረዶችና አዛውንቶች ጋብቻ
13. ተጨማሪ የሚሉት ነገር ካለ፡

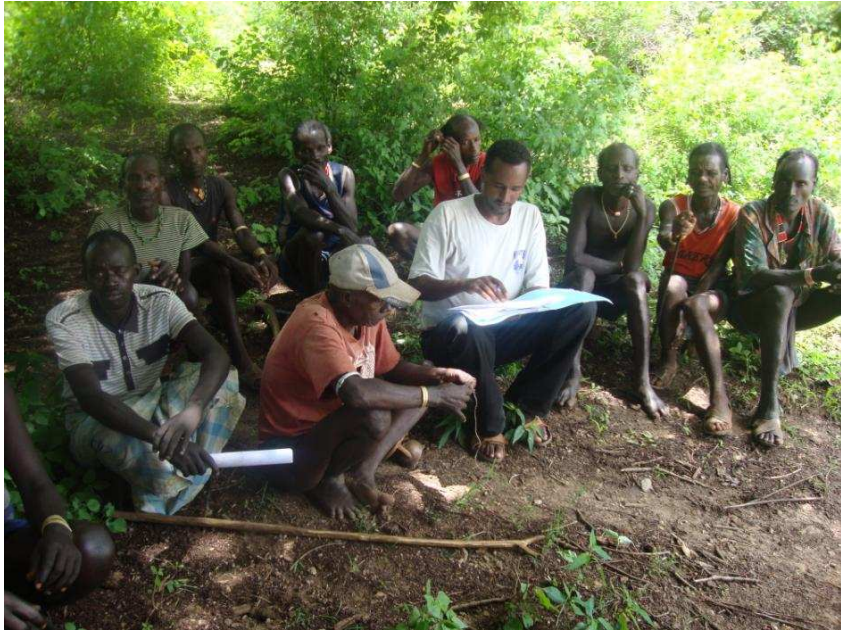
*Annex-XIV Pictures Showing Data Collection Process*



With Community Elders



With Widowed Woman



Community Elders



With Women Groups

## Annex -II Amharic Version Key Informant Interview Guide for Widowed and Married Women

### መግቢያ፡

ይህ መጠይቅ የተዘጋጀው በኢንዱስትሪ ጋንዲ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የርቀት ትምህርት ክፍል በገጠር ልማት የትምህርት መስክ የማስተርስ ዲግሪ ለማሟላት ለሚከናወነው ጥናት እንዲረዳ ታስቦ ሲሆን ጥናቱ በዋናነት በደቡብ ብ/ብ/ሀ/ ክልል በደቡብ ኦሞ ዞን በሃመር ወረዳ ሁለት የተመረጡ ቀበሌዎች ውስጥ የሚኖሩ አርብቶ አደር ሴቶች በጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊት ምክንያት የሚደርስባቸውን ኢኮኖሚያዊ ማህበራዊና ፖለቲካዊ ተፅዕኖችን የሚያስረዳ ነው።

በመሆኑም በጥናቱ ተሳታፊ ይሆኑ ዘንድ ፈቃደኝነትዎን ስንጠይቅ በወይይቱ የሚነሱ ሃሳቦች በሚስጥር የሚያዙና ያለተሳታፊው ሙሉ ፈቃድ ለሰጥተኛ አካል በማንኛውም ሁኔታ የማይገለጹ መሆናቸውን ጭምር በመግለጽ ነው። በመጨረሻም በቃለ መጠይቁ ለመሳተፍ ፈቃደኛ በመሆንዎ ከልብ አመሰግናለሁ።

### ቁልፍ ቃለ መጠይቅ ላገቡና ባላቸው ለሞቱባቸው ሴቶች

1. ስለራስዎ በአጭሩ ቢገልጹልኝ (እድሜ፣ የትዳር ሁኔታ፣ የት/ት ደረጃ፣ ሃይማኖት)
2. የትዳር አጋርዎ ጋር እንዴት ተገናኙ?
3. ከትዳር አጋርዎ ጋር ያላችሁ ግንኙነት ምን ይመስላል?
4. ጾታዊ የስራ ክፍፍልን እንዴት ይመለከቱታል? የሃመር ማህበረሰብ ጾታን መሰረት ያደረገ የስራ ክፍፍልን ይቀበላል? መልሱ አዎ ከሆነ ለምን?
5. የእርስዎ የስራ ድርሻ በቤት ውስጥና ከቤት ውጭ ምን ይመስላል? በዝርዝር ቢቀመጥ።
6. የወንዶች የስራ ድርሻ በቤትና ከቤት ውጭ ምን ይመስላል? በዝርዝር ቢጠቀስ።

7. በቤተሰብ ጉዳዮች ላይ የበለጠ የመወሰን ስልጣን ያለው ማን ነው? ባል ወይስ ሚስት?
8. ባል የበለጠ የመወሰን ስልጣን ያለው ከሆነ ይህ ነገር ለምን የሆነ ይመስልዎታል?
9. በቤተሰብ ንብረቶች ላይ የመጠቀምና የማዘዝ ስልጣን ያለው ማን ነው?
10. የሀገር ሽማግሌዎችና የጎሳ መሪዎች ጾታዊ የስራ ክፍፍሉን ይደግፉታል? ለጾታዊ የስራ ክፍፍሉ ተግባራዊነትስ ምን አስተዋጽኦ አላቸው?
11. ሴት በመሆንሽ በህይወትሽ የደረሰብሽ አሳዛኝ ታሪክ አለ? መልሱ አዎ ከሆነ ታሪኩን ቢያካፍሉን?
12. እንደ በሬ፣ ላም፣ ፍየል፣ በግ፣ የመሳሰሉትን እንሰሳት የመሸጥና የመለወጥ መብት አለዎት? መልስዎ የለኝም ከሆነ ለምን?
13. በየትኞቹ የቤተሰብ ንብረቶች ላይ ሙሉ መብት አለዎት? በዝርዝር ቢቀመጥ።
14. ዘመናዊ የጤና ተቋማትን እንደፈለጉት ይጠቀማሉ? መልስዎ አልጠቀምም ከሆነ ለምን?
15. ጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶችን እንዴት ይገልጻቸዋል? እርስዎ ለጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶች የተጋለጡባቸው አጋጣሚዎች አሉ? በዝርዝር ቢያስረዱን?
16. በጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶች ምክንያት ከማህበራዊ፣ ኢኮኖሚያዊ፣ እና ፖለቲካዊ ተሳትፎዎች የተገለለብኩት አጋጣሚ አለ?
17. አሁን ባለው ሁኔታ የሀመር ሴት ዘመናዊና ባህላዊ የአስተዳደር ስርዐት ውስጥ በሃላፊነት መስራት የምትችልበት አጋጣሚ አለ ብለው ያምናሉ? ከእርስዎ የህይወት ተሞክሮ ጋር በማያያዝ ቢመልሱልን?
18. በመንግስትና መንግስታዊ ባልሆኑ ድርጅቶች የሚሰጡ የክህሎት ማሻሻያ ስልጠናዎችን ወስደው ያውቃሉ? ቢዘረዘሩ፣ እነዚህ ስልጠናዎችስ የግል ስራዎችንም ይሁን ተቀጥሮ ለመስራት ያበረከቱት አስተዋጽኦ ምን ነበር?
19. ከላይ የተገለጹትን የስልጠና እድሎች በብዛት የሚያገኘው ባል ወይስ ሚስት? ለምን?

**እናመሰግናለን!**

# Annex-III Hamer Version Key Informant Interview Guide for Widowed and Married Women

## አርድያ:

ካ ኦይስዋ ይካእሽከዳ ኢንድራ ጋንዲ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ፊጌ ትምህርት ኦንካጌ ገጠርነበር ልማትን ታማሪነት ለንስዋ ድግሪ ጠስንታና ቀዳይአ ኔ። ካትካ ኪልልን ወኖንካ ዞንን ወኖሳ ሃመር ወራዳሳ እንት ቀበሌ ለማ ካምሳናሳ እንት ደና ዋኪ ግሻይና ማና ግሎ ስያካ ዳረን የስኪያና የር ስያናደን ሻዳድያ ነ።

አጋ ይን ይንደን አተካ ኦይስንደን ናሻይስ ሀንኢመንና ናሻይስ ሀንኢምንደን ኤደ ኢብ ናቃንተ ወንግይሞንደን ዉል ወንግይሞን ሃና ወይ ግይንደን። ማችንደር ኦይስን ይገ ወና ግያና ሃናሾና ባይኖ ሀናከኢማ።

## ኤድሳ ሳዳ ጎይቲ ይንካ ኦይስጽያ

1. ሳዳን ሐንሶሳ የር ያንሳኮሳናጽን ኦርጎባ ግያ (ሌን፡ ኬሞንጎይንካ ታማሪን ጎይንካ አማንን ጎይንካ)
2. ጌሾን ሀኖን ጽን ሃቲ አፋ?
3. ጌሾን ሀኖን ቤት የካማይሳካ ሃቲ ሃቲ የደ?
4. ዋዲማንበር አንጋያቤ ማንቤ ካሽዳይስ ዋድምጺጽን ሃቲ ሼዳ? ሐመር ድሎ ግቤ አንግቤ ይንቲ ይንቲ ዋድማን ኪዋድሜ ኢምጽን ጎይንጾት ትያ ክትዮ? ማስኖ ትያ ኬታዮ ኬና ሐርና?
5. ሃኖ ዋድማ ኦንሳ እትቤ ማይንትቤ ክንዋድማይና ሐርቤ ሐርቤኔ? ማይ ማይ ግያ?
6. አንግና ዋድማ ኦንሳ እንትቤ ማይንትቤ ክንዋድማይና ሀርቤ ሐርቤኔ? ፊያ አያይስ ግያ?
7. ዘልንሳ እንት የር ዉልደና አሽኪናቤ ኢሽከሳን ጎይካ ጌጳ ሀይኔ? አንግያ ሞ ማኖዉ?
8. እንግያ የርዉልሳ ጌጳ ኬና የረ ካ ሀርና ይን ክማታ?

9. አንሳ እንት ዳና ኮይሞና ደር ወጪሳ ጌጳ አይኔ?
10. ሐመርን ዛርሰንቤ ቪትና አንግያ ሴ ማንሳቤ ዋድማ ይሳ ይንዶን ጎንጽን ናሻይ ትያ ክታዮ? አንግያ ቤ ማንቤ ክንዋድሜንደር ዛርስኖ የርክንያኢያሐር?
11. ማ ናሲ ሐንዶን ብሽ ሐይር የር ስያ የስክዲዉ? ማሶኖ ደኔ አንጸዲና የራ የስኪና ጽን ግያ?
12. ዋኪ: ያቲቤ ቆሌቢ ድሲ ዳናጽን ሻንሸንታንቤ ኦክታና ዳንዳ አዉ? ዳንዳአትኔ ሐሚዳና ሐርና?
13. ዘሌን አንጋሞንሳ ሐናሻ ድሲ ሐን አያይኖ ሐማቤ ሐማጽን ኔ? ጎይቲካ ግያ?
14. ሐኪምን ኦንት ይኢይስ አኪምዳዉ? ማሴኖ ሀኪምጽትኔ ኬና ሀርና?
15. ሐመርን ግሎንሳ ጊሎ ስያኔ ሐንኢምያጽን ግያ? ያ ግሎ ስያ ሐደር የር የስክሳ ዳዉ?
16. ሀመር ግሎ ስያናሳ ሐጽን ዛረስኖ ኤዳት ሱልድሚ (ሐደር የር ስያ የስኮስደዉ)
17. ሐመር ማ ግሎን ይኖንቤ መንግስት ኪዳሞ ጎይንካ ኪንብሎንሳ ሃዮ ማታይስ ዋድማ ክዋድሜ ኦማይስ ቃዳዉ?
18. ምንግስትዮ ድርጅታ አብመካ እንድይት ትምህርት ቤ ክልንታንካ ኪልጻይስ ጸላዉ =? ሐደን ተመርሰድዳና ትምህርት ሃና እምጳ አንት አንትቤ ማይንት ሃና የር ክንእሸካ የር ፋያ ዳዉ?
19. ጳበር ግጻና ትምህርትቤ ክልንታቤጸን ካትካ ትያይና አንግናሞ ማናዉ? ሀርና?

**ባይሮ ኢሜ**



## ***Annex- IV***

***Dear/Sir,***

This is a research to be carried out as a partial requirement for a master degree in Rural Development. The program has been launched by ***Indira Ghandi National Open University (IGNOU)*** in collaboration with ***St. Marry University College***. You are kindly requested to participate in the Key Informant Interview organized on issues related to the impacts of harmful traditional practices on the socio- economic and political activities of Hamar women in South Omo Zone, Ethiopia. The data you would like to provide will be kept confidential and all the information gathered will be used only for the purpose of this study. Thank you for your consent to participate in the study.

### ***Interview Guide for head of sector offices, health extension workers, development agents and school teachers***

1. Could you please describe the major types of HTPs of the Hamar society?
2. What do you think the Hamar community perceive about HTPs?
3. Why do the Hamar people practice HTPs, and how long was that practiced?
4. Can you explain the negative implications of such HTPs on the overall welfare and development of Hamar women?
5. Can you discuss the adverse effects of HTPs on the socio-economic activities of Hamar women?

6. Can you explain how HTPs affect Hamar women's political participation?  
(Participation in local and higher level governance and leadership).
7. What factors do you think are responsible for deterring (preventing) Hamar women from social, economic, and political activities apart from HTPs? Can you elaborate on this?
8. Can you explain importance and relevance of customary laws which are performed by clan leaders for various reasons? Do you think they are key strategies to reduce HTPs and mitigate impact as well?
9. How do you describe efforts made by the government and NGOs in alleviating HTPs, which have direct bearing on Hamar women?
10. What should be done in the future in order to strengthen existing efforts and or/design new approaches in the effort to fight against HTPs? What are the roles to be shared among Government, NGOs, and community?

**Thank You!**

# Annex -V: Amharic Version Key Informant Interview Guide for Government Personnel

## መግቢያ:

ይህ መጠይቅ የተዘጋጀው በኢንዱስትሪ ጋንዲ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የርቀት ትምህርት ክፍል በገጠር ልማት የትምህርት መስክ የማስተርስ ዲግሪ ለማሟላት ለሚከናወነው ጥናት እንዲረዳ ታስቦ ሲሆን ጥናቱ በዋናነት በደቡብ ብ/ብ/ሀ/ ክልል በደቡብ ኦሞ ዞን በሃመር ወረዳ ሁለት የተመረጡ ቀበሌዎች ውስጥ የሚኖሩ አርብቶ አደር ሴቶች በጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊት ምክንያት የሚደርስባቸውን ኢኮኖሚያዊ ማህበራዊና ፖለቲካዊ ተፅዕኖችን የሚዳስስ ነው።

በመሆኑም በጥናቱ ተሳታፊ ይሆኑ ዘንድ ፈቃደኝነትዎን ስንጠይቅ በወይይቱ የሚነሱ ሃሳቦች በሚስጥር የሚያዙና ያለተሳታፊው ሙሉ ፈቃድ ለሰጥተኛ አካል በማንኛውም ሁኔታ የማይገለጹ መሆናቸውን ጭምር በመግለጽ ነው። በመጨረሻም በቃለ መጠይቁ ለመሳተፍ ፈቃደኛ በመሆንዎ ክልብ አመሰግናለሁ።

## ቁልፍ መላሽ ቃለ መጠይቅ መነሻ ጥያቄዎች ለመንግስት ሰራተኞች

1. እባክዎ በቀበሌው የተለመዱ ጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶችን በዝርዝር ያስቀምጡልን።
2. በእርስዎ አመለካከት የሃመር ማህበረሰብ እነኝህን ጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶች እንዴት ያያቸዋል ይላሉ?
3. የሃመር ማህበረሰብ ጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶችን ለምን ይፈጽማል? እነኝህ ልማዶች ሲፈጸሙ ምን ያህል ዘመን ይሆናቸዋል?
4. እነኝህ ጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶች በሴቶች ሁለንተናዊ እድገትና ልማት ላይ የሚያሳድሩትን አሉታዊ ተጽዕኖ በዝርዝር ቢያስቀምጡልን።

5. ጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶች በሴቶች ማህበራዊ ተሳትፎ ላይ ያላቸውን ተጽዕኖ ቢዘረዝሩልን። በተመሳሳይ ጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶች በሴቶች ኢኮኖሚያዊ ሁኔታ ላይ ያላቸው ተጽዕኖ ቢገለጽ።
6. ጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶች በሴቶች ፖለቲካዊ ተሳትፎ ላይ የሚያሳድሩት ተጽዕኖ በዝርዝር ቢቀመጥ።
7. ከጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊቶች ውጭ የአርብቶ አደር ሴቶች በማህበራዊ ኢኮኖሚያዊ እና ፖለቲካዊ ተሳትፎ ያላቸውን እንቅስቃሴ የሚገቱና የሚያጓጉቱ ምክንያቶችን ቢጠቅሱልን።
8. ባህላዊ ደንብ በመስራት ሀብረተሰቡን ማስተማር የሴቶችን እኩልነት ከማስከበር አንጻር ጠቃሚ ስልት ነው ይላሉ? ይብራራ።
9. ከዚህ ቀደም በመንግስትና መንግስታዊ ባልሆኑ ድርጅቶች የሴቶችን መብት ለማስከበር የተደረጉ ጥረቶችን እንዴት ይገመግሟቸዋል?
10. ወደፊት የተጀመሩ ጥረቶች ተጠናክረው እንዲቀጥሉ እንዲሁም አዳዲስ የአሰራር ስልቶችን ጨምሮ የተሻለ ስራ ለመስራት ምን መደረግ አለበት ይላሉ?

### **እና መሰግናለን**

# Annex-VI Hamer Version Key Informant Interview Guide for Government Personnel

## አርድያ:

ካ ኦይስዋ ይካኸሽከዳ ኢንድራ ጋንዲ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ፊጌ ትምህርት ኦንካጌ ገጠርነበር ልማትን ታማሪኒካ ለንስዋ ድግሪ ጠስንታና ቀዳይኦ ኔ። ካትካ ኪልልን ወኖንካ ዞንን ወኖሳ ሃመር ወራዳሳ እንት ቀበሌ ለማ ካምሳናሳ እንት ደና ዋኪ ግሻይና ማና ግሎ ስያካ ዳረን የስኪያና የር ስያናደን ሻዳድያ ነ።

አጋ ይን ይንደን አተካ ኦይስንደን ናሻይስ ሀንኢመንና ናሻይስ ሀንኢምንደን ኤደ ኢብ ናቃንተ ወንግይሞንይን ዉል ወንግይሞን ሃና ወይ ግይንደን። ማችንደር ኦይስን ይገ ወና ግያና ሃናሾና ባይኖ ሀናከኢማ።

## ገዳ ማከያ አይሷ አይሳድያ

1. ባንዞ ቀበሌን የኖንተ ግሎን የኖንሳ ጊሎ ስያ ኔ ሐንኦማይናድን ወና ግያ፡
2. ቀበን ሐኖንካ ሐመርን ግሎንሳ ጊሎና ስያናድን ሐቲ ሐሻይ።
3. ሐመር ዘርስኖ ግሎና ስያናድን ሐርና ክዋድሜ? ግሎና ስያና የአንሞሞ ዋድሞጳጳይሳካ ሌ ማምሀይ ክደይ?
4. ግሎና ስያና ኪራ ማና ዶር የር ከጊየስኮሳና የር ስያና ሐርቤ ሐርበኔ?
5. ግሎና ስናን ማናደር ክንየስኪስና ጋሌናጽን ግያ? ጋሌና ክራ ማናሳ ኮይሞደር ኪንየስኪስን ወና ግያ?
6. ግሎና ስያና ማናደር ዛርሲንቤት ክንካ ኮንዶንካ ኮደር የር የስክሳጽን ግያ?
7. ግሎና ስያና አምጳይና ክራሳ አብ ማናሳድር ገጽንታን ፋና በር ኪሸሼ የንኦማይንድን ግዮ?
8. ሐመርን ግሎንጽን ኢሻካይስ ዛርስንጽን ታመርስንታ ማናጽንቤ አንግናጽን ኬዳ አይያ ጎይቲ ኔ አማይስ ቃጳዉ? ጎይቲካ ግዮ?
9. ብራይስ መንግስትቤ መንግስታዳማ ዛርስ ኪሊያ ቤ ድርጅትቤ ማናጽን አንግናቤት ኪጽ አይጽን ጎይንካ ስንዋድማት ዶንጽን ሐቲ ሐቲ ሼዴ?
10. ሱስፊና ዋድምጽጽና ገት ኪንይኤን ጎይነቤ አብ የርኦሽከጺያ ጎይንሳ የር ሐር አይጻና ፋያ ክደየ አማይስ ግዮ?

## **Annex-VII**

*Dear/Sir,*

This is a research to be carried out as a partial requirement for a master degree in Rural Development. The program has been launched by *Indira Ghandi National Open University (IGNOU)* in collaboration with *St. Marry University College*. You are kindly requested to participate in the Focus Group Discussion organized on issues related to the impacts of harmful traditional practices on the socio- economic and political activities of Hamar women in South Omo Zone, Ethiopia. The data you would like to provide will be kept confidential and all the information gathered will be used only for the purpose of this study. Thank you for your consent to participate in the study.

*Topic/Discussion Guide for the informant women and community elders.*

1. Can you tell me about gender roles and responsibilities in Hamar society? (Can you discuss the specific roles and responsibilities performed by men and women in Hamar society?)
2. Why do you think women carry on the work burden than men do?
3. Which practices are allowed and not allowed to be performed by women and why?
4. Do you think dowry (twelve and more cattle to be paid for a girl's relatives) is a cause for women's subordinate position in the community?
5. How can Hamar people participate in local governance and leadership? Men or women have the privilege to speak first during meetings and why?

6. Do women allowed to attend education, and seek for modern health care services including family planning? If not, why?
7. Do men or women have access to basic livelihoods and control over it? If either of the sexes has more access to and control over resources than the other, why does this happen?
8. What do you understand by MINGI (notable form of HTP)? Why are women considered Mingi, and when?
9. What do men and women do when they get offended against the behaviour of their mates?
10. Do community members believe that women should be treated the way they have been viewed and valued by the culture? Are you sympathetic with existing socio cultural values which give little consideration to women?
11. Do you support the idea that gender imbalance should be avoided and gender equality is an issue to Hamer women?

**Thank You!**

## Annex-VIII Amharic Version Focus Group Discussion Guide

### መግቢያ፡

ይህ መጠይቅ የተዘጋጀው በኢንዱስትሪ ጋንዲ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የርቀት ትምህርት ክፍል በገጠር ልማት የትምህርት መስክ የማስተርስ ዲግሪ ለማሟላት ለሚከናወነው ጥናት እንዲረዳ ታስቦ ሲሆን ጥናቱ በዋናነት በደቡብ ብ/ብ/ሀ/ ክልል በደቡብ ኦሞ ዞን በሃመር ወረዳ ሁለት የተመረጡ ቀበሌዎች ውስጥ የሚኖሩ አርብቶ አደር ሴቶች በጎጅ ልማዳዊ ድርጊት ምክንያት የሚደርስባቸውን ኢኮኖሚያዊ ማህበራዊና ፖለቲካዊ ተፅዕኖችን የሚዳስስ ነው።

በመሆኑም በጥናቱ ተሳታፊ ትሆኑ ዘንድ ፈቃደኝነታችሁን ስንጠይቅ በወይይቱ የሚነሱ ሃሳቦች በሚስጥር የሚያዩና ያለተሳታፊዎች ሙሉ ፈቃድ ለሰጠኛ አካል በማንኛውም ሁኔታ የማይገለጹ መሆናቸውን ጭምር በመግለጽ ነው። በመጨረሻም በወይይቱ ለመሳተፍ ፈቃደኛ በመሆናችሁ ክልብ አመሰግናለሁ።

### ከሴቶችና ሀገር ሽማግሌዎች ጋር ለሚደረግ የቡድን ወይይት የቀረበ ጥያቄ

1. በሀመር ወግና ባህል መሰረት የሴቶችና ወንዶች የስራ ሃላፊነት ምንድን ነው? ሴቶች የሚሰሯቸውን ስራዎች በዝርዝር ቢያስቀምጡልን። በተመሳሳይ በወንዶች የሚከናወኑትን ቢዘረዝሩልን።
2. የስራ ጫናው በሴቶች ላይ የሚታይ ከሆነ ይህ እንዴት ሊሆን እንደቻለ ቢያስረዱን?
3. በአካባቢው ባህል መሰረት ሴቶች እንዲያከናውኗቸው የሚፈቀድላቸው እና የማይፈቀድላቸው ባህላዊ ክንውኖች ምንድን ናቸው? በዝርዝር ቢቀርቡ።
4. በሃመር ባህልና ወግ መሰረት አስራ ሁለትና ከዚያም በላይ ከብት ለሴት ቤተሰብ በጥሎሽ መልክ ይሰጣል። ይህ ሁኔታ ሴቷ ከጋብቻ በኋላ ብዙ



መብቶች እንዳይኖሯት ተጽዕኖ ያሳድራል ብለው ያምናሉ? በዝርዝር ቢያስረዱን።

5. በአካባቢው ፖለቲካዊና ባህላዊ አስተዳደር ውስጥ ህብረተሰቡ በምን ሁኔታ ተሳታፊ ይሆናል? የሴቶች ፖለቲካዊና ባህላዊ አስተዳደር ተሳትፎ ምን ይመስላል? በስብሰባ ወቅት መጀመሪያ እንዲናገር የሚፈቀደው ለወንዶች ነው ወይስ ለሴቶች? ለወንዶች ከሆነ ለምን?
6. በአካባቢው የሴቶች የትምህርት ተሳትፎ ምን ይመስላል? በትምህርት ቤቶች አካባቢ ለምን የወንዶች ቁጥር በከፍተኛ ሁኔታ በልጦ ይታያል? በአካባቢው የጤና ተቋም ካለ ሴቶች እንዴት እየተጠቀሙበት ይገኛል? አገልግሎቱ እያለ የማይጠቀሙ ከሆነ ምክንያቱ ምንድን ነው? የአካባቢው ሴቶች ስለ ቤተሰብ ምጣኔ ያላቸው ግንዛቤ ምን ያህል ነው? አገልግሎቱ በህብረተሰቡ ተቀባይነት አለው?
7. በቤት ውስጥም ይሁን ከቤት ውጭ ያለ ሀብትን በዋናነት የሚቆጣጠረውና የሚያዝበት ማን ነው? ሚስት ወይስ ባል? ለምን?
8. በሀመር ብሔረሰብ ሚንጊ ማለት ምን ማለት ነው? ሴቶች ሚንጊ የሚባሉት መቼ ነው? ምክንያቱስ ምንድነው?
9. ባሎች በሚስቶቻቸው ድርጊት በተናደዱ ጊዜ ምን ያደርጋሉ?
10. ለወንዶችና ሴቶች የተለየ ቦታና አመለካከት እንዲኖር ያደረገውና ለረጅም ዘመን ሲወርድ ሲዋረድ የቆየው ባህላዊ እሴት እንዳለ መቀጠል አለበት ትላላችሁ?
11. የጾታ እኩልነት በአካባቢው መረጋገጥ አለበት ብለው ያምናሉ? የጾታ እኩልነት በተለይም የሴቶችን ተሳትፎ በማሳደግ መብታቸውን በማክበር እንዲሁም ከጥቃት በመከላከል ረገድ በቀበሌው ሰፊ ስራ መሰራት አለበት ይላሉ?

**እናመሰግናለን!**

# Annex-IX Hamer Version Focus Group Discussion Guide

## አርድያ:

ካ አይስዋ ይካላሽከዳ ኢንድራ ጋንዲ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ፊጌ ትምህርት አንካኔ ገጠርነበር ልማትን ታማሪነካ ለንስዋ ድግሪ ጠስንታና ቀዳይአ ኔ። ካትካ ኪልልን ወኖንካ ዞንን ወኖሳ ሃመር ወራዳሳ እንት ቀበሌ ለማ ካምሳናሳ እንት ደና ዋኪ ግሻይና ማና ግሎ ስያካ ዳረን የስኪያና የር ስያናደን ሻዳድያ ነ።

አጋ ይን ይንደን አተካ አይሰንደን ናሻይስ ሀንኢመንና ናሻይስ ሀንአምንደን ኤደ ኢብ ናቃንተ ወንግይሞንይን ዉል ወንግይሞን ሃና ወይ ግይንደን። ማችንደር አይስን ይገ ወና ግያና ሃናሾና ባይኖ ሀናከኢማ።

## ማና ቤ ዶንዛናቤ ቤት ክንካ ማታይስ ዶልክንታና ወደዳ አይሶ

1. ሀመር ግሎንሳ አንግናቤ ማናቤሳ ዋድማና ሐርቤ ሐርቤኔ? ማና ይንዋድሜን ዋድማንጽን ማይማይግያ? አንግና ይንዋድሜንጽንል ግያ?
2. ዋድማንጽን ካቲካ ዋድሚይና ማና ኬና ኦጋጽን ሐቲ የሸዴ?
3. ሀመርን ግሎንሳ ማና ዋድማ ክንዋድማይና ቤ ክንዋድምምኖ ሀርቤኔ ማይግያ?
4. ሐመርን ግሎንሳ ኪሞና ዋኪ ቴጲ ለማ ቤ አጋራ ባሺ እምጳዉ።
5. ሐመርን ጉርዳንሳ ዘርስኖ ግሎንይኖንጽን ሃቲ ክአየ? ማናሳ ግሎን ክንዋድሜን ሃቲ ሃቲ ክአየ? ዘርሲ ኦሽ ደር ብራይስ ክጻልቃ ኦምጽያ አንግያ ኔ ሐርና?
6. ሀመርን ጉርደንሳ ማናጽን ታመርስጽን ደር ሃቲ ኔ? ትምርትን አንት ናና ዳናሳ አንግና ኔ ሃርና? ጉርደት ሃኪሚ ኦኒ ዳና ማና ሃቲ ሃቲ ኮአክምጽ? ሃመርን ዛርስኖ ማና ናሲ ናሲ ልካ ክአጸ አማይስ መርፎ ሃኪሚ ኦንታ ጸአይስ ኡምጽን ሃቲ ሸዴ ናሲ ልካ አጸና? ጎይቲ ኡጋጽን ዛርከም ፊያ ነ አማይስ ትያዉ?
7. አንት ዶንቤ ማንት ዶን ደልን ኮይሞና ሳ እምባ ሐይኔ? አንግያ ሞ ማኖዉ? ሃርና?
8. ሃመርን ግሎሳ ሚንጊ እምጽያ ሃር? ማና ሚንጊ ኦምጽያ የር ሃር ክንአየገካ ኔ? አንግያ ሞ ማኖዉ/ ሃርና?

9. አንግና ማና ከንዋድማናካ ጸንጽጻና ሃር ከአየ ግያ?
10. አንግያ ቤ ማን ቤ ሳ ጊሎ ዋና ዋና ኮድየ አያ ኦና ወይኬና ጊሎ ፈያ ኔ አማይስ ቀጃዉ?
11. አንግያ ቤ ማናሳቢ ኬጸ ክደየ አማይስ ቃጃዉ? አንግያ ቤ ማ ናሲቤ ካጽኒ ሁል ከንካ ክደር ክጽልቁ አማይስ ጊጽን ኅይጽን ያ ትያዉ?

**ባይሮ ኢሜ**

## *Abstract*

Harmful Traditional Practices are quite common among the pastoralist community where people are substantially livestock producers moving from place to place in search of water and grazing lands. The practice of harmful traditions and prejudices hence cause adverse effects on the lives of women and girls than other community groups in the study area. Pastoral women are therefore socially isolated and have low status, are economically poor and dependent on men for their survival, and the survival of their children. In political leadership pastoral women also do not have as equal rights as men; rather they are dominated by men. In fact, this is the cumulative effect of the prevailing gender ideology. Thus, this research work attempts to identify major Harmful Traditional Practices, which cause life hazards to pastoral women and impair their social, economic and political activities. Furthermore, existing efforts made by the government and Non Governmental Organizations have been critically assessed and possible ways of bringing all the stakeholders including grassroots level community participations to a collaborative effort have been suggested.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 Introduction

In Ethiopia, women are highly marginalized. In most instances, they have limited access to the social, economic or political benefits compared with men. A report on gender equality in Africa emphasizes the low status of Ethiopian women. The report further states that women have been denied equal access to education, training and gainful employment opportunities, and their involvement in policy formulation and decision-making processes has been insignificant (FDRE 2006: 3).

According to the report, women play vital role in promoting social or economic development. However, their contribution has been overlooked and they do not enjoy the fruits of their labor. Rather, they are marginalized in all aspects of the social, economic, political and cultural activities. In a baseline survey conducted in 1998 by the National Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices on ethnic groups in Ethiopia, it was reported that there are around 88 different forms of Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs). Of these, 90% are found to have negative consequences on the physical and mental health of Women and Children (Ibid).

For most of the organizations and community of various countries in the world, women are socially inferior and they are under privileged. Harmful Traditional Practice is the most persistent global problem like poverty (Tadelle 2011: 1). The impacts of Harmful Traditional Practices on Women's overall living situation can be illustrated in the social, economic and political activities and services. The social impacts include: problems of access to and utilization of health services, school enrolment of women and girls, impacts on social dignity,

violation of women's rights in a given society and so forth. On the other hand, the economic impacts include: problems of women's access to and control over resources, income and employment, and skills training. The political impacts include problems of women's participation in local and higher level political institutions and impacts on women's decision making power (Teamir, 2010).

This study therefore aims to answer the following questions: what are the harmful traditional practices in the Hamar society?; how do harmful traditional practices affect the welfare of Hamar women?; to what extent do harmful traditional practices affect the socio-economic and political activities of Hamar women?; and what are the possible feasible strategies to mitigate the impacts of harmful traditional practices?

## **1.2 Background**

Like many African countries, the majority of Ethiopian women 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 process has been minimal. In reality however, women can play key role in the overall development process if they are provided with equal opportunities in all sectoral activities (FDRE, 2006).

The Ethiopian constitution has provisions that protect victims of harmful traditional practices, for all its citizens and particularly for Women. Article 35(4) stipulates that the state shall enforce the rights of women and that laws, customs and practices that oppress or cause bodily or mental harm to women are prohibited. Rape, abduction, female genital mutilation and early marriage are some of the main gender-based violence perpetrated against women in our society. In a baseline survey conducted in 1998 by the National Committee on Harmful

Traditional Practices on ethnic groups in the country, it was reported that there are some 88 forms of Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs), 90% of which are found to have negative consequences on the physical and mental health of Women and Children (Ibid).

Despite women's contribution to the development of a society and the country at large, they did not enjoy the fruits of development equally as their male counterparts due to the multi-faceted problems of gender. Women's low status in Ethiopia, as anywhere else, is expressed in different forms including their lack of assets to ownership, leadership and decision making opportunities and their multiple roles that made them passive onlookers. Due to their low status in the society, women in Ethiopia have been denied the right to access different resources and benefits. Concerning property inheritance, Article 35(7) of the Ethiopian Constitution provides that women shall enjoy equal treatment in the inheritance of property. The provision of the civil code also treats men and women equally regarding succession. This same article of the constitution states that women have equal rights with men with respect to the use, transfer, administration and control of land (National Report on progress made in the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2004). As Meron argues, in spite of provisions provided by the constitution to access equal rights for men and women, the implementation is still problematic in different localities for various reasons (Meron, 2003).

Since 85% of the Ethiopian population lives in rural areas where there is limited or no access to education and other social services, land ownership is a critical factor for the economic empowerment of women. Factors such as remote location of schools from home area, triple role of women, various harmful traditional practices that women suffer from, and societal attitude towards female education are among the reasons for low enrolment and access to female education in Ethiopia (Ibid).

Birhane highlights the situation of Ethiopian women as follows: “the socializing processes observed for boys and girls are designed and rigorously applied to instill a feeling of superiority to boys while girls are groomed to accept subjugation and inferiority with apathy” (2006: 2). Women’s minimum participation in the political arena has also been illustrated in the following ways: the possibility for all citizens to participate in the management of public affairs is at the very heart of democracy. In the majority of countries, however, the political arena remains largely dominated by men, and is even an exclusively male bastion in some countries. Yet, this neglects the fundamental principles of democracy, which the Inter-Parliamentary Union incorporated in the *Universal Declaration on Democracy* using the following words:

*“The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity drawing mutual enrichment from their differences”* (Participation of Women in Political Life: Reports and Documents; No.35, 1999).

Alemtsehay further clarifies harmful traditions practiced against the welfare and health of women and girls as follows: “some of the traditional harmful practices in Ethiopia include: traditional preference for a son, female genital mutilation (FGM), early and forced marriage, marriage by abduction, encouraging girls to be silent and subservient, shouldering domestic tasks on girls, etc. The preference for a son involves favouring the social, intellectual and physical development of a boy child over that of a girl child. Most of the time girls are required to quit school in order to take care of the household chores, or they are prevented from playing games and other activities in order to stay home and supervise younger siblings. Girls are reduced to domestic labours both during childhood and later in marriage” (Alemtsehay 2011: 2).



Despite their contribution to the economy and social development, women did not enjoy the fruits of development equally as their male counterparts. To this effect, they do not have access to health, education, and other productive resources and they are not adequately represented in leadership and decision-making positions at all levels (Ibid).

Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) have adverse effects on the health and welfare of community members in general, and women and children in particular. Harmful Traditional Practices are common in rural areas of Hamer Wereda than in semi-urban settings. Also, the types, number and prevalence of HTPs increase while we go from urban to rural areas. The problem gets more and more complex in remote pastoral areas of the Wereda where traditional practices are common in all walks of the people's life.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The impacts of Harmful Traditional Practices on Women's overall situation can be illustrated in the social, economic and political activities and services. The social impacts include: problems of access to and utilization of health services, school enrolment of women and girls, impacts on social dignity, violation of women's rights in a given society and so forth. On the other hand, the economic impacts include: problems of women's access to and control over resources, income, employment, and skills training and other self and wage employment opportunities. Political impacts also include elements such as women's low participation in local and higher level governance and leadership, impacts on women's decision making power on self and community concerns and so forth (Teamir, 2010).

Ethiopian women experience physical hardships throughout their lives. Such hardships include carrying heavy loads over long distance, grinding corn manually, working in the homestead, raising children, cooking food etc. Ethiopian women have traditionally suffered from socio-cultural and economic discrimination and have had fewer opportunities than men for personal growth, education, and employment. As the case in other traditional societies, a woman's worth in Ethiopia is often measured in terms of her role as a mother and a wife. Over 85 percent of Ethiopian women reside in rural areas where peasant families engage primarily in subsistence agriculture. Rural women are integrated into the rural economy, which is basically labor intensive that causes a heavy physical toll on them including children. Land reform did not change women's subordinate status, which was based on deep-rooted traditional values and beliefs. An improvement in economic conditions has implications for improving women's standard of living. However, real changes require the transformation of practices held by the government and the attitudes of men regarding women (Ministry of Women Affairs, 2011).

A report on gender equality describes women's situation in the following manner. Women play a vital role in promoting social or economic development. However, their contribution has been overlooked and they do not enjoy the fruits of their labor. Rather, they are marginalized in all aspects of the social, economic, political and cultural activities. In a baseline survey conducted in 1998 by the National Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices on ethnic groups in Ethiopia, it was reported that there are around 88 different forms of Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs). Of these, 90% are found to have negative consequences on the physical and mental health of Women and Children (FDRE 2006: 3).

The participation of women in qualified jobs and related fields is at the lowest level in which only 23.9% of women among the general population engage in technical and professional fields. The majority of women take up menial occupations that are low paid and in some cases they even engage in unpaid jobs. The 1994 census on employment also shows that women represent only 27.3% of the total government employees and 93.2% of them are engaged in low-grade jobs (Ibid).

The Ethiopian society is patriarchal that places women in a subordinate position. Traditionally, it is believed that women are docile, submissive, patient, and tolerant of monotonous work and violence for which culture is used as a justification. The study further made clear that socialization process, which determines gender norms, is partly responsible for the subjugation of women in the country. Socialization in Ethiopia therefore takes shape considering women inferior to men. In the process of upbringing, boys are supposed to acquire male gender norms and become self-reliant, aggressive, major bread winners, and responsible in different activities while girls are brought up to conform to the prevailing gender culture and become obedient, shy, and dependent and specialize in indoor activities like cooking, washing clothes, fetching water, caring for children etc (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008).

Women's decision making power is limited regarding land use in rural areas and even on sexual relationships. Less than 25% of women are able to decide by themselves on contraceptive use. Mostly women in the country have limited rights to make decisions on issues related to the daily life of their families. Particularly, decisions on crucial household issues such as controlling resources and reproductive health issues are the exclusive domains of men. Lack of access to productive resources such as land, lack of access to education, employment opportunities, and basic health services, failure to ensure protection of basic

human rights, low decision making power, violence and harmful traditional practices exercised on women are all indicators of the socio-economic marginalization of women in a given society. Gender differences in power, roles and rights therefore affect health, fertility control, survival and nutrition through women's access to health care, lower control over their bodies and sexuality and restrictions in material and non-material resources (Ibid).

Newsweek Magazine ranked Ethiopia 157 out of 165 countries in its evaluation entitled, "The Best and Worst places for Women". Thus, Ethiopia was referred to as the worst place for women. Five areas included for comparison are; treatment under the law, political power, workforce participation, access to education and access to health care (Newsweek, 2011).

Women in pastoral areas play active role in taking care of the children and family, preparing food and drinks, collecting firewood and water, grinding grain, gathering food from the wild, caring for young animals, milking sheep, goats and cattle, processing milk, selling milk products and engaging in some small trade activities. But socially, they are marginalized and oppressed through different mechanisms. For instance, they are given to their husbands in exchange for livestock (dowry) irrespective of age differences between the bride and the groom; livestock is inherited through the male line only; abduction is common; and other violent acts are committed against women such as the pulling of milk teeth, genital mutilation of girls, and whipping women during cattle jumping ceremonies (Yohannes et al 2005: 26).

Socio-cultural factors like early marriage, abduction, child labour, and negative attitude of parents and the community towards girls' education contribute a lot to deterring girls' education (Teamir, 2010).

Some traditional practices are important for the maintenance and perpetuation of the society as a whole while other practices have long been affecting the livelihood and wellbeing of its population, particularly those of children and women (Pastoralist Area Avoiding Harmful Traditional Practices Association; Project Document; December 2009: 9). Pastoral Girls' enrolment and retention in schools is less than 25 % as compared with boys' participation in Hamar Woreda. (Action for Development; Project Document, April 2011: 5).

Harmful Traditional Practices predominant in Hamer Wereda that affect women and girls include: female genital mutilation, female whipping for marriage ceremony, pre-marital sex, abortion through abdominal massage, milk tooth extraction, washing below the waist, etc (Ethiopian Pastoralist Research and Development Association; Annual Project Report, Feb. – Aug. 2009). The most valued material resources in the community include: land and livestock. Men control these materials because women do not inherit wealth from their parents. Besides, women assume that men do have exclusive rights to household resources even during divorce while women leave the households empty handed (Miz Hasab Research Centre, 2004).

Traditional family structures allow men to exercise excessive rights and justify these prerogatives at the expense of women's rights. The modern police and court system is still operated by men and is very much dissociated from the community and its procedures require longer time to reach decisions. In this sense, it hardly addresses the legal rights of women (Ibid). Harmful practices are the results of gender inequality and discriminatory social, cultural, and religious norms, as well as traditions, which relate to women's position in the family, community and society. Such practices allow men to control over women's freedom, including their sexuality.

Women throughout the world may be exposed to a wide range of harmful practices across their life cycle, including prenatal sex selection and female infanticide, child marriage, dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation, so-called “honor” crimes, maltreatment of widows, and inciting women to commit suicide. Besides, restrictions on a second daughter’s right to marry, dietary restrictions for pregnant women, forced feeding and nutritional taboos, marriage to a deceased husband’s brother and witch hunts are worth mentioning in this respect (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2009).

An Ethiopian woman in most families is of lower status and commands little respect relative to her brothers and male counterparts. When a woman is capable, she will start to care for younger siblings, will help in food preparation, and spends long hours hauling water and collecting firewood. As she grows older, she will play important role in establishing kinship bonds through marriage to another family thereby strengthening ties between her family and the community. She is taught to be subservient as a disobedient daughter is an embarrassment to her family. Low status characterizes virtually every aspect of girls’ and women’s lives. Given the heavy workload imposed on girls at an early age, early marriage without choice, and a subservient role to both husband and mother-in-law, girls and women are left with few opportunities to make and act on their own decisions (Pathfinder, 2007).

There are about more than one hundred and forty (140) Harmful Traditional Practices in South Omo Zone alone and most of them are exercised on women and children. In fact, such harmful traditional practices deter the growth and development of children (South Omo Zone Women, Children and Youth Affairs Department, 2012).

The report further states that pastoral societies in Ethiopia in general and those who live in South Omo Zone in particular have practiced harmful traditions for a long time for various reasons. Considering such practices as cultural identity for some ethnic groups and associating them with societal values, make harmful traditional practices deep rooted in the socio-cultural life of the people (Ibid).

Previous academic studies exploring the impacts of harmful traditional practices on the socio-economic and political activities of women are rare in Ethiopia in general and in the study area in particular. Some of the literature available and various reports compiled over the years by the government and NGOs discuss the topics of harmful traditional practices and perceived impacts. However, they do generally not support their conclusions with systematic empirical research findings. This research therefore aims to bridge the gap in the study area by examining the impacts of harmful traditional practices among women based on interview with key informant women and different groups of people having good knowledge of the topic under discussion. In addition, focus group discussions, observations and case studies were employed in the study.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this research is to examine the adverse effects of HTPs on pastoral women's overall development and identify possible strategies to better manage and control such practices in order to ensure gender equality in all areas of the people's activities.

#### 1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- Examine all forms of harmful traditional practices, which have direct bearing on the welfare and overall development of pastoral women.
- Assess the impacts of harmful traditional practices on pastoral women's social, economic and political activities.
- Investigate existing efforts by the government and non-governmental organizations towards fighting against HTPs that adversely affect the lives of Hamar women.
- Identify feasible strategies to fight against Harmful Traditional Practices and promote women's involvement in all spheres of pastoral development.

#### 1.5 Operational Definition of Terms and Concepts

**Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs):** cultural practices performed by the pastoral community of Hamer, which cause physical, social, economic and political threats to the vast majority in general, and pastoral women in particular. <sup>1</sup>

**Social Activities:** Include participation in health care services, education, community ceremonial practices, acquiring respect and dignity among community members, etc <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Operational Definition of Terms and Concepts was given by the Researcher



**Economic Activities:** These include access to and control over resources, skills training, income and employment opportunities, involvement in home and farm related tasks, etc <sup>2</sup>

**Political Activities:** Elements such as power relations between men and women, decision making power, involvement in local level leaderships, acquiring key government positions, involvement in higher level Parliament and Regional Councils, lower level zonal and Woreda political engagements etc. <sup>2</sup>

**Pastoral Women:** Women living in pastoral Kebeles of Hamar Woreda who largely depend on livestock production for their livelihoods. <sup>2</sup>

## 1.6 Scope of the Study

This study was carried out in two selected rural Kebeles in Hamar Woreda, South Omo zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region, Ethiopia. Hamar Woreda is one of the eight Woredas of South Omo Zone where harmful traditional practices prevail, largely affecting women rather than men. Although harmful traditional practices are common in many Woredas of South Omo zone, this research is delimited to Hamar Woreda for the following reasons. First, there is high prevalence of harmful traditional practices and second, I have good connections in the areas and knowledge of the local people's norms, values and practices as a result of previous long stay with the local people.

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<sup>2</sup> The Operational Definition of Terms and Concepts was given by the Researcher

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Limited studies are available on pastoral women's socio-economic and political participations in Ethiopia in general, and in the study area in particular. In the light of this, the study contributes to identifying major harmful traditional practices and prejudices against women and girls among pastoral communities. Also, impacts caused by gender-biased attitudes and practices were thoroughly examined, and feasible strategies were identified to cope with existing maltreatments against pastoral women and make possible future interventions. Prior efforts made by the government, nongovernmental organizations and individuals within the community were also critically investigated and lessons drawn from such initiatives were considered for further recommendations and actions. The research paper will also have significance for policy makers and researchers on the issue of Harmful Traditional Practices both at the national and regional level.

## **1.8 Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is organized in four chapters. The first chapter is introductory and it provides information about how the role of women in the social, economic, and political activities has been overlooked in Ethiopia, and how harmful traditional practices affect the life of women in rural areas where access to education is limited. It also outlines the research questions this study could answer and contextualizes the research as well. Chapter two presents the methodological framework of the study and the review of related literature. It focuses on the research design, description of the study area, sample selection, data collection, data transcription and analysis, ethical considerations, and review of related literature. The third chapter treats results and discussions of the study while the last chapter deals with the conclusions and recommendation of the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Research Design**

In undertaking this research, a qualitative research method was employed. This is intended to describe existing situations, and investigate the challenges and opportunities that victims of HTPs experience from the view points of the women themselves in an open ended manner. The instruments of data collection include: semi-structured interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), case studies and open observations. In selecting key informants of the study, purposive sampling was applied. Secondary sources such as text books, journals, articles, web-sources, newspapers and so forth were also used to complement the primary data.

According to Silverman, “one real strength of qualitative research is that it can use naturally occurring data to find the sequence, in which participants’ meanings are deployed and thereby establish the character of some phenomenon” (2006: 44). In this research therefore, a qualitative strategy is more appropriate to explore the perceptions of women without restrictions to expressing their feelings and experiences. Furthermore, it helps to understand the meanings (Morse & Richards: 2002) that the women give to their experiences and the way they interpret it.

### **2.1.1 Description of the Study Area**

The Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State (SNNPRS) accounts for more than 10% of the nation's total land size with a population of about 15,745,000. The regional state has been divided into thirteen administrative zones, 133 Woredas and 3,512 Kebeles. South Omo zone is one of the thirteen zones of the region located all the way through southern peripheries of the nation following the main Omo Valley. It has been structured into eight Woredas (six pastoral and two agricultural) and one city administration (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008).

Hamer Woreda is one of the 6 pastoral Woredas of South Omo Zone with a surface area of 731,565 hectare and an estimated population size of about 67,045. It shares boundary with Benatsemay district to the north, Dasenech Woreda & Kenya to the south, Gngangatom district to the west, and Oromiya Regional State to the east. Hamer is located in the low land areas of South Omo Zone with over 800 Km distance from Addis Ababa. People are dominantly pastoral and they often move from place to place in search of water and grazing lands for their cattle and goats (Hamer Woreda Administration, 2011).

Three distinct ethnic groups such as Hamer, Kara and Arbore represent the Woreda population. Hamar Woreda has 38 Kebeles (three semi-urban and 35 rural), and the maximum altitude is 1100m while the minimum is 371m above sea level. Annual average rain fall is 731 mm with temperature exceeding from 32-38 degree centigrade at low land areas to 29-31 at highland areas. In the economic sphere, the livelihood of the people is based mainly on livestock production while farming and beekeeping are practiced on irregular basis. It is estimated that 324,738 cattle, 714,760 goats and 332,656 sheep are available in the Woreda (Hamer Woreda Agriculture and Pastoral Development Office, 2011).

Regarding the provision of social services, there are about seventeen formal schools, thirty eight alternative basic education centres, twenty eight health posts, three health centres, and eighty nine different level water points. The population is predominantly young where children under 18 years of age account for well over half of the population. This shows the pressure that the child population will bring on the socio-economic scene of the Woreda in the years to come and its implication on child welfare. With this, the health sector is still seeking attention with limited health professionals in the area (Hamer Woreda Health Office, 2011).

The Hamer people are one of the fifty six ethnic groups of the Southern Regional State (SNNPR) and sixteen ethnic groups of South Omo Zone. The people are hospitable with colourful cultural practices, which serve as identities for the whole community. Many scholars mostly anthropologists wrote about Hamer people and the way the people help each other. Tourists from all corners of the world visit the area to share the pleasure with the Hamar people. Visitors from countries like USA, England, Germany, France, Spain, Israel, Japan, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and Switzerland are among major participants in such cultural shows.

In fact, this helps Hamer people to get media coverage and be familiar with the outside world. The “Evangadi” play is more than everything else and unique to Hamer people, which every outsider is eager to see and share the pleasure with. Besides, their value to communal life, colourful dressings, mutual respect, cooperation and self-help, mediating conflicts, entertaining dialogues, willingness to abide by traditional rules, regulations and customary laws, extended span of delivery and girls’ delayed marriage at the age of eighteen and twenty,

etc are all important culture traits of the Hamar people (Hamer Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office, 2011).

### **2.1.2 Data Collection**

The study area, Hamer Wereda, is categorized into three semi-urban and thirty five rural Kebeles. Two rural Kebeles, which are highly characterized by higher degree of practice of harmful traditions, were selected for the study. The study involved fifty one people including married women, widows, victims of HTPs, teachers, health extension workers, community elders, and government officers. The primary data were collected through different instruments of data collection. The interview and discussion guides were prepared in English and Amharic languages, and key informant women and community elders were approached in the local Hamar language. In conducting the interview and focus group discussions with the informants, I had a research assistant who had good command of both Amharic and Hamar languages. The research assistant was female and she was recruited considering her educational background and work experience in Hamar woreda women and children's affairs office. The fact that the research assistant was a female helped in dealing with sensitive issues related to the life of pastoral women in the study area.

### **2.1.3 Instruments of Data Collection**

#### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

According to Kvale and Brinkmann, a qualitative interview is a process whereby knowledge is produced through conversations between the interviewer and the interviewee on certain

thematic areas (2009: 3). Kvale and Brinkman note that a semi-structured interview *“attempts to understand themes of the lived everyday world from the subjects’ own perspectives. This kind of interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the interviewees’ lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena”* (Ibid: 27). The semi-structured interview was conducted with selected community elders, teachers, women representatives, and government officials. The focus of the interview was on thematic areas, which are explicitly stated in the research questions and outlined in the interview guide.

### **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

According to Krueger and Casey a focus group is a carefully selected group of people with certain common interests and similar levels of experience for group discussions on broad public issues (2009: 2). Waterton & Wynne also argue that the purpose of focus group discussions is to bring issues of common concern into view through conversations, questions and debates among selected participants (1999: 128). The focus group discussions were held with key informant women and community elders separately. The discussions were organized two times for each group as conveniently scheduled, and the topic guide prepared probed on the research questions formulated. In this respect, the key issues raised in the discussions include: community views concerning HTPs practiced against women and girls, the effectiveness and limitations of existing efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations, possible ways of eliminating HTPs or reducing their impacts on women and girls and other gender related issues.

## **Case Studies**

Two key informant women and two men (husbands) were selected for case studies. The case studies explored the life experiences of the informants in relation to harmful traditional practices. The informant men were authoritarian husbands who had personal life experiences in making harmful traditional practices happen to their wives. The information provided by all the informant women and men was valid to make triangulation of data.

## **Observation**

Open observation was employed as an instrument of data collection. I took field notes of my observation of key informants during my initial contacts and later while the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted. Furthermore, my long exposure to the study area enabled me to better document events surrounding the issue of harmful traditional practices.

### **2.1.4 Data Transcription and Analysis**

Transcripts according to Kvale “are [...] not the rock-bottom data of interview research, they are artificial constructions from an oral to a written mode of communication” (1996: 163). This magnifies the importance of transcriptions in academic research that they are reliable and valid (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 245). The relevant data collected in the field were thus transcribed and coded. And this was followed by the process of combining the primary data and secondary sources for analysis of findings and discussions to examine the impacts of Harmful Traditional Practices on the socio-economic and political activities of Hamar women. Moreover, the analyses of findings were looking to identify possible strategies to



deal with the problems of Harmful Traditional Practices among target groups of the study. With the analyses of data, the research report was written and conclusions and recommendations drawn.

### **2.1.5 Ethical Considerations**

According to Gregory, research that involves human subjects needs to provide pre-eminence to the consent of the person participating in the study (2003: 35). In my initial contact with the informants, I sought their consent for individual interviews and focus group discussions and their replies were welcoming. In order to get married women involved in the study, I had to obtain the consent of their husbands, too.

Thus, I interviewed key informant women with extreme care not to step into what Renzetti & Lee (1993) characterize as sensitive topics such as abuses by their husbands and so forth. Sensitive topics were treated by the female research assistant, as the informant women tended to be more willing to speak to a person of their own sex. The interviews, focus group discussions and case studies were conducted with the true names of the informants used in place of pseudonyms as per the consent obtained from the informants. Furthermore, I assured all the informants that the data collected would be used only for the research purpose and will be kept confidential. Also, I made it clear that the consequences of the study would have no potential harm to them. Rather, it would help eliminate Harmful Traditional Practices and promote the rights of women in the social, economic and political spheres. Moreover, accountability and academic honest of the research was maintained throughout the study.

## **2.2 Review of Related Literature**

### **2.2.1 General Background of Ethiopian Women**

In Ethiopia, approximately 27 million people live in poverty. Given that lack of access to and control over resources and discriminatory traditional customs prevail in the country, many people experience absolute poverty. Women disproportionately bear the burden of poverty in Ethiopia, which mainly results from the gender-based division of labor and lack of resource control prescribed not only by tradition and culture, but also reiterated in the law. Women are responsible for all the household chores, in addition to the support they provide in agriculture and livestock production. Environmental constraints and lack of appropriate technology increase the burden of women and decrease the opportunity for income generating activities and limit women's participation in development sectors ([www.un.org/womenwatch/confer/beijing/national/ethiopia.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/confer/beijing/national/ethiopia.htm) Retrieved on 20 March/2012).

Ethiopian women are highly marginalized. In most instances, they have limited rights to the social, economic or political benefits compared with men. A report on gender equality in Africa emphasizes the low status of Ethiopian women. It states that women have been denied equal access to education, training and gainful employment opportunities, and their involvement in policy formulation and decision-making processes has been insignificant (FDRE 2006: 3). Women's low status in Ethiopia, as anywhere else, can be expressed in different forms including their lack of assets to ownership, leadership and decision making opportunities. In fact, women's disadvantageous position in contrast with men makes them the most marginalized section of the population. At the national level, only 30.8 % of female

employment is in the formal sector mainly in clerical and fiscal administrative positions earning less than 200.00 birr per month. Moreover, only 29% of professional positions are occupied by women compared to 71% of that of men. Besides, illiteracy is high at 75% for females. The gap goes wider as one goes higher in the educational ladder (Meron, 2003).

Women are often considered less capable in attaining better educational opportunities. This is basically because of ill consideration towards the merits of women and girls' education. Enrolment, retention in school, and education for women and girls is therefore, problematic. Enrolment and dropout rate is very high among women than men, sons are given priority, and girls begin school very late and withdraw on the onset of puberty. The reasons for all these are biased attitudes towards women and girls' education, early marriage, helping parents with household chores and farming. In addition, the distance of schools from homes, the high costs of schooling, parents' level of education and indifference, and lack of access to educational environment are worth mentioning (Fact Sheet, 1994: No, 23).

Statistics shows that Ethiopian women on average have 5.9 children. Maternal mortality hovers at about 870 women per 100,000. The availability and use of contraceptive is extremely low with a prevalence rate of only 8%. The literacy rate for females above the age of 15 is 33.8%. Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary, and tertiary schools is 29%. Women's political involvement is extremely low with only 7.8% of parliament seats being held by females. The study further states that in Ethiopia the girl child is discriminated from birth. The deep-rooted cultural attitude and traditional practices preach and perpetuate women's inferiority, making the female population a highly disadvantaged segment of the society (Ministry of Women Affairs, 2011).

Patriarchal ideology has strong influence on women's overall development and often causes male dominance in the social, economic and political spheres. A writer emphasizes this concept in the following statement: "patriarchal ideology bases its operation in the premises that men are biologically superior to women, as women are biologically weak, and have to depend on men for survival, men's leadership at all level has been taken as the only legitimate leadership for the protection of women. Hence, this cultural perception that a woman is lesser than a man are embodied in our culture, which led women especially the rural women to be confined to the domestic sphere with little or no exposure to the public sector. Proverbs such as "do not trust women, the wisdom of a woman and the lights of stars do not take you far", etc often reinforce the negative attitude towards women and their role in leadership and decision making positions" (Meron, 2003).

### **2.2.2 Concepts of Harmful Traditional Practices**

Many scholars define Harmful Traditional Practices in different ways depending on cultural experiences. In most cases discussions on HTPs have been associated with the health risks they cause to women and children. The term "Harm" is discussed in terms of health, or, expansively, in terms of human rights. In other words, the term is said to mean rituals, traditions or practices that have prejudicial effects to the health, physical and psychological integrity, or the full exercise of human rights by persons partaking. Examples include: early and forced marriage, excessive dowry system, honor crimes, stoning, female genital cutting/mutilation, breast ironing, forced feeding, shrine bondage, and virginity testing. Some authors include pornography, high heels; virginity restoring surgery, tic surgery and so forth as instances of western harmful traditional practices.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.http//answers.com](http://answers.com) Retrieved on 16 May 2012

Norms of care and behaviour based on age, life stage, gender and social class are often referred to as traditional practices. Harmful Traditional Practices on the other hand, refer to those practices common to all ethnic cultures adversely affecting the health of people, goals of equality, political and social rights and economic developments (Hiwot, 2011). From the insider point of view, there is no harmful culture, which affects a given society or else the society tolerates specific harm from that culture or practice because that specific culture has other meaningful contributions to maintaining the social structure and enhancing social integration, which outweighs the harm (Ibid). Tradition represents the sum total of all behaviors that are learned, shared by a group of people and transferred from generation to generation. It includes language, religion, types of food eaten and methods of its preparation, childrearing practices and all other values that hold people together and give them a sense of identity and distinguish them from other groups (Awassa Health Science College, 2005: 1).

As there are worthwhile traditional practices, there are also parallel customs and cultural values, which are perceived to be dangerous to the welfare and overall health of people in a given society. Harmful traditional practices, which have direct bearing on women include: female genital mutilation, early marriage, massaging the abdomen of pregnant woman with butter during difficult labor, marriage by abduction, shaking women violently to cause placental delivery, throat piercing using hot iron rods to remove the placenta, giving “Kosso” to pregnant women, encouraging excessive fertility, plucking finger nails of women prior to weddings, application of cow dung to the umbilical cord, etc (Ibid).

HTPs which are commonly practiced against the welfare and development of women and children include dichotomy, extracting the milk teeth, female circumcision, abduction, rape, early marriage, etc (Family Life Skill Manual, November, 2001).

Moreover, considering women as objects than human beings, minimum value attached to modern health care services such as mother and child health care, forced abortion, denial of women's rights to share the same dish with husbands, minimum value attached to women's economic engagements, and other forms of localized harmful traditions are considered to have adverse effects on the welfare and overall development of Hamar women (Ibid).

### **2.2.3 Pastoral Women and Harmful Traditional Practices**

A research carried out on the overall situation of pastoral women in Ethiopia describes their economic status as follows: generally speaking 85 % of rural women's labour is exerted on tedious tasks such as farming and livestock production. Likewise, most of pastoral women's time and labour is invested on major activities including livestock production and household chores like child upbringing and food preparation. Women's contribution however, is undermined and not recognized by most community members. As the case with women in many part of Ethiopia, pastoral women are also denied the right to property ownership and inheritance (SNNPR Women, Children and Youth Affairs Bureau, September, 2009).

Pastoral women have no access to and control over basic livelihoods. They have low status; have no access to skills training and other opportunities for income generating activities. New methods of production both farming and livestock are limited to men than women. Higher level of illiteracy among pastoral women also made them assume subordinate position in the society. Eighty one point five percent (81.5%) of rural women in general have no access to credit services and engage in agricultural productions. The situation is worse with pastoral women where credit services are rare and mostly male biased (Ibid).

Concerning the availability and utilization of social services, the SNNPR Women, Children and Youth Affairs Bureau (2009) explains that health service coverage at national level reaches 86.7% while the figure for SNNPR is 75%. South Omo Zone has 51 % of health service coverage. The zone has the lowest figure because the area is far located and rarely communicated, people are marginalized, settlement pattern is much scattered and development initiatives are at early stages. Malaria, pneumonia, pregnancy related complications, accidents, and intestinal diseases are the main causes of morbidity (sickness) and mortality among pastoral women (Ibid).

Only 0.9 % of pastoral women have access to pregnancy follow up, and this is partly due to the absence of health services in the area and somehow because of low level of health service utilization by women. Also, the problem is attributed to the inclination to traditional treatments than modern health care services. 77.2 % of pastoral women don't use family planning services mainly because they need to have more children, and at the same time lack the required information about family planning and available services. Half of pastoral women in the region don't know about HIV/AIDS as reported in the study. Women also do not have access to education and this causes the majority of pastoral women to be illiterate and stay away from the benefits it brings to humanity (SNNPR Women, Children and Youth Affairs Bureau, September, 2009).

It was also reported that women are considered physically weak and psychologically poor by many among the pastoral community. They are denied the right to participation in self and community issues. Absence of institutional setup also makes them vulnerable to various socio-economic and political biases. Women also lack decision making power basically due to socio-cultural barriers. Most women are ignorant about constitutional legislations, which

provide them with basic human and democratic rights. Harmful traditional practices and biased attitudes against women among the pastoralist community thus made women attain little success in the socio-economic and political spheres (Ibid).

Harmful Traditional Practices are long standing components of the social and cultural fabric of pastoral communities. These practices have blighted the lives of children for generations, and in particular caused untold life-long suffering for women and girls. Many of these practices that cause traumas are performed when children are at a vulnerable age. Planned interventions thus include use of radio in order to enhance community awareness and initiate debate and dialogue on pre-identified issues. Mass media approach through radio broadcasting has therefore been given due emphasis and the use of radio as a medium for disseminating knowledge on HTPs to the pastoralist communities is considered effective mechanism for promoting dialogue and change especially in illiterate communities that are socially, economically and geographically marginalized (Save the Children Norway, Project Document, July/2010).

#### **2.2.4 The Impacts of Harmful Traditional Practices and Prejudices against Women's Socio-Economic and Political Attainments**

Women in developing countries are generally silent and their voice has been stifled by economic and cultural factors. Economic and cultural factors coupled with institutional factors dictate the gender-based division of labour, rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and access to and control over resources. Literacy, access to the media, employment, decision making among other things are some of the areas of gender disparity where women are deprived of their basic rights to socio-economic and political activities due to biased attitudes



and harmful traditions against the welfare and overall development of women (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008). It was also stressed that women's limited access to education and employment opportunities coupled with cultural factors reduces their decision making power in the society in general and in a household in particular. In the study conducted by Visaria in Gujarat, Western India, about 50% of the women stated that they do not feel free to take a sick child to a doctor without the approval of their husband, and 70% of the women do not make decisions regarding the purchase of their own or their children's clothing (Ibid).

Son preference, the other form of discrimination against women and girls, refers to a whole range of values and attitudes, attached to preference for the male child, often with concomitant daughter neglect. This practice denies the girl child good health, education, recreation, economic opportunities and the right to choose her partner. All these are due to low status accorded to women and harmful traditional practices and prejudices against women and girls (Fact Sheet: 1994 No.23).

Illiteracy, poor health, poverty, psycho-social stress, lack of confidence, physical damage caused to human body, etc are all problems caused by harmful traditional practices and prejudices against women and girls among the pastoral community. Pastoral women are often observed engaged in tedious tasks from dawn to dusk and this causes physical fatigue, tiredness, emotional stress and loss of weight and associated illnesses. Unless the husband allows a woman cannot go for medical treatment and this causes disease complications and sometimes loss of life because of absence of timely medical care and treatments. Most women cannot read and write and are not aware of changing situations in people's perceptions and attitudes. As feeding the family is the prime responsibility of women, they

are often seen physically weak and psychologically damaged unable to afford the cost of living. Particularly at times of drought, the problem worsens and the challenge becomes more serious (Hamer Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office, 2011).

No pregnancy follow ups are common to pastoral women due to low value accorded to modern medication, and this often causes death because of bleeding and associated child delivery complications. Pastoral women are also excluded from administration and leadership, and this causes lack of confidence and dependency on men for most family and community concerns. As per the values of Hamer culture, key decisions are to be taken by men than women. In fact, such conditions are likely to result in placing low value and showing little concern to women by community members (Ibid).

According to a national study on pastoralist livelihoods, 70.2% of the pastoral communities are unable to afford for daily needs and are living in abject poverty. Of these, women are the primary groups who carry the major life burdens. Land is not in the hands of women, and men are always privileged to own such basic livelihoods. Scarcity of water among the pastoralist community makes the life of women more difficult as fetching water is the responsibility of women than men. On average, women travel six to eight hours a day to fetch water in pastoral areas (SNNPR Women, Children and Youth Affairs Bureau, September, 2009).

The impacts of HTPS on women's overall life situation include: low enrollment and retention in schools, limited utilization of mother and child health care services, physical and verbal abuses, corporal punishments by husbands, economic insecurity due to lack of access to and control over basic livelihoods such as cattle herds and goats, morbidity and mortality due to

unsafe abortion. Moreover, women's low status, illiteracy because of poverty, infections caused by women whipping during marriage ceremonies, migration to towns because of forced marriage, low representation in local governance and leadership and systematic exclusion from political participation can be mentioned as the effects of HTPs on Hamar women (Hamer Wereda Women and Children Affairs Office: 2011).

### **2.2.5 Policy Issues and Legal Provisions**

In 1954, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution dealing with customs, ancient laws and practices related to marriage and the family inconsistent with the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The resolution called on states to abolish such customs, laws and practices by ensuring complete freedom in the choice of a spouse; abolishing the practice of the bride-price; guaranteeing the rights of widows to the custody of their children and their rights to remarriage; eliminating completely child marriages and the betrothal of young girls before the age of puberty, and establishing appropriate penalties where necessary.<sup>2</sup>

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women calls for the elimination of discrimination against women in the field of employment, in order to ensure the same rights on the basis of equality of men and women. It also calls upon states to ensure that women in rural areas have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform. Evidence indicates however, that as girls grow older they face discriminatory treatment in gaining

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<sup>2</sup> UN General Assembly (1954) a resolution adopted on customs, ancient laws and practices related to marriage and the family P. 3

access to economic opportunities. Major inequalities persist in employment, access to credit, inheritance rights, marriage laws and other socio-economic dispensations. Compared with men, women have fewer opportunities for paid employment and less access to skills training that make such employment possible (Fact Sheet 1994: No, 23).

Various measures have been taken to avoid discriminatory practices against women. Policies, strategies and programs have been initiated to promote the empowerment of women. As a result, such policy initiatives are intended to facilitate conditions conducive to the speeding up of equality between men and women so that women can participate in the political, social, and economic life of their surroundings on equal terms with men. In addition, policy measures ensure that women are not excluded from the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour, or from performing public functions and being decision-makers, facilitate the necessary conditions whereby rural women can have access to basic social services and to ways and means of lightening their workloads. Also, policy frameworks aim to eliminate, step by step, prejudices as well as customary and other practices that are based on the idea of male supremacy and enable women to hold public offices and participate in the decision-making process at all levels (FDRE Women's Affairs Office, 1998).

The National Policy on Ethiopian Women (NPEW), which was adopted in 1993 by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) as the first policy document attempts to promote and protect the rights of women and domesticate the international commitment entered into by the government. The NPEW has made an assessment of the situation of women in Ethiopia and made the conclusion that discrimination against women has been perpetuated in various forms depending on their ethnic background, culture and religion. It further notes that Ethiopian women experience a ban from owning the means of production, are victims of

natural as well as man-made disasters, face prejudicial attitudes in the country's political, social and economic life, and are still subjected to discriminatory laws. Thus, NPEW aims to achieve the following elements:

- ➔ Facilitate conditions conducive to the speeding up of equality between men and women so that women can participate in the political, social, and economic life of their country on equal terms with men, ensuring that their right to own property as well as their other human rights are respected, and that they are not excluded from the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour or from performing public functions and being decision-makers.
  
- ➔ Facilitate the necessary conditions whereby rural women can have access to basic social services and to ways and means of lightening their workload.
  
- ➔ Eliminate prejudices as well as customary and other practices that promote the ideals of male supremacy and enable women to hold public offices and participate in the decision-making process at all levels (Ibid).

### **The FDRE Constitution**

The FDRE Constitution has incorporated both specific and general provisions on the rights of women. It provides the right to equality, which entitles both men and women to benefit from the catalogue of rights it prescribes. Specifically, Article 35 of the constitution is devoted to the rights of women and contains several provisions covering important rights of women. These include: equal protection of the law, equality in marital affairs, entitlement to

affirmative measures, protection from HTPs, maternity rights in employment, the right to consultation, property rights, employment rights, and access to family planning information and services. Moreover, the constitution recognizes the effects of past discrimination against women and entitles them to affirmative measures that aim to enable women to compete and participate, on the basis of equality with men in the social and economic life as well as in public and private institutions (FDRE Constitution 1995: page 12).

### **Family Law**

According to the Ethiopian Family Law (2000), men and women have equal rights while entering, during, and at the time of the termination of marriage. The provisions on marriage of the 1960 Civil Code of Ethiopia were founded on the understanding that men were superior while women were subordinate. The provisions treat the husband as head of the family while the wife is supposed to be obedient to the husband's orders, and family affairs including the upbringing of children should be under the direction of the husband. Additionally, the husband was entitled to the administration of the common property and to guide and control his wife's relations and conduct. The Revised Family Law has brought what may be considered a revolutionary change to the parts of the Civil Code dealing with marriage and has abolished most of the discriminatory provisions of the Civil Code in relation to marriage. It thus provides that marriage should be based on mutual respect, support and assistance of the spouses, entitles both spouses to administer and direct family affairs, including the upbringing of their children etc. The practice of bigamy is also prohibited under the revised Family Code, prescribing dissolution of the second marriage as a remedy (Revised Family Code, 2000).

## **Criminal Code**

The code criminalizes most forms of violence against women and girls including rape, trafficking women and children, prostitution of another for gain and physical violence within marriage or in an irregular union. The criminalization also extends to HTPs in general, with specific provisions on abduction, FGM, early marriages, and bigamy (Criminal Code of FDRE, 2004).

## **Labour Law**

The New Labour Proclamation (2002) and Federal Civil Servants Proclamation (Proclamation No 515/2007) provide the basis for the equality of women in employment, promotion, pay and transfer of pension entitlements. Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia aims to address gender issues in different ways. Basically, the policy plans to gear education towards reorienting society's attitude and value pertaining to the role and contribution of women in development. Recruiting female teachers, giving priority to female students, extending financial support to females in order to raise their participation in education etc are some of the activities perceived positive by the policy. Education Sector Development Program has also been initiated to increase girls' enrolment in primary schools to 45%, to reform the curricula to make it relevant and gender sensitive and to reduce the dropout and repetition rate of girls by half ([ethiopia.unfpa.org/drive/WomenandGirlsandHIV-AIDSinEthiopia.pdf](http://ethiopia.unfpa.org/drive/WomenandGirlsandHIV-AIDSinEthiopia.pdf) Retrieved on 10 March/2012).

The Cultural Policy of Ethiopia (CPE) (1997) addresses some of the issues concerning women with a particular focus on fighting Harmful Traditional Practices affecting women. One of the objectives of the CPE is to abolish Harmful Traditional Practices. The CPE also aims at:

- ✓ Warding off all cultural activities that could negatively affect the physical, psychological, and moral wellbeing of the youth as well as the dignity and democratic rights of citizens
- ✓ Ensuring women's active participation in all cultural activities and guaranteeing them equal rights to the benefits thereof
- ✓ Enabling cultural establishments to play active role in all the activities being carried out to keep away harmful traditional practices and attitudes such as indolence, chauvinism, narrow mindedness, prejudices etc
- ✓ Step-by-step eliminating the prevailing prejudices against women and their professions (FDRE, 1997).

Complementing this, the National Population Policy of Ethiopia (1993-NPPE) extensively deals with women's issues. The Policy recognizes the low level of women in the economic, social and political life of the society and calls for measures to be taken to empower women and enhance their participation in it. The NPPE attributes the high prevalence of maternal, infant and child morbidity and mortality problems to the low status of women, among other things.



Among the general objectives of the NPPE the following are noticeable.

- Raising the economic and social status of women by freeing them from the restrictions and drudgeries of traditional life and making it possible for them to participate productively in the larger community
- Significantly improving the social and economic status of vulnerable groups (women, youth, children and the elderly)
- Significantly increasing female participation at all levels of the educational system
- Removing all legal and customary practices militating against the full enjoyment of economic and social rights by women including property rights and access to gainful employment (Office of the Prime Minister, 1998).

### **2.2.6 Prior Efforts to Eliminate Harmful Traditional Practices**

Over the last twenty years, there has been paradigm shift in public opinion against harmful traditional practices though on minimum accounts. A number of programs were carried out aiming at social mobilization, sensitization, advocacy, and helping victims of HTPs. WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA recognized harmful traditions as health and human rights issues and began programs in their respective fields to deal with the problem. The Inter-African Committee (IAC) as a non-governmental organization has also been working against HTPs since 1984. Targeting religious leaders, the youth, women, legislators and policy makers, traditional community leaders, teachers and field level health extension workers, agricultural extension workers, law enforcement bodies, as well as the community IAC aims to create a viable strategy to fight against harmful traditional practices (Berhane: 2006).

Key commitments of governments and other development partners set in the MDGs include gender equality and women's empowerment. The commitments include ensuring universal primary education for both boys and girls by 2015; elimination of gender disparity at all levels of education by 2015; and reducing maternal mortality ratio by three quarters between 1990 and 2015. Ethiopia adopted these agreements to promote gender equality and improve the lives of women. As a means to implement these global agreements, different policies and legislations have also been enacted. These are the National Policy on Women, National Population Policy, Education Policy, Cultural Policy, and other legal documents (Ethiopian Society of population Studies, 2008).

At national level, the Ethiopian Government has so far taken a series of actions to deal with women's empowerment and development. Among these the following could be illustrated as important steps. The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia formulated several laws and policies to promote gender equality. Particularly, Article 35 of the Constitution of the FDRE clearly stipulates the rights of women. The government has also been promoting the mainstreaming of gender in all its development policies and strategies to address gender inequality. Women's National Policy was also formulated and adopted in 1993 in order to address gender inequality. National institutional machineries were established at federal, regional and Woreda levels to implement the policy. The Women's Affairs Office has been reestablished as a full-fledged Ministry in October 2005 with the duties and responsibilities of ensuring participation and empowerment of women in political, economic, social and cultural matters. Furthermore, the Labor proclamation No. 42/93 as well as the newly amended labour law 377/2004 stipulates that women shall not be discriminated against employment and equal payment on the basis of their sex. It also prohibits the employment of women on a type of work that may be harmful to their health. The criminal

code/penal code/ has been recently revised and amended to address discrimination against women and protect them from criminal acts such as rape, abduction, Female Genital Mutilation, sexual exploitation and harassment (Ibid).

It was also stated that efforts have been made to address the problem of gender inequality and gender based discrimination in the education and training policy. The Economic Reform policy was formulated in 1992 aiming to promote economic development and improve the living standard of the most vulnerable sections of the society, particularly women. The economic policy ensured equal rights of agricultural land use, control and participation of women in extension services. The Health Policy, Developmental Social Welfare Policy, Cultural Policy, the Policy on Natural Resources and the Environment, the Civil Service Proclamation, Pension Law, Penal Code etc aim to improve the livelihood of women. The Constitution gives special attention to women's equal economic rights, equal acquisition and inheritance of property including land (FDRE Women's Affairs Office, 1998).

According to the Federal Rural Land Administration Law (1997), the land administration law of each administrative region shall ensure the equal rights of women in holding, administering, and transferring land. It also provides for women's participation in decision-making on land-related matters (FDRE: 2006).

The Ethiopian Government has long been involved in fighting against Harmful Traditional Practices and prejudices, which are bottlenecks for growth and development in general. Specifically, pastoralist societies that do not yet adapt to modern ways of life, are highly affected by such practices. In South Omo Zone, there are about more than one hundred forty

HTPs. Similarly, more than fifty HTPs are registered only in Hamer Woreda (Hamer Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office, 2011).

Thus, government intervention all the way through federal, regional, zonal and woreda level structures has been considered key strategy against these practices. Moreover, other options like mobilizing NGOs and private organizations in the fight against HTPs have also become important. NGOs are key stakeholders and often contribute in terms of finance, expertises input, and logistics support to successfully eradicating HTPs from the area. Thus, the support from all development actors - the state, NGOs and the private sector can further be categorized into three elements: people's mobilization for active participation, mobilization of financial and material resources, and mobilization of skilled manpower for effective and efficient program interventions (South Omo Zone Women, Children and Youth Affairs Department, 2011).

In Hamer Woreda, NGOs are actively operating along with the government in the effort to reduce the prevalence of HTPs, which cause social, economic and political imbalances among pastoralist communities. The operating NGOs include: Save the Children Norway (SCN), Ethiopian Pastoralist Research and Development Association (EPaRDA), Pastoralist Development Affairs Bureau, Farm Africa, Pastoralist Community Development Project (PCDP), and so forth. The Regional Women and Children's Affairs Bureau is the leading government office, which plays crucial role in the welfare and overall development of women and children in the region (Hamer Woreda Administration, 2011).

Interventions by the government and NGOs in the fight against HTPs constitute the following basic components of their action plans.

- ➔ Launch community conversation on HTPs that affect the lives of community members in general, and women and children in particular. Customary laws, which prohibit the practice of Harmful Traditional Practices, will also be initiated along with community conversation.
  
- ➔ Establish HTP eradication committees in each Kebele
  
- ➔ Conduct need assessments and strengthen already established women associations in each Kebele
  
- ➔ Establish Woreda level HTP eradication committee
  
- ➔ Collaborate with law enforcement bodies like the police, prosecutor and the court to launch awareness raising sessions on legal provisions and organize a fair trial of offenders/HTP practitioners/
  
- ➔ Facilitate the installation of grinding mills in remote and inaccessible rural Kebeles so as to reduce women's work burdens
  
- ➔ Encourage and extend support to girls' families who are courageous enough to keep their daughters in school throughout the academic year and so on (Hamer Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office, Annual Report: 2011).

**Table One: List of Financial Sources for HTPs Eradication Mission in Hamer Woreda  
between 2007 and 2011**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Amount (Birr)</i>	<i>Donor</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Remark</i>
<b>2007</b>	100,000	Regional Women Affairs Bureau	Fight against HTPs impacting the lives of women and children	Governmental Organization (GO)
	30,000	Save the Children Norway	“	Non Governmental Organization (NGO)
	65,000	Pastoral Community Development Project (PCDP)	“	Non Governmental Organization (NGO)
<b>2008</b>	105,400	Pastoral Development Affairs Bureau	“	Governmental Organization (GO)
	30,000	Farm Africa	“	Non Governmental Organization (NGO)
<b>2009</b>	81,000	Pastoral Development Affairs Bureau	“	Governmental Organization (GO)
<b>2010</b>	30,000	Pastoral Development Affairs Bureau	Experience sharing on best practices	Governmental Organization (GO)
<b>2011</b>	80,000	Pastoral Community Development Project (PCDP)	Fight against HTPs impacting the lives of women and children	Non Governmental Organization (NGO)

Source: (Ibid).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 General Background of Target Groups**

At Woreda level, the informants are somehow educated assuming key government positions in various sector offices. Office bearers in Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office, Health Office, Education Office, Agriculture and Pastoral Development Office, and the Court were interviewed about the prevailing Harmful Traditional Practices common to women and girls in the study area. These offices run gender related programs and five key informants (one from each sector office) were included in the study.

At community level six individuals, two each from Kebele health post, agricultural development centers, and schools were interviewed on various interrelated issues. Two of them are diploma holders while the rest had certificate awards. They participated in this study as key informants because they lived with the local people and knew the local tradition well. Likewise, most of the target groups involved in the study include: local people with different life experiences ranging from authoritarian husbands to widowed and married women, and from outcaste women to community elders. More than forty localities from villages actively involved in the study and their contribution to the successful completion of the research was immense. In total, fifty one individuals participated in the study.

### **3.2 Harmful Traditional Practices Commonly Practiced against the Welfare of Pastoral Women in the Study Area**

The National Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices on ethnic groups in Ethiopia reported that there are about 88 different forms of Harmful Traditional Practices all over the nation. Of these, 90% are found to have adverse effects on the physical and mental health of Women and Children (FDRE 2006: 3). An annual report made by South Omo Zone Women and Children's Affairs Department identifies one hundred and forty HTPs in most of the Woredas of the zone (Women and Children Affairs Department: 2011). Also, as stated by the Regional Women and Children's Affairs Bureau (2009), Pastoral women are highly dominated by men for socio-cultural reasons. In relation to this, key informants of this study emphasize that the patriarchal ideology is accepted among the Hamar community and deviation from the existing norms is considered taboo. Hamer Woreda Women and Children's Affairs Office (2011) thus identifies commonly practiced HTPs such as wife inheritance, lack of access to and control over resources, dowry, denial of rights to education, polygamous marriage, girls' marriage with old persons, whipping during bull jump ceremony. Pastoral women in Hamer experience domination by men especially after marriage. Unmarried girls are relatively free and independent compared with married women.

#### **3.2.1 Women's Habit in taking Half Shower (Hamer Women only take shower above their waist).**

According to participants of the Focus Group Discussion, customarily Hamer women do not take full shower, rather they often wash half of their body (above their waist) mainly because of the belief that if they wash the whole body, disasters will happen to the entire community.



This relates to the literature that women do not have the privilege to make decisions of their own unlike men (Derare 2006). Obviously, failure to wash all part of the body can cause hygienic and sanitation problems.

### **3.2.2 Denial of Women's Rights to select their Mates and Relationships between Husbands and Wives**

The Ethiopian Family Law states that marriage is the product of equal consent of both parties – the man and the woman (2004:5). However, key informants of this study indicated that Hamer girls do not have the right to select their future mates. Rather, men have the right to choose their beloved ones in their community. Mate selection is carried out by men when girls are about seven and eight years of age. Besides, girls have no right to say no to their mates even at later ages when they are around eighteen and marriage is to be arranged. This is due to socio-cultural biases, which allow men to exercise more privileges than women among the pastoralist communities.

A widowed informant narrated her experience about how she was denied the right to reject her selection as a wife by someone. She said, “I had no option to select my mate. Rather, my husband had the chance to do it. He wanted me to be his wife, but I didn't have the opportunity to prefer him to be my husband. This is due to two reasons; first, I was eight years old when my husband selected me to be his future mate and knew nothing about love or affection and second, in Hamer culture, girls cannot choose their mates, rather they will be selected by male counterparts. While I was selected by my husband at the age of eight, the husband had four wives. This means I was his fifth wife. Surprisingly, he added one more wife and had six wives”.

It can be analysed from the narration provided that decision making for girls and women in Hamar society is problematic given the socio-cultural values, which reinforces male dominance over women. The report released by UNDAF (2001) relates to this fact that women in patriarchal societies tend not to exercise decision making power not only in access to and control over resources, but also in objecting to marriages arranged by families.

Complementing this, a key informant from Woreda Health Office stated, “denying girls the right to make their own choice is against constitutional rights and other laws of the nation such as the Ethiopian Family Law, which declares marriage to be arranged on the equal consent of the couple than against the will of one or the other partner”. The informant further maintained that marriage with old persons may influence the girl to look for another sexual partner indiscriminately due to sexual incompatibility. However, this is likely to cause Sexually Transmitted Diseases like HIV/AIDS. In relation to this, the annual report of Hamer Woreda Women and Children’s Affairs Office (2011) depicts that men’s special rights to marry more wives denying women even the right to divorce causes women’s rights violations and associated problems like family conflicts among the pastoralist community.

Likewise, participants of the FGDs emphasized that the denial of women’s rights to divorce will make Hamer women stay as slaves for their husbands throughout their lives. In other words, such culture constructed marriage forms remain indissoluble unless the woman passes away. In situations where the husband dies, the woman will be inherited by the brother of the deceased person. We can therefore see that Hamar women experience the impacts of deep-rooted harmful traditions throughout their lives.

The SNNPR Family Law (2004:16) clearly states that the husband and wife should respect and support each other, and allow dialogue for mutual consent in order to make joint decisions regarding family issues. Contrary to this legal provision, a widowed woman from Area Kaysa kebele narrated her story as follows. “I respect my husband; serve him food first, but I am not allowed to eat together. I have no right to own resources like cattle and goats and all the household property belongs to him. I am supposed to be submissive to my husband, and cannot say anything even when he gets married to a new wife. Often, I cannot sleep with him because there is a myth that women’s breath weakens men’s courage. It is when he needs to have sexual intercourse that I will be called to sleep with him. When we sleep together he never wants to see my face and I should sleep with my backside facing him. My husband often tells me that he has paid money to make me his own asset. I usually prefer to be silent while he says so fearing physical attack. He also asks me about the sale of a chicken or eggs while I cannot ask him about the sale of cattle or goats”.

Although the SNNPR Family Law (2004:6) strictly prohibits multiple marriages, a married woman in Area Kaysa kebele argues that it is difficult for two wives to share a husband’s affection or love but, women must accept this tradition as long as the Hamar community accepts this gender norm. The informant further stated that she did not reject her husband when he got married to a second wife, and she is now living in the same house with the co-wife. A widowed woman in Simbelle Kebele added, “I have no property ownership rights and everything in the household belongs to my husband. My husband has no respect for me and he often assumes that I am there to serve him throughout his life. He has the right to marry more wives, but I have no right to say no to his choice. In exclusive terms, a husband and a wife have no equal rights and the husband is not only seen as a breadwinner, but also as superior in the family”.

### **3.2.3 Wife Inheritance by Younger Brother of the Deceased Husband**

A report of Hamer Woreda Women Affairs Office (2011) identifies wife inheritance as one of HTPs performed against pastoral women in Hamer. In line with this, key informants and FGD participants argued that culturally a wife can be inherited by a younger brother of the deceased husband for various reasons. The informants maintained that wife inheritance is attributed to several factors including: the need to protect the family from external enemies, safeguard household properties and keep family resources within the premises of blood ties, and properly care for children of the deceased man. As the community gender norm entails, women have no right to say no to wife inheritance, and must continue to bear children from younger brothers of the deceased husbands. A narration by a widowed woman illustrates the problem of wife inheritance as given below.

She says, “I am 36 years old and live in Kaysa Kebele. My husband died eight years ago and we had only one son. Since the death of my husband, I have been responsible for taking care of our son. Although I wanted to remarry in my own choice after the incident, the existing tradition did not allow me to do so. And then, the eldest son of my husband’s sister inherited me as his second wife and I had three children by him. You can see now I have carried the burden of taking care of all the children as the support I am receiving from my second husband is very little. Customarily, all the latter three children whom I got after being inherited were called upon by the name of my deceased husband”.

Complementing this narration, another informant woman said, “When my husband died, his two younger brothers fought over inheriting me as a wife. Finally, the immediate younger brother took the opportunity and made me a second wife. I had two children from my

deceased husband and now I got two more children from his younger brother. But, the task of caring for them is given to me. My second husband devotes much of his time to his first wife and children who live just in the nearby village. He never gave me money or grain to support my family and rarely visits me and his children. I tell you frankly that I am facing the challenge of supporting the family without getting help from him or his relatives. To your surprise, he comes home when he wants sexual pleasure with me. I know that I cannot refuse his sexual request because our ways of life are the products of our culture. Considering that I cannot support my family, the government provided me with two female goats for breeding. Otherwise, I have no cattle, no other goats, and no sheep. I usually rely on community support for ploughing my land, sewing and harvesting”.

### **3.2.4 Denial of Women’s Rights to Property Ownership and Inheritance**

Regarding property inheritance, Article 35(7) of the Ethiopian Constitution declares that women shall enjoy equal treatment in the inheritance of property (FDRE Constitution, 1995). In spite of the constitutional rights accorded to women, a report made by South Omo Zone Women and Children Affairs Department (2011) states that pastoral women have no right to property ownership and inheritance because of long existed traditional practices and prejudices. In relation to this, a study conducted by the SNNPR Women and Children Affairs Bureau points out that women have no access to and control over basic livelihoods such as cattle and goats. The report maintains that pastoral women are given low status, and have no access to skills training and associated opportunities for income generating activities. For instance, new methods of production both farming and livestock are limited to men (Regional Women and Children Affairs Bureau, 2009).

In consistent with this, the informant women stressed that they do not have the privilege to property ownership and inheritance. Rather, men are the sole owners of all household and other properties. This has been substantiated during the focus group discussions with men and women and the following accounts reinforce this statement.

The discussants argued that there is no property registered in the name of wives. Everything belongs to husbands merely because they have accumulated it over years before and after marriage. A woman joins her husband's home empty handed. Also, she has drawn resources to her family as dowry since her selection as a future mate by her husband. Because of these, she has no rights to property ownership. Men in Hamar community have exclusive control over resources including cattle, goats, sheep, and honey while women's rights are limited to access to low valued properties like chicken, egg, fire wood, vegetables and so forth. Paradoxically, almost all household expenses are covered by women's little income while men use the money they earn from the sale of cattle and goats for expenses including: local alcoholic drinks (Tej, and beer) and lavish feasts whereby men from surrounding areas are invited.

The focus group discussions with community elders also indicated that wives must remind their couples when food is not available at home. In fact, the decision must be taken by the husband as to how to spend money for the purchase of grain for instance. Hence, the decision to sell an ox or a goat will be taken exclusively by the husband than the wife. Even at times when the husband is far from the village, the wife cannot sell or exchange property to buy food items for the children. Instead, she will give her children "Aleko" (local cabbage like vegetable) and other root plants as a survival strategy till the husband comes back home. If

the problem persists before the husband returns, the woman will inform her husband's families to get approval to sell an ox or a goat in order to buy food for the family.

It can be inferred from the focus group discussions that Hamar women are economically dependent on their husbands although feeding the family is the prime responsibility of women than men. According to the discussant groups, socio-cultural values, which determine gender relations in the community, constitute the dynamics for gender imbalances. An informant from the Woreda health office substantiated this argument that property inheritance is through the male line and the wife has nothing to own. The informant maintained that Hamar women cannot use crops available in the household during harvest failure without their husbands' consent. As a result, survival is the key issue to pastoralists during drought seasons particularly women face the hardships for reasons that they are responsible for feeding the family. In most cases such tragedies tend to make women suffer from health hazards, emotional stresses, and physical fatigue.

The UN report on Good Practices in Legislation on Harmful Practices against Women states that women have equal rights to occupy, use, own and inherit land and other commodities. The report further depicts that upon the dissolution of marriage there is an equitable distribution of property and women can be the beneficiaries of land tenure reform as well. Many *harmful practices* committed against women and older women in particular, including deprivation of widows' rights to inheritance, maltreatment of widows, and so on are closely related to the denial of women's property and inheritance rights. This is a particular problem in addressing domestic violence because men's perceived or codified exclusive right to property is often an obstacle to women's ability to live safely (United Nations, 2009: 33).

In the interviews with government officials and community elders it was argued that men will be given priority to women to enjoy chances for skills training opportunities and associated self and wage employment. This has been shaped by societal norms and traditions, which community members generally accept in practice. Nevertheless, such tradition influenced employment patterns are often challenged through the intervention of governmental and non-governmental organizations. The informants strengthened their views concerning gender imbalance among the Hamar people mentioning that women's work is overlooked while men's work is seen as value-laden. However, women's contribution to the household economy is as equal as that of men. We can therefore see that women are deprived of basic economic rights due to the influence of tradition practiced through generations and wrong image by men.

Referring to the Ethiopian Constitution (Article 35), Meron (2003) argues that men and women have equal rights to acquire, administer, control, use and transfer property. However, the issue of gender equality is still problematic in practice hence; gender relation is defined in various ways in different geographic regions in Ethiopia. Viewing the inequality of men and women in property ownership and inheritance as a justifiable fact in Hamar community, an informant polygamous man narrated, "I have absolute right to property ownership, but my wives have no say on this issue because they have already taken their share in the form of dowry, which I gave to their families".

Witnessing the accounts provided by the man, a key informant married woman explained, "I have no property at all and the household property belongs to my husband. He is the one who decides on almost everything. My role is just limited to manage the household tasks including feeding the family and raise the children." The opinion of the woman was maintained by



participants of the focus group discussions in that men are the sole actors in the household relations and women are supposed to be submissive and shy. This relates to what the literature on gender relations states that men tend to exercise more decision making power than women who are considered voiceless (Derare, 2006: 3). Community elders who participated in the focus group discussions strengthened the public view that women's social status is rather inferior compared to men's. They emphasized that if a family does not have male children, girls cannot be customarily entitled to inherit properties from their families. This clearly portrays that women and girls are marginalized because of their sexual identity, and the inequality of the sexes has been justified as the gender norm of the Hamar society.

### **3.2.5 Denial of Women's Rights to Decision Making Power**

A study on gender inequality states that harmful traditions, which limit women's participation in all spheres have adverse effects on their decision making power (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008). In connection with this, key informants of this study confirmed that men tend to make decisions over important matters including the decisions for polygamous marriages while women are marginalized in pastoral societies. Importantly, elders assume key positions not only in making decisions, but also in setting rules to punish those who transgress the prevailing gender rules. The Ethiopian Society of Population Studies (2008) reports that women's decision making power is limited concerning land use in rural areas and even in sexual relationships. For instance, less than 25% of women are able to decide by themselves on contraceptive use. Usually women in the country have the power to make decisions on issues related to the daily life of the family, but decisions about large household purchases, degree of participation of a woman in social activities, and reproductive health issues are men's domains.

According to key informant women, women's decision making power for themselves, the family and community issues is insignificant and is widely controlled and by men. Women are not consulted on key familial and community issues. Rather, elders and adult males make decisions in allowing children to go to school, get modern treatment, participate in meetings and discussions, arrange ceremonial practices like the bull jump ceremony etc. Here it can be noted as Kabeer (1994) states that women's agency is overridden through violence or authority of others. The bottom line according to Kabeer is that power operates when peoples' *strategic life choices* are constrained by institutional, cultural or ideological practices. This corresponds with the views maintained by the informant women that prejudices occur to women for interrelated cultural reasons.

A narration by an informant woman further illustrates how women's decision making power can be overridden as follows: "Our culture, beliefs, values and practices, which have been practiced for generations have adverse effects on our spousal relationships. This is because we are always expected to serve our husbands, but not to exercise equal rights with them". This was supported by community elders who took part in the FGDs that women are expected to adhere to societal values, which undermine their personal integrity. Complementing this, a key informant widowed woman pointed out that she cannot say no to resource wastages by her husband, cannot decide on who should go to school among her children, cannot represent the family in a social event, cannot say no when her husband decides to practice polygamy, and cannot oppose her husband's idea in any case. This relates to the literature on the status of Ethiopian women that women have been denied equal access to education, training and gainful employment opportunities, and their involvement in policy formulation and decision-making processes has been insignificant (FDRE 2006: 3).

Among participants of the FGDs, a sixty year old woman expressed her feeling that she is in conformity with the existing societal values and practices, attitudes towards women and the long held beliefs by the public. The informant attempted to make mythical associations between the transgression of established rules and violation of norms with punishment by the supernatural being against women, particularly in causing infertility. She thought that women's disobedience is like acting against the words of the creator, which can also bring about cattle plague or bubonic diseases. As a different concept in the FGDs, the woman tried to provide us with a picture of how gender relations need to be maintained in Hamar community in a short narration as follows. "My husband is the head of the family, and I always expect him to play the key role in the household decision making process and over issues outside the domestic sphere. I tell you frankly that I feel confident and feel personally represented when my husband makes all the decisions in all matters. That is why I have no objection to male dominance over women."

### **3.2.6 The Practice of *Mingi* and Pastoral Women**

One of the major themes of the FGDs was the issue of *Mingi* practice among the Hamar people. According to FGD discussants, *Mingi* is a local Hamar term referring to a socially outcast, cursed and unwanted practice or person. Customarily, people call women who get pregnant without getting married or before marriage, *Mingi*. As a result of the *Mingi* reference to the women, strong social sanctions can be imposed on them. The reference *Mingi* can also be made when married women get pregnant before performing ritual practices to cleanse them from the sin they committed due to cross ethnic marriages particularly with the Amhara (highlanders). Children will also be called *Mingi* if they are born before marriage and within marriage, but without fulfilling social obligations.

Children are also called *Mingi* when milk teeth appear in the upper jaw before the lower jaw. The discussants argued that although the practice existed for years, now they have given it up and have accepted the inviolable rights of people. It has also been brought into view that *Mingi* children are now growing up in many areas where some are sent to Jinka Child Care Centre for better treatment. Contrary to this argument, the informant community elders disclosed that *Mingi* practice still perpetuates in many parts of Hamar Woreda. The reason for the continuation of the practice is to avoid God's wrath that can be accompanied by severe punishments including disaster to the community, drought and famine, cattle plague and so on. Complementing this, the researcher through long exposure to the local people's ways of life, witnesses that *Mingi* still exists in some areas of Hamar Woreda changing its previous forms. People hide it from government officials because they know it is a crime against humanity.

### **3.2.7 Physical and Verbal Abuses against Pastoral Women**

A study by the Regional Women and Children's Affairs Bureau (2009) indicates that physical abuses including torture and beatings are common among pastoral communities. According to the Bureau's study, insults which are immoral and personal in characters are common to pastoral women in the region. This relates to the data provided by interviewed women that husbands often insult, harass, and beat their wives for various reasons. Community elders from Simbelle Kebele who participated in the FGDs strengthened this view that *Archume* (a stick like material) is used to beat women. Physical torture, insult and harassment by husbands against wives is considered men's privilege as long as they paid dowry to bring the women home to serve them.

In situations where the wife escapes her husband's torture or verbal abuses and goes to her parents, the husband will immediately ask his wife's parents to make her return home. Otherwise, he will ask them to pay back all the resources he paid them as dowry. Customarily therefore, parents cannot complain about abuses done by husbands against their daughters. Rather, they will force their daughters to return to their husbands even though there is a potential risk to their life. From the researcher's observation over a long time, it is a taboo to accuse husbands by wives and women are nurtured to serve men than aspiring for equal rights in walks of life. The data provided by participants of the FGDs further reinforces this reality that women cannot even defend themselves when their husbands kick or torture them and community members often perceive that physical and verbal abuses by husbands are key instruments to shape women than open dialogue between partners. Furthermore, the discussants added that married women could be kicked for various reasons. If they could not show behavioural progress, husbands will keep on beating them. After a series of tortures, if the women cannot show changes to their personal behaviour as expected, their husbands will let them return to their parents and they will later ask parents of their wives for compensations.

Contrasting Hamar women's previous treatments by their husbands with the current status of women, a key informant woman said, "Previously women were taken to the jungles, tied with rope, severely beaten and left there for two days without food and water. This was the worst form of physical abuse in our society. The community is often passive to women's maltreatment or abuses and even neglect women's issues as if the husband has all the rights over his wife. Thanks to God, things have now changed or improved". Another key informant woman also narrated her story: "I have fresh memories of the physical and verbal abuses by my deceased husband. He was frequently beating me and I had nowhere to go for justice.

I used to keep quiet after the abuses but, neither my parents nor the surrounding community tried to stop this brutal act”.

### **3.2.8 Marriage with Old Persons**

According to key informant community elders, the Hamar culture allows marriage between old persons and young girls. This is primarily attributed to the reason that the man although aged can marry many wives provided that he has the resources to manage the households. The informants clearly noted that a ninety year old man can marry eighteen year old girl irrespective of sexual compatibility. But, as the man cannot be active in sexual relationships with his wife or wives, the tradition allows all his young male relatives to have sex with his spouses. However, the begotten children will be called by the old man and he is considered father of all. Critically viewing this practice, it can be assumed that open sexual relationships can cause Sexually Transmitted Diseases like HIV/AIDS. This corresponds with what the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women defines forced marriage as “marriage entered into without the free and full consent of both parties” (United Nations, 2009:23).

### **3.2.9 Marriage with a Dead Person**

The focus group discussions also brought into view that the Hamar tradition allows the marriage of a girl with a dead man. The discussants asserted that if a seven or eight year old girl was selected by a man for marriage, but the man dies unfortunately before marriage, the girl is supposed to be his ideal wife and must join his families. This will happen because it is assumed that she is an asset to the deceased man as he had paid dowry to her parents. In fact,

the girl cannot refuse the marriage given that male dominance over women is an accepted norm. As a result, the girl must have sexual intercourse with all adult males of his blood ties or relatives. The deceased husband is therefore considered father of all the children the woman bears.

### **3.2.10 Denial of Girls' Rights to Education**

In the semi-structured interview with teachers, government officials and community elders it was emphasized that Hamar girls are not customarily allowed to go to school. This is because girls are considered the source of income for their parents through dowry. In other words, dowry is an important reason for deterring girls from educational opportunities in Hamar Woreda. In relation to this, the reports of Action for Development (2011) show that the enrolment and retention in schools of pastoral girls is less than 25% as compared with boy's enrolment and retention in the Woreda.

## **3.3 Factors Attributed to the Prevalence of HTPs among the Pastoral Community**

### **3.3.1 Social Factors**

According to key informants from Woreda Women and Children's Affairs Office, the Hamar community lives in a culture embedded social environment. The people define the meaning of life in the context of the existing gender norms. Adherence to traditional values is a must rather an option. The story of an informant illustrates the degree in which social factors trigger the occurrence of HTPs in the Hamar society. The informant narrated: "I belong to the

Hamar tribe but I got married to a non-Hamar girl (an Amhara). I was cursed by the local people for breaching the law of Hamar marriage within the tribe. I am still considered a dead person merely because I did not marry a Hamar girl and found myself out of the network of Hamar culture for instance, practicing bull jumping as a ritual practice before marriage. Even worse, people consider me kid and my idea feeble. The informant's ' ' personal experience was supported by the South Omo Zone Labour and Social Affairs Unit (2011) report, stating that almost all members of pastoral community consider traditional practices people's identities and work for their continuity. The people understand that traditional practices (although harmful) held by the community are beneficial to the community's existence. Obviously as described in previous sections, people practice harmful traditions for various reasons.

### **3.3.2 Economic Factors**

Participants of the FGDs from Simbelle Kebele noted that economic factors play the key role in causing HTPs among the Hamar community. This is associated with parents' exchange of girls for a dozen of cattle and goats in the form of dowry. Clearly, this has economic reasons. A discussant for instance argued: "We need the labour of our male children for cattle herding and goat keeping while girls are seen as our assets. This is because we exchange girls with lots of cattle and goats when they get married. Thus, we value our daughters for economic reasons and do not want to lose the benefit we can obtain from dowry by sending them to school where they are adapted to town life and marry the Amhara. This was further supported by the reports of Hamar Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office (2011) that dowry plays crucial economic role in maintaining the existing tradition of Hamar community.



Community tourism is the other economic factor for the perpetuation of Harmful Traditional Practices among the Hamar. In my observation I realized that some educated Hamar people are engaged in the local tour guide related activities, which help them earn much money. For instance women whipping, although it is inhuman, is highly entertained by tourists coming from all corners of the world including Europe, North America, and Latin America. A slow pace of modernization in Hamar Woreda has also contribution to the continuity of harmful traditional practices in the research area. This was complemented in the interviews held with school teachers and government officials.

### **3.3.3. Political Factors**

Political factors can be considered important in triggering HTPs in Hamar Woreda. A key informant from community elders argued that there has been political dissention among three nationalities in Hamar Woreda. The informant maintained that reasons for political differences include the fact that ethnic groups such as the *Kara* do not have significant representations in the Woreda Council. As a result, this has created political grievance among the respective communities and has deterred them from exerting concerted efforts to eliminate HTPs within their locality. The informant also noted that the local government is not actively working to support efforts to eliminate HTPs in the Woreda. To make matters worse, the local government did not even aspire to create effective networking with NGOs and other stakeholders operating in Hamar Woreda. This, according to the informant, has crippled the existing efforts to deal with the problem of harmful traditional practices in the respective study area.

### 3.4 Division of Labor among the Pastoralist Community

The division of labor among the pastoral community of Hamar was the other thematic area on which the FGDs concentrated. Thus, participants discussed that the division of labor is highly prescribed by socio-cultural factors in which gender inequality is the center stage. It was pointed out that pastoral women participate both in the domestic and public spheres while men engage in the public sphere. In most cases women perform activities, which are often difficult and challenging than men's duties. However, the Hamar culture tends to overlook women's activities merely to reinforce the gender inequality among the sexes. The FGD discussants thus mentioned the main activities women perform in the Hamar community as follows:

- Wake up early in the morning and fetch water from the nearby river or water point
- Prepare “shoforo” (a local drink like coffee) for the family
- Prepare food and serve the family members
- Child rearing/upbringing and cleaning the house
- Grinding cereals with a local stone made mill
- Land preparation, ploughing, sewing, weeding, harvesting, cattle herding, milking cows and other activities women can perform

The literature also relates to the themes of the FGDs that economic and cultural factors coupled with institutional factors dictate the gender-based division of labour, rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and access to and control over resources (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008). In fact, the general situation of Ethiopian rural women is that they experience physical hardships throughout their lives. Such hardships include: carrying loads

over long distances, grinding corn manually; working in the homestead, raising children, cooking food and so forth (Ministry of Women Affairs, 2011).

The FGDs on the other hand, specified men's domains in contrast with women's duties. Thus Hamar men engage in limited activities outside the domestic sphere including: cattle herding, field preparation, weeding, harvesting, protecting the family from external enemies, etc. It can be seen here that pastoral women work long hours from dawn to dusk, engaged both in home and field activities, and share the majority of the work burden in the community. Major factors attributed to this include: traditional values, beliefs, attitudes and all aspects of socio-cultural life of the people that promote, advocate and perpetuate women's engagement in both household tasks and outside the domestic sphere.

Women discussants in particular said, "We do not support the gender-based division of labour, but as long as the community appreciates and defines it in relation to the prevailing gender norms, we have no options than adhering to it". The informant women maintained that they are supposed to accept the workloads and sometimes regard it as their obligation than a responsibility to be shared with their husbands. It is the dowry, which brings harm to women because husbands will feel confident that they can be served by women for life once they paid the dowry to parents of their wives. The informants stressed that the dowry makes married Hamar women the personal properties of their husbands. It is possible to infer from the views of the informants that HTPs are primarily the outcomes of the dowry system coupled with various interrelated factors.

Concerning the division of labour, a widowed informant woman said, “My husband used to finish his work and return home, and order me to wash his feet first, and serve him food regardless of the routine household chores I was performing. The informant added that the division of labour between men and women is not fair because it is women who carry the burden of most tasks including feeding the family.” The informant’s perception of gender-based division of labour was supported by focus group discussant women from Simbelle Kebele who argued: “It is really painful to engage in both household tasks and in the field without rest. We usually get tired to grind grains manually, and prepare food for the family after we return from tedious field works in weeding, ploughing and field clearing. But, we have nothing to do except adhering to societal values, which are oppressive in nature and obligatory”.

Opposed to the views of the informant woman, an interviewed man from Kaysa kebele stated that the work load is on men than on women. Men perform hard tasks, but women are busy with routine tasks like child rearing, and home related activities. At times women participate in field works; their contribution however, remains limited compared with that of men. The informant went on saying that women wrongly assume that men spend most of their time sleeping in a vast sandy area or enjoying with their co-wives. It can be analysed from the narrations provided that women’s productive role in agriculture is often overlooked by men. Utmost, the division of labour often runs health risks for women who do not receive the attention they deserve both by their husbands or the community.

According to a research report, education is increasingly a major factor enabling women to eliminate the division of labor existing between the sexes. It also helps women break down barriers to empowerment. The better opportunities a woman enjoys through education, the

better she equips herself with skills and knowledge to actively engage in traditionally considered men's domain. In practice, this will enable women to achieve empowerment and contribute to the household economy and the nation's development (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2007: 61). In relation to this, Anuradha argues that self-employment will secure women a sense of self-worth and decision making power while literacy levels influence power relations (2010: 11).

### **3.4.1 Pastoral Women and Social Activities**

Key informants of this study noted that pastoral Hamar women are excluded from social activities. For instance, during ceremonial practices women are not allowed to be part of the scene, and participate only in cooking food for their male counterparts. Women cannot eat and drink with men because of gender biases. In most cases therefore, women are isolated from important community activities and are not even heard by their sons.

Participants of the FGDs further added that women are supposed to take active part in labour demanding tasks such as cooking food, preparing "shoforo" or "Borde" (a local drink), fetching water, and so forth during ritual practices or social events. The most important social activities where women are excluded from participating or observing include: bull jump ceremony, (locally known as "eqully"), mourning ceremony, initiating customary laws, mediating conflicts among people within certain ethnic groups or adjacent ethnics, welcoming guests and expressing good will during inauguration ceremonies of newly built infrastructures, and so on. In connection with this, a study by South Omo Zone Women and Children Affairs Department (2011) made it clear that Hamar women are systematically

avoided from social activities and their participation in socio-cultural practices has been found insignificant.

The other thematic area discussed by FGD participants was the issue of utilizing medicine by Hamar women. The discussants argued that women tend to use more traditional medicine in many instances than modern medicine. This does not however, rule out women's utilization of the modern health care services that include: pregnancy follow up, common illness treatment, vaccination to mothers and children, and other health care services. Concerning family planning services, the discussion members stated: "We don't want to limit the size of our families. We need more children as much as we can because our culture appreciates having more children. We need children for two purposes: one for their labour and dowry, and the other is for multiplying and extending our families. Contraceptive use is therefore important only for girls who are not yet married than for those already married". The informants noted that ceremonial practices expected to be completed by women before pregnancy can also have positive impacts on delaying child delivery. As a result of this, one can observe less population pressure among the pastoral community of Hamar.

Some of the discussants however, had a different view of contraceptive use. They believed that once a girl or a woman starts to use contraceptive, there is a possibility that she will get sterile. For this reason, they argued that it is preferable to avoid contraceptive use at all and hence, these informants' preference accords with Hamar culture, which encourages more child delivery. In relation to child delivery, key informants emphasized that the Hamar community generally prefers girls to sons. This is because girls can help their families secure resources in the form of dowry when they get married, while boys have to pay dowry to families of their mates from their own family resources. This corresponds with the literature

that the Hamar pastoral community often sends boys to schools than girls merely to avoid the loss of a dowry, which may result from sending girls to schools (Fact Sheet: 1994 No.23).

### **3.4.2 Pastoral Women and Economic Activities**

In the key informant interview and FGDs the issue of pastoral women's economic activities was discussed. Most of the informants argued that pastoral women in Hamer are engaged in both household and field-based activities including: livestock production, child upbringing, land preparation, ploughing, sawing, wedding and so forth. At times of drought women sell firewood and buy food items for the family with the money they earned from the sale. However, many of the informant women particularly noted that opportunities such as skills training, income generating activities, introduction to modern techniques of production – livestock and farming, credit services and small scale businesses are directed to men than women. Women are rather seen as recipients of irregular supports from the government and non-governmental organizations than allowing them to access such opportunities at large. The reason for such discrimination as Derare (2006) argues is the prevailing gender ideology in the community.

Partly objecting the views concerning gender discrimination, a community elder in the FGDs explained that women are organized in associations and run small-scale businesses for empowerment. They can secure funds from the associations on long term instalments and this is an opportunity by itself. He further pointed out that men do not have objections to any support women are seeking to sustain their livelihoods. Supporting the community elder's views; a key informant woman stated that 20-30 women in Area Kaysa Kebele secured 6,000 birr on support from Save the Children Norway, an international NGO operating in Hamer

Woreda. The support was intended to enable the women to engage in income generating activities. The informant strengthened her points clarifying that other NGOs are also operating in the Woreda though on a limited scale to provide business skills training including cattle fattening and seed money to several women. However, the informant disclosed that the local government support for women's empowerment project particularly in Simbelle Kebele is minimal.

An available study on women's participation in development agrees to the opinions of most of the key informants and discussants that women assume key role in promoting social or economic progress, but their contribution has been undermined and they do not enjoy the fruits of their labor. Women are therefore marginalized in all aspects of the social, economic, political and cultural activities (FDRE: 2006). Another study conducted on the economic status of pastoral women reveals that 85 % of rural women's labour is exerted on tedious tasks including farming and livestock production. Most of pastoral women's time and labour is invested on livestock production and household chores. Their contribution however, is undermined and not recognized by most community members. Eighty one point five percent (81.5 %) of rural women in general have been found not accessing credit services and engaged only in agricultural productions (Regional Women and Children Affairs Bureau, 2009).

### **3.4.3 Pastoral Women and Political Participations**

The political participation of pastoral women was the other thematic area of the FGDs. Participants of the discussion argued that since the time of their ancestors, women have been serving men, they have not been involved in community meetings, have no equal rights with



men, and they are expected to perform specific household chores and file related tasks. The discussants underlined that this has been the case for generations and they are part of this generation, which experiences Hamar traditional values. The participants particularly community elders and many of the women explicitly made it clear that they are supposed to uphold the long existing tradition than attempting to lose it in favour of alien tradition.

Community elders maintained that pastoral women have been found involved in the local level modern administration system, but with little capacity to influence the largest men groups and make meaningful differences. Although there are structures like Kebele women Associations, mostly they are non-functional and symbolic in nature. The discussant community elders also emphasized that they do not believe that women have the capacity to administer the people if they are given the chance to rule over.

Referring to the traditional system of rules, the community elders argued that women are born to serve men. They tried to contextualize women's inequality mentioning the distinctions in social status between old men and old women in the community. Thus, the community elders said that elderly women have no equal respect and say compared with elderly men. Unlike men who are considered important when getting older, old women lose their credibility and will be considered incapable citizens at later ages. One of the elderly participants of the FGDs tried to provide the picture that old men unlike old women do have immense contribution to local security saying, "What added values have older women than being burden to a given family? But older men play crucial role in protecting and promoting community peace and stability".

Other members of the FGD team maintained their views concerning the role old men can play. They underscored that it is a taboo to give female names to villages in the study area; rather the names of places are given male names. According to the discussants, women in most cases cannot stand against men's views. They are important only for labour works and child rearing. Women also lack in technical knowhow and charisma to preside over others and influence the community to undertake certain feasible actions. It is also factual that very few people even women will listen to a woman if given the chance to speak in public meetings. The community elders downplayed the role of women in political leadership saying that if the local government authorities are not required to involve women in leadership, they will not do it by their own initiatives.

Many of the key informant women complemented the views of community elders that women do not have the ability or interest in taking active part in political leadership. They narrated in their own words, "We can't assume the responsibility of local government leadership as we cannot speak in public, and do not have the capacity men do have in our community. We believe that we have defined gender roles and responsibilities and should leave the political leadership only to men". A community elder supported the informant women's opinions and argued that even at times women join meetings after facing challenges; they usually sit at the backside isolating themselves from the larger men crowds. Also, they are not encouraged to propose ideas and when they speak, elder men will undermine their confidence and opinions.

The narration by a married woman informant below illustrates how husbands discourage their wives' involvement in politics. The informant said, "My husband is not happy when I am invited by the local government or NGOs to attend public meetings. He often says to me that

I must finish my routine work at home before considering a public meeting, which he thinks is exclusively men's domain. He also tells me that he has everything in the household and I should not worry about getting money from participating in the public meeting. I always consider that my husband deliberately wants to discourage me from involvement in political leadership because he knows that the government or NGOs teach us about gender equality, which he does not want to hear about”.

Despite many of the informant women's accounts on the need for denying women's rights to political participation given the existing local tradition, a key informant woman from Simbelle village narrated her experience as follows: “I was elected by the local assembly to take political position representing our Kebele. My duty was promoting the rights of women in all aspects of life. I got prominence in defending women's rights and won due respect from among members of the council (dominantly men) and the community in general. I therefore give my testimony that women have the capacity to assume administrative position if given the chance.”

In my observation however, it is a rare phenomenon to see Hamar women involving in politics obviously, due to culture constraints. In relation to the views of some key informant women for the importance of involving women in local level leadership, the literature argues: “Systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and the quality of the activities of local government. If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both women and men, through an equal representation at all levels and in all fields of decision making, covering the wide range of responsibilities of local governments. In order to create sustainable, equal and democratic local governments, where women and men have equal access to decision making, equal

access to services and equal treatment in these services, the gender perspective must be mainstreamed into all areas of policy making and management in local government (SNV, 2001: 8).

The same report goes on explaining that it is often easier for women to participate in local administration than at the national level, because eligibility criteria for the local level are less stringent, and local government is the closest to the women's sphere of life, and easier to combine with rearing children. It can be the first level that women can break into and as such it may serve as a springboard to national politics, by developing capacities and gaining experiences (SNV, 2001: 2).

#### **3.4.4 The Social Impacts of Harmful Traditional Practices**

The focus group discussions and interviews with school teachers also dealt with the social impacts of Harmful Traditional Practices among the local pastoral women. According to the informants, women usually prefer traditional child delivery and this poses risks in health possibly leading to death due to bleeding. The pastoral women also practice twisting a pregnant woman's abdomen to quit unwanted pregnancy. The discussions and interviews also focused on the awareness level of Hamar Women about the advantages of pregnancy follow up. The informants thus elaborated on the point that women do not know the benefits of pregnancy follow up and do not go to medical centers to access regular services. The most preferable method of child delivery among the Hamar women is therefore utilizing the skills of traditional birth attendants whose knowledge may be limited to child delivery than treating prenatal health problems. Also, women are encouraged to give more births and eventually this causes gynaecological related problems.

The informants further explained the potential health risks of women whipping and associated health hazards such as damage to kidney, liver, breast, and abortion due to severe beatings. It was also stated that the social impacts of harmful traditional practices among the Hamar women generally include the following: lack of personal hygiene particularly by women, high opportunity for communicable diseases because of improper use of latrine, multiple marriages by men and the threat of family disturbances, undermining the social value of virginity and practicing open sex, which causes Sexually Transmitted Diseases, denial of women's rights to divorce (Hamar women have no right to divorce) and so forth.

In line with the informants' views concerning the social impacts of HTPs, the UN report reveals that women lose self confidence, illiteracy level rises, health complications occur due to unsafe abortion and delivery, emotional stress increases, and low social status will reign. Moreover, school enrollment and dropout rate is very high among girls than boys, sons are given priority, and girls begin schools very late and withdraw on the onset of puberty (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1995). Furthermore, the regional report on pregnancy follow up demonstrates that only 0.9 % of pastoral women have access to pregnancy follow up and 77.2 % do not use family planning services. Similarly, as people's perception to modern health care services is low because of the tendency to use traditional treatments, children cannot access vaccination services. Eventually of course, this will trigger children's vulnerability to various diseases (Women and Children Affairs Bureau, 2009).

It can be analyzed from the discussions above that HTPs among the pastoral Hamar women pose threats not only to their survival, but also to the Woreda's development efforts in particular and to the nation's vision of progress in general by incapacitating and causing fatal health risks to women. In my long work experience with the Hamar community, most parents

have been found resistant to send their daughters to schools for reasons of dowry as discussed in previous sections. Their reactions often include: “what benefits will you give us when we give you our daughter to go to school?”

### **3.4.5 The Economic Impacts of Harmful Traditional Practices**

The economic impacts of harmful traditional practices on the life of pastoral women were discussed in the key informant interview. The informant women explained that Hamar women do not have the rights to access to and control over resources both in the household and in the field as compared with men. As discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, women can exercise limited rights to sell or own items like chicken, egg, cabbage, butter, “Aleko” (Moringa Tree), etc while men can claim exclusive rights over cattle, goats, sheep, and honey. The informants maintained that women’s earning from the sale of items they own is meagre and often men tend to control how women use their income. However, women cannot ask their husbands about the income they earn from the sale of items they own. Paradoxically, it is the women who are expected to cover the household expenses from their little income while their husbands spend the money holding lavish feasts.

A study conducted by Yeshareg (nd) corresponds with this study showing that in most societies gender based norms and practices favour men and boys over women and girls in granting access to resources, opportunities, rights, voices, decision-making power at home and in the public spheres. The study also explains that fundamental gender inequalities exist in access to and control over productive assets such as land, labor and credits. Besides, gender biases in the labor market trigger women’s enhanced vulnerability to poverty, and women’s high illiteracy rate, lack of decision making power over their fertility and early

marriage of girls limit their chances of coming out of poverty. In addition, due to the disproportionate gender division of labor in the household and their increased responsibilities for domestic and productive work, women increasingly become poor.

Pastoral women are deprived of basic economic rights because of ill attitudes and malpractices embedded in the culture of the community for generations. Such conditions create economic dependency on men and cause women to be subordinate to their counterparts. Apparently, a study conducted on pastoralist livelihoods depicts that 70.2% are unable to afford for daily needs and are living in abject poverty. Of these, women constitute the primary groups sharing the major life burdens (Regional Women and Children Affairs Bureau, 2009).

We can understand clearly from the key informants' interview that women carry the household burden than their husbands despite the fact that their earning is too little to sustain the family livelihoods. In many cases therefore pastoral Hamar women live in extremely horrible life situations and suffer from health hazards facing the challenges of coping with family survival. Thus the economic impacts of harmful traditional practices include: abject poverty, ignorance, labour exploitation, workload and physical fatigue, state of slavery due to exchange of girls with cattle (dowry) and so forth.

#### **3.4.6 The Political Impacts of Harmful Traditional Practices**

The key informant interviews and FGDs with community elders brought into view the issue of pastoral women's problems related to the impacts of HTPs. The informants explained that harmful traditional practices hinder women's overall political participations.

Women's participation in the modern political systems was found to be insignificant for various socio-cultural and historical reasons. Since their representation is minimal, they tend not to influence the decision making process in the Woreda level administration. The key informants and FGD participants also noted that women have no role in the traditional system of rule. As the case with the modern polity, elder men assume key role in the traditional system of rule as well. The cumulative effects of such political marginalization of women in fact, made Hamar women assume low social status, develop low self-confidence, and internalize the notion that women are born to serve men.

According to informants, the political impacts of HTPs on Hamar women also include: no decision making power over self and family affairs, no right to select future mates, go to school, use contraceptive methods, developing self-destructive image, ill consideration to women, and so on. In addition, limited exposure to the outside world, little or no interest in political participation, male supremacy and delegation for all activities, little concern for females' issues, etc can be seen as the political impacts of HTPs on Hamar women. In relation to this, a report on the role of Ethiopian women releases that women's political involvement is extremely low with only 7.8% of parliament seats held by females (Ministry of Women Affairs, 2011).

### **3.5 Dowry as a Factor for Women's Low status in the Community**

The issue of dowry as a factor for women's low social status in the Hamar community was raised in the FGDs with community elders and interviews with key informants. The informants emphasized that dowry (also called Qoyta in the local language) is considered an expression of cultural identity among the Hamar.



Dowry has tremendous significance in bringing different families together through marriage alliance. Because of its social values, dowry is practiced by families of the groom. In fact, before dowry is given to the girl's family, the groom is supposed to practice bull jump ceremony because it is considered mandatory to all young Hamar men in order to be considered adult citizens and get married.

The community elders underlined that dowry will continue in different forms through support given by the husband to families of the wife during holidays and at times of problems. However, dowry also entails a sense of obligation by the wife to serve her husband as he wishes or tolerate regular tortures or beatings by her spouse. This is because customarily it is assumed that dowry will give the husband the upper hand in having all his claims accepted by his wife. It was also noted that even families of the bride cannot accuse the husband of their daughter of wrong acts against her.

The key informant women also added that if a married woman escapes her husband's tortures and goes to her family, the family must return her to her husband regardless of abuses she has suffered. This is so because the husband will ask his wife's family to pay back all the properties he paid as dowry if they persist in allowing her to stay with them. On the other hand, the community elders explained that some Hamar girls may get married to the "Amhara" in semi-urban centres like Dimeka (Woreda Capital). But, such marriages with non-Hamar ethnic groups do not involve dowry practice. The consequence of marriage with non-Hamar people is so adverse in that those Hamar girls will be isolated from their families and relations will interrupt. The girls can even be considered by their families dead and they cannot enjoy any right other Hamar girls are entitled to. In some cases a few Hamar families allow their daughters to marry men from ethnic groups like the Ari from the highlands of

South Omo Zone. But, marriage ties with the Ari quite differ from that of the Amhara because the former case involves the obligation that the husband must serve his wife's parents through labour contribution for life. This may be understood that labour contribution is seen by some Hamar families as equivalent to dowry.

Stressing the value of dowry, a key informant woman narrated her story: "I brought more than twenty cattle and more than twenty goats to my parents in the form of dowry from my husband. My father was so happy with the dowry and I heard him saying I had enough dowry from you, and you are a blessed daughter." Exceptionally however, the experience of another key informant woman shows that she got married without dowry. The woman said: "I live in Simbelle village and have two children. I got married without enabling my parents to get a dowry. I knew that it was an unacceptable practice according to Hamar tradition, but I did it because I loved my husband although he had no enough property to pay for a dowry. I remember that my parents were not willing to marry me off without a dowry. Even the community did not like my marriage for obvious reasons. However, after fierce resistance from my parents and relatives, I got married. I know that no woman except me in my generation got married without the usual practice of dowry."

In correspondence with the analysis provided, the UN report on Good Practices in Legislation on Harmful Practices against Women specifies that demands for dowry can result in women being harassed, harmed or killed, including women being burned to death, and in deaths of women which are labeled as suicides. The report suggests that it is essential to make the law prohibit the demanding of dowry and provide guidelines to distinguish between gifts given voluntarily from dowry that is demanded (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2009: 20).

### **3.6 Community Perception towards Interventions against HTPs**

The FGDs and key informant interviews also explored the issue of community perception towards interventions against HTPs. The key informant women argued that they learned about harmful traditional practices previously from health officials who taught them that HTPs are practices, which run risks to health and community welfare. However, they became aware of HTPs later that they also include socio-cultural practices, which affect the welfare of the community in various ways. A widowed informant maintained the group informants' views that she had painful experience of harmful traditional practices when she got married stay in marriage tie. She explained that HTPs had caused disorder to her life. In fact, the informant disclosed that women are the most vulnerable group in Hamar society to problems resulting from the experiences of HTPs.

In relation to how HTPs tend to complicate the life of women in Hamar Woreda, a key informant married woman stated that women were considered little more than men's properties. This is so because women do not have the right to speak, are considered incompetent in education, will be married off with someone without their choices, lack decision making power over household issues and personal affairs, do not have the right for public meetings, and so on. In fact, it is conspicuous that HTPs root in the age-old biased attitudes against women. The informant insisted on saying, "We are still thinking about our old traditions the way our ancestors had thought of. This is where we should start the fight against HTPs because attitudinal changes will have positive implications for eliminating HTPs in the future. Young people must be aware of changing situations in the country and at the global level. I am confident that the youth can help much in promoting changes in public perceptions towards the fight against HTPs. Change could never come all of a sudden, rather

it is a process which demands our commitment and support from stakeholders.” Supporting the informant’s understanding of how HTPs should be eliminated, most of the FGD participants maintained that interventions to eliminate HTPs in Hamar Woreda need to involve effective networking of relations among all stakeholders including community participations at the grassroots level. They particularly emphasized that women and men should live together in peace, equality, mutual support, respect and cooperation in order to ensure community stability and progress. From among participants of the FGDs however, an old man from Simbelle village had a different view of interventions against HTPs in Hamar Woreda. He believed that the Hamar culture is an identity for the Hamar community, and attempts to modify or change existing traditions is considered a threat to the people’s existence and cannot be tolerated. He finalized his argument that women are living in harmony with men accepting the tradition that place men superior to women.

### **3.7 Government and Non Governmental Organizations’ commitment to reduce HTPs among the Pastoral Community**

According to key informants from Hamar Woreda administration, there has been a shift in public opinion against harmful traditional practices over the last twenty years. However, given the complexity of problems surrounding HTPs, the progress made is minimal. The informants complemented their views that the local government has taken initiatives to coordinate and launch programs aimed at improving women’s socio-economic and political participation. They supported their arguments with gender mainstreaming exercises by government sector offices in which women’s empowerment and development are targeted. The key informants thus specifically mentioned stakeholder government offices that are working on gender mainstreaming in the Woreda including: Woreda women and Children

Affairs Office, Education Office, Health Office, Agricultural Office and so on. In addition, the informants stated that government legislations and acts have increased women's awareness about their rights and duties, and men's parallel awareness about their rights and obligations. The key actors in reaching the community thus include school teachers, development agents, health extension workers and other government officers in the study area. Given that women's cases are often sensitive and demanding, the Woreda court prioritizes women's issues than other cases.

In relation to legal procedures, a key informant from the Woreda court asserted that the cases of two women who claimed property ownership after the death of their husbands were dealt with. As a result, the verdict was in favour of the claims of the widowed women. According to the informant, the court's decision was seen as exemplary by the local people hence, men could draw lessons that women's rights are inviolable. Explaining the post-verdict situations about the widowed women, the informant stressed that neither relatives of their deceased husbands nor change resistant community elders took revenge against the women. Concerning the Woreda court cases, another key informant from the Woreda administration added that people who abandoned or killed their own children for mere reasons that they were "Mingi" and those who were performing women whipping were penalized for their brutal actions against humanity.

The informant also went on discussing the experience of his own relative whose parents forced her to marry. He narrated the story of the girl as follows: "A daughter of my cousin escapes from a rural Kebele and came to my home a week ago. The problem with the girl was that she resisted her parents' plans to marry her off with someone whom she did not know before. When the girl arrived home, her parents also came immediately and tried to take her

by force back home. I tried to mediate the situation for the moment intending to allow her to accuse her parents of rights violation. She then accused them and brought the case to the Woreda court where the offenders were fined 500 birr each and the arranged marriage was annulled.”

Despite the arguments given for a fair trial of women’s cases in the study area, some of the key informant government officials emphasized that victim women may show reluctance to bring their cases to the court for reasons of social sanctions by community members. Moreover, poor coordination among law enforcement bodies such as the police, court and prosecutors deter them from seeking fair trial. In other words, the informants underlined that it is difficult to directly implement the law against offenses committed by men because of existing male dominated socio-cultural values and practices. Besides the absence of effective collaboration among stakeholders allow the continuity of HTPs in the study area. Some key informant women however, had different views concerning crimes committed against women in that they opted for teaching the public about HTPs than resorting directly to legal actions against perpetrators.

Regarding the responsiveness of the current legal laws against HTPs, a key informant from the Woreda court reflected his views saying: “The Ethiopian Penal Code and Criminal Code are properly functioning both in averting the possibility of crimes against the local people, and penalizing perpetrators. No law was weakened rather laws have become more comprehensive and progressive. For instance, the New Family Law is key reference for lawyers in treating cases related to marriage, property inheritance, and children’s basic rights. Also, the previous Penal Code, which didn’t consider HTPs as crimes against the law, has now been rectified as the new Penal Code, which treats cases related to HTPs. The Ethiopian

Civil Law (Fethabher) has also been revised and modified to consider women and child abuses as crimes against the law. Also, the law was revised to include family issues such as marriage and divorce.”

Partly opposed to the actual responsiveness of the law against HTPs in the study area, a key informant government official argued that appropriate laws and legislations are available, but in practical terms a lot has to be done. This is attributed to factors such as lack of skilled human power, lack of financial resources and logistics support, reluctance and lack of commitment on the part of government personnel, and minimum follow-up on prior achievements. Furthermore, most of the HTP eradication plans are directed from above and cannot involve community participations at the grassroots level. In many cases program packages designed to eliminate HTPs lack ownership and representativeness as well.

Key informants from the Woreda court, health, education, agricultural offices and Women and Children Affairs office forwarded their views that the local administration is not closely working in collaboration with NGOs operating in the area towards eradicating HTPs. In addition, the informants stated that the stakeholders’ interventions in women’s empowerment and development schemes are minimal. Rather, meagre resources obtained from various development agencies are unwisely and inefficiently used. This is largely attributed to the following reasons:

- ➔ Many of the educators lack in the required skills and knowledge to implement programs designed, and government officials are political appointees who prefer to indoctrinate political views. Professionals such as judges, prosecutors and the police have limited opportunities to go to the field to educate the people, unlike the

uneducated and poorly equipped government authorities. NGOs have also been reluctant to use expertise knowhow in government offices for various reasons.

➔ Project follow ups have been very limited and in many cases did not exist after certain program interventions

➔ HTP eradication programs have been temporal rather than sustainable in nature and finally, failure to bring offenders before the law constitute the main reasons for negligible success of development interventions in the study area

In relation to the focus areas and magnitude of interventions by NGOs operating in Hamar Woreda, Key informants from the Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office pointed out that NGOs have better records in awareness creation programs. In this respect, Save the Children Norway, EPaRDA (Ethiopian Pastoralist Research and Development Agency) and GTLI (Global Team for Local Initiatives) are good examples. In connection with this, it was emphasized that Save the Children Norway has done tremendous jobs in reducing the degree of women's whipping, "Mingi" practice and forced abortions in certain Kebeles of the Woreda. The key informants however, underscored that many of the NGOs in the Woreda have more program packages directed to physical constructions like construction of health posts, schools and water points than interventions to eliminate HTPs. The literature also supports that different policies and legislations have been enforced to implement the MDGs. The policies include: National Policy on Women, National Population Policy, Education Policy, Cultural Policy, and other legal documents. Besides, the Inter-African Committee (IAC) as a non-governmental organization has been working against HTPs since 1984 (Ethiopian Society of population Studies: 2008).



According to Birhane (2006), a number of programs were carried out aimed at social mobilization, sensitization, advocacy, and helping victims of HTPs in Ethiopia in general, and in the Southern Regional State in particular. WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA also recognized harmful traditional practices as health and human rights issues and have launched programs in their respective domains to deal with the problems. Birhane suggests that a viable strategy can be devised to fight against harmful traditional practices in Ethiopia involving community participations at the grassroots levels, and creating effective networking among various governmental sectors and NGOs.

### **3.8 Case Studies**

In this section the research results of four case studies have been presented. In selecting the case studies of some of the key informants in the study area, I have given particular emphasis on two women who were victims of HTPs, whose life experiences I thought would give the reader the impression that HTPs committed against women can be considered instruments of violating the rights of women, and a triggering factor for women's vulnerability to health problems. In contrast with the women's cases, the life experiences of two polygamous men illustrate that HTPs among the Hamar community are particularly considered by elderly men as cultural identities than crimes against humanity.

### 3.8.1 Case Study One

#### Isolated and Poor Woman (“Mingi” Woman)

Ama Gillo is a 28 year old woman who lives in Area Kaysa kebele. Ama lives in a poorly



constructed small hut with her six children. She was married to her deceased husband ten years ago and her birth place is around twenty Kms away from her place of residence. Narrating how she got married, Ama said:

“My sister-in-law had the opportunity to see me while I was milking cows. She thought that my families were rich enough to have marriage ties with. Then she told the story to her brother (my deceased husband) to consider marriage with me. Her insistence was so strong that her brother was determined to use any means to marry me. He finally, abducted me and took me to his father’s home when I was 15. As usual, families of my deceased husband sent dowry to my parents and marriage was arranged with him without my plan. Then I got married and had a child by him. This was how I started my marriage life.”

Ama went on telling about how she was inherited by her brother-in-law. She said, “My



husband died in an accident just in the nearby village. Customarily, when a husband dies, his wife will be inherited by one of his younger brothers. This was what happened to me. I could not reject my second marriage with my brother-in-law

because the dowry system entitled obligations as well. Being inherited by my deceased husband’s brother, I had five children by him and all the children were considered children of my deceased husband. Unfortunately, my second husband had two wives and four more children. He did not regularly come home and his support for his children I was caring for was quite limited. Then I was faced to serious challenges of sustaining my family.” Ama further explained how sustaining her family was problematic in the following ways.

She stated: “I was worried about the fate of my six children when my second husband stopped his regular support for the family. Imagine how it is possible to sustain the family with six children where I had no income except two cows and five goats as assets of the household. To make matters worse, thieves stolen all my cattle and goats in midnight. This made me helpless and I had nowhere to go for help. What could I feed my children? Having no options, I told my second husband to take away his children and help them join their brothers and sisters just for survival. Although he accepted my plan, his wives rejected the idea for a mere reason that their own children would not be comfortable to live with their helpless brothers. This was dismay to me and the family too.” Ana further told me what happened to her and the family after all her attempts failed.

She explained: “Getting disappointed at all the misfortunes, my elder son disappeared and all



the responsibilities to support the family were left to me.

My problems got complicated from time to time. Then I decided to seek support from my own families and families of my deceased husband and second husband.

However, I was not lucky as I could not get the support I needed to help my children survive. The only thing I could do to my children to survive was feeding them with vegetables and root plants. But, lack of proper diets made them vulnerable to malaria. Finally, I decided to ask school teachers in the nearby village for assistance to my children. Considering the miserable life situation I was experiencing, all the school teachers began to contribute some amounts to support three of my children with feeding and schooling. Later, I asked the Woreda Health Office to support my orphan child, and I got 1,000 birr on support and bought four female goats for breeding. She also said that she could get support from the Woreda through safety net program either in cash or item (grain).”

Despite the assistance she was able to secure for the family survival, Ama felt that she was socially isolated. She explained: “Since the death of my husband, the community stigmatized me for the reason that I had a bad luck. The stigmatization had also other face in that nearly all community members feared that a disaster may occur in the village. This was just merely the result of associating the misfortunes I had in my life with something evil or curse. To your surprise, nobody wants to talk to me or walk with me even in the Dimeka weekly market. No one would come home, and I could not go anywhere because of the social stigma I have suffered from. In public gatherings, bull jump ceremony and other social events, women do not want to sit beside me thinking that I am cursed and can cause similar calamities to the community”.

In my interview with Ama, I saw that the woman had suffered psychological problems, is economically poor, socially isolated and physically collapsed. The house she was living in also looked like a small kraal to keep goats. I also observed that during the interview session three of her young children were asking her for food and Ama was replying to them with shouts of desperation that there was no food in the house. Ama's future plan is actually not to rely on government or NGO support for life, but to generate income for sustainable livelihood. She also suggested that she wanted to get business skills training and access to credit facilities to realize her plan.

### **3.8.2 Case Study Two**

#### **Isolated and Poor Woman (“Mingi” Woman)**

Alu Kotsa is a 22 year old girl living in Dimeka town. She escaped from her Kebele,



Simbelle fearing harmful traditional practices, which might affect her life. Alu narrated the story as follows: “I was given to an old man for marriage at the age of seven. My husband was supposed to marry me when I was 18 or above until then he had

to wait and I could stay with my parents. Parents of my future husband had already started giving dowry to my family. Unfortunately, the man whom I had to marry died. However, the Hamar culture entails that once a dowry was given to the girl's family, it is an obligation for the girl to marry the person or for her parents to give back the dowry they have taken. If the man dies, the tradition also allows a younger brother of the deceased person to inherit the girl.

Since I knew that I could be inherited by my mate's younger brother whom I did not know, I had to look for options to escape from my village.”

Alu continued to explain the situation after she escaped to Dimeka, a semi-urban centre. She said: “Leaving my village at the age of 15, I came to Dimeka where I did not know a relative residing in. By chance, I met a woman whom I knew when I was visiting the town on market days. A week later after my arrival, my parents came to Dimeka to force me to go back home with them. Their intention was clear; it was to present me to parents of my deceased mate. I firmly resisted their plan and informed to the police about the situation. Then my parents returned home without succeeding in giving me away. Alu went on telling me how she managed to make a living in her new home town, Dimeka. She narrated: “After staying with the woman whom I knew in Dimeka for a month, I asked her to look for me a place where I could work as a housemaid. She then kept me in contact with someone working as a day labourer. The man agreed to support me with food and shelter in return for my labour service. My duties included preparing food and washing clothes. After six months stay, I began to sleep with him and became pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy. Two years later, I also gave birth to my second child, a baby girl. However, I learned that the man was not interested to have spousal relationship with me. Rather, he wanted me for sexual pleasure, and it was by chance that he had children by me. My second child got sick when she was one year old and I asked her father to help her get medical attention. But, he refused to do so and the baby sadly died.”

Viewing the situation after the death of her second child, Alu noted: “With the death of my second child, the man began to kick me unusually. He even wanted the other child to die as he belonged to the Hamar community that instantly kills a baby born out of wedlock. I came

to understand later that he would kill me or my only child and left the house. Then I began to live alone with my child, but life was miserable as I had no income to live on. With the assistance of the woman with whom I stayed for some time when I came to Dimeka, I accused the father of the child to the Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office and he was made to pay 40 birr per month for the child's support. But, this did not continue because the man left for a distant town, "Kara" where I could not easily find him to get the monthly support for the child."

She emphasized further: "I live on little income I am earning from the sale of fire wood, which I collect from remote areas. I have no options to make my living except for looking for such menial occupations. My attempt to secure support for my child from the government has also failed. I heard about women support programs in Dimeka, but I could not yet access the services. Being unable to sustain my living, I began to live with the woman whom I contacted when I came to Dimeka. She treats me like a mother, and I help her in fetching water, preparing food, and washing her clothes in my spare time when I return from day labour work in the town." I asked Alu if she wanted to return home and she said: "If I go back to my parents with my child, the baby will be immediately killed by the community as well as by my relatives. This is due to the fact that the child was born without traditional ceremonial processes. But, if I go alone, my parents might be comfortable and welcome me. In any case, I don't want to return to my village and join my parents because life in the village is miserable. There is also a possibility that I would get married to the young brother of my ex-husband. Going back home is just like making myself a slave to my new husband. Although the challenges of life are similar in both the village and in Dimeka, I prefer the later for reasons of avoiding unwanted marriage and gaining some sort of independence."

It can be inferred from the narrations provided that Alu could not access medical services and could not go to school because of severe economic problems. She must work from dawn to dusk if at all labour work is available to sustain the life of the child and her own living. We can therefore understand that fear of HTPs can cause the movement of girls and women from their birth places or villages to the towns where labour work is not readily available. As a result, this will bring more suffering for girls and women, which can also be seen as violations of human rights.

### **3.8.3 Case Study Three**

#### **A Polygamous Man**

Ayke Urgo is a seventy year old man married to two wives. He has six children and lives in



Simbelle kebele. Major livelihood for the family is livestock production although farming is practiced on occasional basis.

Ayke paid ten goats for his first wife and twenty goats for the second wife as dowry. He said that he got married with two

wives in order to have more children. Children are assets to the family, Ayke argued. Women have no rights to family properties as Ayke thought because he paid them dowry when they lived with their parents. Emphasizing the value of dowry to his own possession of properties, Ayke said “I have nothing to give my wives and everything belongs to me now. Instead, my wives have obligations to serve me the way I like”. He further stated that “I am served first at home and my children second, and my wives last. Although my wives are busy with routine home tasks and field works, it is their obligation and I have no reason to support them once I



have accomplished my own task". His wives have no rights to sell or exchange properties unless he gives them permission.

Ayke strongly believes that it is compensation to his resources invested on his wives as dowry that he should be served by them, and they should care for him now. He thinks that women should be beaten when they have been found guilty of some acts. He said, "Physical punishment is good instrument against women's role failure". Ayke firmly supports the prevailing division of labour, which is in favour of males than females. Besides, he considers women as born to serve men, but not as human creatures who have equal rights with men. When asked about marrying more wives, Ayke said, "I would have been able to marry more wives, if I have had enough resources" and he added "As I haven't more resources, I couldn't marry more than two". Ayke said, "I wish I could marry five to six wives, but I have no more cattle, and more goats to be paid to the girls' parents, and I could not add more wives".

Ayke however, doesn't oppose women's economic empowerment initiatives either by the government or NGO or both stakeholders. But, neither of his wives has chances to participate in skills training and income generating activities provided by the government or NGOs. Only one out of the six children has the chance to go to school, while the rest are do not have access to educational programs like regular school, alternative basic education program, non-formal adult literacy program etc. This is because, Ayke added, the labour of his children is highly demanded for different activities both at home and in the field. "I am the sole representative of the family and I usually attend meetings focusing on community welfare and stability. My wives have nothing to do with such engagements, and it is only me who has the right to participate in meetings. Although I am urged to let my wives attend community meetings on occasional basis, they will sit at our back and will add nothing to the meeting.

They are afraid of us to speak in public and even if they are allowed to speak, their idea is mostly trash”

### 3.8.4 Case Study Four

#### A Polygamous Man

Wolle Aygi is a sixty year old man who lives in Area Kaysa kebele. He has eight children



from his two wives. Each wife has four children. Wolle has paid ten cattle for the first wife and six for the second one as dowry. He said: “As I paid dowry for my wives, they belong to me and I have special rights to be

served by them. Once their parents received dowry, the two wives have life time commitment to serve me”. The reason Wolle married two wives is that he needs to have as many children as possible and occupy the area.

Also he said, “If I get more cattle, I will add the third wife. But as I have no enough resources, I couldn’t have more wives”. He continued, “I have absolute rights on household and field resources and my wives have not a say on this, because they have already been paid with a number of cattle when they joined my home as dowry”. Thus, except on few low graded properties like eggs and horticulture products, his wives have no access to and control over any resource. Wolle said, “My wives could say nothing if I sell for instance an ox and spent the money on anything I like. But, I will ask what my wife has bought with the money she earned from the sale of chicken, eggs or fire wood”.

As with other Hamar husbands, Wolle does not eat with his wife. Rather, he eats alone before other members of the family eat. Children eat second and the wives eat last. Nobody cares if the food gets empty and women stay without eating. Wolle added that he has never beaten his wives except sudden anger and insult. As to the workload he said, “The work load is on men than women. Men perform hard works but women are busy with routine tasks like child rearing, home related activities, and farm land, which are not considered real works. He continued saying “Although my wives participate with us in field works as well, women’s contribution is limited and less significant compared with ours”. Wolle further stated: “I have no objection if my wives participate in income generation activities and get the required skills trainings. But, they have to know that their participation should not affect my welfare. For instance, I have to be well fed, children should also be properly cared, and my wives must work on the farm land regularly. I tell you frankly that my well-being must be given priority.”

Finally Wolle added: “I support education being delivered by the government regarding gender equality, harmful traditional practices, women’s equal participation with men, and other gender based issues. I assume most of these things are not practiced in our community because of lack of education and being in a distant area from modern ideals. So, I have no reservation on the government’s effort in showing us the right way although I am part of the problem. For instance, when I let my wives to eat with me, they refuse to do so because of strong socio-cultural beliefs, which perpetuate such discriminations”.

### 3.9 Field Observation

While working with the local people for the last four and half years, the researcher had the opportunity to observe the life situations of women in the study area. Thus, women are observed busy whole day long working both in the household and farm lands. Husbands however, have been seen negligent particularly in carrying out difficult tasks demanding more labour. In most cases such works are left to women.



I also have observed that women are silent during meetings and usually sit at the back of the main audience if they attend meetings by chance. They do not often want to attend meetings and join public gatherings. If they do so, it is usually through the direct influence of the government or invitations than by self initiatives. It is also common to see that women do not speak first in any public gathering.



Besides, selling fire wood and supporting the family is women's primary responsibility than their male counterparts. Particularly, during dry seasons and associated crop failure, women will be troubled more than anybody else in providing food for the family. The worst scenario here is that the return from the sale of fire wood is too little to afford for cereals. Thus, women should always find more ways to supplement household incomes and buy food for the family.

At school, the number of male students is higher than those of female students. This is attributed to various factors and importantly girls' economic benefits through dowry constitute the main reason for girls' problem of access to education. For instance, in Area Kaysa Alternative Basic Education Centre, there are about 93 students, 74 males and 19 females. Similarly, in Simbelle Elementary School, there are about 102 students. Of these, 91 are male students and only 11 are females. Here, the number of male students is observed to be eight times more than the number of female students. This shows that women are denied basic rights to education and lag behind their male counterparts in literacy status. Also, this affects their chances for introducing themselves to progressive life styles and attitudes, which are key to personal developments. Women are also observed being resistant to modern medication like vaccination services made available to mother and children. They thought that the vaccines will make women sterile throughout their lives. They consider that vaccine solutions are not compatible with a baby's blood and are more dangerous to the babies' growth and development. Hamar women have also been observed assuming no role in the political system both modern and traditional. Both Wereda and Kebele Councils are dominated by males. Particularly at grassroots level, women have no role in the leadership and management of community issues.



Women whipping, the most inhuman act against women's survival, is common in the study area. Women will be severely beaten during bull jump ceremony showing love and respect for the jumper who is their close relative. We can see bleeding from each beating and women should not show a sign of shocking as it is considered defeat for the whole family.



As stated in previous sections, this causes serious health hazards such as damage caused to kidney, liver, breast, and the foetus.

Women whipping is applicable to all ages including a 12 year old daughter and old women aged 50 or above. But, those aged between 15 and 40 are the most affected groups. As heard from the local people, women may die due to severe whipping.



Concerning women whipping, those who are supposed to beat women and girls during bull jump ceremony are purposely selected young, energetic and able-bodied individuals who can cause severe physical damage to human body. Also, the stick to be used for whipping is special having the power to cause severe bodily damage.

Another area of my observation was that girls at the age of eighteen are married to eighty year old man. This of course, results in further complications like sexual incompatibility as old men cannot practice sexual relationships with young girls. Moreover, Sexually Transmitted Diseases like HIV/AIDS are health risks for those young girls married with old men. Sex with such girls is allowed if and only if the man belongs to the husband's family.

Women are observed working all day long. Particularly, grinding cereals and preparing food



after returning from tedious field works is difficult and challenging to pastoral Hamar women. Thus, such life styles are likely to cause health hazards to the pastoral women and this should be avoided through effective networking among all stakeholders including the

grassroots level community participations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.1 Conclusion

There are a number of Harmful Traditional Practices and prejudices against the welfare and health of Pastoral Women in the study area. Among these the following are important to note: denial of women's rights to property inheritance and ownership, denial of women's rights to select their mates, wife inheritance, denial of women's rights to decision making power, denial of women's rights to education, physical and verbal abuses, etc. The underlying factors for HTPs against women are basically social, economic and political in their characters. Thus, considering them as community identity, economic return through dowry and reluctance and limited commitment from educated individuals are socio-cultural, economic and political reasons for the existing traditions, which adversely affect the lives of pastoral women in the study area.

The division of labor is highly influenced by socio-cultural factors than equal treatments of both sexes. Thus, pastoral women participate both in the household and field activities accomplishing tasks all day long, while the work load is simple for men than women. Major factors attributed to this include: traditional values, beliefs, attitudes and the socio-cultural life of people which promote, advocate and perpetuate male dominance over women in the community. Pastoral women have limited chances to participate in social activities and their domain specially preparing socio-cultural events is labour contribution, but no key appointments beyond this in the event.

Pastoral women are economically dependent on their husbands. Since women do not have access to and control over resources, they have to wait for their husbands' responses either to sell or exchange properties and afford for household needs. They are also isolated from traditional and modern systems of rules and leaderships, and administration is not women's domain. Thus, women are socially isolated, crave for low status, are physically weak, and emotionally stressed. Most pastoral women are economically poor, not well fed, and dependent on their husbands for their survival. Absence of participation in the political system also makes pastoral women lose self confidence and develop a sense of dependency on men for everything, internalize the notion that women are subordinate to men, and limit chances to personal development. Dowry gives special rights to men to be served by women in their lifetime. Marriage without dowry is rarely possible and in some cases labour contribution by the husband is considered a substitute for material gifts.

Most people in the study area support existing efforts by all partner institutions to reduce HTPs and mitigate impacts. Individual cases however, confirm that intervention in HTP eradication mission is a futile exercise as long as these traditions are embedded in the culture of the local community and serve as identities for the entire community. Despite the views of the local people concerning efforts to combat HTPs, government and non-governmental organizations are working although on their own than through collaboration to fight against HTPs in the study area. Apparently, different government sector offices have given priority to women's issues and NGOs are also working for women's economic empowerment through various income generation schemes.



## **4.2 Recommendations**

The Researcher suggests the following recommendations as important components of HTP eradication mission. The recommendations are assumed to be considered at various levels of decision making ranging from community to higher level Woreda government authorities. Non Governmental Organizations are also supposed to assume key roles in the fight against HTPs, which adversely affect the welfare of community members in general and women and girls in particular.

### **4.2.1 Health Posts as important sites for HTP Eradication Programs**

Identifying community level health posts as important sites for disseminating programs aiming at HTPs eradication and elimination is a feasible strategy. Also, health extension workers are key actors in teaching the people about harmful traditions along with regular health education programs.

### **4.2.2 Launching School-Based Interventions**

Schools are important areas for running HTP eradication programs. Firstly, it is advisable to address the issue to children and youth who attend school and this has added value because students who are already in school can easily contact those peer groups who are out of school. Secondly, the influence of students on their parents is highly effective than other methods like conducting conferences. This is because parents are willing to learn from their children than anybody else. Thus, school- based interventions through clubs are important strategies.

### **4.2.3 Farmers' Training Centres as areas to discuss with parents about HTPs**

Farmers' Training Centres are areas where community members gather for various businesses. Hence, it is good to hold HTP eradication discussions among community members and develop a sense of mutual understanding through a series of sessions.

### **4.2.4 Parallel focus to Men, the Youth and Women like Community Elders**

The current strategies and interventions are highly focused on community elders than on anyone else in the community. It is therefore, advisable to give equal emphasis to other men groups, the youth and women and launch various awareness raising programs so that harmful traditions will be eventually encountered by women and the youth who represent higher percentages of the entire population.

### **4.2.5 Initiating locally responsive Development Policies, Strategies and Programs**

Policies, strategies and programs, which focus on women's empowerment and development, need to consider local contexts and the government should initiate particular policies that are compatible with pastoral life styles. The current situation is therefore characterized by absence of complete pastoralist focused policies and programs, which are in line with existing socio-cultural values and belief systems of the community. Particularly Health Policy, Education Policy, Agriculture and Rural Development Policies, and Women's Empowerment and Development Policy should consider local circumstances and become the centre of excellence of life of pastoralist women.

#### **4.2.6 Helping Rural Hostels to accommodate more Female Students from Rural Villages**

Both the government and NGOs should work hand in hand and support hostels, which are located at District capitals and are currently run by the government. These hostels are providing accommodation (food, cloth, shelter, cleaning materials, stationery materials etc) as well as educational opportunities for pastoralist students who are recruited from remote Kebeles. A few female students are also among the group and most have joined the institution without parent's permission escaping from remote rural Kebeles. None of hostel students both boys and girls have support from their families and this is because their parents are not happy with the education of their children, particularly of female students. There have been a number of occasions that parents came from rural Kebeles and try to take daughters from hostels by force. But, as they have been in close surveillance by the police, they could not be successful. Also, during school vacation girls will not go back home because once they are in the hands of their parents, they will not be freed again.

#### **4.2.7 Strengthening Local Level HTP Eradication Committee**

Kebele level HTP Eradication Committees have already been established and are expected to assist the effort to control and manage HTPs in the study area. However, the committee is not effective for various reasons. It is assumed that if the following setbacks are avoided the local level HTP eradication committees can be actively engaged in the fight against HTPs.

- ➔ Committee members should be free from multiple assignments. Most committee members are busy with their regular tasks and they consider the local initiatives for HTP eradication as extra tasks, and something not obligatory in which accountability is not an issue. Hence, those who are relatively free from workload should be given this assignment
  
- ➔ No top up is applicable to committee members and everything is expected to be done at zero cost. Thus, it is good if the government and NGOs allocate adequate amount of resources to be used as incentives for committee members, purchase stationery materials, report cases to Woreda Law Enforcement bodies and extend emergency support to victims
  
- ➔ There is no regular follow and monitoring of accomplishments by HTP Eradication Committees. Although Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office and Law Enforcement bodies like the police and the court are expected to launch supportive supervisions to local level HTP eradication committees, this has not been the tradition and there is high possibility for practicing HTP in the area. Teachers, medical staff, agricultural personnel, and other civil servants at all levels must be committed enough to work together with the local people in the effort to influence local negative attitudes and malpractices.

#### **4.2.8 Comprehensive Women Development and Empowerment Projects**

NGOs operating in the study area could not yet initiate comprehensive projects and programs aiming at women's empowerment and development. Even some other NGOs do not consider

gender as a cross cutting issue like environment and HIV/AIDS. The government should therefore direct NGOs to develop projects on women's empowerment packages involving HTP eradication as basic issues of proposal components.

#### **4.2.9 Community Conversation (CC) and Customary Laws as key instruments for achieving success in the fight against HTPs**

Conducting community conversation and constructing customary laws are feasible strategies to deal with HTPs among the pastoralist community if exercised appropriately. The usual trend in launching CC in Hamar has its own defects. This is because most CC and customary laws end up in failures. First, the target groups are mixed up. People of all ages and sex, educational backgrounds, and ethnic groups are all participating in a meeting. But, it would have been better if the target groups had been identified and categorized into sexual categories, age groups, educational backgrounds and ethnic groups. Community Conversation and Customary laws can be therefore more effective in helping the fight against HTPs if

- ↳ The intervention focuses on the youth groups, women and girls and elders in separate and distinct sessions
- ↳ The intervention has continuity and is not sporadic
- ↳ Civil servants who are dedicated enough in working with the locals are supported and not transferred to other areas
- ↳ Previous interventions are critically assessed and lessons are drawn before launching new interventions

Moreover, elders who are key actors in the process of constructing customary laws are found reluctant to fight against harmful traditions and this is highly related to various benefits they secure from the government and NGOs in the form of per diem. Elders thus, want to sustain these benefits for long. They are invited to towns for discussions, have chances even to share experiences abroad, have been given top ups, etc. Therefore, their commitment in eradicating HTPs is found much limited. So, it is recommended that it would be better if comprehensive programs could be launched targeting the youth groups, boys and girls, women, elders, and other groups in separate sessions. Also, avoiding direct cash benefits to participants is highly advisable.

#### **4.2.10 Modelling People at Household Level**

Rewarding those families with good record of fighting against HTPs is a viable strategy, which could further encourage others to follow similar track and break the silence. Thus, families who allow their daughters to go to school, avoid women whipping during Bull Jump Ceremony, keep “Mingi” children within the family, avoid dowry, allow women to exercise leadership roles etc should be rewarded with some material and monetary benefits.

#### **4.2.11 Initiating Village level Dialogues and assist in taking Appropriate Actions**

Village level dialogues between and among elders, boys, girls, women, and other community groups in separate and distinct settings is key strategy in achieving HTP eradication mission in Hamer Woreda. Generally speaking, community elders should be systematically approached, given extended time to discuss the issue with other community members, be heard what their real motive is about, respected and their idea given value and above all be

friendly with development actors to internalize issues. Besides, the government should avoid rushing programs, which are not valued by community members in general and elders in particular. In the light of this, constructing customary laws should not precede awareness raising, community dialogue and community conversations, which are crucial elements for the construction of customary laws.

It is advisable if law enforcement bodies (police, court, prosecutors) are allowed to attend such public meetings. Trying to avoid resource wastage by avoiding the placement of ineffective and incompetent individuals to work in these fields is also an important strategy. Programs and projects aiming at launching awareness raising sessions to men specially elders is also a vital strategy along with women's empowerment and development efforts. Isolated efforts on women could not bring about changes; rather parallel efforts on men in the fight against HTPs are more preferable and feasible.

Finally, it is recommended that the government should stay ready in mobilizing people and resources of all types through coordinated efforts for successful plan of avoiding HTPs from the area. NGOs on the other hand, should mobilize financial and expertise knowledge while the community is expected to attend discussion forums, meetings and awareness raising sessions. Contributing material and financial resources is also expected of community members.

#### **4.2.12 Women's Economic Empowerment**

Empowering women economically can bring about positive changes in maintaining gender relationships on equal footing at the household level. Thus, it is highly recommended if GO and NGOs work together in empowering women economically through various project packages. Basic skills training and associated self employment schemes are important to consider. Initial capital in the form of grants and credits is also essential for such interventions.

#### **4.2.13 Working with the existing Government Institutions**

Basically, for project sustainability and effective and efficient resource utilization, working with government institutions is more viable. Also, it is wise to strengthen coordination and integration between and among Woreda Court, Woreda Police, Woreda Prosecutor and grassroots level community structures such as Kebele level HTP Eradication Committees.

#### **4.2.14 Involvement of Women, Tribal Chiefs and Elders**

Pastoralist communities apply customary laws to manage community issues and influence decisions and practices. Such initiatives are therefore expected to be integrated with project results closely linked with sustainability, ownerships, and joint actions.



#### **4.2.15 Building the Capacity of Stakeholders**

Through coordinated and well managed efforts, the capacity gaps of government sector offices and community structures will be clearly identified and supplemented with needed inputs. Thus, through joint actions of all actors, the fight against HTPs will become successful.

#### **4.2.16 Networking and Collaboration**

Linking programs with other organizations, civil societies and grassroots community structures is also considered important strategy in combating HTPs.