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“LET WOMEN KEEP SILENT”: AN INTERPRATATION OF  
1TIMOTHY2:11-12 FROM AN OROMO PERSPECTIVE

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF THEOLOGY  
(METHEOL-342)

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MAY 2017

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and above all, I praise God, the almighty for providing me this opportunity and granting me the capability to proceed successfully. This thesis appears in its current form due to the assistance and guidance of several people. I would therefore like to offer my sincere thanks to all of them. Anna Rebecca Solevåg Research coordinator and Associate professor in New Testament, my esteemed promoter, my cordial thanks for your patience to help me to continue with my study. I want to express my deep thanks to your friendly heart uplifted and encouraged to finish my study. I would like to express my gratitude to Jostine Ådna Professor on New Testament in university of vid, the first organizer of my research title, field work and outline of my thesis paper, your support and encouragement helped me a lot.

I thank Maria Tendenes the study supervisor and international coordinator at Vid for her kind assistance in every aspect of my studies specially, for facilitating me application processes and writing me reminding emails to proceed with my study during the difficult times I had. I greatly appreciate Anne Beth Gilja Johnsen faculty of theology, diakonia and management. Your excellent assistance and your spiritual support for me and my family during my Masters study program, stays with me always.

I also appreciate pastor Trond Hansen and his family from International Kristian Fellowship in Salem Church, Christian friends brothers and sisters providing me your help and friendly concern. May God bless all of you for encouraging me by the word of God for the bad worries I had when my son was put into jail. My appreciation goes to Karin Hkalax for your big effort to help me with editing my thesis paper. Your contribution is remarkable for the completion of my thesis

I cannot find word to expressed my happens to receive cheering words from my beloved children Chara Eliyas and Eba Eliyas. Even though you are living in bothersome situation the way you talked to me on telephone uplifted my spirit and gives me strength. I always put my confidence on you and proud of you. I pray for you and my little sweet boy Gutu for the protection and guidance of God will be with you all the times.

My lovely husband, Dear Eliyas, without your supports and encouragements I could not have finished this work, it was you who kept the fundamental of our family and I understand

it was difficult for you to look for our children alone, have patient with them, advise them pray for them provide them with all the necessaries. Therefore, I can just say thanks for everything and managing all the extremely bad times.

## ABBREVIAITON

1. EECMY: Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
2. EECMY-WWBS: Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus- Western Wollega Bethel Synod
3. BDAG: (Bauer,-Arndt-Gingrich- Danker) English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature
4. ASV: American Standard Version
5. ESV: English Standard Version Bible
6. KJV: King James Version
- 7 NASB: New American Standard Bible
- 8 NLT: New Living Translation
- 9 NRSV: New Revised Standard Version
10. RSV: Revised Standard Version

## APPENDEXES

Below are the description of interview guide inserted and the interviewee grouped from A-C in the foot note of different pages in the all chapters

### Interview guide

1. What understandings do you have on 1Tim11-12 in relation to women ministry in the church
2. Can you describe reasons that prohibit women from the field of church service?
3. Is there biblical evidences that encouragement women on the field of church services?
4. How women are viewed in Oromo culture? -
5. What are the area of the involvement of Oromo women according to the Oromo culture?
6. Do you believe the idea of women ministry is based on God's Call? (Yes/no) How?
7. Do you believe that women can participate in the fields of church services at any level?
8. Can you share any historical experiences from the background of the establishment of the church?
9. What suggestion do you have on the modesty dressing of women in the church ministry?

Foot Note	interviewee	location	Date	Question
68	B5	Dembi Dollo	5June, 2015	Question 5
69	A3	Dembi Dollo	6July, 2015	Question 3
71	A1	Dembi Dollo	5July, 2015	Question 6
78	A4	Dembi Dollo	1July,2015	Question 3and 8
138,139,146	C1	Dembi Dollo	9July, 2015	Question 4,5
144,147	B4	Dembi Dollo	16 July,2015	Question 1 and 7
151	B6	Dembi Dollo	17July,2015	Question 1 and 7
153	B1	Dembi Dollo	25Jun,2015	Question 8
154	B3	Dembi Dollo	20July,2015	Question 7
155,160	A6	AdisAbaba	6 July,2015	Question 1,2,8
158,164,165	A1	Dembi Dollo	5July,2015	Question 1,2,3
159	A5	Dembi Dollo	8August,2015	Question 6
167	A2	Dembi Dollo	7 July,2015	Question 6

## Informal Interviewee

1. Banti Ujulu Pastor in Hanover, Germany (Former president of EECMY-WWBS), Jan.2 2016. Footnote 3, Question 1,7,8.
2. Seena Kefyalew, Norway 18April 2017. Foot note 178.Question 9.



## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Case about the Silencing of women

This thesis consists of five chapters that will discuss and give insights to the question about the ‘silence’ of women in the Pastoral Epistles. This thesis is to my knowledge, the first master’s thesis on 1Tim2:11-12 to be written from the cultural perspective of Oromo. According to the text of 1Timothy 2:11-12 women are commanded to keep silent, not to teach and not to have authority over man.

In this thesis, I will formulate some questions like, what is the impact of the text for the contemporary readers, how can we treat or compromise the phrase “a woman should learn in quietness, I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over men; she must be silent”, in the perspectives of church ministry. Is the Holy Bible in general prohibit women from teaching? Does God really allow women to keep silent? These are the main thoughts in the beginnings of the three chapters that will be presented.

Women play an indispensable role in the church ministry. However, why are they ordered to keep silent and prohibited from teaching is challenging question in the mind of every Christians in the church. There are certain ways that the text can contribute to the understanding of the readers of the text. Women can be withdrawn from the ministry and men can restrict women from church service. Therefore, providing the right insight is significantly important. This can be done thorough the task of exegesis, interpretation and application to the contemporary church. To reflect upon why women are urged to keep silent is an urgent question not only in my country but globally

Women’s silence in Oromo tradition, both in the socio-cultural and religious field will be discussed in chapter four of my thesis. There is special emphasis to reflect how women are viewed in Oromo tradition. Oromo has its own system of living norms that is governed by *Gada* system,<sup>1</sup> the base of Oromo culture and civilization. In this system, *Ateete* and *Siiqe* are the two famous practices for social and physical wellbeing of Oromo women. *Ateete* is the

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<sup>1</sup> The elaboration about the *Gadaa* system will presented in chapter 4.

rituals belong to a cultural belief that Oromo women are intermediaries between spiritual and physical that the God *Waaqa* listens to women's desire and suddenly answers to it.

The second very important cultural practice in *Gadaa* system is *Siiqe*: a stick symbolizing a socially sanctioned set of rights and exercised by women. All these matters will be discussed thoroughly with the significant scholarly based sources in the fourth chapter. These are the main areas I want to discuss in relation to the prohibition of women in 1Timothy 2:11-12. The fifth chapter consists of discussion and conclusion that brings the textual understanding of the Pastoral Epistles in relation to the Oromo culture.

## 1.2. Motivation

In the history of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus, (EECMY) women play a great role for the growth and existence of the church. Their dedicated and loyal involvement in different areas of spiritual and social activities of the church is remarkable. I believe, that this is why the church leaders of EECMY, on every leadership level, witness that “women are the backbone of the church activities”<sup>2</sup>. As one of my friend said: “if women were not involved in the ministry of the church, EECMY wouldn't survive.”<sup>3</sup> Even though especial attention is not given to promote women as, it should.

There are points stated in the resolutions of the church about women in ministry that say: women who have received a calling by congregational members and who are qualified for the work can be ordained and serve as a pastor. Women should be appointed to positions of authority and leadership in the various areas of the church. Efforts to maximize the number of women at the church meeting should be made, thus empowering women to become decision-makers of the church.<sup>4</sup> The constituted polices and bylaws are established and put into practice by the grassroots levels like synod presidents, presbytery and outreach leaders.

However, when it comes to EECMY-Western Wollega Bethel Synod that administers more than 430 congregation and 122 preaching places and consists of more than 200 male pastors and there female pastors all the responsibilities on a leadership level are run by men. Currently, all the leaders in all the structures of the church from the head quarter to the level of the outreach

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<sup>2</sup> This is what I heard from every level of the church leaders when I worked as a community organizer at office of the Western Wollega Bethel Synod of EECMY.

<sup>3</sup> Banti Ujulu Pastor in Hanover, Germany (Former president of EECMY-WWBS), Jan.2, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> <http://eecmy.org/eecmy/am/2015-07-05-19-25-32/wmd>. Accessed on October 10, 2016.

areas of the congregation, are male. When I asked the representative body of board committees why women are absent in leadership, they answered me “women are not capable for administration, they are weak”. The second answer I received is the quotation from the 1Tim 2:11-12.

This made me curious, and eager to know about the text. Since I am a woman pastor and theologian, I should be the one doing this job. Therefore, the research study aims at answering the question stated under the research question of the thesis.

### **1.3 Research Question**

What is the meaning and context of the instruction given to women in 1Tim2:11-12, and how is it interpreted in an Oromo context?

### **1.4. Method**

I use different methods for different parts of my analysis. The historical critical method supported by exegetical literatures will be the Method I am going to use in chapter three. And in chapter five the interpretation the text is supported by field works. In other words, I use qualitative method, which I will explain in more detail below.

#### *1.4.1 Qualitative Research Method*

Within the qualitative research method, interviews were conducted with ministers and member of EECMY-of Western Wollega Bethel Synod (WWBS) and from the representatives of the Oromo traditional religion. In order to do a thorough work, I grouped my candidates into three: Group A: this focus group consists of A1-A6 that is, six informants including both men and women ministers employed by the church with varying degrees of theological training.

Group B: this focus group consists of B1-B6. These informants are selected from the members of the church with different views including both men and women. This groups are important because they have deep understandings of the church and church services.

Group C: the last group consists of two informants C1 and C2 from the Oromo Traditional representatives. Both the informant are males. More explanation about the interviewee and the questioner guide is presented in the appendix.

#### *1.4.1.1 Recruitment of Respondents and Pre-Interview communication*

Recruitment was carried out with the aim of achieving a diverse knowledge regarding the respondents' personal observation based on gender orientation, education background and genuine self-determination and cultural background. Since the purpose of the study was to get a deeper understanding of participants' experiences.

I have communicated with several people who I felt could fit my criteria of selection. In order to arrange the appointment dates, I communicate them using every opportunity I had; like meeting them on Sundays after worship, in the market place and burial sites. Using the telephone also helped me a lot to set up the appointment dates. Some of my candidates live in town and some are in countryside. Some had working programs in the administrative centres of the synod and others live in Addis Ababa. Except a few who were absent due to some inconveniences, most of them grouped above from A-C accepted my request. Though, there was a big challenge to organize and get my appointments on time since some of them had to work hard on their farm field during June-September, and because of the muddy road and heavy rain. Though there were hardships, I managed my interviews well. Pre-interview communication as well as interviews were carried out during the summer of 2015.

#### *1.4.1.2 Interview Processes*

Eleven of the interview took places in the town of Dembi Dollo, and one is in Addis Ababa. Each interview began with a request for demographic information such as the respondents' name, age, educational background, work experience and place of work. The questions were related to their interpretation of 1Timothy 2:11-12 in relation to women's ministry in EECMY. (See appendix) The interviews ranged from one hour to one and half in length. Both the interview and the respondents' answer were recorded and transcribed with the average document consisting of approximately 30 pages of text. Each participant was identified with code symbols, A, B, and C as explicated above.

### **1.5 Limitation**

The issue of commanding women to keep silent and prohibiting them to teach is a big and difficult subject. It stands in contrast to other ideas in the New Testament, equality, and

liberation of women. (See e.g. Rom.16:1-15, Acts 2:17-18, Phil 4:2-3, Gal.3:28; Titus 2:3-5)  
The limitation of the subject in this thesis is on 1Tim.2:11-12. With detailed exegesis, scholarly based investigation, and interviews, I hope it broadens the view on this passage for the readers of my thesis. However, it does not mean that this research solves all the problems concerning the understanding of the text, especially in the context of the Oromo Christian perspectives. I might be biased since I am a woman writing on a women's issue. There might be some imbalances, and the topic may still need additional investigations. However, I believe that this thesis can contribute towards the understanding of the text, its context and its relevance for the church today.

## Chapter Two

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE PASTORAL EPISTLES IN ITS GRECO-ROMAN CONTEXT.

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present my approach to the biblical text, using historical criticism. I investigate the background of the text in 1Tim 2:11-12. This passage is studied by many scholars and there are multiple interpretations and different approaches are applied to the text. For example, arguments that introduce if text is written for universal prohibition, or to control the problem in Ephesian church only. The second opinion is the argument based on the assumed authenticity of the letter. However, for this research of the chapter I will discuss an overview of the text and the fundamental framework that explores the historical and contextual background of the text.

In this part of my writing, I want to make clear that even though my focus is to make an analysis on 1Timothy 2:11-12, doing a brief research on the background of the Pastoral Epistles is essential. Commentators since about the 18<sup>th</sup> century, have suggested that there are reasons why the Pastoral Epistles are grouped together regarding the authorship, the dates, and the recipients of the letters.<sup>5</sup> Therefore studying Pastoral Epistles is knowing the background of the letter of Timothy for me. As I have mentioned earlier, I will use the historical critical method that discusses about different arguments contributed by the commentators that suggest the background of the letters collectively.

### 2.2 Historical background

The historical criticism is one of different kinds of methods that can be applied in the study of the biblical texts. According to Barton, the historical critical approach is a dominant approach in the academic study of the Bible, and is used by many scholars. The concern is always to

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<sup>5</sup> Philip H. Towner., *The letter to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, Michigan. 2006), 1., I.H Marshal. *International critical commentary: The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburg: T and T Clark 1999),1. He noted that the three letters are by one author., Coggins R.J. and J.L. Houlden, (eds.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press: 1990), 518. The dictionary reads also “Throughout the modern period I and II Timothy and Titus have been known by this collective name Pastoral Epistles.”

place texts in their historical context, and to argue that we misunderstand them if we take them to mean something they could not have meant for their first reader. The main task of biblical scholars is to get back to the Original meaning, and to eliminate the false meanings that unhistorical readers thought they had found in the text.<sup>6</sup>

Barton continues suggesting that the historical criticism discusses the composition of history questions like who is the author of the work. What do we know about him/her/them? Is the attributed author the actual author or, is the work pseudographic? When, where and under what circumstances was the work written? And who were the original recipients? These are the fundamental questions that should be addressed to apply to the biblical texts.<sup>7</sup>

Likewise, Fiorenza noted that the historical critical method helps us to avoid hastily projecting our own standpoint into the text, thus confirming what we have always thought to be true. She continues; the historical-critical method emphasizes the strangeness and independence of the text. Only in this way it is possible for the biblical word to help us change our way of thinking and our present praxis.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, I assume that the description about the purpose of the historical-critical method mentioned by the above scholars is very important to study the place of women in the Pastoral Epistles to resolve and argue for the problems I have presented in the introduction.

### 2.2.1. *The Pastoral Epistles.*

The Pastoral Epistles are specifically addressed to the individuals Timothy and Titus:(1Tim1:2, Tit: 4). But according to Solevåg and Bassler, the Pastoral Epistles do not belong to the category of purely private correspondence. They are rather concerned with organization of the churches with Pastoral oversight and its leadership roles of the church.<sup>9</sup> Whether the recipients are individuals or organization of churches, the purpose of the Epistles is to protect and foster the true teachings of the tradition. They are meant to fight against the proclamation of other

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<sup>6</sup> John Barton (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9.

<sup>7</sup> Barton, *The Cambridge companion to Biblical Interpretation*, 11.

<sup>8</sup> Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, (ed.), *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 222.

<sup>9</sup>The quotation is taken from Solevåg Anna Rebecca. *Birthing Salvation: Gender and Class in Early Christian Child bearing discourse* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), 85. And Jouette M. Bassler *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: 1Timothy 2 Timothy Titus* (Nashville: Abingdon Press: 1997), 17.

teachings and instruct the church regarding good teaching. e.g., 1Tim.1:3ff; Tit 1:10-16. This is the brief but important introduction about the recipients and the function of Pastoral Epistles. In the following section, I will discuss the author and date of the Pastoral Epistles.

### 2.2.2 *The Author, Date and Place*

*Author:* As it is indicated earlier, studying the background of the authorship, date and place of a book of the bible is another part of the theoretical approach. The Pastoral Epistles fall between two debating views regarding their authorship; the authenticity to Paul and pseudonymous of the letters. One of the earliest form of the New Testament is the papyrus codex that contain the Pauline epistles during AD2000. The papyrus 46 from which the Pastoral Epistles are missing can be considered as a measurement to accept the authorship of the Pauline Epistles.<sup>10</sup>

Towner suggested, various explanation are offered why the Pastoral Epistles are missing from the Pauline letter. However, he likely to say the absence of the letters from the Papyrus cannot bring an impact to accept the letter as Pauline. Because the early second century recipient and use of the letter adequately accounted and therefore he and others like J.A Emerton<sup>11</sup> suggested that Pastoral Epistles are still the work of Paul.

Marshall noticed, that the impossibility of identifying the authorship of the letter should not obscure the fact that we are dealing with a person of considerable theological skill to present Christian message with the exposition of Paulin theology in the language and categories of Hellenistic world.<sup>12</sup>

However, starting form 19th century, there are numerous scholars suggesting that the Pastoral Epistles are not the work of Paul; they are pseudonymous documents in the sense that they were written to deceive readers.<sup>13</sup> Anchor bible commentary asserted also, in the 1Timothy constituent an epistolary commission for this Pauline co-worker and 2 Timothy is an epistolary testament in the name of the apostles.<sup>14</sup> Critical commentaries mentioned massive tasks that

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<sup>10</sup> Bassler, *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: 1Timothy 2Timothy Titus*, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 6-7. And J.A Emerton F.B.A (ed.,) *The international critical Commentary on the Holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments: The Pastoral Epistles* (British Library: T and T Clark, 1999), 57.

<sup>12</sup> Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles: International Critical Commentary*, 89.

<sup>13</sup> Emerton J.A., *The international critical Commentary on the Holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments: The Pastoral Epistles*, 58.

<sup>14</sup> David Freedman, et al., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary 6vols* (New York London: Double day, 1992), 561.



are contributed from the side of scholars like Harrison to signify the letters are pseudonymous.<sup>15</sup>

According to Green, some pseudonymous writings were clearly treated as sacred Scripture by many of the early church fathers, in the New Testament. “In Pastoral Epistles; reconciliation, eschatology, in Christ, justification by faith, the prominent role of the Holy Spirit and a simple church organizational structure are strong case that can be made that the Pastoral Epistles were written not by Paul but rather by someone who followed him.”<sup>16</sup> MacDonald,<sup>17</sup> and Bruce claim that the Pastoral Epistles are Pseudonymous and the argument to consider the letter as pseudonymous are the historical situation, the type of false teaching condemned, the stage of church organization described, and the vocabulary and style.<sup>18</sup>

There are different argument developed particularly on 1Tim 2:11-15. These verses have received an enormous amount of attention in recent years prompted on women’s ordination debates and feminist investigations of early Christianity. That is why the arguments against the Pauline authenticity of these verses are contextual, traditional, and text-critical. For example, Bruce mentioned verse like, 1Tim01:3, 2Tim 1:16, 17, 4:13, 20; Tit1, 3:12 as examples that cannot fit the contextual nature of Luke’s record of Paul’s activities.<sup>19</sup>

Pastoral Epistles are Pseudonymous for the modern reader whereas, for the traditional scholars the authenticity is given Paul. The common grounds for the arguments both for the authentic and pseudonymous of the letter are, the history of the period of Paul’s imprisonment, the language and style of vocabulary in Pastoral Epistles, the theology and Canonicity.

*Date:* Historically, Pastoral Epistles are attributed to Paul with the hypothesis of the period imprisonment in Rome (Act 28:30). Again, I want to bring the point about papyrus. Towner

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<sup>15</sup> Emerton F.B.A J.A. (ed.,) *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments*, 60-83.

<sup>16</sup> Joel B Green and Lee Martin MacDonald, (ed.,) *The World of the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic: 2013), 362-4.

<sup>17</sup> Green, *The World of the New Testament*, 367. The word Pseudonymous writing refer to writings put forward or published in someone else’s name of the letters. This is not the same as when a writer uses a pen name. And she mentioned that He maintained four different views that help us to understand why the Pastoral Epistles are pseudonymous. Historically, Literary, External, and Theologically. See the details on the refer pages.

<sup>18</sup> Frederick Fyvie Bruce (gen.ed.), *The International Bible Commentary with the New International Version*. (Grand rapids: Michigan, Zondervan: 1986),1472.

<sup>19</sup> Bruce, *The International Bible Commentary with the New International Version*, 1476.

attested the papyrus contain all the Pauline letters except 2Thesolonian, 1and 2Timothy and Philemon.<sup>20</sup> This signifies that the Pastoral Epistles are written after the Pauline letters.

Paul was in prison and released from prison for two years and rearrested back to prison. So, Marshall suggested that it was during the two years of released out from prison that he wrote the letter.<sup>21</sup> However, if had it been Paul who wrote during the lifetime of released from prison he would have mention his situation. Therefore, I assume that it should be dated after Paul.

*Place:* Towner justified that there are possibility not to have the Pastoral Epistles in papyrus or to have them in the manuscript it is difficult to suggest the place. However if it is assumed the theory of the prison it could be in Rome that the Epistles are written. Otherwise, it should be in Ephesus. I assume that since the letter is under different arguments, I consider the letters as Pseudonymous therefore the place can be in Ephesus.

The historical approach of the authorship of the Pastoral Epistle is argumentative I agree with those who claim that the letters are pseudonymous, because, had they been written by Paul they would have appeared in the manuscripts of the Pauline letters. Secondly, the writer of the Pastoral Epistles implicitly suggested separation between male and female in a way that it could devastate the equality of women with men and contradicts the teaching of Paul in Gal 3:28 that says: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for all are one in Christ Jesus.”

Thirdly, the writer should not have used the name of the Apostle Paul as it is mentioned in 1Tim.1:1; 2Tim1:1; Titus1:1, if it was during his life. Because Paul introduce his title as a prisoner and servant in the salutation of the book of Philippians and Romans.

Concerning the date, I conclude that the letters are post-Pauline.

### **2.3. Women in Greco- Roman culture**

As it is mentioned earlier, the book of Pastoral Epistles was written in the Greco-Roman culture where women traditionally been plying inconsistent social expectations. For example, the charitable role of women in the church is one of the most important.<sup>22</sup> The duty of hospitality

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<sup>20</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Marshal, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 68.

<sup>22</sup> Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles. International Critical Commentary*, 57.

was practiced also in the Christian community in which women were in the forefront of making the practice effective. According to Osiek, this would include welcoming and hosting of passing Christian visitors, especially entertaining missionaries like the wandering apostles and prophets of the *didache* or the founder of a church. The practice was taking place in house church assembled. Soon, however this was a ministry entrusted particularly to those widows who would have the capacity to receive guests (1Tim.5:10).<sup>23</sup>

The contemporary Christian, women share identical exercising of the virtue. Entertaining and hosting guests is becoming an experience as well among Christians women. Carrying out the experience of hospitality is essential as it stated in the bible. “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” (Heb13:2)

However, if hosting strangers is the responsibility given only to women, it weakens the other that the Holy Spirit gives to women. “There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given to believers by the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord. There are different ways of the Sprit works. But the same God is working in all these ways and all people.” (1Cor.12:4-6).

Therefore, proper balance and equal involvement in the field of the spiritual activity also demanding for the growth of church organization. That means there are limitations of receiving, practicing, and experiencing of other gifts in the church. This gives the impression that the women task is only in the domestic sphere and hosting guests. They are moved away from other fields of the church. And, the task men would become administrating, preaching and teaching in public service. So, why does the issue of hospitality is special place in widowers’ responsibility in Greco-Roman empire when it comes to being a host? Or, meant only for women? What is the responsibility of widower in hosting the guests? Is the biblical hospitality only for women if so what can we say about Abraham receiving the unidentified men and hosting them in Genesis 18:1-16, while Sarah was in the tent?

All these questions need to be raised and answered by researchers. However, according to Osiek, women knew more than men about household affairs and have their own opinions about them. Wives manage all of these things so husbands do not have to.<sup>24</sup> This is because according to the cultural norms of the Greco-Roman; women are trained from the early stage

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<sup>23</sup> Carolyn Osiek, *A Woman’s place: House churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Frontless Press: 2006), 12.

<sup>24</sup> Osiek, *A Woman’s place: House churches in Earliest Christianity*, 152.

time so that they can be more responsible in household management and those restricted formative public services than giving the public service.<sup>25</sup> That is how women are trained in the culture of the Greco- Roman.

In Asia-Minor women's houses became important centres of education, not only concerning in matters of instruction but also ongoing education in faith. Those who qualified for advanced instructions, to accomplish or get a graduate degree such as that provided by professional teachers like Justin in mid-second- century Rome, had to go through the regular instructions based in the weekly assembly in house hold.<sup>26</sup>

Osiek attested that the character of the culture makes it unlikely that faith based education replaced gender-specific- instruction that were oriented to the particular roles of women and men in the family. However, the role of women teachers is neglected because scholarly interest remains at the public predominantly male level.<sup>27</sup> That is why the allusion of teaching of women by women tell us of a continuing custom of whose content we know is very little: older women are to form character in younger women while male teachers do the same for young men (Titus 2:3-8).

Education is the long-standing tradition in families, whereby women were the principle educators of girls and young women. Therefore, the teaching and educating programs used during the Greco Roman-Empire seems more like gender based education. Especially concerning the ethical life of the family than education with an aim to develop the spiritual life of the whole Christian fellowship.<sup>28</sup>

In the Hellenistic period, female philosophers gave advice about marriage and household management to other women, and practical issues as tolerance of the sexual double standard by their profligate husbands and the right way to manage household slaves, so that they neither grow slack from too loose a hand nor get discouraged and despair from abusive treatment.<sup>29</sup>

Christian households continued this practice of passing down received wisdom and traditions from mother to daughter, from one generation to the next. We catch a glimpse of it

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<sup>25</sup> Osiek, *A Woman's place: House churches in Earliest Christianity*, 152.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*,13.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*,14.

in Titus2:3-5, in the context of general instructions to old and young people of both sexes. Older women (*pesbytides*) are uplifted and encouraged to be well-behaved and not to be given into excessive drinking so that they can be good teachers. This title comes rather strange into the Pastoral Epistles after the prohibition of women teaching in 1Tim.2:12.<sup>30</sup>

Here, however, it is a matter not of public teaching, nor of teaching men, but of instructing younger women in their duties and behaviour: to love their husbands and children, to be virtuously self-controlled, to be submissive to their husbands but good managers of their households, so that no scandal ensues from erratic behaviour. Otherwise young women will not be fit to follow who might otherwise not follow the domestic role set out for them. The use of the recognized word for teacher διδάσκαλος, however, means that the wisdom imparted from woman to woman from one generation to another was considered to be just as significant instructions given to both sexes.<sup>31</sup>

The point that can be analysed from above idea is that the women's possibility to teach and education principle is given to old women in Greco-Roman culture was limited to concern only the issue of house management and women's subordination to their husband.

## 2.4 Conclusion

So far, discussing the historical background of the Pastoral Epistles helps us to understand the Greco-Roman context of the Epistles. There is realization about the cultural influence of a patriarchal system impacted women to be limited in the involvement of the teaching fields. Though there are cultural impacts that don't permit women to teach publically, there are significant roles that women play. To some extent this implies that the writer of the Pastoral Epistles is very flexible regarding the contribution of women. The involvement of women in teaching and education for the change of moral life is something to be encouraged.

Therefore, from the above description of the historical background of the Pastoral Epistles, it is possible to analyse a glimpse of insights around the ethical problem of the false teaching, and the cultural problem of women being limited to hosting tasks with a and with limited teaching field that must a detailed awareness about the text on 1Timo 2:11-12. In

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 91.

exegetical part of chapter 3, the detail information about women silence and their prohibition from teaching according to the Pastoral Epistles and some related ideas in the letter of Paul.

## Chapter Three

### EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The preceding chapter presented the historical context of the Pastoral Epistle in general. In this chapter I am going to analyse all the important points mentioned in 1Tim 2:8-15 that need to be understood in relation to the prohibition given to women. The second task in this chapter will be to do detailed exegeses on 1Tim 11-12. An application of the text in the contemporary church will be the third step in this chapter.

#### **3.2 The Conduct of Women in the Worship place (1Timothy 2:8-15)**

The immediate context of vv 11-12 is the text unit of 1Tim 2:8-15. This unit focuses on prayer during worship within the church gathering. The passage is complicated with full of problematic phrase construction, grammatical structure, and words. Furthermore, the passage helps to ask about what does the text mean, and what is the intention, and the purpose of the writer, for urging women to keep silent and prohibiting them from teaching.

##### *3.2.1 The Historical, literary, and structural aspect on 1Tim.2:8-15*

*Historical aspect:* The historical background of the Pastoral Epistles helps to explain the passage on 1Tim 2:8-15. In several different passages of the Pastoral Epistles we see that they are written in the context of refutation of the false teachers that existed at that time. For example, 1Tim 1:4,7 and 1Tim 4:1b-3; describe the teaching of false doctrines and their character. They occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies and promote speculations, rather than the divine training that is known by faith. Through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared the forbidding of marriage and teaching about the promotion of abstinence from certain foods. Finally, in 2Tim 4:4 turning away from the truth and turning aside to myth.

In the immediate context of our text, the problem is not mentioned but the false doctrinal teaching of the time can be a reason why the prayer is requested in the worshipping. Thus the writer urges people to pray in general for all people, instead of mentioning the specific problem with the adjective form πάντων, implicitly including the problem of the church. The context of the instructions is that men are encouraged to pray, but women are directed to be modesty.

There is no external force or persecution of the church that disturbed the peace of the believers, but we see that praying for the governments and salvation also included in the prayer instruction. However, according to Bruce, prayer ‘must never be parochial’ or it must be inclusive.<sup>32</sup> And Marshall also attested that the instruction to pray for all the people points to the ‘churches’ world consciousness. It is the universalistic elitist understanding of salvation connected to the false teaching at that time.<sup>33</sup> All these are the content of the instruction on worship place that men are encouraged to pray but women are directed to dress modesty, be silent not to teach and be submissive in the household code.

*Literary aspect:* The literary context of 1Timothy 2:11-12 as part of the letter shows that the Churches in Ephesus have internal conflicts when it comes to class, concerning matter of gender, theological disputes and power struggles in general.<sup>34</sup> That helps us to read the passage within the entire conversation of the larger context beginning with 1Tim 2:8-15. After backing from prayer for all peoples on the bases of the universal character, the writer proceeds to mention on how the prayer should be conducted. He gives more emphasis on giving instructions on women’s prayer, and even moves to the stage of prohibiting them from teaching and encouraging them or demanding them to be silent.

Reading 1Timothy 2:11-12 within its literary context demonstrates that the writer’s instruction for women is integrated with his larger purpose for writing the letter. He aims to both give a proper response to the presence of false teaching in the church, and contribute to patriarchal reflection to the church of Ephesus. The writer claims women in Ephesus were exposed to false teaching, and even seduced and deceived. The recorded evidences show “For among them are those who creep into household and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of

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<sup>32</sup>F.F Bruce (gen.ed.), *The International Bible Commentary with the New International Version*, 1476.

<sup>33</sup> Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles: International Critical Commentary*, 420.

<sup>34</sup> Elisabeth Schussler Filorenza. *A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins: IN Memory of Her*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.,) (London, United Kingdom: SCM Press Ltd, 1994), 289.



the truth”. (2Tim3:6, 7) And 1Tim 5:13 tells that some of these women began spreading the false teaching from house church to house church.

It is difficult to give any suggestion on this topic matter since there is no preserved document of the original version. When the writer places restrictions on women in 1Tim 2:11-12, women spreading false teaching might be on his mind. And he wants to rebuke them from this wrong doing and falseness and encourages them to accept full submission instead. He also does not permit women to teach. To my opinion, the concept of is obscure. Many scholars note that it is unclear to whom does the prohibition is written.

*Structural aspect:* I am focusing on the command that says, “let women keep silent” 1Timothy 2:11-12. The verse falls in a wider context that comes with the instruction of prayer from (v.8) that shows the desire (Βούλομαι) of the writer: he encourages men everywhere to lift up their hand in prayer. Then it continues with the adverb Ὡσαύτως (‘likewise’) in (v.9). It seems likely that Ὡσαύτως is used to express the engaging of women in prayer. But after the adverb there is no hint given about the prayer of women. It instructs them to keep their physical manner; dress modestly and do good work in (v10). Fiorenza stated that vv9-10 shows the writer’s strategy that suggests women should not even pray, “but dress modestly and do good works”.<sup>35</sup> But Marshall indicated that “the whole preceding verses are about prayer, and the reference to the women is unmotivated if prayer is no longer in the mind of the writer.”<sup>36</sup> For Marshall therefore, women can involve in prayer. Knight shares the same idea with Marshall. He suggested that “Paul wants to show that both groups i.e., men and women are “to engage in same activity in having certain qualification.”<sup>37</sup>

According to the Greek–English Lexicon Ὡσαύτως is used as a comparative article, indicating the manner in which something proceeds *as like*. For example, in v8 is related to the prayer-meeting. It talks about how men should pray, and, verse 9 continues with the adverb Ὡσαύτως [καὶ] *likewise also*<sup>38</sup> *women*. Thus, according to this definition verse 9 designates women to pray *like* men.

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<sup>35</sup> Fiorenza, *A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian origin: In Memory of Her*,370.

<sup>36</sup> Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles: International Critical Commentary*,446.

<sup>37</sup> George Knight III, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, on the Geek Text* (Grand Rapids, Michigan Eerdmans publishing company,1992), 132.

<sup>38</sup>The translation is from English Standard Version.

“Σωφοσύνης” (self-control) is mentioned as one of the qualification stated repeatedly and which is used as female virtue. “It is specifically applied to women that might suggest chastity and sexual purity as a form of self-control.<sup>39</sup> Bassler suggested that σωφοσύνη and related words appeared frequently in the Pastoral letters to define the behaviour that is expected of all church members. See e.g. (1Tim2:15, 3:2; Titus1:8 2:2, 5,6,12)<sup>40</sup> Marshall noted that σωφοσύνη in Pastoral Epistles is understood equally as a quality determined by faith in Christ. According to Marshall, the same term can be used for different purposes. The quality of self-controlling mentioned in 1Tim 2:9 cannot be understood in same was as those in Pastoral Epistles in general.<sup>41</sup> According to Knust, women should be educated in the virtues, especially, the virtue most appropriate to women, σωφοσύνη. “It is necessary that a woman be chaste and self- controlled,” he strongly argue that σωφοσύνη when applied to a woman carried the primary meaning chastity. She must be pure in respect to unlawful intercourse, pure in other improper pleasures, not be a slave to her passions, or fond strife, or extravagant, or excessive in adornment.<sup>42</sup> He continued, these are the works of σωφοσύνη. When a woman was used of abusive speech, she was regularly accused of violating σωφοσύνη in some way. She was described as the opposite of the female σωφοσύνη; she adorns herself with expensive ostentations clothing, perfumes, and cosmetics; her passions are insatiable; she seeks unlawful intercourse with whomever she can, wherever she can; she is talkative or ugly or loud; she spreads rumours; she participated in suspect religious rites bringing her enthusiastic son along.<sup>43</sup>

Women who controlled themselves, exhibiting the σωφοσύνη appropriate to their gender and their status, brought honour to themselves and their families, their cities, and their nation. Indeed, true heroines of σωφοσύνη could even be described in “masculine” terms. They were “like men” in virtue, but the virtue they displayed was a virtue particular to them, chastity. Bad women brought shame to their families, their city, and themselves by engaging in adultery and fornication; they adorn themselves with expensive perfumes and cosmetics and

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<sup>39</sup> Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles: International Critical Commentary*,182-3.

<sup>40</sup> Bassler, *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: 1Timothy2Timothy Titus*, 58.

<sup>41</sup> Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles: International Critical Commentary*,449.

<sup>42</sup> Wright Knust Jennifer, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander + ancient Christianity* (New York: Columbia University, 2006),38.

<sup>43</sup> Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander + ancient Christianity*,38.

they seek to satisfy their insatiable lusts at every opportunity.<sup>44</sup> A woman is virtuous when she guards her chastity. Her courage lies in maintaining and displaying chastity in face of extraordinary threats. Thus, violations of virtue were equally gender specific. For a woman, any form sexual activity outside of marriage was improper and subject to censure. For a man, sexual acts with freeborn subordinates (boys, girls, women) were largely forbidden. Yet men were not expected to limit their sexual activity to their wives, though some philosophers may have encouraged them to do so.<sup>45</sup>

In v10 the author continues to instruct women not to be physically attractive in worship but expressed their holiness by doing good work. In a literary sense the reading sounds like it has a linkage to the concept of the doctrine of salvation. There are references stated in Pastoral Epistles that good deeds ἔργων ἀγαθῶν are profitable for once salvation,<sup>46</sup> but ἔργων ἀγαθῶν in the context of the text signifies the ethical life of a community situation.<sup>47</sup> According to Bruce,<sup>48</sup> verse 10 is parallel to the idea in 1Pet 3:3, 4 that tells about the internal beauty of women, through which they can be gentle and have a quiet spirit that is very precious in God's eyes. So according to vv9-10 the writer wants to express women should dress modestly, and self-control and good deeds are an indication of their spiritual inclination in the worshiping community.

There are two changes to note in vv11-15. In the preceding verses, vv9-10, the plural form is used for “γυναῖκας” (women) whereas starting from vv11-15 the noun “Γυνή” (a woman) is changed to singular. This designates that there is a specific woman that the writer is talking about. And on v 15 it says, “she shall be saved.” Maybe the “she” is Eve standing as a representative of all the women in Ephesus, many of whom were being deceived by the false teachers just like Eve was deceived by the Serpent.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.,44.

<sup>45</sup> Knst, *Abandoned to Lust*, 49.

<sup>46</sup> See all the explanation of ἔργων ἀγαθῶν on Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation*.94-96. She made all the explanation of the necessity of ἔργων ἀγαθῶν. She left her theological question for the writer if the word (ἔργων ἀγαθῶν) has relation to the case of salvation. But Marshall, 452, stated that the relation between good work and salvation in the Pastoral Epistles is clear from Titus 2:14 “He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds”,(cf Eph.2:10) For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”

<sup>47</sup> Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (e.d.,) *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol.2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1990), 50.

<sup>48</sup> Bruce, *The International Bible Commentary with the New International Version*.1477.

As noted, the designation of women in verse 8 shifts from plural to singular when it comes to vv11-12. For these, from vv11-12, the author uses his authoritative command.<sup>49</sup> and bans women from the teaching role. Teaching activity on the part of women is observed being in conflict with the creation order: Adam was formed first thus he was to be meant to have authority over woman. The prohibition in v12 is also more supported by the reason that it was Eve who was deceived, (v14). Paul said in Romans: “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.” (Rom.5:12) This statement gives Adam the responsibility of sin entering the world. However, the writer of the Pastoral Epistles uses the creation order to give supremacy to Adam, and gives more of the blame for sin entering the world to Eve. This theology nullifies the teaching of Paul and hence, it is one of the argumentative for the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistle.

Verse 15 is another problematic point claiming the salvation of women through birth giving. The shift from singular woman in verse14 to plural in verse 15, sounds like a shift from a particular woman to the women in general. This seems to emphasize the universal women, with future prediction about the salvation accompanied by the verb “will be”. Well, to me, this is another theological debate because, it is different from the teaching of Paul according to Ephesians. “For it is by grace you have been saved through faith. It is not from yourself or anything you’ve done, but the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8-9) I want to point out also that verse15 is a big issue to our own contemporary church. It is practically impossible to teach this in the church since there are barren women who can’t give birth, but who believe in Christ Jesus and seek to serve the lord.

According to Bartels, in Oromo culture, girls had to marry outside their lineage; they had to go to another place , and then immediately expected to present their husband with sons when they get married. If a woman is proved barren or if she failed repeatedly to deliver a live child, she was deprived of respect, and she encountered other troubles as well. Her marital relations would suffer her husband would almost certainly take a second wife; and since ties of consanguinity are more highly regarded than affection and she would find herself isolated in a social environment.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Bassler, *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: 1Timothy2Timothy Titus*, 27.

<sup>50</sup> Bartels Lambert, *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia- An Attempt to Understand*. (Berlin: Dietric Reimer Verlag. 1983),128.

Therefore, it is heart breaking text for them and it is very sensitive part to use especially in Oromo Society where barren women are undermined and even emphasized as “mule” offensive term for barren woman. The verse reminds the societies the wrong perception towards the childless women.

Secondly, this section is contrary to the teaching that says: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark16:16). Paul also said “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes...” (Rom 1:16) Therefore, Salvation is possible through baptism, faith, and the word of God.

### *3.2.2 Women’s silence, submission, and prohibition form teaching (1Tim2: 11-12)*

This is the main section of the exegetical analysis of my thesis which presents detailed information about my two main points: the silence of women and their prohibition from teaching.

#### **Translation**

11 γυνή ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μανθανέτω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ· 12 ἰδιδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω, οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός, ἀλλ’ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ.

Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no women to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent.<sup>51</sup>

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not women to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence.<sup>52</sup>

#### *3.2.2.1 The meaning of the word ἡσυχία silent versus quiet”*

I have consulted different sources to find the meaning of the word ἡσυχία. To find out if the noun is used as permanent or temporal instruction for women or if it is a noun used to restrict women or to allow them to keep quiet. There are two possible ways of definitions. First, it is

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<sup>51</sup> The translation is taken from New Revised International version

<sup>52</sup> The translation is taken from King James Version.

defined as state of quietness without experiencing disturbance, quietness, rest. Living in way that does not cause disturbance. Secondly, it is defined as the state of saying nothing or very little silence. Quite down, giving a hearing. Reverence, devotion, and respect.<sup>53</sup>

The exegetical dictionary of the New Testament is clearer for me to understand the meaning and the explanation on *ἡσυχία*. The meaning is rest, stillness, silence, and peacefulness. And, “it is a request for quietness or for salience in worship 1Tim 2:11-12 does not forbid questioning or speaking in general, but rather speaking that creates a disturbance. Quietness is designated as a virtue of wives (1Pet3:4). The noun *ἡσυχία* is occurs 11 times in the New Testament; five are in Luke-Acts and three are in 1Timothy.”<sup>54</sup>

Most Bible translations, like ESV, NLT, ASV, NASB, translate *ἡσυχία* as “quiet”. Whereas the RSV and KJV translate *ἡσυχία* as “silent.” The preposition “ἐν” is omitted especially from v12 in some translations except in Greek New Testament, KJV, and ASV.

The revised Oromo Bible also use the adjective “quiet.” It says “*Dubartiin abboomamu hundumaan gab jete haa bartu. Dubartiin gabitti haa jiraatun jedha malee haa barsiiftu dhiira irratis aboo haa qabaatu hin jedhu.*”<sup>55</sup> The noun ‘gab’or quiet is accompanied by the preposition ‘itti’ that shows the manner by which a woman should learn. Whereas the original translation of the Oromo Bible uses the noun “silent” instead of quiet without any preposition.

The original Oromo Bible reads, “*Nadheen Garuu haa barsiiftuf kanan abboomu miti. Dhiira irratis ijja hin jabaatin Calluma haa jettu malee*”.<sup>56</sup> This translation uses the phrase “*calluma haa jettu,*” which means let women keep “silent.” I understand, silent is to be stronger than the word “quiet”. Silent is an expression that means there will be no sound, and the noun quiet is used when there is no loud sound. This is a common understanding and is evident that modern readers of the Oromo bible use the original translation with the adjective “silent” when there is debates about the case of women in ministry. That is why I observed that the word

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<sup>53</sup> W. Danker Frederick, *A Greek- English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, s.v. *ἡσυχία*.

<sup>54</sup> Balz and Gerhard, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol.1, 125.

<sup>55</sup> The translation is from *Macaafa Qulqullu Afaan Oromo*, The Bible Society of Ethiopia, 1984.

<sup>56</sup> The translation is from *Macaafa Qulqullu*: Onesmos Nesib, London, 1899.

“silent” is stronger. Some of my interviewees i.e., these who are still ambivalent about the ministry of women, used the word “silent” instead of “quiet”.<sup>57</sup>

According to scholars, ἡσυχία is given as an instruction of a manner in learning position. Marshall and Towner notify that the noun ἡσυχία is explained and understood in the context of learning-teaching processes between “a woman and her teacher”. The activity of learning in subordination to the teacher and listening quietly with attentiveness to the teacher is indicated. Marshall continues: “to learn in silence is not necessarily eluding the interchange which is appropriate to the teaching events (1Cor.14:35)”<sup>58</sup> As already stated above Towner also asserted that ἡσυχία does not exclude women from participation in certain speaking activities such as praying prophesying, or speaking in tongues.<sup>59</sup> So the word ἡσυχία does not necessarily mean that mean that the women are forever to remain quite/silent.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the issue with the false teachers and the connection they have with women is the second basic ground for the restriction of women. The false teachers are condemned for creeping into houses and spiritually seducing women that make women vulnerable to sin. MacDonald suggested, that the author speaks about women not teaching and not having authority over men, as well as the general reference to silly women. This suggest that all women are viewed as being incapable of knowledge on the same level as men. But, if it is viewed like that, men are considered capable of authority and teaching because they are not vulnerable to sin. This understanding is contradicted by, the instruction 1Tim 2:8; 3:1-7 which would not have been written for men overseers.

Therefore, this instruction to men signify that all human beings have their own weaknesses. If men are more holy than women in the church of Ephesus, the writer wouldn't use the word σωφροσύνης (self-control) for men in 1Tim 3:15. That women are rejected to teach and are urged to keep silent\quite because of their sinful nature, contradicts the teaching of Paul to the Romans: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus”. (Rom 3:23-24) So it is

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<sup>57</sup> Informants B2, 3July 2015. The informant claim that “it is hard for me neither to accept nor to reject women in ministry because of the text in 1Tim2:12 that says let woman keep silent. The informant refers to the old Oromo translation for the word ‘silent’ while reading form the New version of the Oromo bible. For me that emphasize the silent refers to the prohibition of women from teaching.

<sup>58</sup> Marshal, *The Pastoral Epistles: International Critical Commentary*, 453.

<sup>59</sup> Towner, *The letter to Timothy and Titus*, 214

not our good work that helps us to involve in churches ministry, but teaching and preaching is possible through the grace of Christ that is revealed for all human beings.

### 3.2.2.2 *The meaning of exercising authority “ἀθεντεῖν”*

The word ἀθεντεῖν is vital to understand of 1Tim2:12. According to the source I consulted,<sup>60</sup> the meaning for ἀθεντεῖν, is to exercise authority over some one. It is defined to assume a stance of independent authority, give orders to, dictate to. According to vv12 it is indicates to tell a man what to do.<sup>61</sup> The word occurs the Pastoral Epistles and only used by the writer of 1Tim 2:12. But in other places like in the teachings of the gospels and letters of Paul, ἐξουσία is used to express authority.

To mention some of the important texts from the Bible, Christ’s ἐξουσία of Jesus over death is announced in Matt 28:18-20; in the Gospel of Luke the followers of Jesus are given ἐξουσία not to exercise it over human beings, or over one another, but to over win the demons and healing of the sickness. (Luk.9:1); Jesus admonish the exercising of ἐξουσία of the Gentiles, and, he taught his followers about the style of servant leadership saying, “...that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. “It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matt. 20:25-28)

The phrase in Matthew “*exercise authority over them*” and the phrase written in 1Tim 2:12 “*I permit no woman to teach or to have ‘authority over men’*” seems likely the same but Luke used ἐξουσία, and the writer of 1Timothy used ἀθεντεῖν. Even though the usage of the word is different, the context of the message is similar. So, because of the similarity of the meaning of the words it can what the writer want to mean when he applies the word to household code to prohibit women from the teaching ministry.

Paul does not used the word ἀθεντεῖν.<sup>62</sup> instead ἐξουσία is commonly used in his letters. For example, when he writes about the head covering of women he used the word

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<sup>60</sup> Balz and Gerhard. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol.1.

<sup>61</sup> BDAG, S.V. ἀθεντεῖν,150

<sup>62</sup> Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P Martin, *Dictionary of Paul and his Letter*. (Downers Grove, Intervarsity press, 1993), 230.



ἐξουσία: “For man was not made from woman, but women from man, neither was man created for women but women for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of “authority” ἐξουσία on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord women is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God”. (1Cor 11:8-12). As it is stated, Paul used ἐξουσία to express the woman’s authority.

So, according to Paul both woman and man are equal before God. But when it comes to 1Tim 2:11-12 women are undermined, and the text is written contrary to Paul’s idea. The usage of the word ἀθεντεῖν instead of ἐξουσί, can be treated as one evidence that the writer of 1Timothy is not Paul. This is an indication of οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω “I don’t permit” with the verb διδάσκειν is stated in present tense that is written in the context of the passage that denotes there was something wrong with the teaching given by the women.

Although, the prohibition may appear to be universally applicable to women, it is in fact mean for a specific group of women among the recipients of the letter. Marshall gives some references from the Scripture that presents, women’s involvement in teaching: Tit 2:3; Acts 18:26 (cf. 1Cor 14:26) and prophesy in Acts 21:9; 1Cor 11:5. The exercise of various forms of female ministry is recognized in the Pastoral Epistles prohibition to be understood as being about the teaching of ‘a woman’. McDonald suggested that the prohibition in 1Tim 5:11-15 is applied for the young women who are influenced by false teachers who are teaching against marriage.<sup>63</sup>

Towner also mentioned that Paul was not dealing with the social realities of the twenty-first –century Western life. From all appearances, he was addressing a uniquely complicated situation in Ephesus.<sup>64</sup> So the passage indicates that there is no universal prohibition of women speaking in the church. Hence, he means the Ephesian women who had been led astray by false teaches, but it is not universal rule for Christian women throughout the Centuries.

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<sup>63</sup> Margaret Y. MacDonald. *The Pauline Churches: A socio- historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Paulin Writings* (Cambridge University Press: New York 1988), 180.

<sup>64</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 213.

### 3.3. The Contemporary Theological Perspective and Prohibition of Women

The theological discussion about silence and the prohibition of women from is a very broad topic, which needs its own analytical research. However, in this part of my thesis. It is a subtopic that is limited to the context of 1Tim 2:11-12. In the Greco-Roman household order, women are instructed to keep silent and they are prohibited from teaching due to cultural reasons and situations as explained in chapter 2. However, how these instructions should be applied in the contemporary church needs to be reflected theologically. These are some of my reflections, considering in situation in EECMY.

#### *3.3.1 The ethical principle*

In this portion, I want to present the ethical principle that is expected from worshipping women in the household code. As I have discussed above, even though the writer states his own desire, and uses the adverb “likewise,” there is a glimpse in v9 of the idea that women are permitted to pray. We can assume therefore that what follows is the ethical principles on how they should behave in the worship. The ethical principle concerns adorning themselves in a respectable manner and with modest clothing, being self- controlled, doing good work, and being submissive.

It should be noted that there is no reference the Bible that the writer uses to formulate all those ethical principles. Rather he expresses his own desire. This makes the writer like the Pharisees and the Scribes (law makers). It should be considered against what Jesus was teaching his disciples in Mat.23:4: “They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.”<sup>65</sup>

Women are not hindered to look attractive as long as they are not seductive and showy. And they must not be silenced by church leaders or prefer to keep silent by themselves because of their outward attractiveness. They should have confidence to serve without subjecting themselves to men and have faith in Christ, rather than relying on their own merit. It is biblically stated that all the Spiritual activities, prayer, preaching and teaching and good deeds are done within the community of saints, through the grace of God that is given to all people

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<sup>65</sup> The translation is from New Revised Standard version.

enable to live the godly life and serve in God's kingdom. The writer of the pastoral Epistles himself stated: "For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age". (Tit 2:11).

As one of my informants said, "it is the Bible that opened our eyes so that we start accepting ourselves as human beings and involve ourselves in church ministry, like singing in the choir group and joining in prayer meetings with fellow brothers and sisters. This happened to us because of God's love."<sup>66</sup> God's love encourages people not to be alienated but included all in church gives ability to serve Him. In addition to that female theologian among my informants presented the same encouraging message for all women with a calling to minister in church, but who struggle to accept themselves: "let women not despise themselves to work for God's kingdom' and let the church not give up encouraging women in the church, for they are part of God's servants."<sup>67</sup> This advice is necessary because there are circumstances that when women do not consider themselves as real ministers of God. For example, when they are chosen as a member of the congregation elders, they lack confidence to work for the church because they always remember the text in 1Tim 2:11-12 and they prefer to keep silent. The text impacts on their psychology so that they are unable to accept themselves as church ministers fully, and they lack enough self-confidence. According to Luther's theology, ethics and ethical effort is offered as pastoral care. It applies to the entire person as a physical being and within the overall framework of participation in society-concentrating on the person's conscience, as it is formed and shaped by God's word.<sup>68</sup> So, I believe in the importance of the ethical principle in the Christian community.

But if the ethical principles are disordered and the Christians are not behaving as they should that can be managed by the pastoral care and counselling. Otherwise, (for me) restricting women from ministry by asserting such an ethical principle is violating the rights they have in church service. The ethical principles in the church not to be used as a means of serving the interest of people, but it should be done for the glorification of God by the help of His grace and by His word that shape our life. As one my informant said: "Women in ministry

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<sup>66</sup> B5, Dembi Dollo 5 June 2015.

<sup>67</sup> A6, Dembi Dollo 6 July and A3, 10 July 2015.

<sup>68</sup> Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A contemporary Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 309.

of the church are not what we can establish or ignore basing on own our personal feelings and understandings. Rather it is based on God's calling."<sup>69</sup> Therefore, using this ethical principle as an instrument to make women silent can be considered as suppression of women, if it is not based on biblical realities.

### 3.3.2. *Ministry limitation principle*

Before presenting the area of limitation of women in ministry on the basis of 1Tim 2:11-12, it is important to look for the definition of the word "ministry". Ministry includes all that the exalted Christ did and is doing through his people in the building his church. This involves the proper exercise of gifts for ministry which Christ bestowed upon all his people.<sup>70</sup> However, the interesting point in the definition is that ministry is inclusive. It is not excluding or segregating people because of their sex, marriage status, knowledge, age or colour.

And also, ministry is exercised by the gift that Christ bestowed upon all his people. That means the gift of ministry is not given by the will and desire of someone or taken away by the decision of people. In 1Cor12:5 it is stated that the gift of ministry is given from God to all persons. So, if the giver and the receiver of the proper exercise of the gift of ministry is known and the Purpose is clear, why are women limited or even directed to keep silent? Of course, the writer of 1Tim 2:11-12 noted his own idea, referring back to the creation order and history of fall in Genesis 3, that he wants to limit women from being teachers and hinder them from authority. This is not applicable to our contemporary time. And this understanding is not supported by the New Testament usage, especially to the people who believe in the redemptive work of Christ Jesus. As it is stated by Fiorenza, the text written on women's salvation is "a shocking part"<sup>71</sup>. Because it is not an appropriate view of salvation theologically, biblically, and socially.

Basically, problems happening in the church of Ephesus can be one factor that initiate the writer to admonish the false teachers and their followers; "the weak women". But admonishing the false teachers is much more constructive than admonishing women from

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<sup>69</sup> A1, Dembi Dollo 5. July 2015.

<sup>70</sup> Gerald F. Hawthorne, (et. al.), *Dictionary of Paul and his letters* (Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity press, 1993), 602.

<sup>71</sup> Fiorenza, *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction*, 370.

ministry and developing unreal doctrines of the salvation of women. Because text always had and still has a great impact on the ordinary readers of the Bible, who are not much concerned to know the historical background of the text. they might feel that the text ,on Timothy is against women and their ministry. But the reality is that even though the Bible is written in a given culture it is for all humankind, and it speaks to all and encourages all in the ministry of God. And it liberates from all the boundaries of limitations.

Biblically, it is indicated clearly that all humans are created in God's image, both male and female (Gen1:27). Moreover, humans, both male and female have been given salvation and made God's ambassadors, according to the letter to the Corinthians. (2Cor5:17-20). In the letters of Paul, there are many indications that women laboured together with men in spreading of the gospel; the most outstanding example is Priscilla. She and her husband Aquila were co-workers with Paul and they risked their necks for Paul. Their house was serving as a church, they were playing important roles in the churches of Ephesus and Corinth and they were probably involved in a wide range of activities from providing hospitality for Paul, to church planting, to teaching and preaching. (See e.g. Rom.16:5, 1Cor16:19, Acts18:1-3). They were mentioned as a major factor in the Gentile mission.<sup>72</sup> What we learn from the life of Priscilla and Aquila is that husband and wife, without any mentioning of one's superiority over the other. They equally shared the work in a healthy and God's honouring way. Therefore, marriage cannot limit women from participating in ministry.

According to Paul's witness, there are other outstanding apostles who came before Paul: Junia, woman, and Andronicus, a man. (Romans 16:7). According to Witherington III, the implication of the term "outstanding" shows that they were engaged in evangelism and their work had borne fruit.<sup>73</sup> There is no specification on gender ministry but they are both called apostles. They apostles, someone who was sent as an authorized by Jesus or the Christian community (Matt. 10:2; 2Cor 8:23). Euodia and Syntyche, Paul's fellow workers who laboured in the congregation at Philippi (Phil4:2-3) they paid the price for the gospel work together with Paul and Paul and affirmed that their name are in the book of life. The deacons Phoebe, who

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<sup>72</sup> Ben Witherington, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:, 1990), 187.

<sup>73</sup> Witherington, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity*, 188.

served the church in Cenchreae (Rom16:1-2), and Tryphaena and Tryphosa, were also workers in the Lord, to whom Paul sent greetings (Rom16:12)<sup>74</sup>

Even though women are not given a place in leadership positions in my church, EECMY-WWBS, the role they have been plying is unforgettable was unforgettable in the history of my church. The former President, now living in Germany serving as a bishop said about these impressive women: *“during the time of the Italian invasion (1936-1941) the American abandoned their work missionaries left the work of the mission and went back their country. The Italians took over the residences of the Missionaries the church and the school and many of the male indigenous church workers were discouraged and lost hope. Then women in Dembi Dollo said one thing, the missionaries left, Christ remained. It is a wonderful saying, Christ remained and these women were the ones who supported the elders of the church. Being as members of the elders women became active supporters of the gospel work, and the building of the church. Because of the encouraging word of women, the work of the gospel had continued. When the missionaries come back after five year of Italian war 8 congregation started in the Dembi Dollo area. He concludes without the women there was no time men could do the evangelism work. This is true not only for my synod but for the whole church of the EECMY.*<sup>75</sup>

When it comes to the time of Christian protestant Christian persecution during the time of Durge From the history of my church, there are various roles women have played. They gave their house for worshiping during the time great protestant Christian persecution, during 70s.<sup>76</sup> Women secretly invite pastors to baptize, teach the word of God and celebrate Holy Communion. in Mather’s home.<sup>77</sup>

Several women are magnified in the Holy Bible for their engagement in gospel work as they became church planters, evangelists, preachers, and administrators. “Their choice to become missionaries’ reflected their deep Christian commitment and their search for a structure that would allow them to unite the spiritual with practical needs in the world.”<sup>78</sup> The foundation

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<sup>74</sup> Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology*, 309.

<sup>75</sup> Tesso Banti Ujulu, Former President of WWBS January 1/2016.

<sup>76</sup><http://www.charismamag.com/blogs/189-j15/features/africa/530-revival-and-persecution-in-ethiopia>  
Accessed 5 May 2017.

<sup>77</sup> A4, Dembi Dollo 1July 2015.

<sup>78</sup> Scott A. Moreau et al., *Evangelical Dictionary of world Missions*. (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, 2000), 386.

for all the contribution of women in ministry was suggested in Peter's speech during the Pentecost day when he prophesied that the Holy Spirit would fall on all people both men and women." (Acts 2:17-18)

### **3.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have given a detailed exegesis of 1Tim2:11-12. I have argued that the problem in Ephesus is not a universal problem. Therefore, that the restrictions on women in 1Tim2:11-12 do not apply to all women always. But if similar problem in church, we need to interpret and use the text in a healing and saving way.

The passage in 1Tim 2:11-12 is one of a few places in the New Testament that is explicitly addressing and banning women from teaching ministry and undermining them socially and stereologically. I argued that verses go against other biblical passages and given a theological consideration about women's equality in teaching and leadership.

## Chapter Four

### WOMEN'S SILENCE FROM AN OROMO CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES.

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to present the view towards women in Oromo culture. The Oromo culture is a patriarchal culture that does not permit women to practice authority; women are expected to keep silent. Therefore, my investigation is concerned mainly about the historical background of views towards women and the influence of the socio-political Oromo culture for the understanding of 1Tim 2:11-12 in the contemporary church. I will start with the historical background of the Oromo People that would help to understand the position of women in Oromo Culture. Mainly, the chapter is an attempt to reflect and provide insights about views towards Oromo women and contextualize the interpretation of 1Timothy 2:11-12 in the light of the Oromo cultural perspectives. Reading the scripture in the context of culture and interpreting it helps us to understand the passage more clearly. The task here is therefore, to articulate the cultural aspects of the representation of women, the participation they have in social and religious groups and, the ceremonial practices relevant to 1Timothy 2:11-12.

#### 4.2 The Historical Background of the Oromo

Many scholars; anthropologists, historians, and missionaries have engaged in the study of the historical background of the Oromo People in Ethiopia.<sup>79</sup> Anthropologist Holcomb and the Political economist Ibsa suggested “The Oromo issue is central historically, structurally,

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<sup>79</sup> Bartels, *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia-An attempt to Understand*, 17. He put in his book “The Oromo are by no means the only people in Ethiopia.” Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia; A history 1570-1860*. (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 1999), xiii. “The Oromo belong to the eastern Cushitic language- speaking group of peoples who are known to have lived in the Ethiopian region for thousands of years and they are one of the indigenous people of Ethiopia. Negaso Gidada, *History of the Sayyo Oromo of Southwestern Wallaga Ethiopia from About 1730 To 1886*. (Frankfurt am main, 1984), 1. “The Oromo are the numerically largest group among the peoples of northeast Africa occupying an extensive part of the region. It is generally accepted that the Oromo had a considerable impact on the region at least since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>79</sup> And many articles and journals are published to testify the Oromo of Ethiopia.



geographically, numerically and theoretically to any consideration of the nature of the Ethiopian state and the political economy of the region”.<sup>80</sup> Let me give some details below.

Historically, the Oromo are the largest Cushitic ethnic group from the North-Eastern part of Africa and the most indigenous group in Ethiopia. However, the Oromo are viewed as alienated<sup>81</sup> in their homeland starting from the time of the powerful emperors of Abyssinia.<sup>82</sup> According to Melba, the powerful Abyssinians, including their clergy, claim that the Oromo are migrated from Asia and Madagascar entered Africa via Mombasa and spread north and eastwards. Secondly they suggested that Oromo have emerged from the Water.<sup>83</sup> Thirdly, they give the name ‘*Galla*’ to the Oromo people which “a derogatory connotation. People of Oromo neither call themselves or like to be called by this name.

The term Oromo means “pagan, savage, uncivilized uncultured, enemy, slave or inherently inferior.”<sup>84</sup> All these prejudices are system of alienation and creating ambiguity about the historical origin of the Oromo in Ethiopia. However, Legese gives the ambiguity to the Abyssinia stating, “ she ‘Abyssinia’ viewed herself as a non-African nation and glorified her south Arabian and Jewish heritage at the expense of her African identity.”<sup>85</sup> There are massive areas of information<sup>86</sup> that nullify the wrong reputations given against the Oromo and, that shows the Oromo people are nations with prosperous historical background in every perspective.

Economically, agricultural activities took place within a closely interconnected network of farming and animal husbandry. Cultivation was and still is, a full-time occupation for most of the population. Coffee production is a very important part of the agriculture.

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<sup>80</sup> Bonnie Sisai Ibssa Holcomb K., *The Invention of Ethiopia* (Trenton N.J: The red Sea Press 1990), 3.

<sup>81</sup> Asmarom Legesse, *Oromo Democracy: An indigenous Africa Political System* (The Red Sea Press, Asmara, Eritera, 2000), xxv.

<sup>82</sup> The Abyssinia is the indigenous name for the ancient kingdom of northern Ethiopia. The name, in its original form, was *Habashat*. It is older than the country’s assumed name “Ethiopia” by at least a millennium. For the Amharic and Tigrinya speakers of Northern Ethiopia it is still an ethnic term of self-designation. Please refer Legesse Asmarom, *Oromo Democracy: An indigenous Africa Political System*, xxv.

<sup>83</sup> Gadaa Melbaa, *Oromia: An introduction* (Khartoum, Sudan, 1988), 4.

<sup>84</sup> Melbaa, *Oromia: An introduction*, 7. Oyvind Eide, M. *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia: The growth and persecution of the Mekane Yesus Church 1974-85* (Ohio University Press, Athense.2000), 21-22.

<sup>85</sup> Legesse, *Oromo Democracy: An indigenous Africa Political System*, xii.

<sup>86</sup> Please refer all the books under footnote no.2 above.

Politically, the governance by an egalitarian *Gadaa*<sup>87</sup> democratic system of administration is important to mention as it is central to Oromo culture. It was the constitution of the Oromo society through which the society administered and defended their territory. Male Oromos are organized according to age-sets (*hirya*) based on chronological age, and according to generation-sets (*luba*) based on genealogical generation, for social, political and economic purposes in the membership of the patrilineage system.<sup>88</sup> Women and slaves and members of castes were ineligible for membership.<sup>89</sup> Women are excluded from public leadership roles in politics and culture. Legesse noted that the exclude of women in political institutions is one of the weakness of *Gadaa* governance.<sup>90</sup> However, though they do not have a place in the political *Gadaa* democratic system, they have full rights and authority to defend themselves against any violence they face. Further, they can perform rituals, and involve in reconciliation through the *siiqqee* institution.<sup>91</sup> Jaleta compared the *Siiqe* institution to *Gadaa*, and he noted that the two institutions helped in maintaining *saffuu*<sup>92</sup> by enabling Oromo women to have control over their labor and economic resources and private spaces. Moreover, it gives social status and respect, and sisterhood and solidarity by deterring men from infringing upon their individual and collective rights. If the balance between men and women was broken, a *siiqqee* rebellion was initiated to restore the law of God and the moral and ethical order of society.<sup>93</sup> *Siiqqee* institution will be discussed more below. Generally, the *Gadaa* governance system provides protection

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<sup>87</sup> Gadaa is an egalitarian political system for many thousands of old years. It is a uniquely democratic age-grade system where power rotates among five age-grade parties Every party rules for 8 years after which power is ceremonially transferred to the next party in festive celebrations of the assemblie's. See Kumsa, *Songs of Exile*, 54.

<sup>88</sup> Asafa Jalata, *Promoting and Developing Oromummaa*. The Journal of Pan- African studies (2014) volu.6 no.8 March 2014. University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

<sup>89</sup> Gidada, *History of the Sayyo Oromo of Southwestern Wallaga Ethiopia from About 1730To 1886* (Frankfurt am Main: s.n 1984), 215.

<sup>90</sup> Legesse, *Oromo Democracy*, 255.

<sup>91</sup> Martha Kuwee Kumsa, *Songs of Exile* (Ontario: Dudhaa publishing Kitchener, 2013), 56. She defines “*Siiqqee*: is the stick a girl receives as a gift on her wedding day through a blessing ceremony. It marks her transition from the girlhood of *addooyyee* into the womanhood of *Siiqqee*. The mother holds one end of the *siiqqee* as she chants blessings and the daughter holds the other end repeating *haa ta’u* (may it be so)”.

<sup>92</sup> *Saffu* is a moral category, based on Oromo notions of distance and respect for all things. The concept of *saffu* is not merely an abstract category: it constitutes the ethical basis upon which all human action should be founded; it is that which directs one on the right path; it shows the way in which life can be best lived.

<sup>93</sup> Asafa, *Promoting and Developing Oromummaa*. The Journal of Pan- African studies (2014) vol6, No8 March 2014, University of Tennessee - Knoxville

for the right of the Oromo, manages conflicts through negotiation agreement, provides respect for elders, women and children and reflects the identity Oromo

Regarding the population and language of Oromo people. Gamta says the Oromo people is the largest ethno- national group, comprising one-half of the 55 million population of Ethiopia. Their language, Afaan Oromo, is one of the “Cushitic languages, closely related to Somali, Afar, Sidama and others”<sup>94</sup>. This estimations is given from 1998. Today the population of Oromo has grown to more than 40 percent of the 90 million of the total population.

The Oromo religious beliefs are based on one supreme God called *Waaqa*. *Waaqa* is the creator of everything in the universe, the sustainer, the provider of everything for human being. He is the protector of people and animals and crops from all harmful and evil things. For Oromo people *Waaqayoo/Waaqa* is the omnipotent, the omniscient, the omnipresence holy and God of truth. He is against injustice, sin and all falsehood.<sup>95</sup> For *waaqa* is the only supreme God, and he has appointed to every being its own place in a cosmic order of which he is also the guardian. Sin is simply a breaking of this cosmic order <sup>96</sup> Men and women of the Oromo people perform different traditional Oromo rituals and blessings by the name *Waaqa*.

The conversion of the Oromo people into Islam and Christianity has brought an impact for the designation of *Waaqa*. However, Bartels suggested that whether they became Christians or Muslims, the Oromo’s traditional modes of experiencing the divine have continued almost unaffected, in spite of the fact that several rituals and social institutions have been very diminished or patently submerged in new rituals cloaks.<sup>97</sup> The Bible translation from the 1890s into Oromo language by Nasib, played a prominent role for the expansion and standardization of Oromo language. Garbi suggested that the effort of Nasib is both secular, since he is the

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<sup>94</sup> Tilahun Gemta. *Consonant cluster in Afaan Oromo*. Journal of Oromo studies (Vol.5 numbers1&2, July,1998),69.

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.ossrea.net/publications/images/stories/ossrea/ssrr-19-p-3.pdf> Accessed October 10,2016.

<sup>96</sup> Bartels, *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia- An Attempt to Understand*, 14-15.

<sup>97</sup> Bartels, *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia- An Attempt to Understand* ,15.

person to be called the father of Oromo literature,<sup>98</sup> and spiritual, since translating both the Old Testament and New Testament into Oromo language made a remarkable impact.

According to Eide, Nasib made use of the traditional Oromo concept of divinity, *Waaqa*, to express the biblical concept of God<sup>99</sup>. Behind the successful work of Nesib, history remembers the prominent Oromo woman with former name Aster Gannao for assisting in the translation of the Holy Bible and writing Oromo literature.<sup>100</sup> The literature is widely used in all Oromo speaking language in the present days of the Oromo land. Regarding the practicing of religion, beside the Evangelical churches, Orthodox Christianity and Islam as well the Traditional Oromo religion *Waqeffata* is widely practiced.

Geographically, Oromia is bordered in the east by Somaliland, Afar and Djibouti, in the west by Sudan, in the south by Somalia, Kenya and others, and in the north by Amhara and Tigre land. It is said that the size of the population and large land areas with its diverse climatic conditions fostered the Oromo to have a very rich culture.<sup>101</sup> Outside of the Oromia region, one of the Oromo groups known as Macca predominantly occupies West Wallaga. The major sub-Macca clans that occupied West Wallaga are Leqa, Sibuu and Sayyo. Even though the Oromo have shared traditions and many cultural similarities. I could believe that all these sub clans have their historical ways of living backgrounds that need special attention that is difficult to mention in this specific chapter, and has to be left out of this thesis

Dembi Dollo is one of the Oromia regions in to the south-west part with one of the *macca* Oromo clan called Sayo. It is in region of Oromia I have carried out my interviews, and thus I focus on this region in my overview of Oromo culture and history. According to recent information, the population of the area reaches 1, 042,873. Out of that, 525,608 females and 517265 are males.<sup>102</sup> In the former times, the Macca clan of Oromo; Sayoo in Dembi Dollo practiced the *Gadaa* political system of administration and it is mentioned earlier that the *Gadaa* political system is patriarchal and restrict women from leadership position. However,

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<sup>98</sup> Wake Jee Gerbi, *Evangelical Christianity and Politics in The Oromo Context in Ethiopia: A glimpse of Oromia Liberation Theology*. (Stockholm: Forfattare Bokmaskin, 2016),130-1.

<sup>99</sup> Øyvind. *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia: The growth and persecution of the Mekane Yesus Church*, 51-75.

<sup>100</sup> Gustav Aren, *Envoy of The Gospel in Ethiopia: In the Steps of The Evangelical Pioneers* (Stockholm: EFS forlaget. 1999), 287-9.

<sup>101</sup> Gidada, *History of the Sayyo Oromo of Southwestern Wallaga Ethiopia from About 1730 To 1886*,1.

<sup>102</sup> Samuel Adimasu, Youth league leader in Kalem Wollgea Zone. Interview by phone, March 5,2017.

Birrii suggested, a woman named Mrs. *Aadee* Shiini successor of her father Yaddessaa played an important role in Oromo history due to her democratic leadership in the history of Sayoo/Dembi Dollo district.

At that time, even though the society falls under the rule of Amhara kingdom, the district knows that in the Gadaa system women are not in power. However, when Shiini became the successor of her father Yaddesa, it was the principle of *Gadaa* that granted her authority. The principle of power shift in the society of the *Gadaa* system was usually patriarchal, i.e. from man to man. However, during the time of Shiinii, the power shifts from male to female/ from patriarchal to matriarchal. After she completed her responsibility of ruling, her brother Shuramo Yaddesa became her successor.

I wondering if Shiini had handled the society well during her authority. According to Birri, answered me she was so good, loving, caring, confident in her power she was a honourable and respected woman. It is a dramatic and unexpected change in Oromo society of Dembi Dollo Sadii district when a woman had authority.

In the Oromo proverb people used to say “*mottumaan dubarti karra cufaati oolcha*” which literally means “in an era of women’s leadership, the gate would stayed closed. This saying is used mainly to express the feeling or the personal character of women in position like: women are arrogant, they do not tolerate people, and they are not humble. In my opinion, this is a way of demoralizing women and hindering the society to engage women in the leadership position. In addition to that, it is difficult to know clearly if the proverb is practically true or not. Because, women hardly experience leadership positions in the *Gadaa* political system. I am not quite sure for how many years did Shinnii ruled and, at what age she became a ruler. According to *Gadaa* system the leadership time terminates after 8 years and the ruler should be 40 years old to take the power.

Nevertheless, it is fascinating to know that women have had authority in Oromo with in the Gadaa system in Dembi Dollo<sup>103</sup>. “Only men are in control of military and political activities. Only men can engage in warfare. Only men take part in the election of leaders of camps or of ag-sets and *Gadaa* classes.”<sup>104</sup> Even though there is no permission in the principle, and women are not existing in the structure of Oromo political governance system, the

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<sup>103</sup> Fixe Birrii, *Seenaa fi Aadaa Oromoo* (Finfine, 2013), 47. See also all the rules and principles of the Gadaa governance in the Kumsa’s work. *Songs of Exile*. 54.

<sup>104</sup> Legesse, *Gada: The Approaches to the Study of African Society*, 19.

involvement of Shini, practicing authority in her society need to be granted as a new breakthrough from gender segregation of the governance system in that era.

From my reading and in the eyes of today's political system of the promotion of equality having the traditional background brings an encouragement for the new generation in the context of the patriarchal political system of *Gadaa*. Farther more in the perspective of the creation history of the human being in the bible that says, "So God created man in his own image, He created them male and female. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitfully, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that move upon the earth." (Gen.1:27-28).

So according to the word of God, having authority is not only given for the man because he is male and not forbidden for the woman because she is a female. In the eyes of God both are his creation and his blessing and gave equal right for both. Therefore, there might be different circumstances that smother the authority given from God for women under the package of culture, different attitudes of peoples that pushes the society to deviate from God is giving authority. I assume, it is the responsibility of every generation, of both sexes and male not to keep silent but rather, study the background of situations that people restricts from giving power.

As we have seen, it is possible to describe that restriction, for women are established in the *Gadaa* system. However, there were open doors and flexibility that permitted women to come to power. Therefore, any restriction established against women in many years ago should not be granted as unchangeable. As the result of expansion of Oromo in every direction of Ethiopia, the genealogical traces became widespread. For example from the two Oromo groups, Borana and Barentu, the Macca Oromo, from the root of Borana, expanded its territory to the west part of Ethiopia called Wollega. From Wollega, it was divided into different groups, and Sayyo/ Macca Oromo in Dembi Dollo is one of them. It traces the matrilineal trace.

Gidaada described the genealogy of Sayyo by starting from Obo who had three wives. His wives bore him eight sons. Thus, Limmu and Guduru had a common mother. The mother of Sibuu, Noonnoo and Tumme was called Baso. The name of the mother of Sayyoo Leeqaa and Caliya is said to have been Dadhii,<sup>105</sup> a woman's name. In Oromo marriage status, though men are polygamous, children are never traced by their mother's name even though women

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<sup>105</sup> Birrii, *Seenaa fi Aadaa Oromoo*, 42.

wave the clans and connect of the society<sup>106</sup> and keep the continuity of generation long by giving birth through marriage.

The genealogical history of the Sayyo/Dembi Dollo therefore gives insight. Even though men are the dominating part in the society, there are areas where women are valued given, worthy and respected and have a space in the eyes of our ancestors in Macca of the Oromo, particularly in Sayyo Dembi Dollo.

### **4.3 Women in marriage life of Oromo culture.**

Marriage is one of the most important institution, both ritually and socially, in Oromo tradition. There are five types of marriage forms in the Oromo of tradition of Sayyo DambiDollo. Out of the five, I want to mention four of them with specific description. The first and typical one is *Naqataa*, it is traditionally arranged by the family before the match takes place. The groom's parents searches seven generations back to make sure that there is no blood relation between the families. Once this is done, the boy's parents contact the girl's parents through a mediator. The girl's parents often impose conditions and the mediator will take the message to the boy's parents. When the parents have reached an agreement, the man and woman get engaged (betrothed). The parents set a wedding date and they meet all the wedding expenses.

The second one is called *Sokka* (some call this *Hasa'ana* ). This marriage depends on the agreement of the bride and the groom. It is considered as an alternative kind of marriage among the young generation today after period courtship. The boy approaches whom he thinks can keep secret to act on a go-between. There are places where the boy and the girl with their company can mostly wait each other. She signs an agreement saying that she was not taken against her will and she will be taken to one of the boy's relative's home and stayed there until his parent prepares feast for marriage and that elders solemnly inform her parents about her safety.

The third form of marriage practiced in Sayyo area was an abduction marriage where the girls is *Butii*. It is without any prior knowledge of the abduction.<sup>107</sup> There are some ideas

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<sup>106</sup> Kumsa, *Songs of Exile*, 53.

<sup>107</sup> Kumsa, *Songs of Exile*, 64.

proposed by different people regarding this option of marriage type. First, a boy falls in love and the girl is not aware at all. Second, a girl's parent is afraid that their daughter might agree to the proposed marriage, they conspire with the would-be husband to take her by force. Third, girl's parent are unwilling to agree to the proposed marriage, as the result of the abduction would be resorted by the boy's family to show their power to take her by force, even if her parents refused.

The fourth type of marriage is called *Assenna*. In this type of marriage, the girl chooses anyone whom she thinks would marry her. She directly goes to the boy's parent's house. There are cases that force the girl to be engaged in *Assenna* type of marriage and go to the boy's parent. For example, she falls in love with the boy but he does not want her or love her. Her age may be more than twenty and is thus considered as *haftuu/spinster*.<sup>108</sup> To remain unmarried is incomprehensible in the society. The parents might want to give her like to someone whom she does not like; she chooses to remain unmarried until she can choose an unmarried young man and runs away to his house without the man knowing about it.

Historically, in Oromo tradition, the issue about widowhood is not a problem. If the husband of a woman is dead, the brother of her husband *warsa* or her cousins could marry her to keep the lineage. However, it should be after the customary period of mourning, (one year).<sup>109</sup> It is not allowed to have sexual intercourse with the widow unless she gets remarried to her husband's brother. Because, according to Bartels, Oromo women would have permanent relationship with lineage of her husband and would marry the brother of her husband's (*warsa*) in the event of her husband's death. According to Bartels when men of the same lineage go to one another man's wife, people do not speak about it, even though the priests disapprove of it.<sup>110</sup>

The Oromo culture developed every possibility that helped the society to arrange any marriage type according to every status of individuals. That means that abstinence from marriage in the Oromo society is unthinkable and is not encouraged. Moreover, whatever type it is, marriage is the starting point when that the spouses experience their rights and obligations as husband and wife in Oromo society. However, it is not simple as that for the girl to be

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<sup>108</sup> Kumsa, *Songs of Exile*, 64.

<sup>109</sup> Bartels, *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia- An Attempt to Understand*, 317.

<sup>110</sup> Bartels, *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia- An Attempt to Understand* 218.



separated from her parents and sisterhoods; *adooyye*. Kumsa suggested that wedding day is the most traumatic experience of separation for Oromo girls.<sup>111</sup> Not because they disregard and neglect marriage but because they worry for the new environment they are going to experience. And sorrow to leave their own family.

The Oromo girl knows very well that special attention is given to marriage in Oromo society. According to Kumsa, for a female in a traditional Oromo society, marriage marks the most important rite of passage.<sup>112</sup> However, the anxiety is due to the bride's dislike of being departed from her family and the village in which was born, and leave the age-mates */hiriyya* and move to another village among people whom they do not know. They are given away to men seven generations away from their fathers' lineages and five generations away from their mothers' lineages. In effect, girls must go to strange countries and start a life from scratch among the strange people of their husbands' clans and sub clans.<sup>113</sup> Wedding is the time when her girlhood is over when she experiences a transition into womanhood.<sup>114</sup> is for all these reasons that Kumsa suggested marriage is a traumatic experience for the bride.

The way the bride expresses her uncomfortable feeling for the departure is described by a special of singing a melody called *seena*. The bride offers her final goodbye word to her mother, father and her sisterhood/ *adoyyee* on the wedding day. It is a special song offered to the parent to designate that she is going to miss them. The sisterhood also sing a farewell for the bride to help her to manage her marriage life. Moreover, it is possible to say the song is a good-bye song that holds substantive elements of counseling that could help the bride who faces a new life in no marriage.<sup>115</sup> Before the wedding day girls engage in different areas of the domestic works and are well trained in the value and customs of their society mainly from mother.<sup>116</sup> So, singing *seena* plays a great role in the continuity of the life of the bride. It reminds her of all the obligations and responsibilities, and all the challenges waiting the bride

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<sup>111</sup> Kumsa, *Martha Kuwee. Songs of Exile*.145.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*,53

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*,150-153.

<sup>116</sup> Gidada, *History of the Sayyo Oromo of Southwestern*, 187.

‘on’ and ‘after’<sup>117</sup> the wedding day; the respect she should give her husband, reserving herself not to gossip with her mother-in-law, controlling herself not to eat alone and to be modesty.<sup>118</sup> Actually, she could have learned a good character from her mother and new married women in her community.

However, the song *seena* indicates that there will be no way to come together as before. Therefore, the *hirriya song* is a provision that help the bride to be ready to take her responsibility in her marriage life. *Seena* is also advises to that will help her to keep her marriage well, and to be respected in the society.

The blessing rituals performed by the bride’s parents, the old people of from the community and the go-between elders as when the groom comes to take the bride on the wedding day is another point to be observed. Serving food and drinks is the main duty at the wedding. During the blessing, the mother and father of the bride will provide *wancaa* a glass *daadhi*/ a local drink made from fermented honey mixed with water or milk. The bride and the groom will take hold of the glass simultaneously by putting their hands together on the glass. While the bride and groom are holding the glass together, the father and mother of the bride will bless them by saying *walitti horaa bulaa*, which means “have children, wealth, and all necessity of life and live together. *Graan keessanii fi afaan keessan tokko haata’u*, which means be “one mind and heart.” And, lots of blessings of traditional Oromo blessing are done. Then the bride and groom will take a sip of the drink of blessing and say *amin/amen*.

The second rituals the *siiqee* blessing ritual performed by the mother of the bride. *Siiqee* is a stick the bride receives as a gift from her mother on the wedding as a part of blessing ceremony. This stick represents the rights of the bride for her female maternal life. As she blesses her daughter, the mother holds one end of the *siiqee* and the daughter holds the other. This symbolizes the tie between them.<sup>119</sup>

After the bride is taken to the groom’s home and they have had sexual relations for the first time wedding day and days afterwards, the bride will be called ‘*dubarti/woman*’ or ‘a

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<sup>117</sup> Gidada, *History of the Sayyo Oromo of Southwestern*, 184-5.

<sup>118</sup> Birri, *Seena fi Aadaa Oromoo*, 201. The content of the song contains the above-mentioned points.

<sup>119</sup> Kumsa, *Songs of Exile*, 56.

wife. Greek term (Γυνή) “a woman” is similar to *dubarti* in that it means married woman.<sup>120</sup> So, in Oromo culture *dubarti*/woman is the married woman. Traditionally, sex before marriage is considered as immoral. If a girl has a sexual relationship and has lost her virginity before marriage, it is considered as breaking of the *Saffu*<sup>121</sup> moral order and she will be neglected and disrespected in the society for not controlling herself.

Five days after the wedding, the woman begins her domestic work. The woman has to serve not only her husband but also the extended family father -in -law (*Amaroo*) and mother-in -law (*Amati*). That is why a woman is subjected to double work primarily to that of her husband, and secondly to that of her parents- in-law. The woman is expected to fulfill her domestic duties, such as the cleaning and preparing and serving food. She is also obliged to participate in certain tasks related to the agricultural production.<sup>122</sup> There is trial time given for the wife. If it is not satisfactory, her husband send her back or takes a second wife. This was traditionally practiced in Oromo culture. If she is active and very submissive to the parent she gains good attribution and be respected.

#### 4.3.1. Authority of women and the *Siiqee* institution

As it is discussed in the Oromo governance system, *siiqee* is an institution enabling Oromo women to have control over their labor, economic resources and private spaces, to gain social status and respect, and to experience sisterhood and solidarity by deterring men from infringing upon their individual and collective rights. If the balance between men and women is broken, a *siiqee* rebellion is initiated to restore the law of God and the moral and ethical order of society.<sup>123</sup> Kumsa noted a very interesting historical background of the *siiqee* and its function during the time of the pre-colonization of the Oromo people.

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<sup>120</sup> Blaz, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 266.

<sup>121</sup> Safuu is the power of *Waaqa* that holds together everything and everyone in the cosmos in a well-balanced egalitarian order.

<sup>122</sup> Gidada, *History of the Sayyo Oromo of Southwestern*, 171.

<sup>123</sup> Jalata, “Promoting and Developing *Oromummaa*.” *The Journal of Pan- African studies* (2014) *vol6, No8 March 2014, University of Tennessee - Knoxville*

It has already been described that *siiqqee* is given to the bride from her mother. It is by only for married Oromo women and they bring their *siiqqee* to all ceremonial occasions as an indication of their married status. Married women use *siiqqee* in religious ceremonies, when they pray to *Waaqa* /the supreme God or to *Ateetee*<sup>124</sup> to Maram the female deities. It is used for blessing or cursing. It is used as a weapon to fight against violation of women in various aspects, for example for the ownership of property, control over sexuality and fertility. They use *siiqqee* for social right as well,<sup>125</sup> and the only occasion *siiqqee* is not used is during funerals.

Oromo women support each other by using their *siiqqee* for a child to childless woman in favor of women with no children. Oromo women who have no children are less respected and considered even to be more the strangers and outsiders, *halaga*, because they have failed to produce a son that would tie them to their husbands' clans. Therefore, the society has created a balancing mechanism of adopting a child, widely known as *guddifaccha*. The "begging" of a child, is the ritual by which women go to the family with children, raise their *siiqqee* collectively, name a child and demand that she be given to the woman with no child. Upon the sight of the raised *siiqqee*, in this processes no mother or family would deny the women their demand.<sup>126</sup>

It is possible to assume therefore, that *siiqqee* has a double sided function understood. It enables women to raise their voice for each other, expressing their need both towards God side and towards society. It connects women horizontally and vertically. We see that in Oromo society women are not only submissive and keep silent when their right is violated, they can collectively speak and act through the *siiqqee* institution.

#### 4.3.2. Women in worship and different rituals with the concept of modesty.

The patriarchal view of *Waaqayyo* and the matriarchal view of women's divinities such as *Ateete* and *Maram* are the reminder of worship ritual relationship between men and women in the Oromo society. Women use both the male and female gods, however, the however the

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<sup>124</sup>Kumsa, *Songs of Exile*, 99. *Ateete* is evoked the goddess of fecundity associated with granting or denying children to women.

<sup>125</sup> Kumsa, *Songs of Exile*, 57.

<sup>126</sup> <http://etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/3385/3/130403341291431729844585340851637305480> accessed 10 May, 2017.

matriarchal divinities *Maram* and *Atete* are used interchangeably,<sup>127</sup> depending on the sporadic events. The prayer ritual for each deity will be presented in the following units. The most significant event concerning the women's involvement of women in the mass prayer together with men needs special attention. In order to avoid the complexity, I can divide the involvement of Oromo women of the prayer rituals in two main parts.

Firstly, women can be included in mass prayer rituals together with men. Secondly, there are exclusion of men in prayer rituals where women only come together for female related rituals to create a comfortable atmosphere to each other, to the environment, to their daily life through prayer. Let me start from the first one that shows ritual is not an exclusively masculine domain in Oromo context.<sup>128</sup> According to Bartels, many there was shortage of rain in Dembi Dollo and the government of the region took initiation for the announcement by hosting a flag so that people can come together at one place to pray for rain. Shagirdi a local person, was invited to do the prayer and people asked him to do it 'in the old way', i.e., Oromo traditional way in which people listen to the words of prayer from the leader and repeat them after him.<sup>129</sup> At the end of the prayer, women and girls shout *ililili* Bartels stated, that *it* was a shout of approval of the prayer and joy. The next day the rain came.<sup>130</sup>

It is a similar practice that my father, a Muslim religious leader had experienced. According to my mother, it was at the time of cultivation of farm fields, but the rain was not coming on time and people were afraid that there would be drought the next year. My father invited all the community; Muslims and Christians, men, women and children on a very big farm field to lift up their hands and pray to *waaqa* saying:

Yaa Rabbi/ yaa waaqayoo bokka nuuf roobsi            O God give us rain,  
Yaa waaqayoo nu araarami    Oh God have mercy on us and  
At the end, everybody the people follow my father and say Araar! Araar! Araar!

Mercy! Mercy! Mercy! Of you Oh God. Then the crowd repeat the same word Araar!  
Araar! Araar!

From the context, it can be a question to my readers why the prayer was only for rain. And I have two answers to this. One is: the happening was practical. Second: even though the

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<sup>127</sup> Kumsa, *Songs of Exile*, 99.

<sup>128</sup> Legesse, *Gadaa: Three approaches to the Study of African Society*, 19.

<sup>129</sup> Please see how the prayer is conducted on page 47 of Bartels.

<sup>130</sup> Bartels, *Oromo Religion, Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia- An Attempt to Understand*, 47.

mining, particularly of iron and gold, was practiced in the region, in the history of *Sayyo Macca* from the time of their initial settlement onwards up to later periods,<sup>131</sup> cultivation and cattle raising were the dominant activities, and they are impossible without rain. Moreover, from the historical practical prayer rituals took place. It is easy to understand about the place of women in worship places. They are free to participate in worshipping with men, to raise their voice equally together with men, to repeat the prayer words after the leader of the prayer and even sometimes have the right to ululate, for the approving of the prayer and joy; (i.e. Opposite of keeping silent).

Dressing is the virtue of women in Oromo culture. In addition, the wearing styles and material the garment was made from the protection of the family members, wife and children. Husbands are responsible for the clothing style of their wives. Legesse noted that the Oromo established the law of regarding the modesty and indecent dressing as one of the twelve basic laws in Borana Oromo context. “Women have taken to wearing cloth so thin as to leave them virtually stripped. Henceforth, they must wear *gorfo* (ceremonial leather dress) at all times. Should a woman be improperly dressed, the husband is responsible and shall be punished”<sup>132</sup> I assume the reason for the punishment of the husband is that he is responsible for the needs and protect the family member’s wife and children.<sup>133</sup> Having the responsibility of husband in mind practiced in Oromo culture, it is also necessary to know that the wearing styles, the materials the garment made from varied from place to place in Oromo region. For example, in wollega women wear *wandaboo* (skirts). Others wear leather garments or animal skin robes, and some women wear *qollo* and *sadetta* (women's cloth made of cotton).

Today, Garments from around the world are also worn. In cash-producing areas and cities, Oromo wear modern Western-style clothes. Oromo have clothes designated for special days. They call the clothes that they wear on holidays or other important days *kitii* and the clothes that they wear on working days *lago*. The Oromo women have especial way of styles of dressing when they worship or if there are processes of reconciliation. The special dress is a cloak/*Caaccu* made from animal skin or leather with a decorative design with beads. Such

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<sup>131</sup> Gidada, *History of the Sayyoo Oromoo of the Southwestern Wollega Ethiopia from About 1730 To 1886*, 165.

<sup>132</sup> Legesse, *Gada, An indigenous Africa Political System*, 97.

<sup>133</sup> The husband is the head of the family and owner of the property, although he took part in production activities, was more concerned with the administration and guidance of the family and property. Please refer Gidada, 169-180.

dresses were worn by certain women called *hadha caaccuu*. In the ancient times before the Oromo political and social system *Gaddaa* was restricted. It was mostly dressed by a mother with special designation, (*haadha Caaccu*). *Hadha caaccu* had to be a woman with unique talents, who has faith, and shows modesty. Character is normally elected by the society women to be a leader. She could conduct prayer to *Waaqayyo*, for peace, rain and for women's fertility. Moreover, she was honorable and respected. *Caccu* and *siiqe*<sup>134</sup> could be used as symbol of peace and authority for *hadha caccu* cease-fire. She could interfere between fighting people on the war field, the fighting would immediately be stopped and reconciliation would take place.<sup>135</sup> This is known and have especial place in the former time of Oromo culture. Even today, old women could have the same place in modern time even though the practice is not taking place.

Generally, I assume that there are purposes and meanings for Oromo women to wear all the types of traditional Oromo wearing styles. However, they are not ostentatious meant to show of wealth or to attract men for sexual temptation. I believe it should not create harmony between Oromo women. In addition to that, there is no uncertainty towards women in Oromo culture because of their participation in ritual places and because of their wearing style.

#### 4.3.2.1. *Jari gatu Rituals*

I have shown, Women's prayer was highly encouraged and used as a powerful means of terminating severe social or environmental concerns (e.g. crop failure, drought, endemic diseases and other social crises such as prolonged fighting). When such problems were detected, the men never disturb or hinder them; rather they urge them to pray. Their prayer is given special attention since they are considered honest and peace loving people.<sup>136</sup> *Jaari gatu* is one of the rituals performed by Oromo women. The meaning is sophisticated. however, from its practical perspective it has dual meanings. It is about care of the ecology and preventing the

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<sup>134</sup>Please see title women authority and *siiqe* institution discussed before this section. Chapter 1, page1.

<sup>135</sup> Bokkuu Diribii Damusee. *Ilaalcha Oromoo: Barroo Aadaa, Seena fi Amantaa Oromoo*. (Ethiopia: Finfinnee, 2012), 107-108.

<sup>136</sup> C1, Dembi Dollo, 9 July 2015. The informant said, Oromo give a special place to women's prayer and *Waaqayyo* hear them and answer them. I asked him why and the informant replied me they do not like war and they are honest creature of *Waaqayyo*. Interview made on July 10/201.

hail from harming the crop. According to my informant<sup>137</sup> and Bartels<sup>138</sup> the ritual is done during the end of the rainy season. Women prepare local beer or *farso* in clay jars, some roasted and grinded cereals from sorghum, barley and maize, green cooked cabbage (*raafuu*). They mix them all together in a big clay pot (*tuwe*). Her children carry the *tuwe* and the mother holds her prayer stick *Siiqqee*, a small knife, a bundle of thin twigs neatly tied up that helps to torch; then children also have some shorter torches to use as flashlights. The women go outside with the food in front of her and take some handful of the food throws them towards the kitchen garden and every field near to the house. Bartels said the women throw the food turning to every direction of the farm fields distanced from her house also. While throwing the food, she prays the following with her children:

Mother: 'O *Waaqa*, make the wild animals satisfied with little.

Children: Make them satisfied with little.

Mother: 'prevent the storm from harming our crops.'

Children: 'Prevent it.'

Mother: 'Make all animals satisfied with little.'

Children: 'Make them satisfied'

After throwing the food in every direction the women put two heaps of food on the threshold of each grain-store, pray again to *Waaqa* so that *waaqa* will make rats and weevils satisfied with little food. While the mother is consenting prayer to *Waaqa*, her husband do not accompany her. He stayed inside the home and wait until the wife finish the ritual. After finishing she cut some grass (*tchokorsa*)<sup>139</sup> put them on both left and right side of the door then the husband call her being inside the house. He asks 'what did the *jari* say? She replies him 'plenty has come, hunger has gone.' After that, he come out and celebrate eating food with family and invited neighbours from the same food in the clay-pot. Since the sermon is done the

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<sup>137</sup> C1, 9 July 9, 2015.

<sup>138</sup> Bartels, *Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia- An Attempt to Understand*.347-9.

<sup>139</sup> *Tchokorsa* is an important symbol in Oromo life. It is a creeper with very deep roots. Even in times of prolonged drought, it keeps alive and provides at least a little moisture for the cattle. As it creeps, it strikes new roots on either side. In this way, many plants remain connected with the mother/plant and with each other. Because of these qualities, it is both symbol of fertility and of peace between homesteads of the same clan, however great the distance between them may be. It plays a part in most rituals. See Bartels. *Oromo Religion*, page 68.



same day at the same time by all neighbour of women, all the neighbours welcome each other for the invitation.

The performance of the ritual signifies the relationship between the creatures and God or *Waaqa* the creator. Oromo women do not treat wild animals and pests cruelly. They are *Waaqa's* creatures and *Waaqa* sustains his creature during the *jari* rituals. For a Christian or Muslim, the ritual might seem idolatrous. Nevertheless, the content of the ritual shows the prayer directed to God for his sustenance of all animals, which are though harmful, God's creature. Therefore, the right relationship between human being and the creator in the universe was taking place through the rituals of women. Mostly, the practice signifies the ecological care women perform beyond the household responsibility they have.

#### 4.3.2.2. *Buna qala* Ritual

*Buna qala* is a ritual sermon prepared from the coffee fruit with some ingredients of spices like *Hogi'o*/Cardamom, *Kefo*/scared basil, and Ginger. A married woman stews it and served in little cups to be chewed and it has a very nice taste. During *buna qala* rituals married women pray for offspring in Children, for peace, for rain, for crops, keeping away evil, for health, for decent life for women, for the maternal affection towards their children, cattle and sheep, and for an abundant harvest. Women pray to *waaqa* so that *waaqa* will comfort the sad, the sick will be healed and support of the aged.<sup>140</sup> *Buna qala* binds and connects the neighbors together for the societal welfare.

There are different occasions *buna-qala* celebrated. Married women of Oromo are the agent to bring peace and blessing for their family as whole and for the community by a special sermon. The blessing is the fertility; wealth and peace for of the Oromo land a whole. When people are served with very little cups. After they finish chewing *buna-qala* and return the cup. They extend blessing extending of good wishes. They say *Kuma hora* means produce thousand heads of cattle; *Kuma bobaasa*-lead out thousand (heads of Cattell to graze), 'may *waqaa* give you good things from above; may the earth give you good things from below. Grow rich. Stay alive in the midst of what you have produced). People of Oromo blesses each other, fathers and mothers bless their children.

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<sup>140</sup> All the content of the prayers is noted on Bartels 287-306.

#### 4.3.3. *The matriarchal view of female is divinities*

So far, I have discussed different ritual prayer practiced by Oromo women by name *Waaqayoo*. According to the legend, after the women have prayed, *Waaqa*, in whose honour the prayer has been articulated, would immediately provide the community members according to the uttered prayer. I have also introduced the Oromo women prayer to both *Waaqayyo* and to female divinities namely *Maram/Ateete*. The two interchangeably used female divinities *Maram* and *Ateete* prayer rituals, have their own time and occasion's women for women do that only. For example, one is the event during childbirth in which that *Maram* is praised by song. They pray to her play with her, tease her and cry to her.

In another ritual, women in their main group gather in houses, for an *Ateete* meeting of the neighbourhood women. The ritual is designed to discipline anti-social neighbors and it is special event of ritual different from the other religious ceremonies. In the former times, all women who were not beyond childbearing age performed it every year. *Maram* is the divinity of motherhood. She is invoked in association with labor and birthing while *Ateete* is evoked as the goddess of fecundity and associated with granting or denying children to women. In the broader Oromo society both *Ateete* and *Maaram* are evoked outside this association with children and birthing.

*Ateete* is exclusively female deity. Only women pray to her and praise her on various occasions. Men do not. On the contrary, *Maaram* is evoked by both men and women, although she too is a female deity. Kumsa says *Maaram* is the most revered of all deities in both women's and men's regions practices. The relationship between *Maaram* and the mother of Jesus Mary is a question. However, it is suggested that *Maaram* is a prominent deity in ancient Oromo songs and lyrics many thousands of years before Christianity or Islam arrived on the scene.<sup>141</sup>

#### 4.4. Conclusion

*Gadaa* Oromo is patriarchal but a number of traditions and rituals that protect women and even give them a prominent religious. In chapter four, I have shown *siiqee*, and prayer rituals the area where women highly practices their rights. Women are not silent and not always submitted to man. Dressing modesty is an appropriate and a virtue of women in the Oromo culture

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<sup>141</sup> Kumsa, *Songs of Exile*, 98-9.

## Chapter Five

# THE UNDERSTANDING OF 1TIMOTHY 1TIM.2:11-12 IN AN OROMO PERSPECTIVE

### 5. 1. Introduction

The place of women and the view they have in Oromo cultural perspective was presented in the previous chapter. This chapter mainly focus on the understanding of my informants' interpretation on 1Timothy 2:11-12. In the EECMY governing body and structure, there is a positive attitude towards women's ministry. Nevertheless, when it comes to the members of the church, it is difficult to conclude that all have the same agreement and clear understanding. From the fieldwork I have conducted, what I understand is that there are people who still have a conservative view standpoint and are against women's ministry but there are also those who accept women ministry in the church.

From both sides, there are arguments used as reference that I will present in this chapter. There is also a third group which consists people who know women in the bible played vital roles and mention some text from the bible, however, but still read 1Tim 2:11-12 in a conservative manner and do not dare to accept women in ministry. We may understand this group as middle group among my informants. From the above categories, it is clear that the interpretation of this biblical passage is still controversial among Oromo in EECMY. Giving special focus to the views of my informants and presenting their thought will be the main task in this chapter I don't bring the questionnaires' that I have asked in the discussion part the reader of the thesis is interested to read the question please see the appendixes.

### 5.2 Informants against women's ministry

#### 5.2.1 *Reading the passage as a universal prohibition*

Despite the fact that women are serving as a group and contributing in different fields of the church, their role at the level of preaching, teaching and leading services and meetings, is still questioned by people with a conservative view. When they are serving as a group , i.e., involving in prayers, serving in choir groups, helping the poor, hosting guest speakers during Sunday service and making preparation for holy communion and doing cleaning work, in all

these types of ministry, their involvement is not are not probed. Nevertheless, when they assigned for position individually, then 1Timothy 2:11-12 will be used as a church doctrine to prohibit their participation. This is done by inner consensus of men.

My informant suggested:

*“The word of God is the word of God! This means, we do not compromise with ‘any ideologies.’*

*Therefore, women are restricted to speak and not to have authority in the church. Therefore, we need to accept the instruction as it is. If we reject the instruction and allow women to be a teacher, we are corrupting the word of God. That is why; i.e. instead of corrupting the word of God, I prefer not accepting women in ministry especially in teaching and having authority over men.*<sup>142</sup>

He continued saying that Women can involving in prayer together with men and serving in some other fields except leadership.

In fact, cultural influence can help us understanding the perception of this individual on the biblical passages. Even though women have special consideration and get massive respect in the society,<sup>143</sup>the patriarchal *Gadaa* system does not allow women to be leaders, as I showed in chapter 4. In Oromo context for example, women are highly involved in prayer and rituals<sup>144</sup> in collective and manner. I assume that because of the impact of the patriarchal system of the culture, people might get the chance to live with their unchanged perception of conservative attitude when they read the text on the prohibition of women. They become very strict about women in ministry. Therefore, for people who are impacted by the patriarchal opinion, they can play role restricting women from teaching and having authority in the church because of the passage on 1Timothy 2:11-12.

### *5.2.2. It is the woman who sinned first*

Some informants emphasize the story of the fall when they explain why women cannot have authority. The Genesis account of the fall indicates that the serpent deceived Eve and she ate the fruit first, and gave it to Adam. When God came and asked Adam “have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman you put here with

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<sup>142</sup>B4, Dembi Dollo 16 July 2015.

<sup>143</sup> C1, Dembi Dollo 9 July 2015;

<sup>144</sup> Please refer chapter four the prayer rituals an Oromo women perform.

me she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” (Genesis 3:11-12) Adam’s response was to blame Eve and set himself free from the action.

An expression in Oromo goes like this: ‘a woman is sinner’/*dubartiin cubbamtuu dha*. “A woman” designates all women not any particular woman. They claim woman is the one who made Adam to sin and leave the Garden of Eden. “*Therefore, she does not deserve authority. God gave the authority to the man.*” As one informant put it.<sup>145</sup>

Such reading of Genesis 3, influenced by 1Timothy 2:14, has led many people in our times to believe that the woman was the responsible person for the original sin. If she would have not sinned first, there will be no tribulations for human being. That is what people are claiming about even today. Instead of thinking the work that God has done through Jesus Christ to save human being from all tribulation, people are still point to women’s weakness as a sense of describing their disappointment towards them. It is the same thought that the writer stated in: 1Timothy2:14 that Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. However, in Genesis, it does not say that the sin of Eve is worse, than sin of Adam. On the contrary, both were punished for their sin because, both were responsible. The scripture makes it clear that sin and death entered this world through one man Adam, it is also through one man Jesus Christ that grace and righteousness are given as a gift to sinners.

Therefore, the book of Romans nullifies the blame put on women: All have sinned and come short of the glory of God- (Rom 3:23). The shortage of glory is restored though salvation in Jesus Christ both for women and men. In Christ, the gender distinction and the classification of race that characterized the fallen relationship is removed. That is why the scripture says: There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ. (Gal 3:28).

In 1Timothy 2:11-12, it seems that the writer did not consider salvation of all human beings and the equality of women and men from creation onwards. He used similar expression about women that they are deceived. In the Old Testament, the serpent deceived the woman. Where as in Ephesus it seems that men with false teaching became deceiver of women: “For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins, and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.” (2Timo3:6-7). What would it be that is deceiving women? If there are people who continue to claim, women have a deceivable nature.

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<sup>145</sup> B4, Dembi Dollo16 July 2015.

Marshal stated the matter is not quite so simple. According to the context, Eve was deceived cited as parallel to. (1Tim 2:11-12). and this strongly suggests the conclusion that, behind the present prohibition lies some false teaching by some women. Otherwise, the reference to Eve being deceived and sinning is pointless.<sup>146</sup> Beal also indicated; women involved in the teaching of the false teachers and so were teaching the heresy. Because of certain elements of the traditional role of women, marriage and childbearing were being set aside based on the false teaching.<sup>147</sup>

### 5.2.3. Women have family responsibility

One of conservative views against women leadership is based on the responsibility of women in household tasks. One informant remarked:

*When women take on the same responsibility of men; they will be absolutely be obliged to drift away from their motherhood role because they would, be expected to work extremely hard in order to be effective, to be worthwhile and to give it the chance for expansion. All hard work – in the church is simultaneously accompanied by the heavy burdens of motherhood. 'Because of the responsibility, they have in the family; I suspect they will be not effective and successful when they come to leadership position of the church. I know women can do what men are doing in the church. However, for me, to encourage them to take responsibility in both ways can be an extra burden for women and bring a negative impact on their life. That is why I reject women leadership in the church.'*<sup>148</sup>

The view of my informant is conservative, but not explicitly based on the bible. He prefers women to stay at home rather than being involving in the church leadership. In Oromo cultural perspective, the husbands is not expected to stay home nor to take active part in household. They engage themselves to the work outside of their home like farming, working in offices, involving in leadership position and so on. In the cases were men are found to be staying at home they will be looked down by the society. Women are expected to stay at home and take care of all the household chores, looking after children, extended family, and cattle.

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<sup>146</sup> Marshal, *International critical commentary*, 458.

<sup>147</sup> Beale, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 897.

<sup>148</sup>B6, Dembi Dollo, 17 July 2015.

Mothers are subjected to double work when they stay at home. Primarily, to that of her husband second to that of her family in law, as noted in chapter in chapter four.<sup>149</sup> That is how women value of submissiveness will be designated. However, in the circumstances of a for poor family, and educated women, the responsibility is beyond that. For example, for financial sustenance of their family for poor women who had to work outside of their home for daily wages. Some educated women are working in offices, a few women are running small business; buying, and selling goods. That is how women in Oromo society are handling their marriage life and reflecting their responsibility. Therefore, the view of my informant and men who have the same opinion, think that if women come to position, all the benefits they supply to their family is declining. That is what men do not accept.

Anyway, in the historical back ground of Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, of my synod, women pioneers who have family responsibility also played great role together with men for the expansion of gospel work. Some of them are, Aade Chawaqe Alabe, Aade Qusi Bati, Aade Nonise Galata, Aade Zanabu Mamo, and many others. Some of them still living some of them are not.<sup>150</sup> Despite the cultural challenge of their time, i., e. the society depicted bad image if women leave their home; these women walk for hours far from their home. These women sacrifice themselves, their economy, time, and energy to shine the light of the gospel in Dembi Dollo area by breaking the entire barriers they have faced.

At that, time when there was not enough transportation, they walked on their foot for more than eight hours, the time they got hungry; they eat dry bread, when they are unable to cross-big rivers, and swimmers helped them. In this way, they make the gospel work to grow by teaching, preaching, and making encouragement to participate people in God's work, and hand the gospel work to present generation of women in the area. Were they positioned women, No, they were member of congregation elders and voluntarily working in congregations and presbyteries. Do they have family? Absolutely. What makes them to be involved in gospel work in unsustainable condition together with men was the call they received from God and the determinedness they had in the midst of hardships to work for the glory of God.

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<sup>149</sup>Please refer chapter four women in marriage life for more information.

<sup>150</sup> B1, Dembi Dollo 25 June 2015. This informant suggested also, the question of women ministry is not a question of right but it is question serving God according to the call we received from God.

What I learn from their life is that women who committed their life to witness for Christ will not be submitted to any contrary powers that pull them down or to keep silent. Moreover, women could not have been deceived by any dissipation they might face.

### **5.3. Informants in favour of women's ministry**

The second group of my informant are those who encourage women in God's ministry. I wanted my informants to tell me the understanding they have on the instruction given in 1 Timothy; "let women keep silent." I found all informants in this group were antagonistic to the instruction. They argue that the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is referring to the contemporary church of the letter writer, and should not be understood as a universal prohibition. In addition, they give several scriptural evidences that help to understand that women are not silent in the bible.

One informant suggested:

*-women in the bible is linked with the issue of gender balance. Therefore, 'every biblical verse that sounds against women needs to be analysed very carefully by church leaders before they are preached and taught in the church. I have heard ordinary people standing on the roadside and arguing why Jesus called the women 'little dog' while talking with her in the gospel.*

The whole passage she is referring to is the story about the Syrophenician woman in: Mark 7:27-28. The whole passage reads: "let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." she answered and said to Him, "yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs from under the table eat from the children's crumbs.

The informant continues:

*Then, as soon as I heard their debates, I start questioning the text. In addition, I was wandering to know the intention of those people who are making the argument. Finally, I come to conclusion; there must be a reason for the de-humiliating words against women used in the bible. Deliberate investigation is needed by preachers and congregation pastors before delivering the messages to church member. I personally do not accept the instruction that says, "Let women keep silent" I do not believe the section helps to understand the equal treatment of all people in the church. It is not a healing message rather it breaks moral. I do not accept*



*because, the bible does not urge women to keep silent, Because there are, numbers of women form the Old Testament to the New Testament who played prominent role during their time.*<sup>151</sup>

From her responses, I found the attitude of my informant is constructive and need attention. Even though she rejects the restriction given to women, in 1Timothy 2:11-12, I assumed that for her the word 'silent' is used for exclusion of women from church service but there should be reason for the exclusion that needs to be investigated by congregation leaders. Some of my informant tried to mention some reasons why those women were given the order to keep silent. I will put the thought as follows:

Reason one: It is a matter of being *quiet, not silent*. Probably they were talking with each other in a loud voice, disturbing, 'or' they were not paying attention when teaching or preaching was taking place. That is why women ordered to keep quiet, and that was the problem of women at that time. My informants suggested that

*“for me it is normal to use the instruction “keep quiet” in order to bring back people’s attention, ‘if’ they are out of spiritual context of worship like; hearing the word of God , praising God’s name and praying.”*<sup>152</sup>

According to her, the instruction is used, as a warning for women is to keep quiet and be listener while they are learning. Whether the word silent or quite<sup>153</sup> is used, the prohibition in Timothy is limited to specific time and place.

The other informant in favour women ministry suggested:

*“It is more than 70 years since I have started ministering in the church. In all my ministry life in the church, there was no time and place to see women are silent and passive. They have sacrificed their life for the gospel work even though they are not recognized. These days it is becoming a kind of habit to say, ‘women are the backbone of the church’. Yes! Their ministry plays vital role for the survival and growth of the church. However, the church should fix every possible opportunities to enhance their involvement in the church. Sending women to theological school, and educating them, giving them position so that they can teach in biblical colleges, let them be the model for other and encourage the church members. My message to the church male leadership is, women can hold a position. Because, the work of God is done not basing on maleness or femaleness but rather it is done by the spirit of God that is promised*

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<sup>151</sup>B3, Dembi Dollo 20 July 2015.

<sup>152</sup>A6, Dembi Dollo 6 July 2015.

<sup>153</sup>Please see the translation of ἡσυχία under chapter three.

*by the prophet Joel and fulfilled in the book of Act 2:17-18<sup>154</sup> Therefore, let the church open her eyes to use women as one part of the body Christ and women ministry as one part of gift for the church.<sup>155</sup>*

Similar opinion stated by another informant:

*Hi suggested that women should not be blocked from giving the church service because of some biblical quotations that are inappropriate for women in our time and places. Similar idea to this, A1 gave his advice, “Women ministry in the church is not what we can stablish or ignore basing on own personal feeling and understanding or considering some very few biblical text like 1Timothy 2:11-12 and 1Corinthians 14:34-35. Rather the encouragement of women in ministry is, based on God’s call.<sup>156</sup>*

According to these two people, though women were not lucky to get enough education and special places in the church, they played enormous contribution in the history of church, because they are included in the promise of receiving the spirit God that enables to work for Him. Second, though the text on 1Timothy urges women to keep silent, they did not consider that this was written as a universal prohibition for them. Third, though it is discouraging to read the text against women in the passage, women have a call to Work for God as men do.

### *5.3.1 Scriptural references for women ministry*

Using the scriptural references was an important part of the argumentation that my informants used to show the instruction about women is not applicable for today. Because the scripture in total does not order women to keep silent. The most important biblical reference used by my informants are, discussed in the fallowing. According to my interviewees, two passages are used as the main supportive references for equality of women and men and against the instructions to silence. These are Gen1:27 and Gal 3:28.

My informant suggested:

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<sup>154</sup> The explanation for the text is found in the next section.

<sup>155</sup> A1, Addis Ababa 5 July 2015. I have mentioned on my interview field report that this informant was in Addis Ababa for medical treatment. That is why I made the interview there.

<sup>156</sup> A5, Dembi Dollo 8 August 2015.

*Knowing and accepting themselves that they are created equally with men by God and share the image of God. At the same time, women need to know the love of God and the salvation they received through Jesus Christ equally with men. So that they will be free from feeling inferiority, and keeping silent even.<sup>157</sup> Culturally, women are de-humiliated in the society. In Oromo culture, every first-born child is, expected to be a boy. Because, boys, after they grow up, they can involve in politics.<sup>158</sup> Second, when they get married, they stay with their parent and, the wife will help both the husband and his family.*

*Thirdly, paternal trace is also an issue for preferring boys than girls in Oromo culture for it continues with the boys than girls.<sup>159</sup> Fourthly, in Oromo, it is not acceptable to call someone by his single name after he or she has a child i.e., parents are called by the first-born child that child is expected to be a boy. Fifth, when mothers give birth; the neighbourhood women express their happiness by ululating five times, if it is a boy and three times, if it is a girl. Girls, in marriage they leave the society of the parents, and adjust their life to new household. The responsibility is only in the house and giving birth to children.<sup>160</sup> All these, created psychological problem on women that affected them to feel inferior.*

According to the above suggestions of my informants, many women understood themselves as if they are created just for men. They assume that every position, all responsibility in the church is for men. That means, they feel, they are not right if they involve in church service.

### *5.3.1.2 Women are included in the promises of God*

In this part of my interview, I will put all the idea of my informant who used the biblical quotes for the title women are included in the promises of God.

My informant who use quotation of Joel and Acts suggested his idea as follows:

*The biblical text to support women in the church involvement is: Joel 2:28-29<sup>161</sup> "...I will pour my spirit on all humankind; your son and daughter will prophesy, your old men will dream*

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<sup>157</sup>A6, 6 July 2015.

<sup>158</sup> Please refer chapter 4 for more information

<sup>159</sup> Please refer chapter 4 the historical background of Oromo people.

<sup>160</sup> Please refer chapter 4 Oromo women in marriage.

<sup>161</sup>A1, Addis Ababa 5 July 2015.

*dreams, your young men will see vision. Even on the men and female servant I will pour out my spirit in those days.” The prophesy in Joel is quoted by Peter in Acts 2:17-18. “The work of God in the church is done by everyone; male, female, young and Old who are discerned by the call of God. For me therefore, women ministry in the church is not what we establish or ignore basing on our own personal feeling and understanding. Rather it is based on God’s call.”<sup>162</sup>*

Another informant suggested:

*Behind the ministry of women, there is a call of God who want women not to keep silent. When God call people, then he gives the spiritual gifts as the book of Joel stated. There are different types of spiritual gifts mentioned given as a body of many members. “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not have the same function. Therefore, in Christ we who are many from one body and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us Romans 12:4-6.<sup>163</sup> Paul mentioned, “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of serve, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work: 1Cor.12:4-5. Even though Paul does not specify gender, in every gifts the centre is God. He is the one who calls, who gives his spirit, He works with men, and women. They are sexually different but one body in Christ.*

Similar ideas of the above informant but who believe strongly agree about the call to his ministers suggested: *women should be able to say yes to God and serve him according to the talent and gifts they received from God.<sup>164</sup>In different place of the New Testament, in: Romans 16:7 we see Junia as an apostle.*

This informant brought about the apostleship of women referring Junia. There are lots of debate on Junia if the name represent female or male. Because during the earthly ministry of Jesus the appellation of apostleship is given for the twelve. *My informant suggested However, the term apostleship is not remained limited to the twelve<sup>165</sup> and it is possible to see from the life of Paul according to: Rom 11:13; 1Cor.1:1; Gal 1:1, 12.*

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<sup>162</sup>A1, Addis Ababa 5 July 2015.

<sup>163</sup> A3, Dembi Dollo 10 July 2015.

<sup>164</sup> A2, Dembi Dollo 7 July 2015.

<sup>165</sup>A3, Dembi Dollo 10 July 2015.

Secondly, Phoebe was a female minister in; Acts 16:1; Philip daughters were prophets: Acts 21:9. Thirdly, there were women evangelist. Evangelist were men and women who preached the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>166</sup> Eudodia and Syntyche or Philipp were co-workers of Paul according to Phil.4:2-3. Fourthly, there women teacher by the name Priscila the co-worker of Paul with her husband Aquila taught Apollos an eloquent man: Acts 18:24-26. These names of few women in the completely biblical verses plays tremendous role during their time. If they have been silent their names and their position should not have appeared in the scripture and, the prohibition given in 1 Timothy would have function as a universal prohibition. Furthermore, in the Pastoral Epistles of Titus, women were recommended to teach.

#### **5.4. Informants uncertain about women's ministry**

In this, section you will find one informant who noted 1 Timothy 2:11-15 is the most confusing section in the bible.

According to her:

*The text is confusing because, it rejects the involvement of women in the church service. Moreover, it creates question about salivation of women. For example, regarding women minsters, if I accept the prohibition according to the text, there are plenty of women in the bible who were serving the lord God with every responsibility they are given. She mentioned some of them like Deborah, a prophet, Judge and leader of the Israelites. Easter; woman who believe in prayer and have faith in God, woman of decision to inter the king's house to save her nation.*

Further, she commented:

*Marry Magdalene; who witness first the resurrection of our lord Jesus Christ to the disciples. Women who were following and supporting Jesus during his earthly ministry, Priscila, Phoeb, Eudodia and Syntyche who were working with Paul the apostles. Many women in the bible serve God without any prohibition. When I think about the history of all these verse, I am inspired and difficult to agree with the passage of prohibition. If I do not accept the prohibition,*

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<sup>166</sup>A3, Dembi Dollo 10 July 2015.

*the word of God says, "The bible is inspired by God. Which is literally means "God-breathed." 2Timothy 3:16 so I consider the text on 1Tim 2:11-12 as an answered question. It is hard section either to reject or to accept. Therefore, this section is always a question for me.*<sup>167</sup>

This informant considered the text as an instruction given for the prohibition of women from ministry. However, to accept or not to accept as universal prohibition a big challenge for the informant. Therefore, the text bring an impact on the understanding of people and, it is the controversial part of the bible especially on the ministry of women.

### **5.5. The problem about modestly dressing**

In the society it is virtue of women to wear modestly. Women with modesty dressing have especial honourer than those who do not dress modestly. would like to bring the idea of my informant. One of my informant faced problem on Sunday because she preached without covering her hair. *It was in countryside I did not realized that they are strict about head covering.* He continued that Christian women should appear in more culturally acceptable clothing so that the Christian message in the larger society may not be, misinterpreted. It would play into the hands of the enemy of the early Christian movement in Ephesus if they dressed like high-class prostitutes. As Zehr<sup>168</sup> puts it What Marshall noted here is applicable in Oromo perspectives. The contemporary Christian women are, always expected to wear modesty dresses so that they are culturally acceptable in the society.

The typical modesty wearing are either long dress with scarf/*naxala* or, skirt and coat and, scarf to cover their hair. Wearing fashionable clothes, Jeans trouser, miniskirts and adding make up on face or colouring hair and putting lipstick is, strictly forbidden. The church has not established any rule and principle regarding the modesty manner of women in the church. However, because it is practiced in the society not to wear showy dress and using makeups. If women wear very fashionable dresses and look attractive in the church, I believe the church leaders may not give them any chance to contribute in the church. Because the view towards those women looking attractive is very bad according to the trend of the society.

Women are, considered, as they are in need of attention from men, showy or adulterous. Women are, assumed they dress for men; to please men, not for themselves. In order to be

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<sup>167</sup>B2, Dembi Dollo 3 July 2015.

<sup>168</sup>Paul M Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: 1&2 Timothy, Titus*, (Scottsdale, Pa: Herland Press, 2010), 63.

refrain from these bad suspicions, women like and prefer to live controlling themselves. If they go to the beauty salon to dress or to braided their hair they need to cover in the church.

Winter suggested, according to the cultural perception of the society, the dress code was described in Ephesus because it sent signals of a lack of moral respectability and sexual availability to those at banquets, at other social gatherings or in the public spaces that women frequented, including theatres.<sup>169</sup>

The In my culture of Oromo all those immodesty dress mentioned in 1Timothy 2:11-12 belongs to the prostitutes who manage their life by sexual business; they live mostly in bars and have many men. They are very attractive for sexual matters any man who is attracted can use women with immodesty manner and she do not have right to defend herself. Winter suggest in his book dress can bring an impact on sexual desire of men and can distract or tempt them if used in worship place. Tanzer suggested, we do not know exactly what these women were doing that attracted the attention of the writer when he command about the modesty.<sup>170</sup> It is likely that the writer was imposed by modesty code perceived by the societal and wanted to reflected in the church. In Roman law, it is, condensed, in a way that women put under condemnation if they use chastity and had to take personal responsibility for the way they dressed. The law punishes the detestable wickedness of married women who prostitute their chastity to the lust of others. In addition, it is established in the Roman law that “if anyone accosts... women who are dressed like prostitutes and not as mothers of families... if a woman is not dressed as a matron and someone calls out to her or entices away her attendant, he will not be liable to action for injury.”<sup>171</sup>

It seems like the author of the Pastoral Epistles have this in his mind when he established the modesty appearance of women in Ephesian church. Therefore, because of all these minds set of the Ephesian people, women are, commanded to keep silent according to the above commentators. The suggestion is, practically applied on women in contemporary church. Therefore, for the sake of the gospel work, women should think in every dimension, to take

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<sup>169</sup> Bruce W. Winter, *Roman wives, Roman Widows: The appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Michigan Cambridge, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 98-122.

<sup>170</sup> Annette Bouraland Huizenga, *Wisdom commentary Volume 53:1-2Timothy Titus* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2016), 15.

<sup>171</sup> Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The appearance of New Women and the Pauline communities*, 83-4.

care of their appearance not to keep silent or neglected from the field of ministry by putting men in temptation.

That means that the societal attitude of culture towards women's immodesty dress can cause women to be silent. That is what the writer want to communicate in his message. The worshipping place is the special place to worship God in spirit. Moreover, according to the message of Paul to Corinthians, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" 2Corinthians 3:17. This passage is un applicable for women with immodesty dress. They cannot be free from the negative reputations that the cultural attitude of the society attribute towards the immodesty dress. In Roman society<sup>172</sup>, you were what you wore<sup>173</sup>, in another word, how they dress is going to convey what they are, and that is very embracing.

Basing on modesty clothing, there are some people, who might think, the more they do not give attention to themselves; good-looking appearance, the more they drew to the presence of God in worship. Therefore, they prefer disordered-looking in the church. Witherington III who granted the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles to Paul noted, Paul is not just arguing here for modest apparel, but he is arguing against Ostentatious, flashy, and distracting apparel.<sup>174</sup> Perhaps, all those modesty manners and about self-control suggested in the passage is not to level of urging women to stop, rather women are given in the manner counselling to be sober.

Pearls are, not used by Christian people these days in countryside. Majority of the Christians consider pearls as an instrument of Satan. During *atette* ceremonies, the Oromo mothers use pearls as one ritual item. Witchcrafts in Oromo count pearls for their witches' purpose. According to *Seena*, Christian women in the modern times wear pearls they are asked if they have connection with witches<sup>175</sup> that means the women who wear the pearls; their being Christianity is under question. Because witches and their evil deeds are extremely heated

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<sup>172</sup> Winter, *Roman wives, Roman Widows: The appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities*, 97. He noted the cultural ethos of this major city in Asia Minor, Ephesian and Roman were no longer mutually exclusive categories and there is no substantial distinction between a major city of Asia Minor, Roan Corinth and Rome itself.

<sup>173</sup> Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows, The appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities*, 96.

<sup>174</sup> Ben Witherington III, *Letters, and Homilies for Hellenized Christians Vol.1: A socio-rhetorical Commentary on Titus.1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007), 225.

<sup>175</sup> Seena Kefyalew, 18 April 2017.



among the Christians. Therefore, after the missionaries came with evangelism work, all the traditional ritual instruments including Pearl were distracted.

Therefore, women even if they do not believe in the implication the ornaments have, because of the perception of the society they do not want to use it. Pearls are used for Religious purpose as well. For example, *hadhacaaccu* an Oromo a woman leader, wear cloak designed and decorated by pearls on her long and wide dress when she performs prayer rituals in Oromo traditional beliefs. Besides its ritual functions, pearls were one of the ornaments used for the beauty of Oromo women. In addition, it represents the large number of the Oromo People. Though it used for beauty because the all the above implication it designates pearls are never used from the area I come from. However, if women decide to use it for ornament, then, that means, they have decided not to involve in the church ministry.

In general, as long, the worshippers worship the one true God and their heart is in the right place it is not necessary to discuss about the modesty wearing of women and how they worship. Never the less, if the approach and conduct of fellow worshippers doesn't edified and strengthen each other in the worshiping places, but rather force them to think of fleshly things, then, there should be a problem with the heart of men not only with the of women. Therefore, the misconduct of social customs and cultural situations reflected in the church can be arranged by teaching and counselling. Ordering women to keep silent in worship place cannot bring solution.

There are massive problems that make women to keep silent and hindered them to involve in the church. Some of them are: lack of education, cultural and social attitudes towards, family responsibility, vulnerability to violence; raping, giving birth to illegal children i.e. pregnancy before marriage that is considered as 'taboo' in Oromo culture, the dominance of husband, the double subjection to husband and family and extended family silenced women. According to the interpretation of my informant and in the perspective of Oromo, all the above problems are treated in the package of: 1 Timothy 2:11-12 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. However, I suffer not women to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence.

## Chapter Six

### CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

#### 6.1 Conclusion

In this thesis paper, I am looking for the possible answers for the research question “what is the meaning and the context of the instruction given to women in 1Timo 2:11-12 and how is it interpreted in an Oromo context.”

In my five chapters I provide some answers to this question

Chapter one consists the introduction part of the whole thesis that discusses my motivation for writing this thesis. I have discussed the misinterpretation of the text by some church members who therefore alienate women from church leadership position. Therefore, to make the right interpretation and understanding of the text in the context of the Oromo tradition I used qualitative method and scholarly book.

In chapter two, I have discussed the historical background of the Pastoral Epistles in Greco- Roman context. This helped me to know historical background of Pastoral Epistles in general and the place of women in particular. I have discussed also the argument about the author the date and place of the book of the Pastoral Epistles. It is not simple to guess and find answer. As a result, I conclude my idea the books of the Pastoral Epistles are not attributed to the Apostle Paul. Studying the historical background helps me to understand that if it had been Paul who write the Epistles he would have not make the instruction in a way that it disqualify the equality between Christian fellow brothers and sisters. However, I find out the Pastoral Epistles are very important books as a part of the Bible.

Chapter three consists the detailed exegesis for the broad context of the text that is found from 1Tim2:8-15. This helped me to understand why the instruction was given and the meaning of the text. The meaning of the instruction (ἡσυχία and “ἀθηνεῖν) in specific and more detailed way. I consulted different scholarly references and Biblical translations to find the meaning especially for ἡσυχία and I realized that quiet rather than silent is an appropriate answer for the translations. Even, if, “silent” or “quiet” is used for the meaning ἡσυχία and the

prohibition not have “ἀποκτείνῃ” for women the instruction is not universal but it is timely specified instruction given to the Ephesian women in Ephesus.

Chapter four discusses about the Oromo culture that is patriarchal and has similarities to Greco-Roman culture. For example, submission of women to their husbands, and living modestly, not only by the modestly dressing code but modesty life for Oromo women means the virtue of being silent. Another point is the motherhood responsibility in the domestic sphere that is similar to the Greco- Roman culture. But the tradition of the *siiqee* institution provides women with female solidarity and defend their right .And female prayer rituals magnifies the place of women to encourage them to experience equality have authority in their society. And defy the structure of being silent.

## **6.2. Summary**

The application of the instruction given in 1Tim2:11-12 without understanding of background and context. It is immoral and creating difference and/or enhancing imbalanced attitude between female and male. Furthermore, the passage is used to hinder women from church ministry. Therefore, this thesis want to contribute to a larger understanding this text and aims to encourage women to come back to their right place to ministry and get a church position at any level based on their calling and experience the spiritual gift they have for the glory of God. Finally, I hope that this thesis can help women and men in EECMY and all the readers who might think the misinterpretation of the passage is experienced in their churches.

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