

Full Length Research

Causes of Gender Division of Labour among Husbands and Wives in Bale Agro-Pastoralist Woredas

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The way work is divided between men and women according to their gender roles is usually referred to as the 'gender division of labour'. Gender division of labour has been as old as history, differing from culture to culture in time and space which has implications for women's empowerment and societal development. Thus, the study was conducted with the aim of identifying and analysing the causes of gender division of Labour in Bale Zone Agro-pastoralist woredas. It was designed to investigate what Wives and Husbands do in domestic chores; crop, vegetable and fruit, as well as livestock productions; and selling of agricultural products. Besides, the study was designed to see the influencing factors for the division of tasks among Husbands and Wives in their decision making roles at household level. Descriptive Qualitative research design and purposive sampling technique were used and the data collected from non-participatory observation, in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were thematically analysed. Thus, from the population of the three woredas, namely Madda Walabu, Gindhir and Goro, wives and husbands who live under the roof were purposely selected for in depth interview and FGD. The criteria used to select participants were: farmer Husbands and Wives who were recognized by local community leaders as models in terms of economic status; Husbands and Wives from religious leaders; and Husbands and Wives from Abbaa Gadaa and Haadha Siinqee representatives. Accordingly, six model farmer husbands and wives from each woreda, with a total of 36 members from the three woredas; two Husbands and Wives from religious leaders households from each woreda, which means 12 participants from the three woredas and Husbands and Wives from Abbaa Gadaa representatives (one Abbaa Gadaa and one Haadha Siinqee representatives from each woreda, with the total of 6 participants from the three districts. Accordingly, 54 participants were purposely selected as sample size of this study. The finding of the study revealed that there is clear gender division of labor in the study areas. The study found that the causes for gender division of labor among husbands and wives in the study areas are interrelated contributory factors (notably, natural or biological; culture – religion related, Gadaa system; and contamination of indigenous cultures by modern values and norms. The finding indicated that wives perform triple roles: reproductive, productive and community service roles. These include giving birth, breast feeding which is biological, and all other tasks in household chores, selling of socially feminized agricultural and animal products like milk, butter, potato and onion, and saving and managing the income of the household. They also perform most of the tasks in livestock productions. On the contrary, husbands accomplish most of the tasks in crop production; and burying of dead human body and animal slaughtering were exclusively done by them. However, wives also accomplish other tasks alone and, crop, vegetable and fruit productions together with their husbands. The study also disclosed that in many ways, women's inferior status in the household decision making is the cause of gender inequality, which includes biased gender division of labour imposed on women. Hence, the study recommended that there is a need to ease the burden of the wives in the study area through creating awareness for society in general and for husbands and wives in particular in fairly sharing of non-biological or gender neutral roles.

Key words: Gender, Gender division of labor, Causes, Husbands, Wives

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding gender jargon is the first step towards understanding gender and sexes. The “feminization of poverty,” refers to the fact that despite the increase in female labor force participation and education, poverty incidence among women in recent decades has increased more and a faster rate than the poverty incidence among men. Evidences show that gender division of labour is a developmental phenomenon in the history of mankind. It existed in all societal stages of development, in every society as well as in all age group of human being, based on their biological or physiological make up. Hence, it was developed from simple in hunting and gathering societies to complex in capitalist modern society (Jennifer, 2011).

The government of Ethiopia is trying to help women to get recognition and appreciation from society which were previously denied, however there is clear gender division of labour and women’s role are not equally recognized as that of men especially in rural areas of the country. Thus, like other parts of Ethiopia the study area has the same problems.

Rural women have less right to use common wealth they produced together with their husband and have limited role in decision making on key resources. Moreover, beside these marginalization, women are the victims of harmful traditional practice. The traditional gender division of labor based on sexes and culture has been linked to reproductive process. As result women were not allowed to certain jobs, the function of child bearing or of social maternity needs not to be deprived women from opportunities, economic, political and house hold decision making (Elizabeth, 2007).

Gender division of labor had been blamed for the low socio- economic status and subordination of women. However, the rare studies which portrayed that the tasks assigned to genders, their economic contribution and status varied greatly on the socio cultural, economic, religious and political set up of an area under consideration (Suzanne, 1998) the studies had disclosed that a cross-cultural variation of the assignment of tasks for men and women in general and wife and husband in particular there by the variation of the status of women across cultures. The same holds true for studies conducted on the issue under discussion in Ethiopia. In fact there are researches done on gender division of labor in Ethiopia. For instance Dejene, (1995) however this researches didn’t have a detailed look at the contributing factors for the division of tasks among wives and husbands. Thus, the researchers were interested to see these condition for division of tasks among wives and husbands and contributing factors for the division in Bale zone agro pastoralist woredas in accordance with the research objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

General Objective

The general objective of this study was to identify causes of gender division of labor among husbands and wives

Specific Objectives

1. To identify contributing factors for the division of tasks among wives and husbands in domestic chores and agriculture (farming and livestock production).
2. To identify the kinds of tasks performed by wives and husbands.
3. To explore workloads of wives and husbands in terms of burdens and benefits.
4. To describe the status of wives and husbands access to and control over resources.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted with the aim of identifying and analysing the causes of gender division of Labour in Bale Zone Agro- pastoralist woredas. The study employed qualitative research methods, which are important to dig out intra household relation between wives and husbands. It is vital to make research on men’s and women’s roles and responsibilities, power relation, decision making process, control over household resources, vulnerability and other related issues. Such issues could not be easily found out unless using qualitative methods.

Descriptive Qualitative research design and purposive sampling technique were used and the data collected from non-participatory observation, in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were thematically analysed. According to Gray (2004) descriptive design portrays an accurate profile of persons, events or situations by describing the existing conditions and attitudes through interpretation of techniques.

Thus, from the population of the three woredas, namely Madda Walabu, Gindhir and Goro, wives and husbands were purposely selected for in depth interview and FGD. The criteria used to select participants were: farmer Husbands and Wives who were recognized by local community leaders as models in terms of economic status; Husbands and Wives from religious leaders; and Husbands and Wives from Abbaa Gadaa and Haadha Siinqee representatives. Accordingly, six model farmer husbands and wives from each woreda, with a total of 36 members from the three woredas; two Husbands and Wives from religious leaders households from each woreda, which means 12 participants from the three woredas and Husbands and Wives from Abbaa Gadaa representatives (one Abbaa Gadaa and one Haadha

Siinqee representatives from each woreda, with the total of 6 participants from the three districts. Accordingly, 54 participants were purposely selected as sample size of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Causes of Gender Divisions of Labor

According to findings of the study, factors such as culture, mixing of religion with culture; the biological factors and Gadaa system are taken as the fundamental causes of gender division of labor in the study areas.

Cultural factors as the causes of gender division of labor

In rural context of our country Ethiopia, the societies have their own culture and constructed norms by default which classify labor between men and women which means socially permitted or accepted and forbidden tasks, and this is a cause artificial job classification in the study areas. Accordingly, both focus group participants and key informants revealed that women are culturally viewed as the cooker, and then after cooking she wait husband (can't eat before him, can't eat with him or if she can eat with, never start before him). Asking for marriage or love, politics and farming permitted for male, cooking 'watt' is permitted for female.

In accordance with the interview results, there were also factors that influenced the active engagement of wives in performing household chores fully or alone. According to the finding, reasons influencing wives to exclusively perform household tasks were:

- ◆ taking household tasks as culturally given phenomenon or as God's gift;
- ◆ the belief that:- they (wives) fit to the task; if they fail to do the task, no one will carry it out; males are not females, who have low status to carry out household chores; and the status of female is low since she is female.
- ◆ considering male as having high status than female by the very reason that they are naturally males; therefore, males have higher status which do not allow them to carry out household chores; performing household chores by husbands is considered as a taboo as per the culture of the study area. As, a result, wives don't allow their husbands to do these tasks.
- ◆ Wives themselves accepted it as appropriate and natural tasks and granted culturally.

Here is the translated response of one of the interviewee wives:

It is because males are males, they are not females, and our role is different. It is the work of God. Since he is male I have to wash his cloth and keep him clean and he therefore will wear and looks smart. I have to keep his protocol. I have to arrange his cloth always. He is not female. In addition, he performs other agricultural tasks and he may take livestock to the grassland. There is division of labor. It is due to these reasons that I am responsible to carryout domestic chores. If he has extra time, he uses it for enjoyment, and spends it to visit relatives. I only take rest if my children help me in performing domestic chores" (fifty years old woman from madda walabu woreda).

◆ Wives also accomplish domestic chores alone thinking that males have other tasks to perform as that of farm tasks.

◆ Most importantly, husbands' lack of willingness to accomplish household chores.

Generally, among many factors raised as the causes for husbands' zero /less participations in domestic roles are: the belief that domestic roles are women's role, the husband being preoccupied with farm activities, cultural taboo, lack of willingness, domestic tasks are being routine and uncomfortable for man etc.

Mixing of Religion with Culture as the Cause of Gender Division of Labor

Gender relations within the religious and cultural communities are a reflection of gender relations within broader society. Tradition and culture are often used to justify women's subordinate position in society. Misunderstandings with the teachings of Religion have been mixed with culture and hence reinforce the power of men in society and perpetuating gender inequality.

According to the interview made with the religious leaders of three districts under studies:

"Religion preaches about equality of human beings. Gender division of labor is both natural and social construction. For instance, giving birth and breast feeding are the natural roles assigned to women. In addition to that, people also consider child-raising as the roles only given for women. In fact, there is no religious base for allocating child rearing and carrying as only women's roles. Thus, our society mixed religious matters with cultural practices (Goro district Christian religious leader).

Correspondingly, the Muslim religious leaders stated that "gender division of labor is social construction and varies from place to place, and

from time to time. He who respects woman is a man who is respected one. Unless he who humiliated man there is no one who humiliates woman; women are men's cloth and men are women's cloth" (Muslim Religious leaders from Gindhir and Madda Walabu districts).

However, what actually practicing by the population of the study areas are against the teaching of the religious doctrines, as practically observed that the wives are overloaded with socially gendered multiple of tasks while, most husbands are engaged in what is religiously and culturally prohibited like chewing chat, smoking cigarette and drinking alcohol.

Thus, the religious leaders of the study areas ensured that even though there are naturally (biologically) given roles for women and men separately, that biological given roles are over exaggerated and extended to unacceptable and illogical interpretations.

Biological factors as the causes for gender division of labor

Division of labour by sex has been characteristics of all societies but there is no consensus about the source or origin of sexual division of labour. Some scholars see the sexual division of labour as originating from natural or biological differences between the male and female. According to Engel as cited in international journals of gender and women studies (2014), the division of labour was a pure and simple outgrowth of nature; it existed only between two sexes. The men went to war, hunted fish, and provided the raw materials for food and the tools necessary for these pursuits. The women cared for the house and prepared food and clothing.

According to health professionals, genetic has its own contribution for gender division of labor but it is over exaggerated and paved the way even for female discrimination (stereotypes). By nature, male and female have physical and physiological difference and strength which differentiate their activity and this should be coursed to gender division of labor. Among the major areas that make difference between males and females is the content of Red Blood Cells (RBC): the amount of RBC in Male is more than that of female. (Goba referral hospital post basic nursing students, 2019). As a result of this, males have more power in performing farming and carrying heavy workload than females, who face difficulties in doing such activities because their muscular strength are not equal to that of male. It is true that biological difference is inevitable phenomenon in human being as there is even difference in physical strength within the same sex.

Gadaa System and Gender Division of Labor

The Gadaa system broadly encompasses the social, political and economic institutions of Oromo. Legesse (1973) correctly describes the term Gadaa as a concept that stands for the whole way of life of the Oromo people. Before the invention of the Gadaa institution, according to the Guji tradition, five kings and five queens ruled their people. The transition to the Gadaa system took place due to bad governance and widespread lawlessness under the queens and kings.

According to Gadaa System, the jobs classifications are based on age (Gadaa grades) and gender of the Oromo people. Thus, in the Gadaa grades, women are expected to play the role of:-

- ✓ Keeping the children known as Daa'imman in the first Gadaa grade.
- ✓ Stimulating male soldier by singing of the hero song as he fighting enemy during the war.
- ✓ Preparing the food for males
- ✓ Overall, women have active roles in ritual practice of the Oromo society.

Although there is strict division of labor between the Bale women and men, some kind has changed over time. For example, earlier when pastoralism was their main activity, where one household has fifties or hundreds of cattle, milking cows was the task of men, and women were responsible only for preserving and managing milk. With declining herd size and production of milk, men abandoned this activity. Household milk consumption has also significantly been reduced, and milk has increasingly become a commodity. In the past, milk was used only for family consumption, but today, since production is limited, even the less preferred milk, is sold at the market, and little is left for household consumption (Goro district FDG participants).

At normal condition, fetching water is considered as the exclusive task of women. Occasionally, a husband may help his wife by fetching water when he is returning from watering livestock, especially if she is pregnant or very sick. However, girls provide greater service to their mothers in fetching water. If they are old enough, fetching water becomes girls' main responsibility. Small boys also do this task if there is shortage of female labor. (Figure 1) One role model husband of the study area in Goro district participated in FGD disclosed that *all the current blindly assigned roles imposed on women are systematically transferred from the males' shoulder to the females' backbone, in addition to the biological roles of giving birth and breast feeding given to them naturally. For instance, child caring in the past was not the duty of wife; rather the mandate of husband, who holds his baby even on his back, using traditional baby pouching material known as kal'oo, made up of goats' skin, and he later also shouldering kids when they reached for that.*



Figure 1. Photo of women and girls fetching water from river of Melka Buta in Goro district, April, 2019 G.C

Source: Researchers field work

Furthermore, Abbaa Gadaa leader of Madda Walabu district stated how the current gender division of labor, in contrary to the indigenous one, is came into being in Oromo societies (translated as follows): “Today we are in a cultural and identity assimilations; Gadaa system has a considerable place for women, elders, children and human being in general and, even for non-human elements of our environment such as plants and animals, but nowadays what culturally prohibited are becoming the norms and values of the society, while eroding the original ones. Today, in relation to the so-called civilization, especially in urban areas, there are insertion of uncultured practices (*faan-baatee*) on the native cultures and values. Some of these are: Youngsters’ alcoholism - intoxication and chewing of chat, female harassment, prostitution - marketing, adultery, verbal abuse, theft, murder, and fabrication of false story including by, who are said to be politicians, elders and religious persons. Similarly The 60 year’s old key informant, Haadha Siinqee from Goro district, narrated her assumption about the current gender division of labor in this manner: I never believe in the saying that these are women’s jobs and the others are men’s; because:

I have 12 children; I am wife of my husband; I am the farmer, while my husband plough the land, I prepare food for him; I collect firewood; I fetch water; I look after the cattle, I clean the cattle’s compound; I am the decision maker of my home together with my husband and I go to

*the market and sell and buy products to my family. So I am doing what the men are doing. How you say these jobs are men’s jobs and the other are women’s jobs? It was the erosion of our indigenous cultures like *ateetee* and *siinqee* institutions that create the current gender division of labor (job segregation) and violate women’s human rights. She summarized her idea of defending women’s right through *Siinqee* institution, using this poem which contains five lines:*

Hayyichallee anatu dayee (I gave birth to the wise or intelligent man!)

Wayyichallee anatu dayee (I gave birth to Honorable or noble man!)

Sheektichallee anatu dayee (I gave birth to sheeka – religious intellectual man!)

Waan wayyichaa maal balleessinee (What we wrong about Honorable man)

Waan sheektichaa Rabbitti geessinee (We appeal to God about sheeka!).

The Above verse discloses that women are the mother of all of us including the wise, honored, and religious men and hence have respect and recognition in indigenous Oromo culture, which especially established in the *Siinqee* and *Ateetee* institutions to safeguard women’s rights. The verse has the implication that men, including the prominent one, in society ought to respect women;

otherwise, if they are not in position to do so, they should be accountable according to their quality, meaning that wise men should be responsible to their intelligence; noble men to their honorability and religious men to their Religion and therefore, must refrain from women's rights violation, such as the blindly imposed current gender division of labor, which is the concern of this paper.

The Perceived Gender Roles Given To Husbands and Wives in the Study Areas

Wives Roles

The focus group discussants as well as the key informants of the study areas highlighted the major roles carried out by the wives, enumerated as follows:

- ✓ Cooking
- ✓ Cleaning house and compound
- ✓ Bed making
- ✓ Care giving for children
- ✓ Fetching water
- ✓ Marketing material for food
- ✓ Hand wash
- ✓ Cleaning cattle dunk
- ✓ Bathing husband foot with hot water
- ✓ Transporting meal to farming area
- ✓ Milking
- ✓ Processing food
- ✓ Carrying for elder, and sick persons
- ✓ Washing cloths
- ✓ Bring water and collecting woods of fire, etc.

The finding of the study revealed that the above listed roles are roles exclusively given to wives in study areas. Accordingly, wives are preoccupied with multiple of the tasks in the study areas because they perform all these tasks alone without sharing to her husband as it was culturally outlawed to perform such tasks by male. Even though wives perform all these roles, the husbands never give recognition for her effort; rather there are even proverbs which consider wives as the property /subjects of the husbands in the study areas. For instance, one woman interviewee from Madda walabu district spelled out what is culturally said to women in her locality that *"Harreen mooraa hin qabdu mooraa loonii galtii dubartiin mana hin qabdu mana dhiiraa galtii"*, meaning that *donkeys have no home but live in the home of cattle; and similarly, women have no home but live in that of men.*

Wives of role model farmer of Gindhir in the focus group explained that some women who are very 'strong' are able to convince their husbands to help out around the house with the children, cooking, and cleaning. But she finalized her assumption by saying that "This is 'very rare'. This suggests that sexism is not heavily stigmatized in the culture of study areas.

According to the interview and focus group discussion

held with the participants, the basic sources of income for the husbands and wives of the study areas are livestock. The livestock benefit them indifferent ways, namely as a source of income, milk, meat and as a means of transportation. However, those poor family especially female headed household and the divorced women have as no such livestock particularly mule, donkey and camel that used for transportation purpose. As the result, many of the wives of the study areas used their foot to transport agricultural products such vegetable and fruits of the local products, even to collect firewood and water they made a long journey and waste their effort and time.

Husbands Roles

The male focus group discussants strongly opposed the assumption that men can do women's work and vice versa., because they argued that house chore activities are typically women's or girls' tasks. On the other hand, a more technical house task, like dealing mechanic equipment, is traditionally a man's job.

Generally, the discussion highlighted that as women are both biologically and socially shoulder more responsibilities.

Nonetheless, there are model individuals who recognize these multiple and socially constructed roles as culturally assigned to women and nothing is wrong if it is carried out by male and the following picture shows the example of husband who engaged in water fetching.

According to the data gathered from both focus group discussions and in depth interview, there are clear gender division of labor between husband and wives in addition to the natural (biological roles assigned to male and female). The result portrayed factors for less engagement of wives in crop production. These are: the belief that women don't fit, that is, physically incompetent to carry out farm tasks; husbands lack of willingness to participate them in the task, considering the tasks as male's tasks culturally and naturally, it is difficult for female to plow and lack of know-how to do some tasks as that of plowing; the belief that culture gave tasks to males and females separately; it is the work of God, who creates difference among sexes and assigns their tasks.

Surprisingly, even many participants did not differentiate the biological and the socially constructed roles among male and female rather than considering all as naturally assigned roles for the two genders. Thus, the studies revealed that husbands are assigned roles such as:

- ✓ Performing productive or income generating tasks;
- ✓ It is believed that outdoor activities should be performed by male;
- ✓ Planting and Harvesting or gathering crops;

- ✓ Social politics or conflict resolution activities;
- ✓ Decision making of buying and selling of property; Farming crop Land;
- ✓ Leading family member; Slaughtering of animal; Burring of dead human body.

According to the interview and focus group discussion made with the participants of the study areas, even there is clear gender division of labor regarding to the product selling and buying of husband and wife to and from the local market accessible for them. Accordingly, the wives are responsible to sell agricultural products such as milk, butter, potato, tomato, papaya, fire wood, onion, cabbage, etc... This fact is revealed by the following picture. (Figure 2)



Figure 2. The photo of girls and women selling milk to the local market, sitting on the side of street in Goro district April, 2019 G.C

Source: Researchers field work

The data that was gathered from interview and focus group discussion revealed the factors that affect the participation of couples in the task of selling agricultural products. The complicated factors for the active participation of wives and the less engagement of husbands in the task of selling agricultural products were:

- ▶ husbands consider the task as simple;
- ▶ Culture-stereotype towards selling agricultural products: if a husband does selling those items, he will be labeled as 'female or wife' because selling these items by husbands is considered as a taboo for the peoples of the study areas. Generally, the participants argued that for one thing it is shame for male to take milk, potato, tomato and onion to the market. It is a taboo. If he does it, he is labeled as 'beera or nadhoo', meaning that he is womanish. The society or his friends will also say he does tasks for which he is not responsible to carry out and he does a task of females. So, if he meet with males, they say go and sell your milk like female and do a task of females (focus group discussants).
- ▶ Economical (cost-effective) factor:

- Husband's being addicted to chat and cigarette: the husband doesn't bother for household expense rather he only wants to satisfy his need. if it is the husbands who do the selling the items, they will spent the money on their own sake i.e. to satisfy their need like buying chat and drinking alcohol which is expensive these days, and cigarette as well as and eat quality food together with their friends in the hotels that are difficult to afford their cost. Today, the cost of chat is too high. It can be imagined how much money is sufficient to cover the cost of chat that the husband uses to chew. The minimum cost of chat is increasing from time to time, not only the cost of chat, chewing chat by itself requires catalyst materials like cigarette and sugar. In relation to this, there is recently innovated term by those who chew chat: '*caatiin madfiidha sigaaraan xiyyitii*', which implies that the two are inseparable, that is, whenever chat is available, the existence of cigarette is also equally important. So, if this is the case, the wife and children will leave empty handed. The wife will not get what she deserves from her husband while he comes back home selling of the agricultural products. This will result in exposing the survival of the household at stake. The issue that should be noted here is that since husbands know that they are addicted to chat and cigarette which will affect the family living and income conditions, they agreed with their wife to sell the items in order to ensure the needs of the household.

- Wives being wise for satisfying their household needs, selling the items and their being wise to sell the items with expensive price as well as their eagerness to sell the items going anywhere including 'gulits', smaller marketplaces, in which women sell and buy daily used household products. So, there must be a mechanism to arrange this extravagancy through giving this task for the wife. Thus, if it is the wives who do selling the items, they will definitely buy any material for household consumption and their children; and they would save the remaining money that will be spend on other costs including medication fee.

Thus, according to the finding of the study, many husbands and even youngsters of the study areas in general are addicted to many things. One wife from Gindhir narrated how her husband addicted to chat in the following manner: *I perform all the domestic chores and I am small trader of potato and tomato, and I feeding my family by the income that I earn from this small marketing activity. But my husband is always chews chat together with his friends and I'm the one who provide money for him. I have no right to oppose him because if I refused him, he will automatically divorce me and divorced women has less recognition in the society and the possibilities for remarriage is also rare.* She affirmed that males are extravagant. They use the money for satisfying their addiction. They don't bother for the expense of the household. But, females are comparatively good at saving the money and invest for the household and

children needy.

Opposite of female, male engaged in selling of cattle, sheep and goats and thus, there is clear classification of marketing of products for male and female in the study areas. (Figure 3)



Figure 3. Photo of Men Selling goats and sheep at the Market of Gindhir District April, 2019 G.C

Source: Researchers field work

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and discussions, the following conclusions were made.

- The chief parameters concerning work are gender and age (women and the youngest do most of the work), in Gindhir, Goro and Madda Walabu districts. Unfortunately, however, the efforts and contribution made by girls and women did not get the deserved position.
- Women were represented and portrayed in a stereotypical manner. Women were shown engaged in a number of roles, but are vulnerable to: victims of violence, early marriage, and divorce, or as dutiful: mothers, wives and daughters. Men, on the other hand, were very rarely shown as caregivers and nurturers; while others were observed in a wide variety of different roles, from powerful decision making to being the proverbial man on the street. These stereotypes are drawn from the gender roles ascribed to men and women in society, reinforced by cultural attitude and patriarchal ideology.

Apart from accomplishing domestic chores, which are usual for women in the agricultural society of Ethiopia, wives of Bale zone agro pastoralist woreda accomplished almost all tasks in livestock productions which were perceived to be male's tasks in agricultural community and even in other agro-pastoral areas. The factors that affect the division of tasks among couples in household chores; crop, vegetable and fruit, and livestock

productions; selling of agricultural products and saving and managing the income of the household were - cultural, mixing cultural issues with religion, economic, the perceived difficulty of the tasks, the belief that division of labor is natural and wife's considered being wise in accomplishing the tasks. The overall finding together with the results obtained from other researches affirmed what many researchers and scholars forwarded That is, gender division of labor varies across cultures, within cultures, crops and tasks in a crop. As we have seen in the discussion part of this paper, the couples accomplish tasks in the variables sometimes similar across different cultures, crops and tasks, but it also varies in these regards. For instance, agro-pastoral areas of Ethiopia don't always allocate similar tasks for the couples. There is variation across different areas including Bale zone agro pastoralist woreda. The most likely factor might be the specific culture of the areas. For instance, chewing chat by husbands is the common practice in agro pastoralist areas of Bale zone and taken as the most influencing factor of the division of tasks among couples in livestock production, selling of agricultural products and the role of saving and managing the income of the household; but it might not be the case in other agro-pastoral areas of Ethiopia

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the major findings and discussions, the following recommendations were forwarded.

- ▶ Awareness campaign need to be done for concerned bodies as to the fact that wives have tasks and roles even in saving and managing the income of the household as in the case of the study areas which is different from the perceived fact that the head of the household is the husband and does managing the same.
- ▶ In order to dismantle culture based gender division of labor, it is needed to introduce equality at work. Avoiding assignment of tasks according to sex but according to individual abilities and preference.
- ▶ In order to deconstruct such religious seeming distorted cultural attitudes towards gender division of labor; our societies have to clearly understand what religion preaches and teaches about humanity in general and gender division of labor in particular.
- ▶ By taking gender equality perspectives into account, policies have to be better defined in terms of real needs of women and men. Gender mainstreaming is a real win- win strategy. Moreover, mainstreaming gender issues have to start from the household (family) level;
- ▶ It is necessary to create awareness in relation to gender and gender division of labor for the society of agro pastoralist areas of Bale zone in order to aware them on the issue that gender division of labor is culturally and socially constructed which will help to do

away the belief that the tasks assigned to them are natural (God's gift).

► Awareness creations have to be done by the religious leaders of the study areas because many husbands and wives of the study areas don't know the distinction between religious teaching and cultural construction of gender roles.

► Religious leaders, Abbaa Gadaa, and elders of the local communities and the government have to work cooperatively; especially, on the current blindly assigned gender division of labor that men engaged in chewing chat and female engagement on buying the chat and boiling the coffee for those who chew the chat in groups.

► Further research needs to be done on the issue of the role of wives in saving and managing the income of the household in the study area in the relation to husbands' economic power since the researchers believe that such studies will add more knowledge on this topic and will be vital for concerned bodies and policy makers.

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