

Research article

Critical Analysis on the Causes and Consequences of Gender Based Violence and the Collapse of Siinqee and Attette institution of women in Oromiya Regional State of Ethiopia.

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The questions on what causes gender based violence and the factors that exacerbate it have been an area of rigorous academic writing and debate. Feminist explanation on the causes and consequences of gender based violence are very diverse and interlocked. Thus, the objective of this article is to critically analyze the causes and consequence of gender based violence's in Oromiya regional state of Ethiopia. Thus, to effectively confront gender based violence, inequalities, in justice, the structures and systems which act as root causes of gender inequality must be addressed. Gender based violence is any act of physical, psychological, and sexual impacts on women by men due to the fact that they are women. In order to achieve the stated objectives, the reviewers critically and systematically reviewed different researches, articles and books and legal documents. Finally, the reviewers concluded that the government is unable to achieve its dream of achieving gender equality, eradication of absolute poverty and hunger due to gender based violence. Gender based violence has persistent practices in all areas of the Oromiya regional state. It is found that the main causes for gender based violence among the society of Oromiya regional state are: cultural and traditional marital structure, religion based attitudes, gender socialization, social attitudes toward sexes, patriarchal institutions, and the weakening of traditional institutions of Gada systems like attette and siinqee that safeguard the rights of women and non-cultural causes like; illiteracy, alcohol and drug abuse and chewing chat. The reviewers also identified the main types of gender based violence among the regions like economic abuse, sexual harassment/ emotional and verbal abuse, woman beating, and rape. Other types of gender based violence like abduction, female genital mutilation, and early marriage and divorce and the increasing rate of female headed house hold due to the migration of husband to other state. The aforementioned of type's violence had brought significant consequences on the women of the region in general and women empowerment in particular. Among these : Divorce, poverty, injury, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, murder and the frightening rate of female headed house hold.

Key words: Gender, Gender Based Violence, Causes, Consequences, Siinqee and Attette

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INTRODUCTION

Gender based violence is a phenomenon rooted in unequal power relations between women and men and experienced across culture, across socio economic status, ethnicities and other demographic diversities. Violence against women reinforces gender hierarchies and power imbalances between women and men within families and communities (Fulu, et al, 2013).

Jeanne (2006) looked at gender based violence as any harm that is perpetrated against a person's will that results in a negative impact on the physical or psychological health, development, identity of a person that is as a result of gender power inequalities that exploit the differences between males and females. It has become internationally recognized as a denial of human rights to women since they are the mostly affected (UNFPA, 2005). Globally family break ups are on increase since wives can hardly contain the manifestations of gender based violence. This has compromised family relations both on rural and urban households.

Gender based violence encompasses a range of acts of violence committed against females because they are females and against males because they are males, based on how a particular society assigns and views roles and expectations for these people. It includes sexual violence, intimate partner or spouse abuse (domestic violence), emotional and psychological abuse, sex trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, harmful traditional practices for example female genital mutilation forced marriage, infanticide of girl children and discriminatory practices based on gender (Vann, 2002). Gender Based Violence may also take other forms such verbal abuse, deprivation, physical abuse, and gambling by men, polygamy, property grabbing, dowry and bride price, divorce and desertion, teenage pregnancy, and abusive in-laws drinking and chewing chat which is the most persistent practice especially by youngsters Oromiya regional state since the regions are main growers of this green leaf called chat than other regions of the Ethiopia.

It is fact that Gender based violence is a worldwide problems that increasingly drawing the attention of citizens, states and international community. This is especially for Ethiopian where traditional patriarchal societal structure are interwoven with feminization of poverty and illiteracy. Thus, gender based violence is a day to toady reality for Ethiopian woman.

Causes of Gender Based Violence's in Oromiya National Regional State

The Weakening and Disappearance of Ateetee and Siinqee institutions of Gada systems

Gadaa as a system of governance includes several

institutions which manifest themselves in overall socio-economic and political culture. Gadaa has been an egalitarian and democratic socio political and cultural system of governance, which has also been practiced among all Oromo branches and other Cushitic peoples (Mekuria, 2011).

The role of women in the Gadaa political power has created controversies among scholars. Some argue that women were completely excluded from the Gadaa system while others strongly indicate that the women held a significant position particularly by referring to their institutions of Ateetee and Siinqee (Qabbanee, 1991). Ateetee is a ritual ceremony exclusively practiced by women in the belief that it makes them fecund, happy, wealthy and prosperous. It is one of the dominant ritual ceremonies to celebrate in births and to support women with no children by praying to Waaqa (God) to give them children. It is a cultural representation in the Oromo society at large to counter male dominations and to enforce religious sanctions against related abuses.

Siinqee on the other hand, is a ritual stick that only married women carry during various social, ritual, spiritual and political purposes. The honor of siinqee starts on the wedding day when the stick is given to the bride on the very day of marriage and stays with her throughout the rest of her life. Siinqee is closely associated with the world of women and symbolizes women's rights over material and spiritual power. A woman carrying this emblems always signifies that she has to be respected and anybody who touches siinqee and haadha siinqee (possessor of siinqee) would be punished according to Oromo customary law. More specifically, when there are inter- ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts or wars break out the women carrying siinqee intervene among the warring parties; fighting would stop immediately and reconciliation will follow. Most importantly it is a symbol of women's power which prevents bloodshed and maintains the Oromo nagaa (peace (Kuwee , 1991).

Ateetee is an institution by which women posed and exercised some enormous spiritual and moral supremacy over the men. It is a ritual ceremony that women used to exercise exclusively as a way of strengthening their solidarity and also use it as a tool to counter male domination. In the traditional Oromo society, the Ateetee ritual shows that men are functionally dependent on women in many ways. It is a vivid indication of the place women had in the religious and cultural philosophy of the people (Jeylan, 2005). Ateetee is also female deity or divinity which women worship in the belief that it makes them fecund, happy, wealthy and prosperous is day to day realities for Ethiopian woman.

Now a day's siinqee, Ateetee and other Oromo cultural institutions are endangered in Oromiya regional state due to various internal and external factors. These are both domestic and external like the expansion of Christianity and Islam, and globalization effects. The teaching of these two religions is intolerant to indigenous traditions

and beliefs. So that, they consider these tradition as evil. It was the erosion of these indigenous cultures like Ateetee and siinqee institutions that create the current gender division of labor (job segregation) and violate women's human rights. The following poem which contains five lines clearly state how Siinqee and Ateetee institution are endangered by the religion:

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 (Gutema and Sultan, M. (2019).

Due to the weakening and eradication of Siinqee and Ateetee, women are vulnerable to gender based violence and social disintegration in the Oromiya regional state. The change in the religious practice, the influence of globalization and human movement from place to place degraded and underestimate the practice and fear on Ateetee and Siinqee worship in the current. As a result of the weakening of these institutions, different gender based violence's are increasing in type and magnitude among the Oromo society. The current social controlling mechanisms like the court and elders council are not as effective as women's indigenous institutions. Because they are male dominant and the decisions are also influenced by patriarchal social institutions (Tsegaye, 2015). Similarly the role of globalization for gender based violence in Oromiya regional state are summarized as follows: it is the modern marriage systems that facilitate feminization of jobs (tasks), or it is the western cultures and values that eroded our indigenous gender division of tasks. 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. Furthermore, Abbaa Gadaa leader stated how the current gender based violence and

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. Faan - baatee ofirraa dhorkuuf aadaa jilaa keenya deefachuun dirqama (in order to defend our self from these harmful uncultured/ fabricated practices, it is must to regain our aadaa jilaa (Gutema and sultan, 2019).

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

The supply and demand for alcoholic drink increases from time to time in Oromiya regional state. There are different alcohols producing companies planted in Oromiya in the last few years. This shows us the demand for alcohol drinking is increasing in the region. In addition to those produced in factories, there are different local alcohols producing system. The local alcohol producing system. There is strong relationship between alcohol consumption and gender based violence in the rural of Oromiya regional state. The different research found that the majority of men who drink alcohol and chew chat violate their family while they return back to home. This violation ranges from oral insulting of the family members to physical attack. The violence is not only confined to the family, it extends to the neighbors and the local peoples.

In some rural areas of the region there is also the supply of beer and other different modern alcohols even in remote and inaccessible areas of the region. For instance, Arake locally produced alcohol is high in Arsi Nagele. Arake have high alcoholic content than any other alcohol weather those produced in factories or locally produced types. The consumption of Arake by many of the rural farmers 'of the regions causes' family violence since a man is highly affected by the alcohol. It affects the whole body function and makes the man uncontrolled.

Moreover, alcohol selling rooms are becoming center for girl's sexual appropriation, commercial sex and gender based violence. It is through the owner of alcoholic beverage room that girls are recruited and used for the sexual purpose. This situation steadily increasing

in cities of the regions like Adama, Assela, Jima, Nekemte, Robe, Ambo and shashamane due to the center of universities and contact to visitors, guests and investors as result of globalization .The girl is negotiated by money through broker and with the owner of the beverage and the man in need. A virgin girl is appropriated with about one thousand birr that is mutually shared by the girl and the supplier of the beverage (Tsegaye 2015).

Besides, to alcohol, drug abuse is another factor behind gender based violence. Chat is the dominant drug that is prevalent to the rural areas where it has proximity to the urban. In urban surrounding villages of the region, the youths are more prime to Chat addiction that they adopted through urban interaction. Thus, they invest their money on those alcohols and chat using the dominance they have in the society without the consultation of the family. This in the long run, put the family's economic well-being falls on danger and creates fertile ground for the perpetuation of feminization of poverty in the region (Gutema and sultan, 2019).

Illiteracy

One of the major factors for the prevalence of gender based violence is lack of education. But, educated person can be seen as perpetrators of gender victims in urban areas and literate females are also the subject of the violence. When we look in comparison, rural women are culturally tied to discriminatory social practices that need social awareness and education to be changed. Most of the women never know how to present their cases to the court. It is difficult for them to write and read provision related to women's right and responsibility. Hence, they find it better to present their issues at the elder's council. This institution never requires advanced knowledge, much money, long time processing. Research indicates that, Oromo elders investigate in their own ways about who has done wrong. If it happens that the man is wrong and mistreated his wife, elders would advise him not to do it again, but not in front of the wife who has complained. Thus an Oromo woman refrains from complaining against her husband. A woman can be labeled as crazy if she is talkative, especially talking in public against her husband (Hirut, 2000).

Due to lack of time for study, most of the girls remain ineffective in their education and forced to traditional and religious marriage as optional. This further exacerbates gender violence among women. Daughters are usually expected to help their mother with household chores when a family has the capacity to educate children, it is the son who gets the chance to be educated. The reasons why sons are chosen than daughters for educations is that they are thought to stay with and could eventually turn out to be assets to the family. Daughters on the other hand, are meant to go to another family when they get married (Guday, 1998).

Lack of Commitment from Decision Making Bodies

Commitment plays crucial role for the success of any activity. To achieve gender equality and minimize gender based violence the question of commitment is corner stone issue at all levels of institutions and government officials. Commitment at the highest level would lead to the allocation of space and resources for gender equality in development plans and programs. It is commitment that would motivate program managers and experts to take on gender equality in their work and ensure that competence in gender mainstreaming reaches into different aspects of development. Having this guiding principle in gender equality work in mind, research had made to assess whether or not decision-making bodies are committed for gender equality. This was conducted in the form of interview and focus group discussion with the participants. Thus lack of commitment among decision maker bodies are indicated in various ways. Inadequate budget allocation for gender and, lack of training in the area of gender, the issue of accountability, patriarchal attitude etc. is worth mentioning as far as the issues of commitment are concerned (Gutema and sultan 2019).

Patriarchal Institution

Patriarchy is a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways. The subordination that we experience at a daily level, regardless of the class we might belong to, takes various forms – discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence – within the family, at the place of work, in society.

Patriarchy is in short, the rule of the father or rule in the hands of man. Among patriarchal societies like the Oromo, men are entitled culturally as decision maker up on the society in general and the family in particular. It is the responsibility of women to accept and implement those decisions made at the society level as well as the family level. This decision making is most of the time in favor of male than female by the social, economic and political spheres. In some cases, refusal to implement the decision made by men causes violent punishments like physical, psychological ,and sexual. Patriarchal institution appropriated males as property owners and females as one part of the property of men.

For instance in Arsi Oromo culture Female is considered weak, unknowledgeable, foolish and irrational. Due to this conceptions, it is not advisable for the husband to give power for the woman to administer property and family. Among the Oromo it is said that:

- dubartiin beektee beektus, ilmi ofii ishii gorsa (even if woman knows something her son advise her). From this proverbs we can understand that the knowledge of much older women is not equal

with the younger boy. Boys are more knowledgeable than women because boys have the sex of masculinity. This proverb also strengthen patriarchal outlook on women.

- Taa'urra Durba dhalchuu wayya (interview with Abba Gada of Goro district, 2019), which can be translated as getting birth of the female child is better than absence of doing nothing; indicating that rather than having not any job it is comparably better to get female child; thus, this is among the proverbs underestimate the status of female in the eyes of male.
- Harreen mooraa hin qabdu mooraa loonii galtii dubartiin mana hin qabdu mana dhiiraa galti", meaning that donkeys have no home but live in the home of cattle; and similarly, women have no home but live in men's home.
- የቄስ ሚስት አወቅሽ አወቅሽ ቢልዋት መጻፍ አጠበች ' (to mean A priest's wife washesa book when she is repeatedly told that she is clever'
- ሴት ምን ታውቃለች አዋቂ ትወልዳለች እንጅ (A woman does not know anything, but she gives birth to a knowledgeable child).
- ለሴት ምክር አይገባትም ('A woman cannot understand advice).
- ብልህ ሴትና ቀንዳም አህያ አይገኙም ('it is impossible to get a wise woman and a donkey with horns' These proverbs directly deny women's intellectual capacity and wisdom and even compared woman with an animal which is considered as the most stupid by the society, i.e., a donkey. The society thinks that getting a wise and intellectual woman is like getting a donkey with horns, which is quite unrealistic and illogical. But these proverbs are widely in usage in rural areas of Ethiopian society and such patriarchal thinking are still shared by the educated peoples. All the aforementioned scenarios clearly notice that women are perceived by the society as lacking intelligence, wisdom, artistic qualities, and critical thinking.

The proverbial expressions implicitly suggest that women cannot learn. Through such expressions, the community reflects its ideology that trying to teach women is all worthless and futile.

In order to control women in patriarchal society and maintain the male supremacy there are two ways of manipulation.

(a) Through submission of women to the ideology of patriarchy and, (b) through coercion or violence. In order to gain respect and acceptance from the woman, a man uses physical and psychological influence on woman. Now days, some woman are on the way to struggle patriarchal system through the council of elders, and the court while majority of the woman consider male dominance as legitimate and natural.

Consequences of Gender Based Violence

In Ethiopia, sexual gender based violence occurs in the streets, in public transportations, in the work place and most importantly within the family. It can be said that generally it happens everywhere and wherever a woman or a girl goes she is vulnerable to one or any other form of gender based violence. This condition often exacerbated by the different sociocultural norms of the Ethiopian society which disregards men's sexually harassing behavior while affirming women's submissive reaction to such acts. That is, mostly the male who did the harassment is not blamed. But rather the society sanctions the woman for violating the normative culture expectations to which she is responsible through socialization into culture.

Thus, sexual harassment in Ethiopia is often justified by the naturalistic argument that men are likely to be aggressive as a result of their biological nature when in fact is mainly concerned with gender socialization and power. This naturalistic argument supports that gender differences in sexual needs and patterns of sexual expressions are determined by nature which implies that while men are endowed with greater sex drives and greater forms of sexual expressions, women have lesser sexual drives and control than men. Men are often socialized to believe that they are indeed superior to women and that this superiority emanates from their natural physical and biological characteristics.

The other reason for the prevalence of sexual harassment in the country is the patriarchal nature of the society which is also related to gender socialization. That is, children who are brought up in this patriarchal setting will grow up believing that men are superior to women, a woman's place is in the home, it is only men that should hold public status and offices etc... This concept of patriarchy is embedded in cultural and traditional norms that discriminate women, religions that hold women in an inferior status, employment opportunities that give preference to men and some discriminatory laws that do not encourage women's participation in the public sphere. For instance, sexual harassment laws for the protection of women at the workplace or in educational settings, has not been enacted yet which envisages the country's failure to live up to international standards it has committed itself to uphold.

The FDRE (1995) constitution extends recognition to marriage concluded under systems of religious or customary laws and it does not preclude the customary or religious adjudication of disputes relating to personal and family laws, with the consent of the parties to dispute. The recognition to and non-preclusion of religious and customary laws ignores the fact that this recognition may be a potential threat that perpetuates the existing gender inequalities in the society. Because, intentionally or unintentionally, these laws usually work in the way that sustain and maintain the subordination and

oppression of women.

Successful trials of gender based violence cases are relatively rare considering the scale and the severity of the phenomenon. For instance, Women domestic workers are often reluctant to report the incidences as a result of cultural, economic and educational factors. "...they may feel ashamed to disclose the incident; they may fear losing their jobs and not finding other jobs if they speak out which is especially true if the case goes to court, as the process may take a long time and discredit the worker in the eyes of other future potential employers; and the victims may not be aware that domestic violence is a crime. This failure of disclosure enforces the invisibility of gender based violence that continues to be inflicted on women. Thus, some of the effects of gender based violence are discussed as follows.

Retarding Education among Children

Gender based violence has impacted on children's education especially girls' education. Due to the domestic work nature that women and girls collectively do, in case women left all the responsibilities were left at the helm of girls of the family. The end result was dropping out of school which greatly impacted on such girls' ability to empower themselves after marriage. because they lacked skills to earn income as they never attended fully to education. This was responsible for the re-occurrence of violence as most girls dropped out of school and married at an early age. This situation common especially in agro pastoralist zones of Oromiya region.

Accelerate feminization of Poverty

Feminist approaches to women's poverty begin with the premise that pervasive gender inequalities and biases within households, labor markets, legal codes, and political systems throughout the world, render women more vulnerable than men to poverty (Meer, 1994). The feminist scholars focus on the gender implications and social costs of poverty. These include the growing involvement of women and children in the informal economy; differential treatment of girls and boys in households; pressure to get girls married off quickly; higher school drop-out rates for girls; less control over fertility; and recourse to prostitution. (United Nations, 1995).

Women's lack of economic resources and education increase their vulnerability to poverty. Poverty leads women into different unproductive activities like commercial sex workers which increases their vulnerability to sexual assault. In rural parts of Oromiya, women are migrated to urban areas due to the prevalence of early marriage, poverty and for seeking

better lives. In the town most of them become housemaids or prostitutes where they are more often raped as they make their jobs as prostitutes or street girls and even at the homes what they serve as maids. Moreover, females who came from low income families are observed to be deceived by gifts, money and promise of marriage which is some of the ways that increases their exposure to being to gender based violence.

Exacerbate Marital Divorce and Separation

The practice of marriage in Oromiya regional state has different forms traditional, cultural, religious and civil. Still the traditional and religious marriages are widely practice where civil marriage is becoming more common. Marriage in Ethiopia as the research of Tilson & Larsen(2000) is nearly common where about 95% of women marry by age 30 where as 45 % of all first marriage ends in divorce within 30 years. Divorce is one of social problem challenging family, which is the fabric of society. Regardless of all efforts made by the community and state to protect marriage and family divorce is unavoidable reality for many families in the world. In case of Ethiopia, the arguments about the increasing number of divorces are both internal to the family and external. The reasons peculiar to the situation of the country are ethnic politics, job displacement, economic crises and changing attitude towards divorce (Daniel, 1994).

The agreement of spouses and /or a petition for divorce is the outcome of a malfunction of family for many personal, social and economic reasons. According to Pankhurst (cited in Tilson & Larsen, 2000), on study divorce in Ethiopia, the most common reasons women indicated among the Amhara people in North Shewa province as causes of divorce were childlessness, physical abuse, maltreatment, wasting money, adultery, exerting too much control over personal activities, forcing intercourse, homesickness, and a large difference in age.

A gendered culture of a society is part and parcel of the society's complex socio-economic structure. Then, it is only when one sees it within this broader perspective that one may build a clear understanding of gender construction. Within the Oromo cultural practices, there are laws or legalities and various other manifestations of gender stereotypes that directly or indirectly reinforce gendered culture.

In areas where the Gada System is active or a powerful socio-political institution, as in Borana and Guji. There have been forces of law governing gender and other relationships between members of the society. In areas where the Gada System has collapsed, on the other hand, there are ample tacit social value systems that still enforce gender based violence. For instance the differential treatment of boys and girls from the moment of their birth. At birth, parents are asked whether they have a gurbaa (baby son) or intala (baby daughter).

Widowed women have rare chance to remarried, even if remarried she served as the servant (gursummeettii). There are shocking proverbs that strictly oppose divorced woman to be married by another man;

- (dubartii heerumtee ilma qabdu dhiisii sa'a jabbii qabu hin bitin; gafaa ati eelmitu sirra koree si cabsa waan ta'eef- not even widowed woman having a son, do not buy a cow having a calf; because it would broke you when you milking the cow) (Gutema and sultan, 2019). This is the social alienation that the divorced women face and the possibilities divorced women to be married by on other men in the region as a result the number female house hold are at alarming rate. The proverbs clearly reveal that women are at inferior position when compared to men. Most of these proverbs discourage women and encourage men domination and violence up on women. To mention some examples;
- Niitiin dhiirsa mootu olla horn hin gootu (A women that dominates her husband will not at all value her neighbors);
- Namni beera koorse galgala qorsaa nyaata, namni farada koorse galgala kooraa baata (one who has spoiled his wife eats roasted barley for his supper, one who has spoiled his hoarse carries saddle at night).
- Niitiin dhirsi koorse itilleerraa mucucaatti (A wife whose husband has spoiled, her slides from a tanned hide).

The role of proverbs in strengthening women's subordination and violation, most men and women did not refuse to the local sayings that have negative connotation for women. Since proverbs are spice of speech among the Oromo, these proverbs are repeatedly said on the speech concerning gender based violence. This attitude on the other hand implanted in the mind of children and preserve and perpetuate male dominance.

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