

**Early Marriage and Its Effects on Girls' Education in Rural Ethiopia:
The Case of Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam, North-Western Ethiopia**



Overleaf: 9 years old girl, forced to marry at the age of 8 while she was attending first grade, and her husband, a farmer (Photo: Guday Emirie, Rim Peasant Association, January 2004)

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The Case of Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam, North-Western Ethiopia**

Dissertation

Submitted for Doctorate/Doctoral Grade in Ethnology (Social and Cultural Anthropology)
to the Faculty of Social Sciences,
Georg-August University of Goettingen

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Göttingen, June 2005

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Date of Defense: July 22, 2005

To my husband and sons

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people and institutions have contributed to the completion of this study in different ways. My deepest and sincere gratitude goes to my main advisor, Prof. Dr. Brigitta Benzing, for her guidance, insightful comments, and determined facilitation extended throughout my study. She supported me to win the DAAD scholarship and made this study a success by assisting me in several respects. She did everything possible to secure me the financial assistance of the Austrian Embassy Development Co-operation for my fieldwork research in Ethiopia. She has devoted her time for advising, reading and commenting my work starting from the initial stage. Without her valuable comments, constructive criticisms and the time devoted to guide me through my work at its different levels and reading the final manuscript, it would not have been completed on time. However, I would like to take full responsibility for any problem concerning this text work. I also express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Ulrich Braukämper for taking his time for reading and commenting the manuscript.

My deepest gratitude and appreciation goes to Dr. Hirut Terefe and Dr. Alula Pankhurst, my former teachers, at the Department of Social Anthropology and Sociology in Addis Ababa University, for their encouragement and moral support in pursuing my Ph.D. study. I am also very grateful to Dr. Judith Narrowe, a social anthropologist at Dalarna College University in Sweden, for providing literature on gender and anthropology and her keen interest in my research. I acknowledge to those scholars whose works I have frequently consulted and/or quoted in this thesis. Furthermore, I must thank all the archivists and librarians in so many places who were so helpful through my work.

I owe my gratitude to all the people in the ethnographic settings of Rim and Bachema, without whose patience, hospitality and co-operation this study would not have been made possible. I am also indebted to my research assistants, key informants, fieldwork questionnaire enumerators, Bachema and Rim Primary Schools' directors, teachers and pupils without whose co-operation the ethnographic data of this thesis would not have been gathered. I would also thank all the officials of the Amhara Regional State at different levels: Regional Offices, Zone Offices, *Woreda* Council Offices and Peasants Association Administrators for facilitating and giving me permission to conduct the ethnographic fieldwork among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam Administrative Zone of Amhara Region.

I extend my gratitude to Mecha *Woreda* Council Administrative Officers in general and Mecha *Woreda* Women's Affairs Desk Officer, Ato Lanteyideru Tesfaye, in particular for facilitating and coordinating the two-day exploratory workshop on the early findings of my ethnographic fieldwork. In this connection, I would like to thank all the participants of the workshop for their active participation and insightful feedback. I am deeply grateful to W/ro Yeshimebrat Mersha, a senior lecturer at Bahir Dar University and currently doing her Ph.D. research in an Austrian University, for facilitating the whole program of the workshop.

The Austrian Embassy Development Co-operation in Addis Ababa deserves grateful acknowledgement for its financial support, which was used to cover most of the expenses incurred in the fieldwork. It has also sponsored the two-day exploratory workshop on "Early Marriage and Girls' Education in Mecha *Woreda*" (18th-19th September 2004), held at Merawi, capital of Mecha *Woreda*, the study area. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Ing. Fekadu Shewarega, Duisburg-Essen University in Germany, for assisting me in searching for a funding institution for my fieldwork in Ethiopia.

My deepest gratitude also goes to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for sponsoring my Ph.D. study in Germany. My thanks go to the Georg-August University for giving me the opportunity to do my study in Goettingen. I would also like to extend my thanks to the International Students Office of the University for covering some of my living expenses during my last three months stay in Goettingen, Germany.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. Kahsai Wolde-Giorgis, Göttingen in Germany, for assisting me in times of acute difficulties and in providing me professional supports to computer related works during my study in Germany. I am also greatly indebted to Dr. Getie Gelaye, Hamburg University in Germany, for guiding and assisting me in the transliteration of Amharic (local) terms used in this study.

I would like to thank W/t Enguday Adem at the Faculty of Education in Addis Ababa University, currently a Ph.D. student in Germany, for her generous support in cleaning and entering the household survey data. I also thank Ato Ebrahim Kassa, head of the multi-media center at the

Institute of Ethiopia Studies in Addis Ababa University, for editing the video-recorded ethnographic data presented at the exploratory workshop in the study area and the weekly colloquia of the Institute of Ethnology in Goettingen University, Germany.

I am very grateful to all members of the Institute of Ethnology, students, weekly-seminar participants, and librarians for their supports without which I could not have managed to benefit from favorable working environment and pleasant study program. My thanks also go to all my friends for making my study in Germany more pleasant and for their continuous moral support. My special thanks go to my close friends Netsanet Mulat and Adefris Teklewold for their sympathetic moral support and encouragement.

I take this opportunity to extend my thanks to my employer Kotebe College of Teachers Education in Addis Ababa for giving me a study leave. I am particularly indebted to Ato Bikale Seyoum, Dean of the College, Ato Mezgebu Getachew and Ato Semeneh Alemu, the previous and current Academic and Research Vice-Deans, Ato Getachew Demissie, Administrative and Development Vice-Dean, and Dr. Gessesse Tadesse, English Language Professional, for their moral and intellectual support from the outset.

My deepest gratitude goes to my parents Ato Emirie Kassahun and W/ro Shashitu Abeje, and my brothers and sisters for their encouragement and support throughout my studies. I am especially grateful to my immediate younger brother Ato Asmare Emirie, an information scientist at Addis Ababa University, for his professional assistance and sympathetic support throughout my study. I also express my sincere gratitude to my sister-in-law, Sister Muluemebet Genetu, for taking care of my children's health during my stay in Germany.

Finally, I believe it is time that I pay tribute to my husband, Ato Mekonnen Alamneh, who has always been beside me in all my endeavors, taking care of our two very young sons, and managing the family while I was pursuing my Ph.D. study. I am sincerely indebted to him and my sons, Haileyesus and Kidus Mekonnen, for bearing the hardship of separation during my studies in Germany. It is for my husband and our sons that I dedicate this study.

Guday Emirie
Göttingen, June 2005

PREFACE

The issues of harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls, including early marriage, have been calling the attention of international and national organizations in traditional societies, including Ethiopia. However, as the reviewed studies indicate, there is no an in-depth anthropological study on early marriage and its effects on girls' education in rural Ethiopia, including the study area. Thus, this study is aimed at filling this research gap.

The main purpose of this study is to examine issues pertaining to early marriage and its effects on girls' education among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam Administrative Zone of the Amhara Region of Ethiopia, where early marriage is the norm and girls' participation in formal education is very low by national as well as regional standards.

My interest in dealing with the issue at hand goes back to my personal, intellectual and professional backgrounds. I was born and brought up in a peasant community where the practice of early marriage is most common. I am a graduate of social anthropology from Addis Ababa University and an educator at Kotebe College of Teachers Education in Addis Ababa.

This study was first anticipated during conducting my previous research project on "The Effect of Socio-Cultural Values on Females' Participation in Primary Education in Rural Ethiopia: The Case of Yidonga Peasant Association in Merawi District, West Gojjam" (2002), which was sponsored by the Organization of Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA). One of the major findings of the research project was that early marriage, among the local socio-cultural customs, negatively affects females' participation in rural primary formal education. This led me to examine issues pertaining to early marriage and its effects on girls' formal education with a wider theoretical scope and in-depth empirical investigation. Fortunately, I find the organization to fund my further study and an advisor, Prof. Dr. Brigitta Benzing, interested in gender issues in anthropology.

The contents of this study are organized under four parts: I) General Introduction; II) Ethnographic Background; III) Marriage Customs and Practices, Early Marriage and its Effects on Girls' Formal Education; IV) Conclusions, Abstract, Zusammenfassung, Bibliography and Appendices.

Part I consists of three chapters. The first chapter discusses the research background, aims and scope of the study. Chapter two reviews related theoretical approaches and empirical studies, conceptualizes terms used in the study, and finally presents the analytical framework used in the study. The third chapter describes the research methods employed in the study and fieldwork experiences.

Part II has three chapters: Chapter four, five and six. The fourth chapter briefly describes the natural, ecological, economic, historical, political, demographic and social settings of the study area. Chapter five describes and analyses the social structure and organization of the ethnographic research settings. The sixth chapter describes and analyses the gender socialization process and formal schooling in the ethnographic research settings.

Part III consists of three chapters: Chapter seven, eight and nine. Chapter seven deals with marriage customs and practices among the peasant communities of the study area. Chapter eight examines the prevalence, causes and consequences of early marriage among the peasant communities of the study area with special focus on case studies of victims of early marriage. Chapter nine examines the effects of early marriage on girls' formal education with special focus on the problems of early-married female pupils in the ethnographic research settings.

Part IV consists of five chapters: Chapter ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, and fourteen. Chapter ten summarizes the major findings of the study, and then proposes possible areas for further research and future intervention. Chapters eleven and twelve provide a brief summary of the study in English and German languages, respectively. Chapter thirteen provides the bibliography of secondary sources of the study. Chapter fourteen consists of appendices of list of tables, list of figures, list of case studies, glossary of local terms, acronyms and abbreviations, primary data sources, list of maps and photographic documentations of the ethnographic research sites and study subjects.

Guday Emirie
Göttingen, June 2005

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH BACKGROUND, AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Education is an important social objective of any society. The role it plays and its possible contribution to the intellectual growth and development of the society have become points of common concern in both developed and developing countries (Abera Regassa 1999:1).

Education enables individuals and the society to make an all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, abilities and skills. Education also plays a role in promoting respect for human rights and democratic values, creating the condition for equality, mutual understanding and cooperation among people (Transitional Government of Ethiopia 1994:1-2). Thus, it is an indispensable prerequisite for developing the capacity of participation in all aspects of development (Yilma Workneh 1995:27; Trufat Bekele 1999:141-142; Befekadu Zeleke 2000).

Regarding the relationship between education and socio-economic development, Befekadu Zeleke (2000:1) notes that, “education is a backbone for both social and economic advancement, and primary education is the foundation.” Especially, in those developing countries where the majority of the population lives in rural areas, the provision of appropriate rural primary education for both sexes is also instrumental to increase women’s participation in development (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991; Lee 1988; Colcough 1982; OAU and UNICEF 1992; in Befakdu Zeleke 2000:1).

Ethiopia is one of the economically and educationally most underdeveloped countries in the world. Ahmed Ali (1999:5) argues that, “the underdevelopment of Ethiopia is an indicator of an inadequate educational system.” The quality of the educational system of any country reflects the progress attempts that are made in social, economic and political aspects by that country (Abera Regassa 1999:1).

In Ethiopia, as elsewhere, there is a close relationship between educational policy as well as its content, and the development models adopted by successive national political elites: *Modernization* (Imperial Regime), *Marxist-Leninist Ideology* (Military Regime), and *Mixed Economy* (Federal Regime). All three models, according to Alem Habtu (2003), have failed to expand school coverage significantly or to bring about fundamental changes in women’s access to and success in education. All were superimposed upon *traditional patriarchal structures and ideologies*, which serve as obstacles to women’s education (Alem Habtu 2003:101-103). Alem Habtu’s (2003) research on “Gender Gap in Ethiopian Education, 1974-2002” challenges the assumption that “revolutionary change promotes gender equality in education.”¹

The overall level of education in Ethiopia is very low. The majority of the Ethiopian children have no access to basic education. The literacy rate is 41% for men and 21% for women. More specifically, in grades /1-6/, boys attend school to 50.3%, girls to 29.3%; in grades /1-8/ boys are represented by 43% and girls by 26%; and in senior secondary schools, boys by 17.9%, and girls by 14% (Trufat Bekele 1999; Befekadu Zeleke 1998, 2000; Haregwoin Cherinet and Emebet Mulugeta 2002; Ministry of Education 2002). Furthermore, one quarter of the children drop out of school before reaching grade two. The dropout rate is very high for girls throughout the school grades. Repetition is also higher for girls than for boys, in particular at the secondary level. The gender inequality in education widens as one goes up higher in the educational ladder. For example, during the academic year 2001-02, only 18.1% university students were female (ibid).

¹ Empirical studies on “Gender and Education in Ethiopia” are thoroughly reviewed in the second section of Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Like in many other educational systems in Africa, gender disparities are prevalent in Ethiopia (Ayalew Shibeshi 2000:104). The limited participation of girls in the Ethiopian education system is linked to the historical development of education in the country. Education in its traditional form has a long history in Ethiopia. Originally, the educational system was predominantly religion-oriented to serve the manpower needs of the church, the mosque and the state (Teshome Gebremichael 1979; Richard Pankhurst 1968; Maaza Bekele 1966; Alemtsehay Zeleke 1985). Since women were not allowed to assume responsibilities in these institutions, the exclusion of women from the teaching activities was their main feature (Alemtsehay Zeleke 1985:17-20).

Until the beginning of the 20th century, the Ethiopian society saw education as an exclusive male preserve. The first formal school was opened in 1908 in Addis Ababa. The opening of the first girls' school in Addis Ababa in 1931 by Empress Menen marked the beginning of the provision of modern education for girls in Ethiopia (Alemtsehay Zeleke 1985:21; Maaza Bekele 1966:61; Sendu Gebru 1957:77; Naomi Gebrat 1957:102; Alem Habtu 2003:100). The expansion of formal education in Ethiopia started in 1942 after the end of the Italian occupation (1935-41).

In 1974, the year of Haile Selassie's overthrow, the proportion of female students' enrolment was 32% in primary schools, 30% in junior secondary schools, and 24% in senior secondary schools, 8% in higher educational institutions (Genet Zewdie 1991). In 1990, the last full year of the military regime, female students comprised 30% in elementary school, 41% in junior high school, 30% in senior high school, 14.5% in junior college, 8.2% in senior college, 6.2% in graduate school (Transitional Government of Ethiopia 1993, in Alem Habtu 2003). With the formation of a transitional government in 1991, a new Education and Training Policy was issued in 1994 with its main objective of achieving universal primary education in the next 20 years, as stated in the New Education and Training Strategy, and this strategy also gives attention to promote girls' education at all levels. However, up-to-date, the female educational level in Ethiopia still is among the lowest in the world (Alem Habtu 2003:101).

The ongoing reforms in curricula and educational materials, media of instruction and the decentralization of the system may be steps forward. But expanding access particularly to primary education, improving equity by narrowing enrolment gaps between the different sectors of the population, increasing efficiency by institutional development and capacity building, and improving the quality and relevance of education are challenges facing the educational system.² Generally, despite the increased efforts made to expand the educational system, the provision of education at all levels is very low. The problem is more serious at the primary level, which leaves Ethiopia behind, even by sub-Saharan standards. This small-scale formal education has never been evenly distributed. As a result, three types of disparities are obvious: Disparities among regions, sexes, and rural and urban areas (Ayalew Shibeshi 2000:104-105). In short, a limited number of people in Ethiopia have access to education and these are mostly residents in urban areas. The problem affects the rural majority, which is more than 85% of the Ethiopian population. The majority of the rural illiterate are women and girls (Befekadu Zeleke 1998:129).

In Ethiopia, women constitute about 50% of the population and contribute about 50% to subsistence production. In the rural areas of Ethiopia, women play vital roles in food production, preservation and storage. They are totally responsible for processing foods for consumption and marketing the surplus locally to generate income. They are invariably involved in helping all food storage and containers with the exception of granaries. The heaviest workload on a woman during the pre-harvest and harvest time generally coincides with the period of lowest household food

2 See the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) Education and Training Policy (1994)

availability, increasing the strain on her, the situation being aggravated if she is pregnant or breast-feeding (Haregwoin Cherinet and Emebet Mulugeta 2002:4). Hirut Terefe (2001) further notes that Ethiopian women are overexploited by their involvement in productive as well as their reproductive role, which, in turn, has affected the development of the society at large.

The Ethiopian women are subject to discrimination in every aspect of their life- in economic, social, cultural and legal aspects. They do have less access to education and employment. Measured in terms of educational attainment, employment and remuneration, occupational type, access to services and benefits, opportunities to participate in decision-making and politics, Ethiopian women's status is "low" (Trufat Bekele 1999; Haregwoin Cherinet and Emebet Mulugeta 2002). In short, women in Ethiopia encounter several economic, social and cultural constraints that affect their access to education and resources. As a result, their opportunity for employment and earning is minimal compared to their male counterparts. Thus, the majority of Ethiopian women is in a disadvantaged position so that it cannot enjoy certain privileges, rights, duties, roles, power and authority equally to their male counterparts.

Gender discrimination affects not only women but also the overall growth of the economy. It makes one-half of the population not to perform according to their full potential in social, economic and political life (Trufat Bekele 1999:141). Being cognizant of the need for providing adequate compensations to the socially sanctioned gender role differences in Ethiopia, Article 35:3 of the current Ethiopian Constitution states:

"In recognition of the history of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia, women are entitled to remodel and take affirmative measures. The purpose of such measures shall be to enable women to compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, economic and social life, and to gain access to opportunities and positions in public and private institutions"(Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, FDRE, 1995).

The current Ethiopian Constitution (FDRE 1995) has amplified the provisions given to women, and assures women equal rights with men in every sphere, and that affirmative actions would be taken in order to remedy the sufferings of women because of past inequalities. Furthermore, the Ethiopian Government's Women's Policy (1993), Health Policy (1993), Population Policy (1993), Education Policy (1994), and Cultural Policy (1997), all promote gender equality and eradication of harmful traditional practices, including early marriage, affecting the health of women and girls in Ethiopia.

In addition to the above-mentioned national policies, the Ethiopian legal and judicial documents are also being revised against biases and discrimination of women. For example, the old family law of Ethiopia is revised. However, the Ethiopian constitutional provisions, policies and laws prohibiting harmful traditional practices, including early marriage,³ affecting the overall well-being of girls and women, are not enforced, especially in the rural areas where the majority of the population lives due to economic and socio-cultural barriers.

Concerning the implementation of the Ethiopian National Policy for Women (1993) and the institutional and regulatory issues, the Women's Affairs Office of the FDRE and the World Bank (1998:1) note that:

"With the announcement of the National Policy of Women in 1993 and promulgation of the new Constitution in 1995, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia declared its unequivocal commitment to the equitable socio-economic development of women. The women's policy aims to institutionalize the political, economic, and social rights of women by creating appropriate structures

3 The gap between national laws legislating against early marriage and local traditional practices is thoroughly discussed in the first section of Chapter 2 (cf. 2.1.4.5) of this thesis.

in government offices and institutions so that public policies and interventions are gender-sensitive and can ensure equitable development for all Ethiopians” (in Fellner 2000:202).

With specific reference to the issue of gender disparities in education, one of the specific objectives of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) Education and Training Policy is: “to gear education towards reorienting society’s attitude and value pertaining to the role and contribution of women in development” (TGE 1994:11). Despite the government policy of providing education without discrimination, the participation of girls at all levels of education has traditionally been low compared to male students. The problem is not only their low participation in the educational program but females’ lower effectiveness in education. School dropout and repetition rates are higher among girls than boys (Almaz Haile-Selassie 1995:5-6). Hence, even if the current Ethiopian laws and policies support girls’ education, the understanding of its vital link to the future has yet to be fully understood by the local people in the rural setting. This lack of understanding by the rural majority inhibits the effectiveness of national laws and policies designed to reform the Ethiopian education system.

In general, the Ethiopian Government’s Constitution, Policies and Laws promote gender equality. Despite these endeavors, gender equality has never been realized in Ethiopia, especially in the rural-traditional settings. As a result, there exists a disparity between the national Constitution, Policies and Laws in favor of promoting women’s equality on the one hand and the local traditions on the other. In this connection, Fellner (2000:202) argues as follows, “While the central government shows openness towards progressive ideas in the field, Ethiopia is often referred to as the country of traditions and behavioral change of the more than 80 ethnic and cultural groups is not likely to happen because a new law has been promulgated in Addis Ababa.”

In fact, Ethiopia is a country with a majority of people living in rural areas with bad communication and infrastructure and a high illiteracy rate. Customary practices die hard but history shows that they can be eradicated through education and exposure of traditional people to other cultures and their way of life. National efforts of challenging and eradicating harmful practices, including early marriage, affecting girls and women in the traditional settings of Ethiopia requires: Broad community involvement and coordination among community-based institutions, including key decision-making bodies, such as regional councils as well as institutions at grassroots level such as community associations, councils of elders, religious leaders, youth centers, school clubs, and other local community organizations (Guday Emirie 2004).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Researchers have mapped out the relationship between women’s education and development. These include: The increased participation of women in productive activities, reduced reproductive burdens, improved maternal and family health, and increased opportunities for the education of children, especially daughters. Researchers also highlight the empowering role of education, that is, the crucial role it plays in increasing women’s self-esteem and personal fulfillment through the dissemination of information, knowledge and skills (Emebet Mulugeta 1999:7).

The importance of educating girls is entering public consciousness globally. The education of girls is a stimulus for societal change and human development. Studies consistently document that girls’ education enhances the welfare of the population and increases the country’s economic productivity. Hence, investing in girls’ education provides the highest returns, both economically and socially (UNESCO 2002b). Of course, the transformative power of education, especially women’s education, as a key to the desired societal development in developing countries has repeatedly been demonstrated. Despite wide acknowledgment of the value of female education, women and girls in

developing countries, including Ethiopia, are still excluded from the educational system. Many researchers argue that efforts to promote gender equity in the educational system of developing countries are confronted by challenges including poverty, cultural beliefs and practices.

In developing countries, including Ethiopia, economic, social and cultural factors, in complex interaction, play their part in determining access to and success in education, both for boys and girls. However, the impact of these factors is greater on girls than on boys in most contexts. A useful way to look at these different dimensions of the problem is to divide them into 'supply-side' and 'demand-side' factors.

The supply-side factors include: Shortage of places and poor physical infrastructure, poor quality of education, and lack of female teachers. Shortage of school places, the remoteness of rural schools and poor physical infrastructure are major problems in many developing countries. Such deficiencies are often due to lack of resources. Girls tend to suffer more than boys from such deficiencies. Girls are often disadvantaged because of well-founded concerns about their physical security. The poor quality of school facilities in the developing world also militates against girls' attendance. In societies, which ascribe great importance to female 'modesty', simply a lack of toilet facilities can make school environments inhospitable to girls and deter parents from sending their daughters to school. The quality of the education offered in developing countries is often very poor. This is particularly so for girls, with curricula and textbooks frequently reinforcing limiting and demeaning stereotypes about women's roles. Studies show that girls often have to spend more school-time than boys doing non-formal educational "house-keeping" tasks. Where there are little educational benefits to be gained, it is not surprising if poverty-stricken parents decide that it is not worth incurring the costs of sending a girl to school. Furthermore, studies in sub-Saharan Africa show that the lack of female teachers as role models is discouraging the girls and can prevent them from doing well at school. The demand-side factors include: Socio-cultural attitudes, and direct and indirect costs. In many developing countries, a woman's role is still defined in terms of marriage and child rearing, and girls' education is seen as less important than boys. Other cultural features also have a strong effect on girls' education. For instance, in patrilocal societies, including Ethiopia, a young girl moves into her husband's family on marriage, so it is her husband's family rather than her birth family that reaps the rewards of her education. In such societies, parents look to sons to take care of them in old age, which is another incentive for parents to educate sons rather than daughters (UNICEF 2002a; UNESCO 2001; Synder 2001).

With specific reference to Ethiopia, a growing body of studies and statistical reports has started revealing the low participation rate of females in the Ethiopian educational system. There are sources of data concerning female education in baseline surveys, sample surveys, and pilot studies on the general conditions of females' participation in education.⁴ These studies shed light on economic, social and cultural factors affecting female education in Ethiopia. Of the research perspectives on factors affecting female education in Ethiopia, the socio-cultural perspective offers the greatest promise for bridging the gap between aggregate and individual behavior, offering hope for a unified theory of female education at the local level (Guday Emirie 2002).

Coming to the socio-cultural perspective, many scholars⁵ have characterized the Ethiopian society as patriarchal according to which women's activities are within the home and involve

4 (e.g., Genet Zewdie 1991; Seyoum Gebre-Selassie 1991; Almaz Eshete 1991; Atsede Wondemagenehu 1991; Adugnaw Alamneh 1995; Negat Teklehaimanot 1995; Ababayehu Aemero 1995; Yelfign Worku, et.al 1995, 1999; Yelfign Worku 1996; Asmaru Birhanu, et al 1996; Tabeyin Gedlu 1996; Befekadu Zeleke 1998, 2000; Asmaru Birhanu 1998; Emebet Mulugeta 1999; Alemu Habtu 2003).

5 (e.g. Genet Zewdie 1991; Teshai Berhane-Selassie 1991; Dicks and Eddle-Senay Bogale 1995; Trufat Bekele 1999; Tronvoll 2000; Hirut Terefe 1997, 2000, 2001; Benzing 2000; Haregwoin Cherinet and Emebet Mulugeta 2002, etc.)

cooking, bearing and rearing children, and taking care of the household. In other words, Ethiopia is characterized as a patriarchal society that keeps women at a subordinate position, using religion and culture as an excuse, which has, for many years, been supported by laws and legislation that uphold patriarchy and women's subordination. This has brought about and maintained disparities between men and women, in division of labor, share of benefits, in law and state, in how households are organized, and how these are interrelated. With specific reference to the Ethiopian family structure and socialization of children, Benzing (2000:17) clearly states that:

"It is often said that democracy begins in the family. The family in Ethiopia is still based on patriarchy. The concept that a couple can be 'head of household' equally together is worth considering at most among intellectuals. Female heads of household come into this position only in the absence of an adult man. The household-structure and socialization of children is authoritarian. Girls and women, in most societies, suffer from genital mutilation with all its physical and mental consequences, and from early marriage, often to a much older husband, so that they are hampered in achieving a status of social maturity beyond the household sphere."

Of course, Ethiopia is a patriarchal society that has a system, which values men's activities and achievements over those of women, reflected in all aspects of life. In most cases, the cultural values and practices favor men (Haregwoin Cherinet and Emebet Mulugeta 2002), though women's contribution in domestic and reproductive activities is vital for the whole group. The impact of patriarchal thinking has made women reluctant to become involved in activities outside their homes, because they fear that they cannot achieve equally with men (MacLean 1967, in Dicks and Eddle-Senay Bogale 1995:90). Scholars further argue that, socialized by patriarchal thinking, many women have developed a withdrawn view about their capacities and potentials in participating in education. Genet Zewdie (1991:96) argues that: "Sex stereotyped education; parental discouragement and early marriage are directly linked with social values and attitudes, which seriously affect the education of women in Ethiopia."

Concerning the effect of the patriarchal system on female education in Ethiopia, Hirut Terefe (2000:26) states: "An important factor explaining the low access of girls and women to the educational system is the traditional value system placing greater premium on men. Since resources are scarce, parents often decide to use the limited resources available to them in sending boys to school in preference to the girls." In this context, parents prefer to invest on sons' education than of girls because the girl-child will get married and live in her husband's village (Guday Emirie 2002).

In general, the available literature on factors' affecting girls' education provides us with the effects of social, cultural, economic, and political factors at the macro-level. Of course, the research on factors influencing girls' education at the macro-level has offered valuable, but fragmented, insights into the problem of challenging factors constraining girls' formal schooling in the local socio-cultural context. Ideally, research for investigating factors that influence female education should be qualitative, participatory, involving the key actors themselves, and importantly, it should be able to challenge deeply entrenched attitudes, practices and power structures that perpetuate gender inequality and injustices (Guday Emirie 2002). In this regard, the weakness of studies on factors affecting girls' education to date is not one of the poor general formulation, but its failure to place girls' education within its local socio-cultural context. In short, many scholars have looked into economic and social-cultural barriers to girls' access to and success in education at the macro-level. Furthermore, early marriage, as part of socio-cultural factors affecting girls' education, has always been present in the works of some of the researchers in education and gender issues in Ethiopia. However, the reviewed studies lack an in-depth anthropological investigation of issues surrounding early marriage and its effects on girls' education in the local socio-cultural environment. Therefore, this study is aimed at filling this gap.

1.3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

The central assumption of this study is that early marriage is one of the major socio-cultural custom that influence the primary and secondary socialization of girls in the rural settings of the Amhara Region of Ethiopia in general and that of Mecha *Woreda*, West Gojjam Administrative Zone of Amhara Region, in particular. Therefore, understanding the *nature, causes* and *consequences* of early marriage at the local level, examining its effects on girls' education, and the extent to which the local practices are related with the national constitution and education policy is vital. Hence, this study attempts to investigate issues surrounding early marriage and its effects on girls' education with specific reference to Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam Administrative Zone of Amhara Region, Northwestern Ethiopia. In the light of this central theme, the study aims to:

1. Review theoretical approaches and empirical studies related to gender issues in general and girls' education and early marriage in particular;
2. Examine the nature and context of early marriage in the study area and then to explore the root-causes for its endurance and social acceptance;
3. Investigate the overall-impacts of early marriage on the health, education and psychosocial well-being of the girl-child, and its implication for family life and the society at large;
4. Explore the nature of formal schooling as well as the trend of early marriage in the study area and then to examine to what extent early marriage affects girls' access to and success in the locally available formal education; and
5. Suggest locally appropriate strategies for challenging the negative aspects of early marriage and then promoting girls' education in the study area.

In order to attain the above-mentioned objectives of the study, both secondary and primary methods of data collection were employed. Secondary sources of the study were based on a review of related studies and document analyses. The primary data were gathered through preliminary household surveys and ethnographic methods involving participant observation, key informants, in-depth-personal interviews, extended case studies, recording life histories of selected subjects and focus group discussions coupled with tape and/or video recording and photographing. Network analysis and simple statistical tools were employed to analyze the ethnographic data and that of the preliminary household survey results, respectively. Based on the early findings of the ethnographic data, a two-day exploratory workshop was conducted in the study area, Mecha *Woreda* of West Gojjam. The workshop was aimed at discussing issues surrounding early marriage and its negative effects on girls' education; raising consciousness of the issues and arriving at a culturally acceptable change in this practice and then promoting girls' education in the study area. Specific methods and procedures used in conducting the preliminary household survey, the ethnographic fieldwork as well as the exploratory workshop on issues pertaining to early marriage and girls' education in the study area are explained in the third chapter of this thesis.

1.4 THE STUDY AREA AND ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH SITES

The fieldwork for the present study was conducted in Mecha *Woreda*, West Gojjam Administrative Zone of the Amhara Region, Northwestern Ethiopia. According to the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution, the Amhara National Regional State is one of the nine Regional States⁶ of the present-day Ethiopia (Federal

⁶ According to Article 47:1 of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) has nine member states. These are: (1) Tigray, (2) Afar, (3) Amhara, (4) Oromiya, (4) Somali, (5) Benishangul-Gumuz, (6) Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP), (7) Gambella, and (9) Harari. Dire Dawa is a chartered city-state, and Addis Ababa is the capital city of the Federal State.

Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, FDRE) (see Appendix 7, map1). This region comprises eleven Administrative Zones⁷ (see Appendix 7, map 2). West Gojjam is one of the eleven Administrative Zones of the Amhara National Regional State where Mecha *Woreda*, the study area, is located (see Appendix 7, map 2 and 3).

Mecha *Woreda* consists of 46 Peasants' Associations, and 2 Urban Dwellers' Associations (Merawi and Wotet Abay) are established (CSA 1995). Merawi, the administrative capital of the *woreda*, is located about 546 km away from Addis Ababa and 34 km south of Bahir Dar, the capital of the Amhara National Regional State (see Appendix 7, map 3 and 4).

Mecha *Woreda* has three climatic zones: *qolla* (lowland), *wäyna däga* (mid-land), and *däga* (highland). Agriculture is the dominant activity in the rural areas of the *woreda*. Mixed farming, crop production and livestock raising, is the dominant farming system (see Chapter 4).

According to the 1994 Population and Housing census of Ethiopia, the *woreda* has a total population of 244,943 inhabitants, of whom 50.48% are male and 49.52% are female. Among the total population of the *woreda* (244,943), 94.99% (232,665) are rural dwellers, whereas only 5.01% (12,278) are urban dwellers (CSA 1995). This entails that the majority of the *woreda's* population lives in the rural areas. Regarding the educational level of the *woreda's* population, of all persons aged ten years and above, only 13.11% are literate, of which females' literacy rate is only 5.59%. In the rural areas of the *woreda*, female's literacy rate is only 2.69% (CSA 1995). This extremely low literacy rate of the rural female population in Mecha *Woreda* calls for further investigation (Guday Emirie 2002).

For an in-depth ethnographic study of issues surrounding early marriage and its effects on girls' formal schooling, two research sites (Bachema and Rim Peasant Associations) were intentionally selected among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda*. The research sites were selected on the basis of: (1) The presence of rural formal schools (at least one primary school); (2) Variations in proximity to the *woreda's* capital town (one from the nearby rural communities and the other from the relatively remote ones); and (3) Variations in climatic conditions (one from *qolla* and the other from *wäyna däga*) (see Appendix 7, map 4).

In present-day Ethiopia, there are five political hierarchies: Federal Government, National Regional State, Administrative Zone, *Woreda* Council and Urban Dwellers' Association (in the urban areas) and Peasants' Association (in the rural areas). Accordingly, one has to get the necessary legal permission document to reach the lowest unit of administration in the rural setting, which is known as Peasants' Association (hereafter PA). According to the current division of the Federal State and the Administrative Regions, the study area and ethnographic research settings can be sketched as follows:

1. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.....FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
2. NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE..... AMHARA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE
3. ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE.....WEST GOJJAM ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE
4. *WORED*A (DISTRICT) COUNCIL.....MECHA *WORED*A COUNCIL
5. PEASANT ASSOCIATION..... -- BACHEMA PEASANT ASSOCIATION
-- RIM PEASANT ASSOCIATION

The ethnographic, historical, political, socio-economic, demographic and ecological settings as well as the economic basis of the study area, Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam, are described in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

⁷ The eleven Administrative Zones of the Amhara National Regional State are: (1) North Gondar Zone, (2) South Gondar Zone, (3) Bahir Dar Leyu Zuriya Zone, (4) West Gojjam Zone, (5) East Gojjam Zone, (6) Agaw Awi Zone, (7) Wag Himra Zone, (8) North Wello Zone, (9) South Wello Zone, (10) North Shoa Zone, and (9) Oromiya Zone.

The reasons for selecting the present study area as well as the ethnographic research focus on the rural settings of the study area are: Firstly, early marriage is the most common practice in the rural settings of the Amhara Region of Ethiopia in general and in West Gojjam Administrative Zone of Amhara Region in particular. Secondly, the researcher of this study was born and has been brought up and educated in the study area, Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam. For almost half of her age she shared the culture of the people in this *woreda*, experienced their way of life and, above all, closely observed the effects of cultural traditions, especially early marriage, on girls' formal schooling in particular and on females' life in general. Acquaintance and mastery of the local people's language are promising credentials. Thirdly, her study focuses on the rural life-orientation where females' literacy rate is extremely low and early marriage is the most common practice.

1.5 SCOPE, LIMITATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is limited in its scope of investigation for three basic reasons. Firstly, it mainly focuses on the effects of early marriage on girls' primary formal schooling due to the absence of secondary formal schools in the rural settings of the study area. Secondly, the researcher is engaged in examining early marriage among socio-cultural values affecting girls' primary formal schooling in the rural settings of the study area due to the fact that early marriage has a strong negative effect on girls' primary and secondary socialization in the family, school and community levels of investigation.⁸ Thirdly, the study focuses on two selected peasant communities among 37⁹ Peasant Associations (PAs) because the successful incorporation of the anthropological concept of "culture" into the explanation of early marriage and its effects on girls' access to and success in primary formal schooling requires a theoretical approach and thorough contextualization through greater reliance on relatively small social units. This is to be done with reference to neighborhoods, villages, social networks, kinship ties, beliefs and values. Accordingly, most data were collected through the ethnographic methods over the period of the study by intensive personal and participant observation, with special attention paid to focus families and life histories of selected subjects. As a result, the scope of the applicability of the findings have to be valued with regard to the target groups viewed in the light of the economic, social and cultural conditions of their local communities.

The major limitations in undertaking this study were: 1) the absence of in-depth anthropological studies on "early marriage and its effects on girls' education" in rural Ethiopia in general and in the study area in particular. Of course, at the national level, there are baseline survey results on harmful traditional practices, including early marriage. However, these results did not reveal specific issues surrounding early marriage at the local level. Furthermore, early marriage was not considered as a topic for research in dealing with factors affecting girls' education, even at the national level. As a result, the literature review on "early marriage" focuses more on survey results on "harmful traditional practices" in Ethiopia and research reports on "early marriage" in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America, which were written in English. 2) Since my command of the German language is limited to understanding and communicating, I could not consult relevant German literature though I had a strong desire to do so. 3) The translation of my ethnographic data, which

8 Guday Emirie, in her research project on "The Effect of Socio-Cultural Values on Females' Participation in Primary Education in Rural Ethiopia: The Case of Yidonga Peasant Association in Merawi District, West Gojjam" (2002), has found that early marriage, among the socio-cultural values, negatively affects females' participation in rural primary formal education with specific reference to one peasant community in Merawi District of West Gojjam Administrative Zone, Amhara Region. This finding led the research to search for issues surrounding early marriage and girls' education in Mecha *Woreda* of West Gojjam, with a wider theoretical scope and in-depth empirical investigation.

9 Previously, there were 46 PAs in Mecha *Woreda*, the study area. Presently, the 46 PAs are restructured into 37 PAs just by merging some PAs together (cf. Chapter 4 of this thesis).

were collected through the Amharic language (the local language), to the English language did not fully express the deep-rooted cultural attributes¹⁰ related to my research subject.

This study deals with early marriage and its effects on girls' education with specific reference to selected peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam Administrative Zone of the Amhara Region (Northwestern Ethiopia), where early marriage for girls is a norm and girls' attendance of the locally available formal school is extremely low. This study comes out with relevant anthropological theoretical insights and empirical findings on gender issues surrounding early marriage and girls' formal education. It also reveals the root-causes for the endurance and social acceptance of early marriage and its overall-impacts on the health, education and psychosocial well-being of the girl-child in particular and its implication for family life and the society at large. Above all, it brings to light the negative aspects of the socio-culturally approved practice of early marriage in the study areas and suggests locally appropriate ways for addressing the issue at hand.

Consequently, this study has the following theoretical as well as practical significances:

1. It provides theoretical frameworks for understanding the relationship between early marriage and girls' education in general. More specifically, the research provides anthropological analytical insights into gender issues surrounding early marriage and girls' formal schooling at the local level of investigation.
2. Besides its theoretical significance, this research serves practical purposes such as:
 - By revealing the root-causes and harmful consequences of early marriage on the overall well-being and development of girls in the study area, it attempts to suggest locally appropriate strategies for challenging the harmful effects of the practice. In other words, the research contributes to the understanding of the negative effects of early marriage on girls' primary formal schooling at the local level and provides valuable insights into the possible ways of challenging the negative aspects of early marriage in the study area. Its findings could be addressed to the affected groups through local government officials and non-government organizations working in the area such as educators, development and social workers, health personnel, etc. This would sensitize the peoples concerned on the predicaments of early marriage so that they could fight or seek the way out of it.
 - The idea of promoting girls' education, particularly at the primary level, is prominent on the agenda of educational policy makers in developing countries, including Ethiopia. In this regard, this study informs policy makers and planners about key socio-cultural constraints to girls' participation in primary formal education in the rural economic and socio-cultural settings. More specifically, as an applied scholarly research, it could serve as an authentic and reliable reference material to policy makers and government and non-governmental organizations involved in designing and implementing programs centered on girls education, harmful traditional practices, including early marriage, economic development, empowerment of women, health and other related issues.
 - Finally, by giving a clear picture of early marriage and its effects on girls' education at the local level of investigation, it paves the way for further action or practical research in the field.

¹⁰ In this context, Hirut Terefe (2000:24) argued that, "culture is the mental language of the culture bearer to which no other language can have a full access."

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: THEORETICAL APPROACHES, EMPIRICAL STUDIES, ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS AND FRAMEWORKS

2.1 THEORETICAL APPROACHES

2.1.1 Anthropological Approaches to Gender Roles and Relations

Gender studies in anthropology begin with the late 19th century, when anthropology emerged as a distinct academic discipline, and anthropological studies are pursued up to now (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000). By placing these approaches in historical perspective, Marcia-Lees and Black (2000) review the major anthropological orientations to gender studies. In this section, an attempt is made to review these theoretical orientations to gender relations and inequalities. Knowing the theoretical orientation out of which any particular knowledge arises is an important first step in analyzing it (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:14-15). In order to review these orientations, terms such as *gender*, *gender roles*, *behaviors*, *stratification*, and *asymmetry*, according to Marcia-Lees and Black (2000: xi-2), need to be conceptualized as follows:

- ***Gender, as a cultural construct***, can be understood as the meanings that a particular society gives to the physical or biological traits that differentiate males and females. These meanings provide members of a society with ideas about *how to act, what to believe, and how to make sense of their experiences*. Since gender constructs are cultural interpretations of physical differences, they are open to change. This dynamic aspect of culture is not surprising because culture, as anthropologists define it, is a system of meaning that is *learned* and shared by members of a group. Culture organizes people's behavior and thoughts in the context of their society's history and environment. Since individuals learn cultural ideas within the context of their society, gender constructs and expectations can be unlearned and modified, although the process can be quite difficult. The significance of these interpretations can have major consequences for individuals. Defining gender as a cultural construct suggests that gender is largely due to nurture or cultural practices and ideas, not to "nature" or biological causes. This nurture position is, however, somewhat controversial in some societies and within some academic fields because of the widespread belief that gender behaviors are inborn. As a result, there exists the nature/nurture controversy in defining *gender roles* or *gender behaviors*.
- ***Gender Roles and Behaviors*** refer to the social skills, abilities, and ways of acting thought appropriate to members of a society, depending upon whether they are male or female. Anthropologists are particularly interested in uncovering the reasons for the differences in the roles assigned to men and women as well as in the relationship of these roles to the differential access men and women have to power and authority in their society.
- ***Gender Stratification*** connotes the system of unequal access of men and women to a society's resources, privileges and opportunities, and the differential control over these resources and privileges accorded by sex. This hierarchical system reflects the expectations of a particular society or subculture. It arises from a group's differential evaluation of males and females and their roles, and the status they are allotted based on that assessment.
- ***Gender Asymmetry*** refers to the situation in which men's and women's roles are not the same and their positions in society are not equal.

In the light of the above analytical concepts, the *Evolutionary*, *Psychological*, *Materialist*, *Structuralist*, and *Critical-Reflexive approaches* can be reviewed as follows.

Evolutionary Approach

While no one denies that men and women differ biologically, there is great variation in the importance placed on these differences by researchers interested in understanding gender roles and the existence of systems of gender stratification. Anthropologists who have focused on *biological differences* and *biosocial explanations* have tended to employ evolutionary models in their explanations. Finding explanations of gender differences in evolutionary factors has a long history within anthropology. This is because the first school of anthropological theory, known as *social evolutionism*, used an evolutionary model to explain all aspects of human social organization (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:20). Social evolutionists (e.g. Tylor 1871; Morgan 1877; and Spencer 1884, in Marcia-Lees and Black 2000) argued that societies had developed from the simple to the complex, the chaotic to the organized, and the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. These theorists were immersed in beliefs about the desirability of progress, and since simpler societies were seen as less advanced, it made sense to them to view non-Western societies as inferior. Social evolutionists claimed that societies evolved through a fierce struggle for survival. They pointed to Western civilization's political, economic, and cultural dominance over the rest of the world as evidence that it was the fittest form of social organization and, thus, the most highly evolved (e.g. Spencer 1884, in Marcia-Lees and Black 2000). They not only saw the social practices, customs, and institutions of non-Western societies as inferior and less evolved but also claimed that they represented earlier stages in Western society's evolution. Non-Western societies were used, in other words, as living examples of the West's "primitive" past, one that was left behind as it struggled for supremacy (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:22). Spencer (1884, in Marcia-Lees and Black 2000) hypothesized that the earliest societies were *promiscuous* and lacked any institution to regulate sexuality. This situation meant that knowledge of paternity was obscured. Out of these chaotic conditions evolved societies that traced descent *matrilinearily*, inheriting a mother's kinship group rights to her children. By contrast, any society that regulated paternity through *monogamy* or institutionalized it by tracing descent through the male line would increase the chances of its existence. In other words, institutionalized paternity would lead to institutionalized male protection, ensuring that vitality and survival of the entire society. A society that favored monogamy and accentuated the male line would be able to conquer those that did not, thereby increasing its size and strength. In the process, it would become more complex and evolve to a higher stage of development (Spencer 1884:611-31, in Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:22-23). To ensure that women had enough energy for their childbearing and child-rearing duties, it had to be channeled away from other functions, such as public, religious or political functions. The concentration of energy on reproductive functions was responsible for women's supposed inferior mental capabilities, causing women to lack "the power of justice" (Spencer 1884:374, in Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:24). Such inadequacies, which made women unsuited for important activities in the public realm, were seen as the natural outcome of the struggle for the "survival of the fittest". Women's attempts at the time to advocate for equal rights were, therefore, discounted and their demands were viewed as unnatural and perilous (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:24).

The Psychological Orientation: The Social-Learning Approach

The social-learning approach to gender draws psychological and anthropological cross-cultural studies of gender roles and relations (Pine 1996). A major focus of psychologically oriented anthropological literature concerned with gender stresses on explanations of the differences that characterize male and female personality types. Anthropologists have been particularly concerned

with identifying the cultural factors that shape the development of these traits, and which underlie sex role behaviors (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:40).

A social learning orientation focuses, among others, on how cultural learning shapes male and female personality types. The interest in defining and specifying the exact nature of the personality differences between the sexes has its roots in Freudian psychology. According to Freud, women are “naturally dependent and passive”. For Freud, “anatomy is destiny”. Nancy Chodorow (1974), on the other hand, argues that the consequences of male and female personality traits depended upon a society’s particular interpretation of them. Indeed, her work has been an important impetus for research in feminist anthropology on the *socio-cultural factors* influencing psychological development and gender identity. Gender identity is psychosocially and culturally determined. Gender roles are practices and activities carried out by men and women, which lead to an economically and socially constructed division of labor (Hirut Terefe 2000:72).

According to Chodorow (1974), early gender socialization proceeds in universally similar ways and establishes certain basic differences in the psychological (interpersonal) orientations of male and female children. This is, of course, questionable because many other researchers have observed that socialization differs from culture to culture, as each culture is unique (Hirut Terefe 2000:36). Hirut Terefe (2000:37) notes that a growing body of ethnographic literature attests the specifics of these differences. Anthropologists have long understood that normative “sex roles” vary considerably from culture to culture (Brown 1970; Friedl 1975:3, in Hirut Terefe 2003:37). The degree and character of social asymmetry between the sexes are highly variable both between cultures and between different domains within a single culture (Whyte 1978:9; Collier and Rasaldo 1980:18-19; Leacock 1981:18, in Hirut Terefe 2000:37). Thus, the contests of and relations between gender categories that inform and reproduce particular gender identities are socially and culturally relative. This is because gender socialization is a process whereby humans in the course of interaction are molded and continuously shaped to appropriate images of femaleness and maleness (Hirut Terefe 2000:37).

The Materialist Orientation: The Marxist-Approach

The social evolutionists were not the only social anthropologists to employ an evolutionary framework to explain gender differences. The social philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels gave many impulses. While Marx is best known for his analyses of class oppression, Engels is best recognized for his treatment of gender oppression in his classical study: “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State” (1884). Engels’ focus on how the material conditions of life and economic factors affect gender stratification is still a starting point for materialist researchers today (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000: 47).

Engels ([1848] 1967, in Marcia-Lees and Black 2000) postulated that as the production of wealth increases, private property ownership emerges and men became more important within the family. They used their strengthened position to overthrow “mother right” and matrilineality in favor of patrilineality and to replace pre-existing marriage forms with monogamous ones. Monogamy was instituted to ensure that a man’s wealth and property would be passed only to his own children. This practice was enforced through patriarchal control of the family. Engels claimed that under such conditions, women became degraded and mere instruments for breeding children ([1848] 1967: 746, in Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:50).

In line with Engels’ view, many materialist theorists argue that with the development of class society, women’s status, defined in terms of their rights, declined. The new social relations, according to materialist theorists, result from economic patterns based on private property ownership and the

accumulation of wealth; which were supported by state structure, and rendered women economically and politically powerless and socio-culturally undervalued (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:51).

The Structuralist Orientation: Lévi-Strauss' Approach

The structuralist anthropological theories emphasize the ideas that members of a society hold and analyze the way these ideas are represented in *language, myths, or symbols*. Unlike materialist theorists, the structuralists' approach rejects the premise that the material conditions of life determine other aspects of social organization. They view the ideational realm of culture not as a super-structural outgrowth of underlying economic relations, but as having an independent reality. Ideas are understood as distinct and autonomous factors that not only exert an influence over the behavior of individuals but also constitute an individual's very sense of self (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:68).

One of the most influential structuralist approach for explaining gender relations and asymmetry is Lévi-Strauss' approach. He focused not only on the importance of ideas but also on how the mind is structured to organize them. For him, myths, rituals and even aspects of social organization, such as kinship systems, can be understood like language. All are reflections of the underlying structure of the human brain. This structure, according to Lévi-Strauss, is binary: all human thought is dualistic, dividing the world into sets of oppositional categories like black and white, male and female, nature and culture. He viewed cultural expressions like myth and kinship as cognitive efforts to resolve fundamental paradoxes set up by such binary categorizations. One such paradox, for him, is the one produced by the recognition that humans are both natural and cultural animals. While Lévi-Strauss drew on linguistic models in his analyses and focused on symbolic systems, he also assumed that biological structures in the brain explain cultural forms (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:68-69).

Lévi-Strauss explains the universal subordination of women not through biological factors per se but through focusing on the cultural interpretations of biological attributes. For Lévi-Strauss, women's universal subordination is grounded in the role women play as signs in a system of exchange. Men are more highly valued than women, not because of some innate superiority that is genetically grounded or based on some physical characteristic such as speed or strength, but because of the very way the human mind organizes the world into opposing categories. Several problematic assumptions lie at the base of this structural argument, many of which have not been substantiated by data. For example, there is no evidence that people at all times and in all places think through the construction of binary oppositions. Since "Western" thinking has been based on such oppositions, some have reproached Lévi-Strauss with ethnocentrism: projecting Western ideas on to all human beings. Regardless of the specific drawbacks of a structuralist interpretation of gender roles and asymmetry, its insights have been valuable to grasp cultural interpretations of biological attributes related to "sex" and gender stereotypes in a specific social system (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000).

The Critical-Reflexive Approach

The critical-reflexive approach to gender studies has been adopted by some feminist anthropologists. Marcia-Lees and Black (2000:92) place this theoretical orientation within the historical context out of which it emerged, explore the self-critique which anthropology has recently undergone, and assess the challenges anthropologists continue to encounter in a world of changing power relations. Such challenges have led to a re-evaluation of anthropology's tradition of fieldwork and of writing descriptions of the people it studies (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:92).

By the 1970s, "white women", African-American men and women, and members of other ethnic "minorities", such as Native Americans, waged battles against their own oppression, just as many colonized people around the world had done. The roots of the critical-reflexive approach in

anthropology began to grow within this cultural milieu. In the wake of such criticisms, many anthropologists themselves began to recognize the limitations of traditional anthropological practices in their own research. They questioned not only previous representations of non-Western people, but also traditional explanatory models, finding many insufficient for understanding a fundamentally changed world.

Anthropology by this time had moved well beyond its roots in social evolutionism. Nonetheless, critics argued that it is still perpetuating inequalities between the West and what has come to be known as the “Rest” (the traditional societies that anthropologists have studied). Theoretical orientations such as structuralism were criticized for assuming that Western categories like “subject/object”, nature/culture were universals, rather than recognizing them as Western categories that helped to keep people “in their place”. These kinds of criticism gave rise to a new reflexive anthropology, one greatly influenced by feminist anthropologists. Reflexive anthropologists think critically about the political and ethnical questions surrounding their work. These anthropologists have focused specifically on how unequal power relations are reproduced in anthropological fieldwork and in ethnographic representations (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:94).

The critical-reflexive approach in anthropology focuses on effects of material conditions or of ideas on people’s lives while simultaneously keeping in mind the limitations of the researchers. This awareness encourages the researchers to question how any theoretical orientation helps frame the research in ways that might not be beneficial to the people under study. The significance of self-reflexivity lies in the constant evaluation and re-evaluation it calls for. This evaluative process better enables all of us to remain aware of how power relations continue to operate, not merely in anthropological research, but more importantly in the larger world. These days, the trend in anthropology is away from asking questions about women’s oppression in general and is towards investigating causes of gender inequalities in particular cultural contexts. These investigations have recently proceeded within the framework of particular theoretical orientations that help guide a researcher through an overwhelmingly complex set of variables and factors. Currently, the tendency, however, is towards studies that combine the strengths of particular theoretical orientations while eschewing some of their weaker points (Marcia-Lees and Black 2000:102-105).

Generally, the foregoing anthropological discussions of gender roles and relations revolved around evolutionist, psychological, materialist, structuralist and critical-reflexive orientations. These theoretical frameworks serve as a general guideline in analyzing ethnographic data on gender relations and inequalities in a particular socio-cultural and economic context. More specifically, in analyzing the ethnographic data on gender specific issues surrounding early marriage and girls’ education, the researcher employs an information synthesis approach, since a single theoretical orientation cannot fulfill to explain the ethnographic data. Hence, gender specific causes and consequences of early marriage as well as gender issues in education can be interpreted in terms of the above presented anthropological orientations to gender studies.

2.1.2 Feminist Perspectives on Gender in Education

The contemporary feminist theoretical framework is classified into *liberal*, *socialist* and *radical approaches*. These approaches are closely related with perspectives of social theories such as *functionalism*, *human capital* and *modernization theories*, *conflict* and *Marxist theories*; and *the liberation theory*. More specifically, liberal feminism is closely related with functionalism as well as human capital and modernization theories; socialist feminism with conflict and Marxist theories; and radical feminism with liberation theory. In terms of their theoretical orientation, liberal feminism

stresses on economic force, radical feminism on ideological force, and socialist feminism on the interconnection between ideological and economic forces (Stromquist 1990a).

The purpose of this section is to review the above-mentioned feminist perspectives on gender in education. For this purpose, the *liberal*, *socialist* and *radical feminists'* approaches to gender in education are critically reviewed¹¹ below.

Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism stems from the idea that women must obtain equal opportunities and equal rights in society (Acker 1987; Stromquist 1990; Phillips 1987; and others, in Yokozeki 1998). Stereotyping and discrimination have created a situation where women have less chance of education, fewer career opportunities, and less access to other social dimensions in society than men. Hence, liberal feminism argues for better allocation of resources so that women can obtain a fair share of educational opportunities. The liberal feminists' discourse focuses on three major points: 1) *equal opportunities*; 2) *socialization* and *sexual stereotyping*; and 3) *sexual discrimination* (Acker 1987:432, in Yokozeki 1998:2).

Liberal feminism, being closely related with the functionalist social theory, enforces the idea that schooling is meritocratic and that success in it depends primarily on the motivation and the intellectual ability of the individual. In this context, liberal feminism does not aspire to change the society; rather it aims at improving the situation within the present system, i.e. western industrialized society (Stromquist 1990a). For liberal feminists, schooling and education are considered to be positive and good, and improvements are to be made within the existing system. Strategies include attempts to increase access, such as promotion of 'good practice', e.g. the 'Equal Opportunities Commission' (Acker 1987, in Yokozeki 1998) and "training to change attitudes of teachers and pupils/students" (Weiner 1986, in Yokozeki 1998). In short, liberal feminism is based on the assumption that schooling is positive and improves women's welfare. Social evolution is assumed and the state is perceived as a benevolent actor, which provides services and goods for the benefit of the people (Stromquist 1990a).

Liberal feminism is criticized for ignoring patriarchy, power and the systematic subordination of women (O'Brien 1983, Weiner 1986; Acker 1987, in Yokozeki 1998) as well as the effects of racism and class (Arnot 1982, Acker 1987, in Yokozeki 1998). *Socialist feminism*, according to Yokozeki (1998), attempts to address some of these problems.

Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism, being closely related with neo-Marxist social theory, poses questions about society and power, issues which are not addressed by liberal feminism. Social feminism views the State as an agent, which "acts jointly and closely with economic interests to keep women in a subordinate position" (Stromquist 1990a:146).

Unlike liberal feminism, socialist feminism does not consider education as positive. Instead, for socialist feminism, the school system reproduces the current unfair situation. In this regard, education is viewed as a regressive rather than progressive organization, and as fostering a sexist culture. For socialist feminists, the school curriculum incorporates sexist assumptions, and sexual division of labor is built into the context of education. In a gender context, schooling serves to perpetuate gender inequalities (Jayaweera 1987; Acker 1987; Stromquist 1990a, in Yokozeki 1998:3).

¹¹ In reviewing the feminist perspectives on gender in education, I relied mainly on Yumiko Yokozeki's article on "Gender in Education and Development" (1998), In: *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, Vol.1, No.1. June 1998. This is so due to lack of any latest material on this issue; this article is accessed through the Internet: <http://home.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/cice/Yokozeki1-1.pdf>.

According to Yokozeki, the strength of a socialist-feminist perspective, which provides a theoretical framework for the parallel analysis of class struggle with gender, is that it incorporates other factors of inequality. Racism and class are seen to interact with gender in education (Acker 1987, Brah and Deen 1986, in Yokozeki 1998). In developing countries, however, gender imbalance is often amplified by rural-urban disparities and income differentials (Tilak 1993; Hyde 1993; Abraha et al 1991, in Yokozeki 1998). Other factors also affect gender imbalance, such as ethnic affiliation and religion (Yokozeki 1998:3).

Despite the fact that the socialist feminist discourse has a macro-sociological nature, most of the empirical data are derived from school-based observation at the micro-sociological level (Acker 1987, in Yokozeki 1998). In this regard, some criticism focuses on the research methods of socialist feminists, stating that they do not necessarily address the issue directly. Much of the socialist feminism work in education emphasizes theoretical arguments, historical research or policy analysis, but relatively little research is done using empirical data. In other words, lack of empirical analysis is also a source of criticism. Furthermore, it is criticized for being more theoretical than implementation oriented (Weiner 1986; Acker 1987, in Yokozeki 1998:3).

Radical Feminism

Radical feminism is concerned with male monopolization of culture and knowledge and the sexual politics of everyday life in school. Its focus on education is in concern with curricula, women teachers' and girls' access to power and policy formulation in schools (Acker 1987:429, in Yokozeki 1998). Radical feminism accepts that education is a tool to release women from subordination, but argues that existing formal schooling cannot be trusted to serve the purpose. Rather, radical feminism supports an alternative non-formal type of education, and single sex schools (Yokozeki 1998).

According to radical feminism, as in socialist feminism, the State acts as "a key agent in the perpetuation of women's subordination via its strong defense of the family as the core unit of society" (Stromquist 199a:145). Such a view stems from the theory of liberation developed in Latin America. In liberation theory, where the aim is transformation of the society, formal education/schooling is not considered to be the key agent, although the transformation itself is an educational process (Short and Freire 1987, in Yokozeki 1998). The existing school system is criticized for maintaining a "banking concept of education" where students deposit knowledge given by teachers (Freire 1987:46, in Yokozeki 1998:3-4).

Radical feminism focuses on *patriarchy* and power, which facilitates an explanation of the oppression of women both within the school and within the wider context of the society. At the micro level, it addresses the issue of sexuality and sexual harassment in schools, which commonly is not discussed in other feminist perspectives (Weiner 1986; Acker 1987, in Yokozeki 1998). In this regard, girls not only receive less teaching time, but their classroom contributions are often met with systematic ridicule and girls are exposed to verbal and non-verbal abuse (Mahoney 1985; Acker 1987, in Yokozeki 1998). At the macro level, it argues that the higher non-literacy rates of women result from the State's reliance on women for biological reproductive tasks which require only a minimum of skills and knowledge and do not generate demands for schooling (Stromquist 1990a:145).

Among the three feminist perspectives, radical feminism is criticized for being the least articulate. Its research methods are also questioned, as a number of studies adopt research methods, which are considered 'unconventional'. It is also criticized for its generalizations, which give little consideration to issues such as racism (Middleton 1985; Connell 1985, in Yokozeki 1998).

Comparatively speaking, liberal feminism aims at improving the existing system of education, whereas both, the socialist and radical feminists, aim at much more fundamental transformations. The latter do not trust the existing formal educational system to serve the needs of women because it is monopolized by the State (Yokozeki 1998). Furthermore, we have seen that feminist perspectives differ in terms of their theoretical orientations. More specifically, liberal feminism has an economic orientation, radical feminism an ideological orientation, and socialist feminism combines both ideological and economic forces. In this connection, Stromquist states that:

“There has been a recent convergence in feminist thought toward the meshing of ideological and material elements in the explanation of women’s subordination, bringing closer than ever the radical and socialist feminist perspectives. These perspectives detect severe limits in the state’s ability to improve women’s conditions while groups outside the state, particularly women-run organizations, are identified as the most likely sources of significant educational change and thus social change, in the interests of women” (Stromquist 1990a:137, in Yokozeki 1998).

The following table summarizes the feminist perspectives on education and development:

Table 2.1: Feminist Perspectives on Education and Development (Yokozeki 1998:5)

Feminist Theory	Liberal Feminism	Socialist Feminism	Radical Feminism
Related Social Theories	- functionalist theory - human capital theory - modernization theory	- neo-Marxist theory - conflict theory	liberation theory
Research Focus	- equal opportunities - socialization and sex stereotyping - sex discrimination	- reproduction of gender and social division	- patriarchy - male monopolization of knowledge and culture - sexual politics in schools
Forces	Economic force	Interconnection between ideological and economic forces	Ideological force
State viewed as:	benevolent actor	acts jointly and closely with economic interests to keep women in a subordinate position	a key agent in the perpetuation of women’s subordination
School viewed as:	agent for social mobilization	agent for reproduction and perpetuation of existing social classes	place where injustice and oppression of a certain category of people is done, such as sexual harassment
Orientation	Implementation-Oriented	Theory-Oriented	Description-Oriented
Possible Intervention a) Orientation	- existing school based - numerically (quantitatively) oriented	- existing school based - content of education oriented	- alternative forms of education - single sex schools
Possible Intervention b) Methods	- better allocation of resources - increased access for women	- revision of curricula - consciousness raising	- awareness - conscientisation - prioritizing female interests

This table shows the proximity between socialist and radical feminism, especially in their observations on the role of the state and schools in education. However, all the three current feminist perspectives fail to deal with the distinction between rural-urban and low-high income groups, the extremes which exist in many of the developing countries. The feminist perspectives, corresponding to a number of major social theories, are useful tools for critically examining gender inequalities in education. While liberal feminism perceives both the school and the State as positive agents, socialist and radical feminism aim for a more fundamental societal transformation. Naturally, it was liberal

feminism, the most conservative perspective, which was taken as a basis for the Women in Development¹² (WiD) approach initiated by development agencies (Yokozeki 1998).

In general, according to Yokozeki, many of the feminist arguments are weak in terms of addressing the issues of female subordination in different contexts. Although gender issues in development are not identical with feminism, feminist theories, as well as the debate about relations between industrialized and developing countries, are both necessary for analyzing gender in education in developing countries. “Knowledge of feminists’ theories is essential in gender planning which aspires to achieve gender equality” (Moser 1993).

2.1.3 Gender Issues in Development

Gender Planning

The Women in Development¹³ (WiD) approach has been translated into a series of development objectives, namely *welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency, and empowerment*. Gender planning emerged from the critical review of these objectives. The first four objectives had top-down characteristics whereby women were perceived as mere tools rather than active agents to achieve the outcome of emancipation for themselves. Therefore, gender planning adopts an empowerment approach, which seeks for alternative development where education of women must lead to empowerment (Yokozeki 1998:16).

The *orientation in policy* approach has shifted in the course of the last four decades (Yokozeki 1998:14). Moser (1989, 1993) analyzes five aspects of orientation adding to ‘efficiency’ and ‘empowerment’. These shifts mirrored general shifts in development policies, “from modernization policies of accelerated growth, through basic needs strategies associated with redistribution, to the more recent compensatory measures associated with structural adjustment policies” (Moser 1989:1807, in Yokozeki 1998:14).

Gender issues are not necessarily women’s issues (Molyneux 1985, in Yokozeki 1998). Molyneux (1985:232, in Yokozeki 1998) articulates “the false homogeneity imposed by the notion of women’s interests” and differentiates between women’s interests and more specific gender interests. Gender interests are further divided into strategic gender interests and practical gender interests. The former addresses women’s emancipation or gender equality, while the latter responds to an

¹² The Women in Development (WiD) approach states that if education is to have any value for women, it must be a means to raise their consciousness about the oppressive structures that keep them in positions of powerlessness. Most educational systems do not provide a climate for such thinking skills to develop. In developing societies, most educated women- the leaders, academicians, professionals in establishment organizations- perpetuate the *status quo*. The reasoning behind this is that if the patriarchal system has worked for them, it should work for all women. When a woman is relatively powerless and has little control over what is happening in her environment, education for literacy is meaningless. What she craves is knowledge of why she must bear so many children, work endless hours without respite, be beaten and raped, have an alcoholic husband and go hungry. Existing educational systems have not provided women with the tools to understand and analyze the true nature of social, political and economic systems that govern their lives and repress them, and this is why they have failed. If women are to be change agents in their societies, the education offered them must be a tool for consciousness raising and action. Although the WiD approach may seem very radical, it may be useful to consider these points in the context of improving relevancy and quality of education for girls (UN ECA 1999).

¹³ In order to understand the historical contexts of the Women in Development (WiD) approach, we need to look at WiD in relation to WaD (Women and Development) and GaD (Gender and Development) approaches. The concept of ‘WiD’, articulated by liberal feminists, became a “common currency both inside and outside academic settings” in the 1970s to mean the “integration of women into global processes of economic, political, and social growth and change” (Rathgeber 1990:489). The movement was facilitated by international concern with equity issues at the time (Blumberg 1989). WaD, derived from the socialist feminist approach, had a more critical view of women’s position than WiD. GaD emerged in the 1980s as an alternative to WiD. GaD’s approach focuses on the totality of social organization, economic and political life and recognizes women as agents of change with an emphasis on empowerment and female solidarity (Rathgeber 1990:492-4). Although GaD’s approach is considered more advanced and favorable, it is rarely used in current projects (Rathgeber 1990; Moser 1993). WiD has been accepted and used in both the research and implementation of projects while WaD is seldom used (Yokozeki 1998:13).

immediate perceived need. Her analysis contributed to the stratification of women's interests (Yokozeki 1998).

Moser (1989) further developed Molyneux's framework into gender planning, which identifies different needs of women derived from different roles men and women play in societies in developing countries. This view provides both the conceptual framework and practical tools for assimilating gender into planning. The recognition of the fact that women and men have different societal roles as well as the identification of the triple role of women, i.e., *reproductive*, *productive* and *community management work*, should have important implication for policy makers. Reproductive and community managing work has not been valued, and only productive work was considered to be important. Structural adjustment policies' narrow definition of economics was criticized from this perspective. It includes only marketed goods and services but excludes *women's reproductive work*, such as *bearing* and *raising the next generation* (Moser 1989, Elson 1991, in Yokozeki 1998:14).

Gender planning differentiates gender needs from women's needs, and gender needs are further divided into *strategic gender needs* and *practical gender needs*. Moser (1993:39-4, in Yokozeki 1998) clearly points out strategic and practical gender needs as follows:

- ***Strategic gender needs*** are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position to men in their society. Strategic gender needs vary according to particular contexts. Meeting strategic gender needs help women to achieve greater equality. It also changes existing roles and therefore challenges women's subordinate position aspiring for emancipation and empowerment.
- ***Practical gender needs*** are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Practical gender needs do not challenge the gender division of labor or women's subordinate position in society, although rising out of them. Practical gender needs are a response to an immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context.

While the latter deal with more immediate issues perceived by women themselves, the former aim at the more fundamental issues of the emancipation of women. Such a framework is useful in clarifying gender needs in education and development, for these two kinds of needs are essential for achieving gender equality in education (Yokozeki 1998).

Strategic gender needs stem from the gender inequality existing in society, and the concept is akin to the radical feminism perspective. It is described as women's 'real' interests and essential for emancipation and empowerment (Molyneux 1985; Moser 1993, in Yokozeki 1998). Practical gender needs, on the other hand, are most functional. They are practical in nature. They deal with more immediate needs in everyday life, such as *water*, *health care* and *employment*. Both strategic and practical gender needs can be described as prerequisites for each other. The emancipation of females in education can be achieved through the process of addressing practical needs at appropriate times in order to achieve further objectives. For instance, improvement in economy in a certain area might make the people more willing to send their daughters to school, which, in turn, may lead to change the education policy in the direction of making a wider choice of courses for female students' available (Yokozeki 1998:15-16).

More specifically, gender-planning strategies value women's organizations, stressing women's solidarity. *Schooling* and *formal education* are seldom referred to as a means of empowerment. Instead, conventional education is often viewed as a 'false focus' for changing women's relation to technology. The underlying notion here is that the educational systems tend to reflect the existing cultural bias and values of the societies, which support male dominance in technology (Conway and

Bourque 1995; Bourque and Warren 1990, in Yokozeki 1998). However, a framework of gender needs can be utilized to clarify needs perceived in education.

In general, the contribution of *gender* to the field of *education* and *development* should not be ignored. First of all, it is helpful in analyzing the nature of inequalities and in changing women's perceived role from that of recipients of welfare to active agents for transformation. It has also helped to clarify the issue of north-south relations in academic thinking. Studies in both gender and education should be academic as well as practical, and therefore they should continue to be in touch with the gender reality and the educational reality in order to further productive research. The two fields are likely to enrich each other as long as forthright dialogue continues (Yokozeki 1998).

Gender Mainstreaming

To be effective, development planning must understand and be able to respond to gender-based differences and power relations. It must develop and apply policies and tools to integrate gender into all mainstream programs. The 'Gender and Development' (GaD) approach looks not just at women's participation in development projects but also at the type of development. Women scholars from the south started questioning mainstream development theories on the grounds that development could not be seen solely in terms of economic growth and/or redistribution. The goal must be long-term, equitable and sustainable development.

Since the mid 1990s, gender mainstreaming has become the key tool for redressing women's subordinate role in society. Mainstreaming involves more than simply ensuring women's consultation or participation. Rather, it involves giving adequate attention to gender issues at all levels, most importantly at the levels of analysis, policy development and planning. Attention must be given to both women and men; both must have equal opportunities for involvement; women and men must have equal opportunities for benefiting from development. This approach, with its strong emphasis on gender analysis, presents opportunities for deepening the understanding of the structural origins of gender inequalities. The change must come from *within* in order to ensure that both men and women are equal partners in the development process (Emiliana Topia 2001).

In general, gender mainstreaming is understood as a means by which the role of women in development is made visible. However, lack of practical implementation is the major problem in the process of gender mainstreaming. This is due to resistance within organizations, within countries, among the beneficiaries of gender mainstreaming, and so on. The rationale behind this view is that greater inclusion of men in projects helps in providing for the advancement of women (PEFG 2001:22).

Gender Equality

The key term in 'gender equality' is the word 'gender'. It really has to do with the differences between men and women, spelled out in terms of their respective social roles and needs, which are not always the same for women as they are for men. The second term of the compound (i.e. equality) implies that both should have access to equal possibilities and opportunities. It does not mean that, at the end of the day, what applies to one will also apply to the other. There are differences that are intrinsic to each and this should be taken into consideration. Gender equality looks at all the social roles women and men play. Both genders are valued as equal human beings and they are given the same opportunities based on their respective needs. Gender equality in Europe goes beyond giving women the same opportunities as men. It actually looks at and weighs the opportunities and the rights available to both genders. The argument is that the gender agenda cannot be moved forward unless all

men are taken into consideration. Besides, men constitute 50% of the population. Failure to recognize this fact can result in dissatisfaction and resistance on their part (PEFG 2001:21).

Because of the low status of women in Ethiopia, the emphasis on gender activities is always related to women. This has led to a kind of backlash. There is too much pressure, too much push from outside whereby there is too little understanding of whatever is being introduced into local contexts. People in the rural areas, where more than 85% of the population live, believe that gender mainstreaming is not what they needed at present. They need, instead, real economic empowerment, which is directly related to their daily livelihood. And this is a serious challenge many organizations are facing: how to go about gender mainstreaming, while people have other needs that demand immediate satisfaction (PEFG 2001:23).

In recent years, the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has implemented a many-fronted program to change and improve the position of women. This has included a widespread campaign to eliminate ‘harmful traditional practices’, affirmative action programs to increase the participation of girls and women in educational and other institutions, the establishment of Women’s Affairs Office (WAO), both federally and in regions and zones, and the production of gender-disaggregated statistics in all fields. Recent evaluations regarding the effectiveness of these several policies and programs reveal that, while the structures are most often in place, there is serious lack of competent personnel who can implement them (Lexow 2003, Cherinet and Mulugeta 2003, in Narrowe 2004:1).

According to Narrowe (2004), gender activities at the College and in Ethiopia in general are heavily focused on girls and women, and not boys and men. There is no doubt that some of this focus on girls and women is justified. The problems of women in Ethiopia are enormous: there are far too few girls in schools and universities, and of those who begin, too few finish school; there are too few in the work force and in politics, and far too many are still undergoing female genital mutilation, rape, abduction, early marriage and abuse in many contexts (Cherinet and Mulugeta 2003, in Narrowe 2004:3).

Narrowe (2004) mentioned a concrete example of the strong focus on [gender-as-girls] in an “Assertiveness Training Workshop” held at the College,¹⁴ which was supposed to be obligatory only for female students. The desired outcome of the workshop, according to Narrowe, is that girls must be assertive, active, learn to speak out, and become empowered. Again and again *shyness* and *weakness* are said to be the major problems for girls, often pointed out by female students themselves and by faculty members. They are said to be weak on the sports field, in their academic performance, and too weak to say “no” to the sexual advances of boys. Seen this way, it is logical to institute and implement programs, which will empower them and alleviate their problems. What is lacking is a specific focus on boys and their responsibility to girls’ education. Boys are not officially targeted in the gender discourse. Thus, ‘gender’ is not generally understood as socially, contextually and culturally constructed understandings of men and women and their relationships; gender is most often ‘women’ (Narrowe 2004:3). In this connection, Bahru Zewdie (2002:12) notes that, “in Ethiopia the gender discussion has hardly begun.”

Currently, the empowerment and participation of women in political life, most often in rural contexts, have been considered crucial in the context of development (Helen Pankhurst 1992; Poluha 2002, in Narrowe 2004:6).

¹⁴ Kotebe College of Teachers Education, where Judith Narrowe has conducted her ethnographic research on “Gender, Modernity and HIV-AIDS: A Study of Practices and Ponderings of Young Female and Male Teachers in Urban Ethiopia”.

2.1.4 Perspectives on Early Marriage

Theories and debates surrounding the subject of early marriage, like other traditional cultural practices, are numerous and complex. There is a paradoxical existence of multiple forms and even cross national and regional variations of marriage customs and traditions. The existence of various customs and traditions within the institution of marriage alliances is well established. However, a comprehensive appraisal of the present position demands an impartial survey of the very considerable body of scattered and uncoordinated material on the socio-cultural, legal, economic, and political aspects of early marriage. Even though issues surrounding marriage alliances (including early marriage) converge and differ in many ways, efforts to challenge the *status quo* could be based on a unified agenda and prescriptive modes of action around common denominators. The forces, which promote and sustain early marriage, are usually expressed in terms of socio-cultural, economic and legal factors. The selection of these common denominators forms part of the larger argument, which emerges from reading about the issues of early marriage in their individual or combined contexts (Heinonen 2002).

Based on the above general highlights, this section attempts to review global, regional and local perspectives on early marriage. In this context, the reviewed literature on early marriage is structured in *socio-cultural, economic, human development, right-based, and legal frameworks*.

2.1.4.1 The Socio-Cultural Framework: Customs and Traditions Related to Early Marriage

The socio-cultural framework can be explored in terms of ‘customs’ and ‘traditions’ as two common denominators for the causes of early marriage. ‘Customs’ and ‘traditions’ can be understood as ‘man made doctrines, beliefs, practices, or stories that are passed from generation to generation, orally or by example’ (Heinonen 2002). Customs surrounding marriage, including the desirable age and the way in which a spouse is selected, depend on a society’s view of the family—its role, structure, pattern of life and the individual and collective responsibilities of its members (UNICEF 2001a:5). Early marriage and other traditional practices such as female genital mutilation¹⁵ are part of a complex social relationship related to family formation and sustainability of ethnic groups. Studies on marriage abound but often fail to incorporate early marriage in a holistic picture of the place of marriage in family formation, community building, the role and process of early marriage and its relations to other traditional practices (NCTPE 1997:197).

Viewed from a socio-cultural perspective, the reasons for early marriage are varied and many. Some of the most common socio-cultural reasons for early marriage are: to forge alliances/ links between families and to ensure that the girl is properly married while she is still a virgin and too young to act independently. In this context, early marriage may even occur where a family has made a pledge to give its daughter in marriage to a benefactor. Hence, the age of betrothal for girls in early-arranged marriages might even be before birth takes place or after puberty (FMRWG 2000, 2001, 2003; Heinonen 2002). Here it should be noted that, in early arranged marriage, like forced marriage, the element of the girl’s consent is usually absent.

¹⁵ “The majority of women live under the dictate of old social values, and matrimonial security and the need for social integration demand the observations and rituals. While certain aspects of the rituals have positive elements of educating and training, they also entail practices, which have health and medical consequences and contribute to the complications suffered by women in childbirth. The practice of female genital mutilation is a traditional ritual that has been clearly identified as having many dangers and complications for the health of women and children... Moreover, the underlying factors, which compel women to adhere to customs and practices, can be attributed to the conditions of poverty and ignorance, which they find themselves in. It is also clear that in order for women to utilize their full potential of leadership they have to rid themselves of deeply engraved and internalized values of submission and eliminate that of all forms of social prejudices and stereotypes. Through various forms of socialization processes, women have learnt to sacrifice their comfort and well-being for the benefit of their husbands and children and to conform to established value systems” (Mehtar 1996:4-5, in Hirut Terefe 2000:42).

The themes of *female purity* and *danger* permeate entrenched beliefs for maintaining the *status quo*. In societies where the honor of the family depends upon the honor of its women, there is a strong link between early marriage and the social goal of maintaining the reputation of daughters. Consequently, *virginity* becomes a necessary preliminary as well as an absolute prerequisite to marriage. This is because once a girl has lost her virginity, and/or given birth out of wedlock, she is considered a woman, even if she is only 12 years old or younger (Heinonen 2002).

The socio-cultural justifications of parents for early marriage can be summed as: fear of being dishonored as a result of delayed marriage and/or loss of virginity, to prevent abduction, to secure a proper marriage for daughters, and to forge links between families. More specifically, traditional justifications for early marriage may include: 1) Respect for traditions that dictate that girls should marry early; 2) The honoring of pledges to a family or a benefactor; 3) The strengthening of community ties; and 4) Girls given a substitute to the husband of a deceased sister (FMRWG 2000; Heinonen 2002). However, this does not tell us why particularly girls are married off early, rather than boys. The underlying reason behind early marriage is discrimination against girls and women from the time they are born and throughout their life cycle (FMRWG 2000, 2001, 2003). Hence, the themes of female purity and danger permeate entrenched beliefs for maintaining the *status quo* (Heinonen 2002).

With regard to why particularly girls that are married off earlier than boys, Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls (FMRWG 2003:10) argues that:

“In general men tend to marry ... at a much older age than women or girls, and this is even reflected in some national laws where the legal minimum age for boys may be two or three years more than that for girls. Again, the national minimum age of marriage is often only applicable in statutory marriages and is hardly even enforced in religious or customary marriage. The notion of men as household heads means that most husbands are often financially better off and older than their brides. The age differences between spouses have serious consequences on the power dynamics between them, resulting in unequal partnerships in the marriage, social isolation, low-decision-making powers and coercion. It is common to find girl brides becoming widows at a very early age because of this age gap. In many communities, a young wife cannot inherit her husband's property when he dies, because of discrimination, customs, gender biases and her low social status within the family. She may even be blamed for his death”.

In the final analysis, social norms and gender-related inequalities reinforce poverty in girls who marry early. In this regard, the underlying reason behind gender-specific socio-cultural justifications for early marriage can be further explored in the light of the economic framework or the economics of early marriage.

2.1.4.2 The Economic Framework: The Links between Early Marriage and Poverty

From the economic point of view, young girls are often seen as an economic burden and married off. In this respect, early marriage for girls is viewed as a means of economic survival, i.e., if a girl is married early, the family has one mouth less to feed, and the hope is that the girl herself will be better off. In other words, parents may feel that marrying a daughter at a young age can help them economically (Heinonen 2002). In this context, the link between early marriage and poverty is discussed in terms of ensuring a better future for girls, or of girls being financial burdens to their families. The latter is voiced in terms of “another mouth to feed”, the aim is securing the survival of the family, depriving a girl of her education in order to give a better chance to her brothers, since her labor power and children will go to her husband's patrilineage anyway (Heinonen 2002; UNICEF 2001a; FMRWG 2000). Conversely, the prohibitively high bride price demanded by parents in some

rural areas of Ethiopia is encouraging poor young men to abduct and rape underage girls in order to secure a marriage (Teshome Segni 2002).

A multitude of issues created by early marriage are increasingly associated with poverty and illiteracy. Recent studies show that *poverty* and *illiteracy* are the main causes for early marriage and its continuance. “Globally, early marriage and early childbearing have been more or less abandoned by the wealthiest section of society, even in poor and highly traditional countries. Virtually, everywhere, poor women in rural areas tend to marry younger than those in urban areas and educational levels also play a critical role” (UNICEF 2001a:5).

FMRWG (2003:11) further notes that, “poverty is a major cause, as well as a consequence, of early marriage for many young girls under the age of 18.” In many traditional settings, poor families use the early marriage of daughters as a strategy for reducing their own economic vulnerability, shifting the economic burden related to a daughter’s care to the husband’s family. Unfortunately, while this strategy may in some instances place the girl in a better-off family environment, in many cases, the negative effects reinforce her vulnerability, and that of her children, to poverty in her marital home. “The younger the age at the time of marriage, the lower the probability that girls will have acquired critical skills and developed their personal capacity to manage adverse situations that may affect their overall welfare and economic well-being” (FMRWG 2003).

The foregoing discussions about the links between early marriage and poverty imply that the tradition of early marriage is part of a circle of “poverty”¹⁶ in its broader sense. In this connection, FMRWG (2003:14-15) clearly states that:

“There are over 1 billion people living below the poverty line (on less than a dollar a day). The majority of whom are females and mainly live in rural areas of developing countries. This form of poverty is characterized by a lack of human capital such as livelihood, skills, education, interpersonal skills, good health (including sexual and reproductive health) and well-being. Additionally the majority of poor people lack social assets and social networks (Diop et al 2002). Married adolescent girls, especially those from rural settings, are at most risk of being poor and will therefore manifest most of these characteristics of poverty. There is little information on the determinants of early marriage. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that the majority of married girls in rural communities tend to have mothers who are married early. Marriage becomes the only option available to such girls. Poorer mothers are more likely to transmit intergenerational poverty to their children....Children born to young mothers will be disproportionately affected by the ‘intergenerational transmission of poverty via nutrition which often begins in the womb of the malnourished mother’ (Harper et al 2003:3, 27). Such children become stunted and underweight in early life and also experience slow-cognitive development. This may lead to learning difficulties-and adversely affect their development of life skills-which will also, in turn, limit their productivity and earning opportunities, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty into the next generation. This could be financial, material or environmental, or simply about acquisition of social values, knowledge or status...Young girls who have married early will therefore have fewer opportunities to acquire vital capabilities that can be used when they are in vulnerable situation.”

Based on the above-mentioned statements, FMRWG (2003) strongly argues that poverty is gendered and affects men and women differently; strategies that target poverty do not address the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and fail to focus on the most vulnerable. Existing gender discrimination and socially prescribed roles for wives put undue pressure on young wives to meet these demanding responsibilities. Social issues around the transmission of poverty and the vicious circle of early marriage have not been adequately researched. However, available evidence indicates that social norms regarding access to and control over productive resources and assets within the

¹⁶ “Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure a sustainable livelihood; hunger and malnutrition, ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increasing morbidity and mortality from illness; and social discrimination and exclusion” (UN 1996:38, in FMRWG 2003:11).

household are biased against girls and can be exacerbated in situations where girls are married early and have very little decision-making power.¹⁷ In addition, social pressures to bear many children results in the girls' preoccupation with childcare and their social isolation, while their lack of access to opportunities and resources is a hindrance to improve their vulnerability to social poverty.¹⁸

In general, concerning the intergenerational cycle of early marriage and poverty, Tan (2004) further argues that once married, young girls will no longer be able to stay in school. They tend to be socially isolated, sequestered at home to raise another generation of children where daughters are again deprived of opportunities to break out the intergenerational cycles of early marriage and poverty. Ultimately, it is the society, which pays for this. The young brides, as well as their children, face greater risks for illness and death. The young brides also represent "wasted human capital", reduced to becoming "baby-makers" (Tan 2004). This remark will be further explored in the light of the human development framework.

2.1.4.3 The Human Development Framework: Early Marriage Hinders Overall Development

In order to grasp how early marriage hinders overall development, we need to conceptualize the concept of "human development" in terms of "education".¹⁹ In other words, the human development framework revolves around the concept of "education" as a development theme. In the 1970s, education was "rediscovered" as a development theme; but this owed less to the view that education was intrinsically important than to the recognition that it was essential for economic growth, which was seen as the real measure of development. In the terminology adopted and popularized by the World Bank, "education was a form of 'human capital' capable of generating high returns for economic growth" (OXFAM 2000a:15). Here, according OXFAM, education matters because it is a fundamental human right, and because it is intrinsically important in its own right. It opens new horizons and raises the quality of life. However, education is also a means to achieving wider human-development ends, including higher living standards, improved public health, and democratization. It is one of the most powerful catalysts for poverty reduction. Viewed from the opposite angle, educational deprivation is an equally powerful cause of poverty. "The intergenerational cycle of illiteracy and poverty admittedly involves many complex, deep-rooted issues for which there is no simple solution" (OXFAM 2000a:3).

When we come to the relationship between early marriage and education as a means to achieving wider human development, early marriage seriously hampers the girls' educational and social development. It also has serious health and social implications for children. Ultimately, early marriage has implications for the well-being of families and the society as a whole. Hence, where girls are uneducated and ill-prepared for their roles as mothers and contributors to the society, there are costs to be borne at every level, from the individual to the household to the national as a whole (UNICEF 2001a:9).

¹⁷ In many countries, the power inequality between the bride and the groom is amplified by a large age difference, meaning the male is often much older than the child brides (Tan 2004).

¹⁸ A review of time-use patterns in rural Bangladesh confirmed this situation. They noted that, "adolescent girls are not as readily available for educational, vocational or social activities as single girls because of their domestic responsibilities and the restrictions on young brides' mobility" (World Bank 2001). It is also important here to assess how all these poverty-related conditions reinforce each other in the context of other violations of the rights of girls who are forced to marry early (FMRWG 2003:15)

¹⁹ "The Greek philosopher Aristotle declared the central purpose of education to be the enrichment of the quality of life (Aristotle: *Politics* 111.9). Since Aristotle believed that States existed only for the sake of promoting 'the good life', it went without saying that they should educate all of their citizens. Society and the individual alike suffer from the absence of education. In fact, few States have provided universal education on the basis of its intrinsic value. For much of human history, education has been viewed as a means to other ends, rather than as an end itself. Nation building, national security, political imperatives, economic growth, and the socialization of children have all been advanced as justifications for the provision of education, sometimes to the frustration of reformers" (OXFAM 2000a:15).

Education, even at a basic level, is not only about livelihood and technical skills but more importantly provides social ‘connectedness’ or aptitude which enables one to access key resources to alleviate poverty (Harper, et. al 2003:13, in FMRWG 2003:13). However, girls who are married early are often denied access to education or pulled out of school, diminishing the opportunity to acquire critical life skills, which will enable them to escape poverty related conditions. Some parents even fear that formal education of girls’ will increase their bride price (FMRWG 2000) and so be a deterrent to prospective husbands. For a number of poor families, the potential rewards of educating daughters are too off and therefore their education is not recognized as an investment. Families perceive that a girl’s education will only benefit her husband’s household, and not her parents. Prevailing gender norms on the roles of girls focus mainly on marriage, and as such it becomes acceptable to remove girls from school for marriage. In some cases, girls are not even allowed to go to school at all, because an education is perceived as unnecessary for becoming wives and mothers (FMRWG 2003:12).

Of course, all children from poorer households are less likely to go to school; however, this is more so for girls than boys. This gender gap in educational enrolment is also more pronounced in rural communities. Early marriage is often linked to low levels of schooling for girls (AGI 1997). Studies confirm that school attendance is lowest for married girls aged 15-19. Some research findings suggest that early marriage is the main cause of high dropout rates for girls. Other studies show a sudden drop in the proportion of girls in school between the ages of 13 and 14 years, but it is unclear whether girls are removed from school to be married or girls are withdrawn from school because of other reasons, be it the quality of the education, girls low educational attainments or parents’ fears of the safety of adolescent girls. Furthermore, many societies in which early marriage takes place believe that giving information to girls on contraception and other matters concerning sexuality encourages promiscuity, which can lead to unwanted pregnancy and family shame. This denial of girls’ rights to make informed decisions about their sexual lives and to plan their families persists into their marriage, resulting in decision-making on reproductive matters becoming the domain of husbands (FMRWG 2003).

In general, the continuing gaps in literacy rates and schooling between the sexes and the comparatively limited access of women to various types of resources must be realized and dealt with. “Women’s lives are, to a large extent, bounded by their activities and responsibilities as wives, mothers, and food producers, processors and distributors. Women are seriously vulnerable to the physical dangers of unattended births. It is also noted that high parity (high birth rate), which leads to a high risk of mortality greatly impair their health” (Adepoju and Oppong 1994:4, in Hirut Terefe 2000:44). Hence, exploring how poor health status, including sexual and reproductive health, illiteracy, social exclusion and powerlessness affects married girls provides a better understanding of their vulnerability to poverty. Where these elements are linked with gender inequalities and biases for the majority of young girls in rural communities, their socialization which grooms them to be mothers and submissive wives, limits their development to only reproductive roles (FMRWG 2003:12).

2.1.4.4 A Right-Based Approach: Early Marriage and the Human Rights of Girls and Women

A right-based approach to early marriage is founded on the universal principles²⁰ of human rights. Human rights are a set of common standards that every individual is entitled to enjoy by virtue of

²⁰ According to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the underlying principles of human rights are: 1) *Universality*, i.e., human rights are universal and are available to all individuals and peoples without discrimination on the basis of gender, political affiliation, race, religion, and so on; 2) *Inalienability*, i.e., human rights are inalienable and

being human, because they are universal, indivisible, and interdependent and enshrined in international conventions, agreements, and declarations (FMRWG 2003). At the national level, the Governments, which signed the Convention in 1948, are obliged to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of their citizens, according to this convention. Human rights not only give power to individuals, they are “rich”, infinitely moldable raw materials out of which individuals, communities, and societies can shape their reproductive and sexual liberty (Cooke et. al 2003:215, in FMRWG 2003:28). However, girls and women’s human rights, and sexual and reproductive decision-making remain contentious in a number of countries because of cultural and religious reasons. The legal context of women’s marriage life often reflects the society’s attitudes towards females (FMRWG 2003). Even in countries that have signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), there is a discrepancy between the legal minimum age of marriage and the actual age of marriage, due to “official tolerance of cultural, societal and customary norms that shape and govern the institution of marriage and family life (Center for Reproductive Rights, CRR 2000:52, in FMRWG 2003:16).

These social norms make the legal national minimum age difficult to enforce. Additionally, in a number of countries, the law recognizes three types of marriage: customary, religious and civil. Often the minimum age of marriage is only applicable in civil marriage. In some countries that have a legal minimum age of marriage, there is unequally defined age for boys and girls. The legal minimum age of marriage²¹ for boys is often two years higher than that of girls. This lower age of marriage often reflects an influence of tradition and religion. Most early marriages in developing countries result from parental choice, and often do not require the consent of the girl. In countries where the legal age of marriage is below 18 years, marriage with parental consent does not negate the fact that such marriages are “early marriages.” Any individual under 18 who is willing to marry, which has life long implications, is considered to lack the full understanding required to make an informed decision (FMRWG 2001). Unfortunately, for many girls under 18 in developing countries, they are no longer categorized as children (FMRWG 2003:16). In short, early marriage, because of its harmful consequences, violates the rights of children, in particular girls, in relation to such matters as health, survival and development, education, and protection from sexual and other forms of exploitation. Within a rights perspective, three key concerns are: 1) The denial of childhood and adolescence; 2) The curtailment of personal freedom, the lack of opportunity to develop a full sense of self-hood; and 3) The denial of psychosocial and emotional well-being, reproductive health and educational opportunity. When children are married off at an early age, they are denied their human rights, foremost their right to be children. Early marriage constitutes a violation of a girl’s human rights, primarily because it can deprive her of the right to give full and free consent to marry. It also deprives children, particularly girls, of an education.

With specific reference to the situation of early marriage and women’s life cycle in Africa, the following statement reveals the actual reality:

“In the traditional subsistence situation, early marriage is the norm for women and woman’s life is closely oriented around her capacities to reproduce and provide for her family. Arduous involvement in child bearing and rearing and the economic and domestic activities required for the maintenance of children continues throughout life (Adepoju and Oppong 1994:22). The life cycle and plight of the average African women were aptly clarified from the description of UN report of 1975. Before the age

cannot be separated from human beings; and 3) *Indivisibility*, i.e., human rights are indivisible and all rights are dependent on other rights. In this context, there are no hierarchies of human rights and human rights cannot be applied selectively. However, this does not mean that all states have accepted and implemented all rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other International Human Rights Conventions (Guday Emirie 2004).

²¹ In some countries such as Kenya, Egypt and Pakistan, the national minimum age of marriage is 16 years (FMRWG 2001)

of 20 the African female child carried a full load of adult responsibilities. By the age 25 she might have given birth half a dozen times and by the age 40 she might already be exhausted by illness, poor nutrition, child bearing and heavy work in the field and at home, which leads to early death” (Hirut Terefe 2000:45).

When one considers the impact of early marriage on the lives of children, particularly girls, it is clear that the practice violates a range of human rights, including those contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Governments who have signed these conventions are obliged to ensure that these rights are fulfilled without cuts and must therefore take steps to prevent early marriage. CRC and CEDAW regularly urge states parties to raise the minimum age at marriage and to set the same minimum age for girls and boys. In a General Recommendation, the CEDAW Committee has recommended that “the minimum age be set at 18, because when men and women marry, they assume important responsibilities. Consequently, marriage should not be permitted before they have attained full maturity and capacity to act.” The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is also opposed to forced marriages at any age, where the notion of consent is non-existent and the views of bride or groom are ignored, particularly when those involved are under the age of 18. UNICEF also believes that “because marriage under the age of 18 may endanger a wide range of human rights (including the right to education, leisure, good health, freedom of expression, and freedom from discrimination), the best way to ensure the protection of children’s right is to minimum age limit of 18 for marriage” (UNICEF 2001a, 2002c, 2002d). Generally speaking, according to international conventions and declarations, girls are adequately protected against the abuse of early marriage, yet it is still taking place. However, early marriages violate the right of children with often more negative consequences for girls.

Furthermore, the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC 1995, in FMRWG 2003) states that the majority of countries have set a minimum legal age of marriage of 15 years, but this varies throughout the world, and is often different for girls and boys. In this connection, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF 1993, in FMRWG 2003) argues that “while at first glance a higher minimum age for men appears to discriminate against women, these laws and traditions tend to be based on ideas of women’s inferiority. They imply that women need fewer years to prepare for marriage as their duties are confined to childbearing or domestic roles”. Furthermore, the age for marriage with parental consent is invariably lower and although it should, does not require the consent or the presence of those getting married since the families of the future spouses are very much involved in the negotiation. Hence, marriage without the child’s consent, where only parental consent is necessary, reveals a flaw in safeguarding the minimum age of marriage (FMRWG 2003).

In short, though the international conventions and declarations are aimed at protecting girls from the harmful consequences of early marriage, in developing countries, including Ethiopia, girls are married early mainly for socio-cultural and economic reasons. There is also the problem of defining when a girl is too young to marry in the International Conventions, such as the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC). CRC is near universally ratified, but it does not state that early marriage is prohibited, although many of the articles protect the child through other means, such as the right to have their views taken into account and a right to education (FMRWG 2000). Above all, CRC as well as other related international conventions do not clearly state when a girl is too young to marry and various provisions that deal with age of marriage do not have a commonly accepted definition to “early marriage”. Thus, lack of an overarching definition of “early marriage” in international conventions has generated some debate. Some scholars and activists argue that instead

of looking for a universal age at which girls (and boys) should not marry, we should focus instead on eliminating the unwanted effects of early marriage. For example, some commentators (such as Bunting 1999) suggest that a universal age of marriage is not appropriate, in part because societies have different understanding of what it means to be a child as well as different socio-economic and cultural realities. Bunting (1999) proposes that governments should be allowed to set the age of marriage below 18 years of age, but that the onus is on them to demonstrate that this lower age does not result in any discrimination or adverse consequences for women. She argues that this approach to early marriage provides a more accurate reading of the international conventions than the approach, which stipulates 18 as the minimum age of marriage (Bunting 1999).

Viewed from the anthropology of human rights, women, either all of the time or in specific contexts, have obviously been viewed as different from men- a separate category of person or non-person that never totally belongs to the social unit's category of person - or some fraction of full adult human status²² (Strathern 1972, in Messer 1996:185). The political, economic and social structures that deny women full personhood may also deny them human rights (Messer 1996:185-186). More specifically, in local communities, definitions of personhood are embedded in cultural values that set women apart. In this connection, Savell's article entitled "Striking a Balance between Cultural Sensitivity and International Human Rights Standards" (1996) examines the role of international human rights norms as a means of criticizing traditional cultural practices. In order to achieve an intelligent and informed debate on traditional cultural practices, Savell (1996) stresses the need for cross-cultural dialogue that recognizes cultural and historical differences and her primary concern is how commentators' external to a particular cultural tradition should respond to "human rights concerns" within that cultural tradition.

Currently, cultural practices, including early marriage and FGM, have attracted considerable attention and criticism from commentators outside practicing cultures, where as internal commentators have been addressing the issues from the point of view of their own cultural traditions within their communities. In response to these internal and external processes (sometimes reflective, sometimes ill-informed) a cross-cultural dialogue has emerged (Savell 1996).

In this cross-cultural dialogue, according to Savell, the focusing on women's experiences is necessary for the following reasons. First, with this perspective, outsider assertions about the nature and reasons for the continuation of a certain cultural practice can be tested and, perhaps, challenged. Second, we can appreciate the form and content of the internal struggles and debates surrounding the issue. Finally, we might subsequently engage in a form of criticism that supports those internal agitators in culturally appropriate ways (Savell 1996). In this regard, Savell has attempted to demonstrate that by taking a dynamic view of culture as a series of ongoing internal and external debates, the role of cross-cultural dialogue in expanding cross-cultural understanding of human rights looks promising. She has also argued that this approach opens opportunities for discourse by orienting us to the cultural and historical assumptions that feed the human rights debate. This approach encourages us to re-evaluate theoretical positions and strategies in light of the actual (rather than imagined or imposed) experiences and priorities of those with the cultural tools to devise the best strategies for dealing with human rights concerns. At the same time, Savell argues that the cross-cultural dialogue should not be used to silence external criticism, but such criticism should be supportive of and sensitive to the substance of internal debate and norms.

²² However, such view completely neglects the matrilineal societies.

2.1.4.5 The Ethiopian Legal Framework: Early Marriage and the Law

The global understanding of marriageability is expressed in terms of the legal age for marriage, 18 years for girls. However, this is neither an universally adhered to custom nor a commonly accepted view. Many, if not all, traditional marriages arranged by families and elders in rural areas are seldom entered in official marriage registers or included in official statistics. It is therefore difficult to get accurate statistics for early or forced marriages worldwide. This is because early and forced marriage seldom conforms to legality in accordance to civil laws on the age of marriage. Nevertheless, early marriage is common in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and some Middle Eastern countries (Heinonen 2002).

When we come to present-day Ethiopia, the Civil Code of 1960, which sets, the minimum age of marriage for girls at 15 years and that of boys at 18 years, was revised through concerted advocacy for gender sensitive revision of the Penal Code by women's organizations as well as other gender progressive organizations. Such consultation resulted in a considerable number of gender egalitarian provisions, establishing equality in marriage and divorce. According to the revised family code, the minimum legal age of marriage for both girls and boys is 18 years. This law also established the equal rights of both men and women in the formation of marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

The Revised Family Code of Ethiopia, Original (2002:166) states:

“The Revised Family Code (Proclamation No.213/2000) is a culmination of the efforts of various groups. This law, which was issued in December 2000, did away with the power of Family Arbitrators to decide cases and betrothal. It raised the marriage age of boys and girls to 18 years. It abolished the power of the husband as the head of the family and the sole decision maker. It allows a woman who has been cohabitating with a man (without concluding a formal marriage) for more than three years have to have a share in the common property. There are also other beneficial provisions, which could help to ease the plight of women. However, the new law has so far not proven its efficiency in practice. The real test is the extent of its application.”

From a historical viewpoint, national laws related to the minimum age of marriage and related issues in the three successive regimes of Ethiopia can be briefly summarized as follows:

“The Civil Code of 1960 set the minimum age of marriage for a woman at 15 years and that of a man at 18 years. However, the Code provided the emperor the power to grant dispensation of up to two years meaning that he had the power to set the marriage age for a girl at 13 and that of a boy at 16. The Civil Code prohibited marriage by representation and stated that marriage required the personal consent of the spouses. Not only were these laws inadequate but they were hardly ever implemented and enforced. During the period of the military regime, 1974-1991, some attempts were made to stop some of this practice particularly early marriage but these efforts were far from successful because of the highly repressive character of the state and the manner in which all policies were implemented forcefully. The absence of an autonomous women's movement and other gender progressive civil society organizations also limited the changes that could result from seemingly gender sensitive laws and policies. To date most of these legislation and policies have not yet been implemented nor have they been accompanied by allocation of public resources for their implementation. One practice that is shared by the two previous regimes and the current one in Ethiopia is the glaring gaps between laws and policies and the implementation of these policies. However, there are cases that differentiate the contemporary conjuncture from the previous two periods. The emergence of civil society organizations is a case in point. These organizations have been able to use the limited democratic space to discuss norms, institutions and traditions that structure women's personal and social lives some of which are detrimental to women's well-being. A significant outcome of these debates and public awareness campaigns is the phenomenal increase in forums and news items on various types of violence against women throughout the country” (EWLA, Hundee and Kembatta Women's Self-Help Center 2002:1, 11-12).

Currently, Ethiopia has ratified the major international conventions and instruments, and made them part of the laws of the land in Article 9(4) of the 1995 FDRE Constitution. These laws need to

be integrated in the ordinary laws such as the Penal and Civil Codes. How to apply the international instruments in Ethiopian courts is still being debated today. In reality, the majority of women and girls suffer discrimination because of traditional attitudes and practices in the society and in large parts of the public opinion. They are disadvantaged in distribution of property even within the family; and they suffer from discrimination of the enforcement of law in judicial institutions (Original 2002). Original (2002:165-66) further argues that:

“If the legal situation today is compared to the realities of life, it shows clearly that women suffer multiple discriminations. The ideals as enshrined in the Constitution are far from being realized. Discrimination continues everyday, because people are more concerned about traditional rules and personal interests, than about the fate of individual women who suffer from it.”

On line with Original’s argument, Bahru Zewdie (2002:11) broadly argues that, in present-day Ethiopia, “the tension between the formal and actual, between declaration and implementation, rhetoric and reality, remains a palpable one. While such tension is perceptible in other African countries that have adopted the path to democratization, it is bound to be more pronounced in a country like Ethiopia, where the weight of tradition (the ‘burden of history’) lies so heavy.”

When we come to marriage and its legality, marriage involves the consent of both spouses and entails a minimum age requirement. Consent should be the corner stone of any marriage. Article 16 (1b) of the CEDAW states that women should have “the same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full endorsement”. Article 34(2)²³ of the Constitution also provides that marriage should be based on the free and full consent of both spouses. “In practice we see today many children’s lives wrecked by forced early marriages, and radio and television refer frequently to marriages that lack the age and consent required. The right to freely enter marriage and choose a spouse is directly related to the age at marriage. Early marriage restricts freedom of choice. It also limits the right to education, the right to work, to health, and the right to decide on the number and spacing of children” (Original 2002). Concerning the legal capacity of married women, the Constitution guarantees the equal rights of spouses at the conclusion of marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution (Article 34:1). “A married woman has the right to carry out the occupation of her choice. The legal capacities of man and woman are equal on paper, but the legal capacity of a married woman is not equal with her husband’s in the Civil Code. This clearly contravenes CEDAW and the Constitution” (Original 2002). Furthermore, according to Original, registration of marriage is very essential to women. “Without it, problems arise in proving marriage and many other rights including the curbing of early marriage. Article 118 of the Civil Code makes registration of marriages compulsory. But the registers were not established and registration was suspended. The registers still have not become operational except for civil marriages at the Municipalities” (Original 2002:176).

With specific regard to the issue of early marriage and the national law, Ethiopia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and therefore there is almost country-wide agreement with its definition that all people under the age of 18 are children. However, in a large majority of developing countries, including Ethiopia, local and customary law is often adhered to more than international conventions, resulting in children losing any rights they have (FMRWG 2000). Coming to the national law pertaining to the legal age of marriage in present-day Ethiopia, according to the new Ethiopian family law, the minimum age of marriage without parental consent is 18 years for both girls and boys. Officially, the new Ethiopian Family Code prescribes a minimum age of 18

²³ “Men and women, without any distinction as to race, nation, nationality or religion, who have attained marriageable age as defined by law, have the right to marry and found a family. They have equal rights while entering into, during marriage and at the time of divorce. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses” (Article 34 (1-2) of the 1995 FDRE Constitution).

for marriage, but there are quite a number of exceptions since, according to Article 34(4)²⁴ of the current Constitution, the law gives recognition to marriage concluded under the systems of religious or customary laws. Most customary marriages among the rural majorities of Ethiopia are early arranged by parents, without the free consent of the would-be-spouses, mostly without the consent of the would-be-young brides. In this context, very young brides have little negotiating power to protect themselves from early-arranged marriage practices.

In general, despite the above guarantees of equality granted by the Constitution and the revised family law of Ethiopia, girls and women are not treated equally to boys and men in married life, in the family and in the society at large, particularly in the rural or traditional settings. This entails that the deep-rooted influences of cultural traditions on girls and women were not changed by the passing of laws, so there is a discrepancy between national laws and/or policies and local practices pertaining to gender equality in the traditional settings of Ethiopia. In fact, “most girls in northern Ethiopia, especially in the Amhara Region, are under 18 when they marry” (FMRWG 2000; UNICEF 2002d; Salopek 2004a, 2004b).

In the light of the socio-cultural, economic, human development, human rights, and legal frameworks, the present study attempts to look deeper into the gender-specific causes and consequences of early marriage in the local socio-cultural and economic contexts. Chapter seven of this thesis is fully devoted to marriage customs and early marriage practices among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam, Northwestern Ethiopia.

2.2 REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL-STATISTICAL STUDIES ON GENDER AND EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

2.2.1 Analysis of the Gender Gap in the Ethiopian Educational System

The educational coverage in Ethiopia is amongst the lowest in the world. Even compared to the sub-Saharan countries, access to education and *retention*²⁵ rates in Ethiopia are low (MoE 1999:3-4). Low access to Ethiopian higher education is likewise striking. Successive regimes have failed to effect changes in educational access. This problem is more reflected in low women’s access to education, which results less from effect of policy orientations and regime types than from economic and sociological issues (Alem Habtu 2003:100).

The Ethiopian Central Statistics Authority Demographic Household Survey (CSA DHS 2000, in DSC 2003) indicates that the majority of the Ethiopian population has little or no formal education. The gender disaggregated data of the survey shows that 62% of the males and 77% of the females have no formal education. This survey further shows that less than 3% of the males and 1% of the females have completed primary education. This indicates the need for rapid transformation of education, both quantitatively and qualitatively (DCS 2003).

Ethiopia has experienced many changes and reforms in its educational system. Currently, education occupies a central position in the country’s development policy. The Constitution of FDRE (1995) states that, “Access to public health and education are a priority and the state has the obligation to allocate increasing resources for these services” (Non-Formal Education Report 1999:9; Second Annual Report on Ethiopian Economy 2000/01, in DCS 2003). The current Education and Training Policy (1994), the First Five Year Educational Sector Development Program (ESDP I) (1997/98-2001/02), the Five Year National Education Development Plan (2000/01-2004/05) and ESDP II (2002/03-2003/05) all clearly state the country’s commitment to provide access to quality

²⁴ “In accordance with provisions to be specified by law, a law giving recognition to a marriage concluded under systems of religious or customary laws may be enacted” (Article 34 (4) of the 1995 FDRE Constitution).

²⁵ “Retention”, according to MoE (1999:1), is defined as “the probability that a young person completes a basic education.”

learning opportunities for all children. However, low enrolment, high dropout rates and low achievement in the educational sector are still prevalent. Due to the limited access and inefficiency of Ethiopian primary education, female children's participation is very low by international standards and even lower compared with neighboring African countries (Women's Affairs Department, WAD, of MoE 1999:4, in DCS 2003).

Enrolment in the Ethiopian primary education is characterized by both *gender* and *regional disparities*. At the national level, out of the girls (aged 7-14); nearly 37% were enrolled in schools as compared to 51% of the boys. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)²⁶ for girls ranged between 91% in Addis Ababa (the capital city of Ethiopia) to 6% in Somalia Region (Government of Ethiopia and UNICEF, MoE 2002-2006:97-98, in DCS 2003).

With specific reference to girls' primary schooling (grades 1-8) in Ethiopia, the major obstacles which seem to account for most of the gender gap are: "getting into school where girls are less successful than boys; passing grade one where the survival rates for girls has been less than for boys; getting through the middle grades after they again encounter special difficulties; and completing the late years of primary schooling. This gap has been widening in recent years" (MoE 1999:3). Here it is further pointed out that once admitted to school, boys seem to manage their academic advancement somewhat better than girls, fewer boys repeat grades and dropout from school, and as a result, the gender gap in primary education participation is widening.

Genet Zewdie, in her study "Women in Primary and Secondary Education" (1991), confirms the national gender disparity in education being high with girls representing only 39% of the primary school population. Moreover, Alem Habtu's study on "Gender Gap in Ethiopian Education" (2003) notes that primary GER is only 30% in Ethiopia (33% for boys, 24% for girls).

According to the Women's Affairs Department (WAD) of the Ministry of Education (MoE 1999), there is an increasing concern paid to the lack of progress over the past several years in improving the survival rate of girls in schools. Special policies such as *automatic promotion* and *free tuition* have been introduced. However, these policies have had only a marginal impact on enabling girls to get into schools and little apparent impact on helping them get through the grade one hurdle. Girls seem to do as well as boys from grades two to five. But from grades six through nine, the academic and personal challenges mount, where many students face difficulties and these seem particularly severe for girls (MoE 1999).

In general, access to, participation in, and success in completion of education in Ethiopia, like in most African countries, is characterized by gender inequality. Gender inequality in education is caused by a combination of many socio-cultural, economic and political obstacles (MoE 1999). The Ethiopian Government, being aware of it and concerned about this problem, is committed to the provision of equal education for boys and girls. Due to this commitment, proactive policies and strategies were set, such as promoting the value of education, eliminating school based gender biases in the curriculum, changing teachers' attitudes and behaviors, and equipping schools with such simple facilities as toilets for both sexes, reducing distance to the next school, and providing positive role models (MoE 1999:7).

²⁶ Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is defined as "the total number of children enrolled at a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the total official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given year". It is obtained by dividing the number of individuals enrolled at a given level of education, irrespective of age by the population of the age group officially corresponding to that level of education and multiplying by 100 (UN 2000, in Okojie 2001:2).

2.2.2 Empirical Studies on Gender and Education in Ethiopia

Among the various studies reviewed on “Education in Ethiopia-1994-1997”, those that are related to gender issues in the Ethiopian educational system in general and problems pertaining to primary schooling in particular are summarized in the following table.

Table 2.2: Brief Summary of Studies Related to Gender and Primary Education in Ethiopia (Summarized from Tilahun Workneh et al 1999)

S. No.	Author/s, Year and Study Title	Educational Problems	Methods	Major Findings
1	IDS and MoE (1996) “Gender and Primary Schooling in Ethiopia”	Problems of low female participation, persistence and performance in primary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive and analytical methods reflecting the results of fieldwork in Jimma and East Gojjam zones • Group discussions • A review of previous work on gender and education 	<p><i>In rural schools:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • girls’ enrolment is lower than that of boys due to economic problems and opportunity cost, being higher for girls • Dropout is higher during harvest and in families with fewer children • Parental socio-economic status is related to parental attitude towards schooling • Girls attending schools have mothers and/or fathers with some kind of formal education • Attendance is affected by early marriage (for girls), poor school health conditions, conscription (for boys), length of the school day, distance to school, lack of secondary schools in the local community, and unattractiveness of the learning environment • Late entry, repetition and corporal punishment work against persistence • Repetition is higher among girls, which is a function of academic problems since girls perform worse than boys in class because of the high opportunity cost
2	Asmaru, Ruotonen and Lebesech (1996) “Gender Perspective in the Education Sector Development Programme (Amhara and Benshangul-Gumuz Regions)”	Problems of low female participation in Amhara and Benshangul-Gumuz Regions	Desk Study and Document Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participation of females in education is alarmingly low • Such a disproportionate participation is highly pronounced in marginalized regions like Benshangul- Gumuz Region where nearly 33% of enrolled students in primary schools were girls; in Amhara Region they constituted nearly 47% although there was a wide disparity in female enrolment between zones • The rate of female dropouts and repeaters in Benshangul-Gumuz and Amhara Regions were high and the percentage of female teachers was low
3	Yelfign, et al (1995) “Females’ Primary School Participation and Performance in Cheha District”	Problems related to female primary education such as enrolment, attendance, dropout, repetition, and academic achievement	Field study supported by seven different questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of girls is low because of social and economic factors such as mother’s educational attainment and provision of materials increase girls’ participation in primary education; parents’ preference to sons than daughters for schooling, and they consider girls schooling costly; and girls’ engagement in household chores
4	Tabeyin (1996) “Women in Education”	Problems of under-participation, underachievement and under-representation of women in the education system, particularly at tertiary level	Descriptive analysis using secondary data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural, social, political, and economic factors contribute to under- participation, under-achievement and under-representation of women in the education system • Ethiopian education has been urban-centered and male-dominated • Girls’ contribution to household tasks and family livelihood is valued highly and so they have less chance for schooling • Repetition and dropout are greater for girls • Fierce competition to get into university works against females

5	Lexow (1996) “Education and Training for Ethiopian and Eritrean Women”	The Ethiopian part of this study investigated the issue of under-representation of women at all levels of education and training	Interviews, discussions, meetings, fieldwork, review of documents and secondary data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among a range of socio-cultural, economic and institutional pressures which mediate against the full involvement of women in education. Early marriages, stereotypical perceptions, preference for boys in parental investment costs, traditional curricula, shortage of women teachers, lack of day-care centers, and poor job opportunity were identified as the major factors
6	Davison, et. al (1994) “Educational Demand in Rural Ethiopia”	Factors influencing the demand for primary schooling and that of gender issues	Analysis of data collected from schools, households and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic constraints are the most salient impediments to enrolment and participation in primary schools in rural areas • Occupational development, specific school expenses and demands of seasonal agricultural practices are important factors in the decision to stay at school
7	Mulate and Zewdie (1996) “Household Demand for Schooling”	Problems of repetition and dropouts, lack of access, late entry, low demand for schooling and low enrolment	Documentary review and analysis of data from the 1995/96 Household Income, Consumption, Expenditure and Welfare Monitoring Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of children within a family is positively correlated with enrolment, i.e., the greater the number of children in a family, the greater the probability of enrolment • Enrolment increases with an increase in parental education and income • The probability of late entry is higher for students from rural areas • The demand for education in rural areas is lower than the urban areas due to opportunity cost and other factors • Students from rural areas have a higher probability of dropout than students from urban areas
8	Anbesu and Derese (1996) “Participation and Dropout in Eastern Tigray Zone Primary Schools”	Problems of primary school participation, enrolment, dropout, teacher absenteeism and achievement results	Field study conducted through school observation and interviews with teachers, pupils and education officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most school-age children are out of school and the majority of those enrolled are over-aged • Compared to boys, the proportion of girls enrolled at every grade is small • The main reasons for not sending children to school are poverty, child labor, school costs and length of school days • The causes for dropout are poverty, out-migration, influence of peer groups, involvement in agricultural activities, distance to school, availability of temporary jobs and marriage • Lateness and absenteeism are major problems
9	Anbesu, Derese and Alemayehu (1997) “Students’ Participation, Dropout and Achievement in Primary Schools and Manpower Capacity in Zone and Wereda Education Offices of Sidama Zone”	Problems of dropout, shortage of teachers and school facilities, dilapidated schools and inexperienced education administrators	Field study by observation and interviews with teachers, pupils and education officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting of school fees and the campaign carried out to persuade parents have improved participation and enrolment in the zone • Compared to boys, the participation rate of girls is lower • Further growth in enrolment is affected by shortage of teachers, textbooks and lack of space in existing schools • Dropout is a serious problem and is caused by a preference for trading to attending school • A difficult rural life, involvement in agricultural activities for boys, and early marriage and fear of abduction of girls are additional reasons for dropout • The quality of education is affected by inadequate supply of curricular materials and shortage of classrooms, desks, teachers etc. • There is no significant gender disparity in terms of grade repetition but still boys perform better than girls

10	FDRE (1996) "Education Sector Development Programme (1997-2001)"	Educational problems such as: primary education is underdeveloped, male and urban biased, poor in quality, wasteful and starved finance	Policy Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school enrolment is very low • There is high early dropout rate • Quality is declining • There is regional and gender disparity • Education financing is not equitable
11	FDRE Policy and HRDP Office (1996) "Education Sector Review: Synthesis and Summary"	Issues of demand for education, efficiency and effectiveness of the education sector	Descriptive and analytical methods and summary of nine studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is extremely low enrolment in schools, even by the standards of sub-Saharan countries, and a significant disparity in enrolment between the sexes, regions and rural/urban areas • Demand is constrained by individual characteristics (age and sex), household factors, opportunity cost, and residence • Late entry into school is a major problem • Urban classes are crowded but there is low enrolment in rural areas • The majority of schools operate on a single shift basis • The dropout rate is high and teachers are under-utilized • Teachers are predominantly male; not all of them have the desired qualifications and most are young and inexperienced
12	NES (1996) "The Ethiopian Primary Education System"	Problems of poor quality of primary education as evidenced by inadequate teacher training, negligible supply of textbooks and equipment, and overcrowded classrooms	Desk study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 % of school-age children attend schools, among these, 38 % are females • The gap between male and female attendance is greater in rural areas than in urban centres • Poor working conditions and low salary have made the teaching profession unattractive • The then curriculum was considered irrelevant to Ethiopian conditions • The quality of instruction is poor owing to lack of textbooks and equipment • Schools in towns are over-crowded while schools in the rural areas are under-utilized

In general, according to the above studies, Ethiopian education has been urban-centered and male-dominated. Cultural, social, political and economic factors contribute to under-participation, under-achievement, and under-representation of women in the education system. Girls' contribution to household tasks and family livelihood is valued highly and so they have less chance for schooling. The demand for education in rural areas is lower than in urban areas. Economic constraints and opportunity costs are the most salient impediments to enrolment and participation in primary schools in rural areas. In rural primary schools, girls' enrolment and participation is lower than that of boys. Parents prefer sons to daughters for schooling since they engage girls in household chores and consider their schooling costly. Non-enrolment and dropout rates are more serious in the initial years of schooling and more severe among females and children from rural areas. Dropout in rural primary schools is higher during harvest and in families with fewer children. The main reasons cited for non-enrolment and dropout are lack of money for school related expenses, opportunity cost, early marriage (for girls), poor school health conditions, conscription (for boys), length of the school day, distance to school, lack of secondary school places in the local community and unattractiveness of the learning environment.

These studies further noted that the probability of late entry is higher for students in rural areas. Late entry and repetition of classes, which work against persistence, are higher among girls and are functions of academic problems. Boys perform better than girls in class due to the high opportunity cost. The participation of females in education is alarmingly low in Benshangul-Gumuz Region where nearly

33% of enrolled students in primary schools were girls. In the Amhara Region, females' educational participation nearly constituted 47% although there was a wide disparity in female enrolment between zones. In addition, the rate of female dropouts and repeaters in Benshangul-Gumuz and Amhara Regions was high and the percentage of female teachers was low.

Moreover, these studies indicate that the number of children within a family is positively correlated with enrolment in rural primary schools. Enrolment also increases with an increase in parental education and income. Girls attending schools have mothers and/or fathers with some kind of formal education. Thus, parental socio-economic and educational status is positively related to parental attitude towards schooling in general and girls' education in particular.

Overall, the findings of the reviewed studies provide one with a general highlight about the low participation rate of education in rural areas and among girls. However, none of the reviewed studies dealt with the extent to which early marriage affects girls' formal education in rural areas. This could be, perhaps, due to the fact that the reviewed studies focused on national and regional problems mostly based on descriptive quantitative methods and secondary sources.

With regard to the strengths and weaknesses of the reviewed studies on Ethiopian education (1994-1997) in general and the above selected studies in particular, Tilahun, et al (1999:19-23) commented that:

“The reviewed studies have addressed problems, issues and concerns at national, regional, zonal and school levels. One of the strongest aspects of the studies during the period is that they have gone down to school level. Most studies use the current socio-economic, political and educational environment as a frame of reference; but some are also essentially of historical interest. In general, most of the reviewed studies have reasonable levels of accuracy and reliability. However, some gaps and incongruencies still remain. The gaps and incongruencies make program design, international assistance and policy-setting difficult. Some of the reviewed studies repeat or duplicate others in the period 1994-1997 and those prior to 1990. The studies are mainly concerned with numbers, number of pupils, females, teachers, schools, and amount of money. The issue of quality has received the least attention. Classroom teaching and learning, the objectives and philosophy of education, developing creative and critical thinking, and communicative skills, to take a few examples, are not major concerns in the studies. Nor has the impact of, for example primary education, has been the focus in any of the studies.”

Tilahun et al's (1999) reviews of studies on Ethiopian education cover only the periods of 1994-1997. However, before 1994 and after 1997, there are various studies on education in Ethiopia. Among them, studies related to this research subject are: Genet Zewdie (1991), Assefa Beyene (1991), Tietjen et. al (1998), MoE (1999), Tilaye Kassahun (1999), UNICEF (2002c and 2002d), DCS (2003), and Alem Habtu (2003). Among these studies, Alem Habtu (2003) is a relatively latest and more focused study on factors contributing to gender gap in the Ethiopian education.

Based on public documents and personal interviews, Alem Habtu (2003:100) found that the most important factors to account for low school coverage and gender gap in the Ethiopian education are *poverty, patriarchy, and school characteristics*, in descending order. Alem Habtu (2003: 103-109) also discusses in detail that poverty, patriarchal ideology, gender socialization and schooling, school characteristics, overage schooling, early marriage, lack of role models, gender disparity in school participation, gender discrimination and sexual harassment, and urban-rural differences in access and participation as factors contributing to gender gap in the Ethiopian Education. Analysis of these factors suggest that gender division of household labor, differential expectations of male and female schooling, gender-based prejudice and discrimination, lack of role models for girls, sexual harassment by male students and teachers, and pressure to marry early account for gender gap in the Ethiopian education. Specifically, according to Alem Habtu, *poverty and patriarchal customs* that

treat boys and girls differentially serve as main obstacles to female education. These obstacles become more severe as girls move from primary to secondary schools. Given expectations of early marriage, pressure on girls' early marriage increases once they begin their teens years. Instead of becoming an avenue of change for women's social status, schooling ends up being primarily an instrument for the reproduction of traditional gender roles. Therefore, the transformation of women's educational status requires a simultaneous challenge of poverty, patriarchal ideology and practices, and sexist education (Alem Habtu 2003:112).

In general, the reviewed studies tried to examine barriers to girls' education in Ethiopia and how gender socialization produced psychological effects in terms of self-definitions, social expectations and/or beliefs about male and female roles, participation in the schooling process, and access to equitable opportunities and resources. They also attempted to analyze how parental socio-economic and educational status influence male and female student's participation and achievement in the educational process. They underscore barriers to girls' academic performance that include *prejudice, gender stereotyping, low self-esteem, plus heavy domestic chores*. In most cases, the emphasis was on barriers to girls' education at the national or regional level with little focus on the local variations on socio-cultural barriers to girls' education.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW ON EARLY MARRIAGE

2.3.1 An Overview of Early Marriage in the International and Regional Contexts

Studies on early marriage at the international and regional levels have been mostly conducted by international and regional organizations such as UNICEF (2001a), FMRWG (2000, 2001 and 2003), UNESCO (2002a), UNFPA (2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2004b, 2004c), Population Council (2004), Fistula Foundation (2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005a, 2005b), AGI (1997), UN ECA (1999), and IAC (1987 and 1990). Among the reviewed international documents on early marriage, UNICEF's (2001a) and FMRWG's (2003) research reports have extensively examined the prevalence, causes, and consequences of early marriage and proposed the need for further research and action to end the harmful consequences of this practice. Among the reviewed regional research reports on harmful cultural and traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls in Africa, the UN ECA's (1999) research report on "Traditional and Cultural Practices Harmful to the Girl-Child: A Cross-Sectional Review" is relatively related to the present study, though it is broader but less concrete in its scope. Among the reviewed studies related to early marriage at the international and regional levels, UNICEF's (2001a), FMRWG's (2003) and UN ECA's (1999) research reports are briefly reviewed below.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s research report titled "Early Marriage: Child Spouses" (2001a) has examined early marriage, the marriage of children and young people under the age of 18, from a human rights perspective.²⁷ It has also attempted to examine the prevalence, contexts, and causes of early marriage and its impacts on every aspects of the lives of those affected - particularly young girls - and on the whole society based on the available secondary sources on early marriage. The available data, according to the report, suggest that early marriage is most common in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where poverty, traditional taboos about pre-marital sex and fears of HIV/AIDS are widespread.²⁸ According to the report, the major reasons for early marriage are: 1)

²⁷ Research into early marriage, according to UNICEF (2001a), has tended to concentrate on its impact on reproductive health, school dropout and rising population figures, and there has been little examination of the practice as a human rights violation in itself (see also section 2.1.4.4 of this Chapter).

²⁸ The practice of early marriage, according to UNICEF (2001a), is closely related to rural life-orientation, poverty and level of education. In this connection, UNICEF (2001a:5) further notes that, "Virtually everywhere, poor women in rural areas

poverty or 'early marriage as a strategy for economic survival'; 2) tradition or the need for protecting girls from pre-marital sex; 3) contemporary pressures such as HIV/AIDS; and 4) lack of legal sanctions against early marriage or lack of effective implementation of existing laws. The report has also underlined reproductive health problems, psychosocial problems, denial of education, violence and abandonment, and poverty as the major harmful consequences of early marriage, particularly for young girls. Finally, the report has concluded with a call for more rights-based research on early marriage, an issue that has far-reaching consequences, and suggested: a) the need for small-scale researches on the psychosocial, economic as well as social impacts of early marriage; b) support for the physical well-being of young girls; c) support for the psychological well-being and emergency assistance for young married girls; d) support for improved economic status; e) education for empowerment and intellectual development; f) increasing self-determination in adolescent girls; g) legal change; and h) advocacy. Overall, the UNICEF (2001a)'s recommendations revolve around the need for helping those who have been married at an early age and the need for preventing early marriage through education, advocacy and alliance-building or networking.

The Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls (FMRWG)'s research report on "Early Marriage and Poverty: Exploring Links for Policy and Program Development" (2003) has thoroughly examined the links between early marriage and poverty based on the available secondary data on the issue at hand. According to this report, in line with UNICEF (2001a)'s report, early marriage is most prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia because of poverty, illiteracy, custom/ tradition and gender discrimination. It has also cited the following as the major consequences of early marriage: 1) violation of the human rights of girls; 2) early pregnancy, unsafe motherhood, and obstetric fistula, which, in turn, result in a) social and physiological vulnerability of married girls, and b) maternal mortality and morbidity; 3) gender violence, which affects the well-being of married girls and the commercialization of sex and marriage; and 4) young married girls vulnerability to HIV/AIDS which, in turn, results in poverty, gender inequality and access to AIDS treatment. Finally, the report has suggested the following frameworks for action: 1) promoting a gender and rights agenda, 2) providing opportunities for services; 3) reforming and/or enforcing laws and policies pertaining to early marriage; 4) supporting girls and developing their skills; and 5) using advocacy as an intervention strategy to prevent early marriage.

The United Nations- African Economic Commission (UN ECA)'s research report on "Traditional and Cultural Practices Harmful to the Girl-Child: A Cross-Sectional Review" (1999) has assessed socio-cultural and economic issues surrounding "harmful traditional practices" affecting the overall well-being of the girl-child based on available secondary sources on the subject. Specifically, section five of the report has examined why girls are married off early, impacts of early marriage on the girl-child in particular and on the society at large, and measures to be taken to address the harmful consequences of the practice in Africa- particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, including Ethiopia. According to the report, there are many interactive social and economic structures and pressures, which encourage a specific marriage, which differ from society to society. The report further notes that, an analysis of the variance of the effect of traditional factors, such as type of production system, lineage organization, inheritance of property (through males or female), political and social stratification, and of one modernization factor, literacy, on the timing of women's marriage (measured by the proportion of single women in the age group 15-19), concluded that literacy is the major modernization factor that produces high proportion of singles. In explaining the reasons why

tend to marry younger than those in urban areas and educational levels also play a critical role... Early marriage and early Childbearing have been more or less abandoned by the wealthiest sections of society, even in poor and highly traditional countries".

girls are married off early in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, UN ECA (1999) further argues that:

“If a girl’s main role in society is to be a wife and mother, then it may be felt that the sooner the better to marry her off and let her achieve recognition in the community in this capacity. Many groups, which practice early marriage, feel strongly that it is essential in order to ensure that girl remains a virgin, and is encouraged by the practice of a bride price being paid to the girl’s family. The amounts normally vary according to whether the woman is a virgin, has been married before and has children or not. A woman’s value is then based on virginity and fertility. In Gabon, Niger and Togo limits have been set for maximum bride price allowed; however, families of daughters may wish to receive bride-wealth soon so as to have resources to enable their sons to marry. A girl may suffer from reduced self-identity and opportunities for receiving education or learning skills, which could be economically useful and be denied a choice of spouse in order to be protected from being sexually violated, while such restrictive measures are not taken to control males. Cultural norms of parental decision-making power regarding marriage timing and choice of spouse, large families and the expected assistance of the extended family in making the establishment of a household possible, have its major influence on the pattern of early marriage.... Also, lack of change in marriage behavior can be attributed to traditional family systems—mainly based on agriculture, limited agricultural technology, illiteracy and slowly developing economies. With less employment in agricultural work and no alternatives in the modern sector (trade, services, government), women may become more dependent upon their husbands, which eventually could reinforce early marriages. When rural families are struggling to make ends meet, early marriage may be motivated by increasing need for children to provide economic security, which may ‘out-balance their reduced need for children as sources of labor’” (Boserup 1985:389, in UN ECA 1999:10-11).

The UN ECA (1999) report has highlighted social and economic structures, poverty, illiteracy, socio-cultural values, and gender discrimination as the major reasons why girls are married off early in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. It has also pointed out high fertility, reproductive health problems, human rights’ violation, effects on educational attainment, and poverty²⁹ as the major harmful consequences of early marriage. Finally, it has suggested: 1) the need for addressing the negative impacts of early marriage on girls;³⁰ and 2) the need for re-examining legal issues related to: a) marriage and reproductive health, b) land, property and inheritance rights, and then c) addressing legal inequalities.

Of course, various international and regional studies³¹ indicate that early marriage,³² the practice of marriage before 18 years, prevails across much of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and in some form or another exists throughout the world.³³ According to UNICEF (2001a), exact figures of the

²⁹ “The poverty cycle also tends to perpetuate itself through illiterate mothers raising illiterate daughters, who marry early, experience high fertility rates, poor health and few opportunities for anything better” (UN ECA 1999:2)

³⁰ “It is hard to understand fully the many ways in which girls are hampered from reaching their full potential as human beings, participating in and benefiting equitably from economic activities and decision-making in the communities of which they are a part, without concretely identifying and describing all of the contributing factors and how they operate to negatively affect women during their entire lives. It is equally important to note that all of these issues are interrelated. Real change in one area is needed to reinforce or prompt change in another. For example, the educational, health and marriage status of girls is very connected” (UN ECA 1999:2)

³¹ E.g. UNICEF 2001a; FMRWG 2000, 2001 and 2003; UNESCO 2002a; UNFPA 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2004b, 2004c; Population Council 2004; Fistula Foundation 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005a, 2005b; AGI 1997; UN ECA 1999; and IAC 1987 and 1990

³² The global understanding of marriageability is expressed in terms of the legal age for marriage, which is usually 18 years for girls. However, this is neither universally adhered to custom nor commonly accepted view. Many, if not all, traditional marriages arranged by families and elders in rural areas are seldom entered in official marriage registers or included in official statistics. It is therefore difficult to get accurate statistics for early or forced marriages worldwide. This is because early and forced marriage seldom conforms to legality in accordance to civil laws on the age of marriage. Nevertheless, early marriage is common in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and some Middle Eastern Countries (Heinonen 2002)

³³ Salopek’s article on “Early Marriage Survives in U.S.” (2004c) and Morrison’s article titled “Tradition of Early Marriage Hurting Mexican Immigrant Girls” (2004) affirm the existence of early marriage in the United States of America with specific reference to the rural Mexican city of Cheran, where girls often marry by their mid-teens, and then drop out of

number of early marriages are difficult to obtain, as so many are unregistered and unofficial. Of course, there are no accurate data³⁴ on the prevalence of early marriage at the global level. Although statistics and data are unclear, it is undeniable that there are millions of girls and boys forced into marriage while they are still children (FMRWG 2000). There are, according to child-rights activists, an estimated 50 million early (as early as 7 years old and less) married girls across the world: “Young teen or even pre-teen girls whose innocence is being sacrificed to arranged marriages, often with older men” (Salopek 2004a). Salopek (2004a) further notes that, “Coerced by family and culture into lives of servility and isolation, and scarred by the trauma of too-early pregnancy, child-brides represent a vast, lost generation of children.” While humanitarian campaigns have focused global attention on childhood, AIDS in Africa, FGM and child labor, one of the underlying sources of all these woes remains largely ignored. Child marriage, an entrenched practice long hidden in shadow, was only denounced by the United Nations as a serious human-rights violation in 2001 (Salopek 2004a). Population Council (2004) further argues that, “Early marriage is a neglected human rights abuse that affects millions of girls worldwide”. In short, various studies suggest that early marriage is most common in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where poverty, traditional taboos about pre-marital sex and fears of AIDS are widespread. Accordingly, the following table indicates ten country’s percentage of girls married before age 18.

Table 2.3: Child Marriage Top Ten List (DHS 1996-2001)

<i>No.</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Percentage of Girls Married before age 18</i>
1	Niger	82%
2	Bangladesh	75%
3	Chad	73%
4	Yemen	64%
5	Mali	63%
6	Nepal	63%
7	Mozambique	59%
8	Ethiopia	57%
9	India	57%
10	Uganda	50%

The above table shows that ‘child’ marriage is most prevalent in Niger (82%) among the top ten lists, followed by countries from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In these countries, according to the reviewed studies, parents choose to marry off their daughters early for a number of reasons. Poor families may regard a young girl as an economic burden and her marriage as a necessary survival strategy. They may think that early marriage offers protection for their daughter from the dangers of sexual assault, or more generally, offers the care of a male guardian. Early marriage may also be seen as a strategy to avoid girls becoming pregnant outside marriage. Gender discrimination can also underpin early marriage. Furthermore, girls may be married young to ensure obedience and subservience within their husband’s household and to maximize their childbearing. Of course, the causes of early marriage vary from culture to culture. However, the most common causes of early marriage among different cultures are:

1. **Poverty:** early marriage is sometimes viewed as a means of economic survival. If girls are married early, the family has a mouth less to feed, and the hope is that the girl herself will be better off.

school to raise a family. BBC NEWS on “Action Demanded by MIP over Romani Child Bride” (September 30, 2003) also shows the reality of early marriage in Greece, Europe.

³⁴ In fact, there are various problems in assessing the prevalence of early marriage. One of the problems is that so many early marriages are unregistered and unofficial, and are not therefore counted as part of any standard data collection system and very little country data exist about marriages under age of 14, even less about those below age 10 (UNICEF 2001a:5)

2. **Social unrest or civil strife:** in countries experiencing war or other types of severe social stresses, violations of children's rights often increase. Child labor, child prostitution, high levels of neglect and abandonment and a rise in early marriage are often signs of underlying social traumas.
3. **Desire to protect the girl:** in societies where virginity is valued, early marriage is seen as a way of protecting girls from unsanctioned pre-marital sex.
4. **Laws:** in some countries, the age of marriage for boys is higher than for girls. This contributes to the belief that it is acceptable for girls be married at an early age.
5. **Threats to cultural survival:** in societies facing war or some other form of trauma or risk, marrying a girl to someone within the same culture is seen as a way of promoting the culture by ensuring that the children will be born and raised in a culturally safe environment.

Currently, the Population Council (2004) has developed country-specific briefing sheets on "Child Marriage", including Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria and Zambia, where marriage at the age of seven or eight is common. According to the Population Council (2004), child marriage has the following consequences: a) it violates fundamental human rights; b) it is closely associated with no or low levels of schooling for girls; c) in many instances, it marks an abrupt transition into sexual relations with a husband who is considerably older and un-chosen; d) it results in early pregnancy which carries special risks for both mother and child; and e) it may put girls at increased risk of HIV infection compared to unmarried sexually active girls.

In general, according to the reviewed studies on the consequences of early marriage at the international and regional levels, early marriage has the following multi-dimensional consequences:

1. **Poor health including poor reproductive health:** girls who marry young are at risk of earlier exposure to risk of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. They also risk diseases such as vesico-vaginal fistula (VVF) or leakages from the bladder into the vagina caused by the birthing process.
2. **High maternal mortality rates:** young women who give birth between 15 and 19 years of age are twice more likely to die in childbirth than women who are over 20 years of age. Early marriage also tends to mean increased pregnancies which further increase the chance of death.
3. **Greater risk of domestic violence:** young girls are often married to men who are much older than themselves. The age difference tends to reinforce the powerlessness of the girl, who is thus at greater risk of abuse and less likely to assert herself.
4. **Lower education and work skills:** girls who marry young tend to drop out of school and are more likely to bear children during adolescence, thus effectively ensuring that they will not return to school or develop other work skills.
5. **Divorce or abandonment:** some desperate girls and women who have been forced into marriage try to run away or take other avenues to leave their spouses, and others are abandoned by their spouses. Usually, however, the girls and women are left with the responsibility of raising children without the husband or family's financial support, thus making them more likely to live in poverty.
6. **Reinforced gender stereotypes and roles:** the lack of other opportunities and the powerlessness that often accompanies early marriage combine to perpetuate the gender roles of girls and women and reinforces cultural traditions that support early marriage as a desirable practice.
7. **Psychological disadvantage:** girls who are forced to marry early often face social isolation and have no one with whom to discuss their unhappy lot.
8. **Widowhood:** where a young girl is married to an older man, the chances of becoming a widow at a young age increase. This often carries with it a low social status and inability to inherit property.
9. **A cycle of poverty and abuse:** children of young and illiterate mothers tend to face the same cycle of deprivation and abuse experienced by their mothers.

Overall, early marriage contributes to extreme and persistent poverty; high illiteracy; high incidence of infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS; elevated child mortality rates; high birth rates; low life expectancy for women; and malnutrition. In short, there tends to be a relationship between age of marriage, level of education, poverty and health; and early marriage results in a cycle of poverty and poor health.

2.3.2 Early Marriage in the Ethiopian Context

2.3.2.1 Prevalence of Early Marriage in Ethiopia

Early marriage can be found throughout Ethiopia. Regarding the trend of early marriage in Ethiopia, the National Family and Fertility Survey (NFFS 1990, in EWLA et al 2002) found that the average age at marriage was 15.6 years for the country as a whole and 16.2 for Addis Ababa (CSA 1993, in EWLA et al 2002:4). According to the Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS 2000, in Population Council 2004), 19% of the girls were married by age 15 and about half of girls were married by age 18 at the national level. “Overall urban women ages 20-24 marry about 2.5 years later than rural women. The median age at first marriage among women ages 25-49 varies significantly by region ranging from 14.3 years in Amhara to 19.4 years in Dire Dawa” (DHS 2000, in Morin and Garbus 2003:47-49). DHS (2000) also found a strong relationship between education and age of marriage. Finally, the survey found that men marry more than seven years later than women in Ethiopia (CSA and ORC MACRO 2000: 77, in EWLA et al 2002:5).

According to the National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia (NCTPE 1997), the prevalence rate of early marriage at the national level is 54%. However, early marriage is practiced to a larger degree in Amhara (82%), Tigray (79%), Benishangul/Gumuz and Gambella (64%). The survey report also notes that over 50% of girls were married under age 15 in Amhara (62%), Tigray (53%), Addis Ababa (51%) and Benishangul/Gumuz (50%). Early marriage, according to NCTPE (1997:108), seems higher among the Orthodox Christians.

NCTPE (1997)’s national baseline survey results indicate the highest prevalence rate of early marriage in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia, where 82% the female population have married before 18 years of age. In this region, according to NCTPE (1997), at least four out of every five women were married young and in several other regions, nearly two thirds of women wed early. However, the average age at first marriage in Ethiopia may mask the fact that early marriage may still prevail in some districts within the country or the region, where marriage agreements take place for girls as young as 4 to 5 years old and sometimes before birth (UNICEF 2002d). UNICEF (2002d) further notes that though some girls marry and leave home soon after the agreement, most go to their husband’s home when they are 10 to 13 years old. Presently, although the socio-culturally accepted age of marriage varies from region to region, early marriage (marriage before 18 years of age) is still prevalent in the rural areas of Ethiopia (Adane Gossa 1990; Haile-Gabriel Dagne 1994a and 1994b; Heinonen 1996, in Heinonen 2002). Though there are no accurate data on the prevalence as well as the current trend of early marriage in Ethiopia, the available sources suggest that the practice is evident throughout Ethiopia and it is most common in the Amhara region.³⁵

Ethiopia, according to the Population Council (PC 2004), has one of the most severe crises of child marriage in the world today. In other words, a high prevalence rate of early-childhood marriage exists in Ethiopia. Child marriage is extremely prevalent in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia, where 50% of girls were married by 15 and 80% were married by age 18 (DHS 2000, in PC 2004). The Amhara National Regional State Women’s Affairs Office (ANRSWAO 2003) also asserts that early marriage is most common in the Amhara Region where the rate of urbanization is less than 9%. Salopek’s article titled “In the heart of Ethiopia: Child Marriage takes a brutal toll” (2004b) further reveals the most common nature of the practice of early marriage among the rural communities of the Amhara Region of Ethiopia. In this connection EWLA et al (2002:2) notes that:

³⁵ “Amharaland has the highest child marriage rates in the world, according to U.N. and Ethiopian statistics; in some dusty corners of the ancient highlands, almost 90% of the local girls are married before 15” (Salopek 2004b).

“The extreme form of early of marriage is still highly prevalent in the Amhara Region although it has a significant prevalence rate in Oromiya as well. Relatively speaking, early marriage is not widely practiced in the Southern Region but the high incidence of abduction appears to have triggered early marriage in some districts. However, there are variations among the large number of ethnic groups in the Region. For example, in Sidama Zone, most girls marry at around 14”.

In general, in all regions of Ethiopia, most girls marry before they reach puberty compared to their male counterparts. Especially, among the Amhara, early marriage arrangements take place even before the birth of a girl-child. The World Health Organization’s (WHO 1993, in EWLA et al 2002) team encountered an example of the “the extreme nature of some early marriages” in one *woreda* clinic in Amhara Region. During discussions with maternal care and health (MCH) clients, a young mother informed the team that, “The year old-baby that she was breast-feeding was ‘already engaged to be married’” (WHO 1999: 23, in EWLA et al 2002:5). In short, the occurrence of early marriage in Ethiopia is so common that a hospital has been set-up to deal only with ‘obstetric fistula’, a consequence of early sexual relationships and childbirth (FMRWG 2000). According to the founder of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital (AAFH), Dr. Catherine Hamlin, 33% of young women suffering from ‘fistula’³⁶ came from the Amhara Region (WIC 2005b). This indicates the highest prevalence rate of early pregnancy complications as a result of early marriage practices in this region.

2.3.2.2 Types and Patterns of Early Marriage Arrangements in Ethiopia

Early marriage, marriage before or during adolescence, has different forms of arrangements in the Ethiopian context. UN ECA (1999) has identified six types of marriage arrangements in the regions of Ethiopia where the practice of early marriage is prevalent. These are:

1. *Promissory marriage* whereby a family promises its new-born (or not yet born), daughter to another family which formally proposes marriage;
2. *Child marriage* whereby children under the age of ten are wedded in one of two ways. In one case, the child-bride is given to her in-laws immediately after the wedding ceremony. In the other case, the girl stays with her parents until such time as the two families agree that she is mature enough to go to live with her husband. In the first case, sexual assault is likely and the chances of the marriage breaking down are also greater;
3. *Early adolescent marriage* which takes place between the ages of 10 and 15;
4. *Marriage of a young girl to an elderly man* where the man is typically between the ages of 40 and 50, but can be even over 60. The main reason given for supporting this practice is fertility considerations, followed by the perceived better adaptability of young girls to married life, need for labor of a young girl and submissive wife to provide care in the husband’s old age, desirability of a virgin and increased wealth;
5. *Late adolescent marriage* which takes place between the ages of 16 and 20; and
6. *Adult marriage*, which takes above the age of 21.

In each of the above-mentioned types of marriage, according to UN ECA (1999), a marriage is arranged after negotiations between two families. The bride, who has no idea who her husband would be, is required to prove she is a virgin. If she is not a virgin, she and her family are disgraced and the marriage is dissolved (UN ECA 1999). UN ECA further notes that:

“Early marriage is arranged in a different age group. It ranges from a promise of marriage when a child is conceived, to eight years and they remain protected until 12 or 13. A marriage may have been agreed to by two families very early in a child’s life and the actual wedding ceremony held at the time

³⁶ ‘Fistula’ is a health risk commonly associated with child marriage because of the mother’s physical immaturity at the time of childbirth. A girl whose pelvis and birth canal are not fully developed at the time of delivery often endures labor that lasts for many hours or days. Unless emergency obstetric care is available, the pressure from the baby’s head in the birth canal may cause tearing of the young mother’s vagina, bladder and rectum, causing uncontrollable leakage of urine or feces. This condition can only be repaired with reproductive surgery, which is usually inaccessible to the girls who need it (Murray and Lopez 1998; UNFPA 2002a; World Vision 2002; Fistula Foundation 2004).

the girl reaches puberty, at which time normally, the husband may begin having sexual relations with the young wife. In one area of Ethiopia surveyed, 21 of respondents said that the ideal age for marriage of a girl was below the age of nine, with the majority of respondents in areas surveyed replying that ages 10-15 were more preferred. In a few areas, girls marry at 14 or 15. The same research showed that people generally give their children in marriage at an early age due to the pressure to conform to tradition. Other major reasons were to ensure the girl remained a virgin until marriage and to see their children married before getting old or dying. The parents of a child married early often also feel proud and respected because their child was wanted at an early age” (UN ECA 1999:11-12).

Here it should be noted that early marriage arrangement patterns in Ethiopia change in accordance with the changing historical, political and socio-economic conditions. In this regard, Alemante Amara, in his M.A. thesis in Social Anthropology, titled “Early Marriage and Reproductive Health Problems in Eastern Gojjam”(2004), has pointed out four phases of early marriage arrangement patterns in Ethiopia. The first phase was the arrangements of marriage for political alliance through “dynastic inter-marriage”³⁷ and this was occurred before 1941. The second phase was the period from 1941-1975 and during these times early marriage arrangements were based on economic motives, mainly land. The third phase was during the mid 1980s, when early marriage arrangements were mainly based on economic and life securities. The last phase is from late 1980s towards the present and during this phase early marriage arrangement patterns take cultural and religious cover or socio-cultural justifications such as fear of *qomo qär* (unmarriageable) or *saləmot abəbayän ləy* (parents’ desire to see the marriage of their daughter before they pass away). He has also found that presently the age at first marriage is going down from 12 to 9 years with specific reference to one peasant community in East Gojjam Administrative Zone of the Amhara Region of Ethiopia.

2.3.2.3 Causes of Early Marriage in the Ethiopian Context

In the Ethiopian context, early marriage is practiced for various reasons. The reviewed studies have repeatedly asserted that the prevalence of early marriage in Ethiopia is closely related to *underdevelopment, poverty*, and the ‘*low*’ *status of women*. In other words, the explanations given for early marriage in Ethiopia revolve around economic and socio-cultural factors.

According to the NCTPE (1997:108-110), the major reasons for the practice of early marriage among the different ethnic and religious groups of Ethiopia are:

- *Economic reasons*, i.e. improvement of the economic status of the family through marriage, or through material gains during the marriage ceremony (in Amhara in particular where different contributions in kind or cash are made for the ceremony by relatives, neighbors, etc) or through dowry or bride price (Anyiwak, Bume, Guragie, Harari);
- Parents’ desire to see the marriage of their daughter and/or a grand-child before they pass away;
- To strengthen ties between the marrying families;
- To avoid the perpetuation of a non-married status (*qomo qär*, unmarriageable). If a girl is not married beyond a certain age, she is considered as undesirable for marriage, a shame to both her family and herself. To avoid this *qomo qär*-stigma and ensure the girl gets a husband, families agree to a request even when they might not consider the girl old enough;
- Early and compelling requests when the family or the elders sent by the bride-groom’s family are of such a status that negative response is unthinkable (Amhara, Tigray) or, as in Oromiya, when the request is from a *balä wukabi* or ordained by him;

³⁷ Dynastic inter-marriage was used to consolidate the government of the realm, as well as to strengthen control over economically or strategically important areas. Marriages were also important in resolving, or minimizing, conflicts, including those on the borders of the realm. Hence, interregional or inter-ethnic dynastic marriages, liaisons, or proposed unions, in the economic, political and military contexts of the time represented an important, and recurring, factor in Ethiopian statecraft, as well as a colorful feature of the country’s social life (Richard Pankhurst 1997:206-220).

- To avoid pre-marital sex or loss of virginity and its consequences; and
- Others include the need to marry before menstruation appears (Argoba), to stake first-claim (Tigraway), for the fame of giving a marriage feast (Amhara, Kimant), as a repayment for attending others' (friends, relatives, neighbors) wedding feasts (Amhara), to get the services of a son-in-law (Agew) and fear of abduction (Oromo).

In short, according to NCTPE (1997:110-111), parents and/or grand-parents arrange early marriage for their daughters and/or grand-daughters for economic and socio-cultural reasons such as improvement of the economic status of the family through marriage, to strengthen family-ties, desire to have a child (grand-child) or see the marriage of their daughters, to avoid *qomo qār*-stigma, and to protect girls from pre-marital sex (loss of virginity).

According to UNICEF (2004c), the primary reasons for early marriage in Ethiopia are: 1) for the fame of giving a marriage feast as a demonstration of wealth and respect; 2) to secure economic alliance and consolidate their wealth, parents of boys from well-to-do and respected families seek partners for their sons from similar class backgrounds and arrange for their marriage at an early age- in many cases husbands are much older than their girl-brides; and 3) to ensure that girls are virgins when they marry thereby preserving their own as well as their families' respect. These explanations for the persistence of early marriage in Ethiopia reveal "the economics of early marriage" and its socio-cultural justifications. In most studies, the *economic motives* behind why girls are married off early among the agrarian communities of Ethiopia are covered with socio-cultural justifications. In this connection, Mulu Muleta and Willams (1999:2051) state that:

"In agrarian societies, such as Ethiopia, the social and cultural pressures on girls to marry at an early age remain very strong. In such societies, an unmarried daughter passed a certain age may be considered an embarrassment or disgrace to the family as well as an economic burden, if she is economically unproductive. In this case, parents are no more likely to spread their child-related investment over many children because of the high risk associated with investing a large amount in any one child. A situation like this could lead parents to invest less in educating their daughters. In the traditional settings of Ethiopia, the girl-child is a victim of early arranged marriage which is customarily the only vocation in her life, where she is excluded from the decision-making process in regard to her spouse, and reproductive health. In traditional societies such as those in Ethiopia, marriages are usually arranged by parents or elders, who decide at which age and whom the girl will marry. Decisions are usually based on financial interests, with the girl's opinion rarely considered. Girls are given in marriage at an early age because of pressure to conform to tradition and to ensure that the girl is a virgin on marriage. Parents also wish to see their children married and settled before they themselves become old or die. Age differences between husbands and wives are frequent, with men usually aged between 18 and 20 years on marriage, by contrast with girls who may be married from the age of 6 years."

Three major factors that are still critical to understanding the persistence of child marriages among the rural communities of Ethiopia are: 1) a high social and cultural value attached to virginity; 2) the need for creating a bond between families rather than a personal arrangement by bride and groom; and 3) a growing trend towards a reduction of ritual and expenditure for all marriages, combined with a shift toward informality³⁸ (Helen Pankhurst 1992, in EWLA et al 2002). Given the large family size and deepening poverty, securing a child's future is likely to be a major concern of rural households in Ethiopia (EWLA et al 2002). Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2000a, 2000b and 2002) indicate the impoverishment of most rural households, which results in an increase in the informality of marriages in rural Ethiopia. According to these studies, the most valuable asset brought to marriage is land, followed by oxen and livestock. These studies also found that daughters hardly

³⁸ In the case of Menz, Northern Ethiopia, the outcomes of state intervention as well as impoverishment "seemed to operate in the same direction, namely towards less ceremony, a more narrow choice of marriage format, partners from geographically closer communities, and later unions" (Pankhurst 1992:125, in EWLA et al 2002:6).

ever inherit anything from parents and that most brides bring no asset to marriage. It might be that the responses to increased impoverishment are area-specific in that while it might mean delayed marriages in some areas, in other communities, it might result in the persistence of early marriage (EWLA et al 2002:6-7). EWLA et al further notes that:

“The justifications for early marriage are once again very similar in the Amhara and Tigray regions of Ethiopia and can be summed as fear of being dishonored by the parents of the girl as a result of delayed marriage and/or loss of virginity, to prevent abduction, to secure a proper marriage for daughters and to forge links between families. In Amhara Region, close relatives, neighbors and friends make contributions to the wedding ceremony. This, in turn, has led to a type of rotating credit system where those who contribute promote early marriage of their own daughters so as to ensure repayment of their contribution to other marriages” (EWLA et al 2002:22).

Diverse explanation have been given for the persistence of early and child marriages in Ethiopia. Of these, the most prominent and plausible are those that are related to parent’s desire to ensure a daughter’s virginity as well as secure a future of a child (EWLA et al 2002:6). In the past, the rationale for these types of ‘parent-centered’ child or early marriages were said to be the forging of alliances among the rich peasant classes for purposes of consolidating ancestral land-holdings (Haile-Gabriel Dagne 1994b). In some regions of Ethiopia, including some parts of Amhara Region, child marriages still persist. In this region, men are desperate to find a wife because only then are they allowed to own land. If so, the reason for its tenacity almost thirty years after the land reform makes it imperative to search for more complex explanatory frameworks (EWLA et al 2002).

In general, the reasons why girls in Ethiopia, like in other traditional societies, are married off early are diverse and complex. According to the reviewed studies, there are various interactive socio-cultural and economic structures and pressures, which encourage early marriage among the rural communities of Ethiopia. The most common explanations for the persistence of early marriage range from the desire to ensure a daughter’s virginity; to secure a child’s future at an early age; or simply to conform to tradition.

2.3.2.4 Consequences of Early Marriage in the Ethiopian Context

Whatever justifications or explanations are given for early marriage, many scholars and health professionals believe that the consequences of early marriage are largely negative, particularly for young women. In this regard, WHO (1999, in UN ECA 1999) argues that:

“By remaining in subservient roles, whether as daughters within the parental household or as early brides, opportunities to develop the psychological and social skills necessary to make decisions and life choices remain severely restricted. These restrictions are compounded further by the fact that young women are denied educational opportunities, even at the primary level”.

When we come to Ethiopia, many studies on the consequences of early marriage have been primarily concerned with the health risks of the practice. According to the baseline survey results of the National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia (NCTPE 1997), the most frequently mentioned harmful effects of early marriage are:1) problems related to early pregnancy and Childbirth; 2) harm to the uterus and/or the body in general including the lack of thrive, sickliness of the girl-child and damage to the uterus and the vagina sometimes leading to death; 3) psychological problems; 4) loveless marriage often ending in divorce or separation; 5) the girl-child being not mature enough to run a household; and 6) high expenses related to the marriage, since it often ends in early divorce or the running away of the bride.

According to the Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (DHS 2000, in EWLA et al 2002:22), “early age at childbearing has a detrimental effect on the health of both mother and child.”

The survey enumerates relatively higher level of pregnancy complications among young mothers, due to physiological immaturity, inexperience with childcare practices that also influence maternal and infant health as some of the major consequences of early childbearing. The most widely documented consequence of early childbearing is obstructed labor, leading to vesico-vaginal fistula (Nebiat Tafari 1987, in EWLA et al 2002:22).

Alemante Amera, in “Early Marriage and Reproductive Health Problems in Eastern Gojjam” (M.A. Thesis, 2004), identifies the following consequences of early marriage with specific reference to one peasant community in East Gojjam: 1) Rapture uterus or obstructed labor; 2) fistula which occurs in two ways: first due to in-balance sexual-intercourse when the husband is too much older than the young wife; and second due to prolonged labor of young pregnant woman; 3) spontaneous abortion or miscarriages; 4) changing of spouse or frequent divorce which results in conflict over private children and share of property; 5) violence against women and denial of the fundamental rights of girls such as the right to education; and 6) exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS. In line with the sixth point, Bruce and Clark note that:

“In Ethiopia, when the HIV epidemic is selective of young females, child marriage may be a significant risk factor for adolescent girls. Among young people aged 15-24, girls are more likely than boys to be infected with HIV. In Amhara region, two of the four sentinel sites report the highest rates of HIV among pregnant women in the entire country. This region also has the lowest average age of marriage in Ethiopia” (Bruce and Clark 2003, in Population Council 2004:2).

In an article on “Ethiopian: Fistula Makes Social Outcasts of Child Brides” (2004a), Inbaraj has written a life story of a fistula victim young-bride in the Amhara Region and how this incidence makes victims social outcasts, with specific reference to a young bride who got married at 12 and got pregnant at 13. In another article on “Married as Children, Women with Obstetric Fistulas Have No Future” (2004b), Inbaraj has also written the life history of a fistula victim child-bride from the same Amhara region. Furthermore, the health consequences of early pregnancy and life stories of fistula patients who have got access to the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital are well-documented and publicized by the Fistula Foundation in its own website on “One Woman’s Story” (see Fistula Foundation 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005a and 2005b).

The only Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia in Addis Ababa operates on 1200 fistula patients a year. However, these are just the girls who manage to get to the hospital, representing only a small proportion of the girls affected throughout Ethiopia. The other may remain unaware that an operation can help them (FMRWG 2000). In Ethiopia, the terrain of mountains and gorges makes transport difficult and transport costs may be prohibitive (Mulu Muleta and Willams 1999). World Vision (2002:1-2) further notes that, “Although the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital charges nothing, most women from rural areas have difficulty getting there for treatment. Some are pushed in wheelbarrow for carried across rugged, rural terrain. Others ride camels or donkeys. Some, unable to read, arrive with signs asking people to guide them to the hospital.”

In the Ethiopian socio-cultural and economic context, reasons for fistula victim girls’ delay or not reporting their injuries are multi-factorial which include poverty, complete dependence on the husband and his family, lack of health facilities, and the cultural taboo of discussing issues relating to sexual intercourse and childbirth. Traditional beliefs may mean that a woman is regarded as a failure if she does not achieve a normal delivery at home. Bringing about changes in attitudes and behavior within traditional societies is a very slow process. This process would include education, especially of girls, which need to be supported by influential leaders. Governments and health workers need to be aware of the severity of the problem. Policies and laws should be revised and strategies designed

to both create and enforce laws about the rights of women (Kelly and Kwast 1993; Mulu Muleta and Williams 1999). With regard to the socio-cultural dimensions of reproductive health problems and the need for community-based interventions, the World Health Organization notes that:

“Of all the health challenges that countries face, those posed in relation to sexual and reproductive health are perhaps the most daunting because they involve not only diseases, but also normal components of life such as sexual maturation and pregnancy, surrounded by cultural, social, ethical and religious considerations. In no other aspect of health is the need for broad community involvement, alongside focused and effective interventions, so necessary” (WHO 1997, in WHO 1999:1).

According to the available data on fistula victims in Ethiopia, most fistula patients are the victims of the custom of early marriage. In Ethiopia, like in many developing countries, the role of women is limited to “providing sexual satisfaction for their husbands, producing children and performing the hard labor associated with agrarian life. Fistula injuries destroy their ability to fulfill these roles, and with it their sense of self-worth. They became social outcasts from their community through no fault of their own” (Hamlin, in Inbaraj 2004a). There are many empirical evidences of very young brides from the Amhara region of Ethiopia suffering from reproductive health problems related to early pregnancy and early childbearing (Inbaraj 2004a and 2004b, see also WIC 2005b).

Early marriage poses many dangers to the girl’s health, fertility, physical and psychological well-being and/or her rights to an education and other life choices. In other words, early marriage closes girls’ educational prospects and threatens their health. The health risks are numerous and contribute to the high rates of maternal and child morbidity and mortality. The health risks from early childbearing are exacerbated by poverty and lack of information and services. These include malnutrition and low antenatal and postnatal care. Poor health and lack of childcare skills of child mothers result in the intergenerational transmission of morbidity and mortality (NTPE 1997; FMRWG 2000; Belete and Dereje 2000; Heinonen 2002). Researchers found that girls who marry young are more likely to be illiterate and to have no experience of formal education. In other words, early-childhood marriage has negative consequences on educational opportunities, the physical and psychological health of the child bride and on family stability, especially the high rate of divorce, desertion and poor employment prospects for the young girl.

With regard to the psychological, social and political consequences of early marriage, EWLA et al (2002:22-23) note that:

“Early and child marriage restricts opportunities to develop the psychological and social skills necessary to make strategic decisions and life choices. The political outcome of child marriage is thus lack of equal citizenship resulting from inhibiting the right of consent and autonomy. Early and child marriage is clearly one of the major obstacles to the successful implementation of a number of development policies of the country such as the Women’s Policy, education, health, and population policies as well as policy to reduce poverty. The disempowerment of women resulting from lack of schooling, ability to earn a decent income and inability to make strategic decision results in marital instability, psychological trauma and limited alternatives which often end in poor employment and even exposure to HIV/AIDS are the overall consequences of early and forced marriages” (EWLA et al 2002:22-23).

Overall, the reviewed studies on the consequence of early marriage in Ethiopia have focused on the health risks of early marriage. In this connection, EWLA et al (2002:7) argue that:

“In terms of consequences of early marriage, the health consequences of early marriage have attracted relatively more attention. Passing references have also been made to the restrictions of opportunities to develop the psychological and social skills necessary to make decisions and life choices, denial of educational opportunities that result from early marriage. However, in Ethiopia, there has been very

little discussion of the political and social consequences of child and early marriage. In part, this is most likely due to the emerging character of the women's movement in the country and the tendency of NGOs working on gender issues to shy away from political issues. A noteworthy effort at shifting towards rights-based advocacy has been initiated by the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association. Basing their arguments on the new Ethiopian Constitution and its commitment to international human rights instruments, the organization is calling on the government to take all the necessary measures to abolish practices such as FGM and early marriage. There is, however, much more work that needs to be done in order to understand the various social and political consequences of these practices.”

Some studies, mostly conducted by UNICEF,³⁹ on early marriage in Ethiopia generally highlight the negative effects of early marriage on girls' education, which is the basis for their human and social development. According to the Population Council (2004), married girls receive little or no schooling. According to DHS (2000, in Population Council 2004), 80% of married girls have received no education, and 81% cannot read at all; and only 3% of married girls aged 15-19 are in school, compared to 34% of unmarried girls. The Population Council (2004) also notes that large spousal age differences may limit married girls' autonomy and decision-making ability.

Early marriage is illegal in Ethiopia. At the national and regional levels, the new Ethiopian family law legislates against early marriage, marriage before the age of 18 for both boys and girls. Despite the illegality of early marriage in Ethiopia, it is widely practiced in the rural settings of Ethiopia, especially parents in rural settings of the Amhara Region, marry their daughters off at a very young age (as young as 2 years old or below) due to socio-cultural and economic reasons which are repeatedly cited in the reviewed studies.⁴⁰ Furthermore, health problems (in most cases), psychosocial impacts and lack of educational opportunities for girls are just some of the multi-dimensional issues discussed in the reviewed studies on early marriage in Ethiopia.

In general, the reviewed studies on marriage arrangements and early marriage practices in Ethiopia give one with the general customs and traditions related to marriage practices in general and early marriage in particular. However, there is no any single study conducted on “early marriage and its effects on girls' education” with specific reference to the present study area, Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam, Northwestern Ethiopia. In this regard, one of the purposes of this study is to fill such a research gap.

2.4 ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS USED IN THE STUDY

2.4.1 “Childhood-Girlhood”

The concept of “childhood-girlhood” is not as simple and straight forward as it may appear. One of the difficulties revolving around the understanding of “childhood-girlhood” is with regard to its definition. Attempts to define it have taken two questions as central issues: 1) *what constitutes “childhood”?* *What constitutes “girlhood”?* These issues are briefly discussed below.

Anthropological and Legal Conceptions of “Childhood”

“Childhood” can be defined in terms of age. However, “age may not always be a sufficient base, since the fulfillment of certain rites may be more important than the biological maturity” (Tirussew, et al 1997:6). As a result, a “child” could be defined differently in different societies. Thus, the concept of “childhood” must always be related to a particular social framework as well as to chronological age” (Rodgers and Standing 1981, *ibid*).

“Childhood,” according to Weisner (2001:1697), is “a cultural project with goals, meanings, constant adaptation, and struggle, and anthropology provides the evidence for the startling and

³⁹ cf. UNICEF 2002c, 2002d, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d

⁴⁰ cf. FMRWG 2000; UNICEF 2002d; Salopek 2004a, 2004b

remarkable varieties of childhoods lived around the world.” Weisner further notes that biological, psychological, and cultural anthropologists collaborate in the study of childhood, since biology, mind, and culture are all required to understand childhood.

In anthropology, there are two major perspectives on ‘childhood.’ In one view, children are socialized into a set of norms and customs that they learn and then perpetuate. In this view, “children are small adults in the making, ready receptors of traditions, shaped by parents and community adults to ensure continuity in cultural and moral education, competence for survival in the ecology of the community, respect for tradition, appropriate behavior and respect for elders in demeanor and gender roles.” (Weisner 2001:1697). According to the second view, “children’s personalities and minds are understood as reflections of the cultural themes as well as the anxieties children grow up with. These children become adults who then project into myths, rituals, art, and other forms (including, in turn, their own practices as parents) the learned patterns produced in childhood and shared by others in their community” (Weisner 2001:1697).

At the international level, the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines “childhood as lasting until an individual reaches the age of eighteen.” This seems to have been used as a base by many countries (including Ethiopia), ratifying this convention, for defining a ‘child.’ Constitutionally, the Ethiopian Government has declared its determination to promote and protect the rights of the child. According to this Convention, children have the right to have their views taken into account and a right to education. To this end, the Ethiopia Government has ratified regional and international treatise on children’s rights and has even enshrined children’s rights in its national constitution. However, notwithstanding such initiatives, the socio-cultural as well as economic dimension of children’s lives remains unchanged, particularly in the rural and traditional settings of Ethiopia. Furthermore, in countries like Ethiopia, with more than 80 ethnic groups and differing child-rearing practices and perceptions of the “child,” it would not be logical to think of a common notion of ‘childhood.’

The notion of ‘childhood’ needs to be perceived in the socio-cultural and economic context of a country. In this connection, Rwezaurat’s article “Competing ‘Images’ of Childhood in the Social and Legal Systems of Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa” (1998) examines the effects of economic and social constraints on the enforcement of laws and treatise designed to protect the interests of children. Using the concept of “competing images of childhood,” Rwezaurat (1998:253) argues that:

“The perception of the child as a family resource in pre-capitalist African social systems, which has persisted in certain families, conflicts with the idea that children are separate individuals vested with certain rights. The worsening economic situation in Africa has seemingly reinforced the image of the child as a family assets without ensuring the survival of the old safeguards intended to prevent the abuse of children. It is argued, therefore, that any effort to raise the status of an African child must begin with an appreciation of the current social and economic context given that it is such a powerful force on the lives of most children in sub-Saharan Africa.”

However, for the purpose of this study, the legal dimension of “childhood” will be used. Regarding the legal definition of “childhood” in Ethiopia, the Civil Code (1960) defines “child” as a “minor of either sex who has not attained the full age of 18 years.” This definition is compatible with that provided in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989) as well as constitutional rights of children in present-day Ethiopia.

In the light of the foregoing conceptualization of the notion of “childhood” and the legal definition of a “child” in the Ethiopian context, let us proceed to the conceptualization of “girl-hood.”

The Social Conceptions of “Girl-hood” and the Feminist Critique

At the international level, CRC (1989) defines the “child” as “anyone below the age of 18.” However, in traditional societies, including Ethiopia, “childhood” for girls is socially defined. In this connection, UN ECA (1999) notes: “One must bear in mind the fact that many girls are married and are mothers by middle adolescence and are burdened with adult responsibilities.” Girls are typically expected to take on a major part of caring for younger siblings and household chores even before adolescence. By that time, patterns of limited opportunity and cultural expectations have shaped the life-time potential for the vast majority of girls. UN ECA (1996, in UN ECA 1999) further argues that:

“Girls in Africa live in environments, societies and cultures that are diverse. Yet their disadvantaged situation is basically similar wherever they might live. They are more likely to be born into discrimination, be under valued in comparison to their brothers, be exploited and considered transitory members of their families, and serve as helpers to their over burdened mothers from a very early age. Their sexuality increases their vulnerability to violence and abuse. These discriminatory attitudes and practices, deeply rooted in the cultures and traditions of some African societies, are perpetuated and accepted primarily because societies are basically complacent and satisfied with the status quo” (UN ECA 1999:2).

The girl-child in traditional societies of Africa has been described as being discriminated against throughout her life from birth onward. From an early age, girls are socialized to put themselves last (UN ECA 1999). According to UN ECA (1999), everything that happens in girl’s childhood has a cumulative effect, which culminates in adult women being hindered, discriminated against or otherwise being put in a disadvantage position, having fewer rights and opportunities as compared with men.

“For many girls, adulthood is entered into with poor health as a consequence of years of poor nutritional status, adolescent childbearing and heavy workload. This lack of reserve energy and spare time makes real participation in the development of her community and self-development through education and training impossible even if the opportunity is available. ... ‘The girl-child of today is the woman of tomorrow. In order that she may grow up with the health, confidence and education necessary for her to take her place with dignity and equal to man in society, special attention needs to be focused on her’” (UN ECA 1999:1-2).

In Africa, many of the cultural and traditional practices stem from “the belief that females are inferior, do not benefit the family into which they are born, and must be controlled as well as prepared for their main role -- and generally only means of earning respect and status in life -- to be wives and mothers” (UN ECA 1999:2-3).

The feminist critique of 1950s ‘girlhood project’ was rooted in rebellion against the “traditional conception” of “girl-hood” (Sommers and Whitehead 1998). According to feminist critics, earlier generations of girls were raised primarily to be wives and mothers, from puberty on, parents taught daughters to be modest, nice, nurturing, accomplished in the domestic arts, and virginal. Since a young woman’s virginity was understood as a moral as well as a physical condition, family and church conspired to keep women “pure.” The feminist activists who undertook the ‘girlhood project’ declared war on what they viewed as “Victorian double standards for boys and girls,” which they blamed for unhappy marriages and unfulfilled female desires. They instead called for a new single sexual standard based on “traditional boyhood.” In their play and pursuits, little girls were to be elites; a “traditionally feminine daughter” became a mild social embarrassment, while a “feisty tom-boy/daughter” was a source of pride. In everything from sports to sex, girls gained experiences that were once off-limits. The virtue of staying sexually “pure” has been replaced by the virtue of being physically fit. Amidst its success at terminating different standards for the sexes, the ‘girlhood

project' has created new discontents (Sommers and Whitehead 1998). Based on the available evidence on the negative consequences of the feminist activists' 'girlhood project' on the 'girls of gen x', Sommers and Whitehead further note that:

“...All that is naturally womanly - especially anything related to childbearing, is treated by elites as something to be managed, minimized and somehow overcome. As a result, a woman's life between ages 10 and 60 has been medicalised and problematized with a host of products and technologies like birth control and abortion, hormone replacement therapy, and cosmetic surgery being offered to ward off or manage what is natural. Old women must recognize that their feminist critique of 1950s girlhood, which inspired the effort to remake female upbringing may not fit the realities of girls' lives now. May be the problem then is the 'tyranny of the femininity mystique.' But the solution today is not a more 'unnatural' and therefore even 'more tyrannical masculine mystique'” (Sommers and Whitehead 1998:1-2).

Taking into account issues surrounding both the traditional conception of “girl-hood” and that of the feminist critique of 1950s 'girlhood project', let us proceed to the link between the notion of “girl-hood” and early marriage in the Ethiopian context.

In the traditional settings of Ethiopia, the social conception of “a girl is no longer a child” (*yäset läḡ tənäs yälläwum*) is significant for the continued social acceptance of early marriage. In this context, the Ethiopian legislations provide background information about the basic principles underlining the “social construction of the Ethiopian girl-child.” According to the *Fäta Nägäst* (The Law of Kings), a fifteenth century text that contains legal provisions on matters regarding social life in Ethiopia, “girls reach majority between ages twelve to fifteen years, but boys when they are eighteen or when they are able to financially support themselves and/or their families.” Furthermore, Article 581 of the Ethiopian Civil Code (1960) sets “fifteen years as the legal age of marriage for girls and eighteen years for boys.” However, the expression “girl-child” as used in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989) and that of the revised family law of Ethiopia (2000) refers to “girls” up to age 18 and therefore they are normally considered minors without the rights that an adult, male or female, would be expected to have. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the notion of “girl-hood” or “girl-child” refers to “girls” up to age 18.

2.4.2 “Early marriage”

The reviewed studies on “early marriage” reveal the lack of a universally accepted definition for “age of marriage.” In other words, one of the difficulties revolving around the understanding of “early marriage” is with regard to its definition. The concept is not as simple and straight forward as it may appear. Attempts to define it have taken two questions as central issues, i.e. what constitutes ‘marriage’? And what constitutes ‘early marriage’? In this connection, UNICEF, in its publication on “Early Marriage: Child Spouses” (2001a), notes that:

“Birth, marriage and death are the standard of key events in most people's lives. But only one—marriage—is a matter of choice. The right to exercise that choice was recognized as a principle of law even in Roman times and has long been established in international human rights instruments. Yet many girls, and a smaller number of boys, enter marriage without any chance of exercising their right to choose. Some are forced into marriage at a very early age. Others are simply too young to make an informed decision about their marriage partner or about the implications of marriage itself. They may have given what passes for ‘consent’ in the eyes of custom or the law, but in reality, consent to their binding union has been made by others on their behalf. The assumption is that once a girl is married she has become a woman—even if she is only 12. Equally, where a boy is made to marry, he is now a man and must put away childish things. While the age of marriage is generally on the rise, marriage of children and adolescents below the age of 18 is still widely practiced” (UNICEF 2001a:2).

The Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls (FMRWG 2003:39) defines marriage existing in all societies as a “formalized relationship with legal/or social standing between individual men and women, in which sexual relations are legitimized and as an area for reproduction and child rearing which has state recognition.” Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls (FMRWG 2001:1) further argues that:

“Marriage is usually greeted as a joyful occasion. It displays the union of two families and the creation of a new domestic unit to continue the hopes and values of the community. In reality, however, for girl children, the event often represents a serious abuse of human rights. From birth, they are treated less favorably than their brothers. Girls are worked harder, receive less education than boys. If girls do attend school, they complete fewer grades than boys. Marriage, relentless hard work and childbearing are an almost inevitable premature end to a girl’s childhood and formal education. Early marriage consumes many years of a girl’s adolescence, compromising her schooling, life choices and future health (Aleksander 1998). In these situations, girls are often condemned to lives of misery, servitude, sexual abuse and premature childbirth while they are still children themselves and therefore, before they have even reached the internationally agreed age of consent. The child may be classified as a ‘wife’ but is often little more than a ‘slave’ whose body is used for sexual purposes as well as household drudgery.”

With specific reference to what constitutes “early marriage”, international organizations defined the concept as follows:

- According to UNICEF (2001a:5), “early marriage refers to the practice of marriage before or during adolescence.”
- According to Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls (2003), early marriage refers to any form of marriage that takes place before a child has reached 18 years.
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW 1979) states that, “any betrothal or marriage of a child should not have any legal status.” Article 16 (2) of CEDAW further states that, “the minimum age for marriage for both male and female should be 18 years, the age when they have attained full maturity and capacity to act.” However, most early marriages are arranged and based on the consent of parents and often fail to ensure the best interest of the girl-child. Early marriages often include some element of force. A forced marriage is defined as any “marriage conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress is a factor” (United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2000, in Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls 2003: 8).
- In its preamble, the UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (ratified in 1964) recalls article 16 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which specifically refers to: “Men and women of full age” and states that “marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.” Article 3 of the UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages requires that States register all marriages in an official register. However precise statistics on early marriage are difficult to obtain, as, still, few marriages are formally registered.

The global understanding of marriageability is expressed in terms of the legal age for marriage. However, this is neither universally adhered to custom nor a commonly accepted view. Hence, in spite of provisions of UN human rights instrument, the promulgation of statutory rules for early marriage by member countries have so far proven very ineffective. Most customary laws do not recognize women’s equal right in marriage, in property or inheritance rights, thus denying them their right as children and as adults. They also limit women and girls ability to exercise their right via statutory laws by overcoming their efficacy due to the need to ‘preserve, adhere, and/or respect culture and traditions.’ Custom, tradition, and culture are thus used to oppose change or promote the continuation of early marriage (Heinonen 2002).

The age of child brides varies according to countries. Furthermore, the age gap between the man and his wife varies, but the man often is much older. In other words, various international conventions and provisions that deal with “age of marriage” do not clearly state “when a girl is too

young to marry.” Accordingly, there is no commonly accepted definition to “early marriage.” The lack of an overarching definition of “early marriage” in international conventions has generated some debate. Some scholars and activists argue that instead of looking for a universal age at which girls (and boys) should not marry, we should instead focus on eliminating the unwanted effects of early marriage. In this connection, some commentators suggest that a universal age of marriage is not appropriate, in part because societies have a different understanding of what it means to be a child as well as different socio-economic and cultural realities. In this context, Bunting (1999) proposes that governments should be allowed to set the age of marriage below 18 years of age, but this lower age does not result in any discrimination or adverse consequences for women. She also argues that this approach to “early marriage” provides a more accurate reading of the international conventions than the approach, which stipulates 18 as the minimum age of marriage. In other words, though the international conventions and declarations are aimed at protecting girls from the harmful consequences of early marriage, in developing countries, including Ethiopia, girls are married early mainly for socio-cultural and economic reasons, as we have explored earlier in the socio-cultural and economic frameworks of early marriage.

According to (EWLA et al 2002:22), the working definition of ‘early marriage’ is taken as marriage before or during adolescence. In this study, the concept of “early marriage” refers to a situation where “children under the age of 18 enter into marriage.” This definition is in line with the current family law of Ethiopia, which legislates against “marriage before the age of 18 for both boys and girls”, or “early marriage.”

2.4.3 “Education”

Education in its broadest sense is a mechanism of socialization (Odetola and Ademola 1985; Zanolli 1971; Spindler 1963; Banda 2002). In any society, there are socially recognized ways in which the norms and values of the society are inculcated into the new members. Without some processes of socialization the society itself would cease to persist.

Education involves both *informal (traditional)* education and *formal education (schooling)*. Informal education occurs primarily in the family groups, its agents are not specified and it may occur at any time and at any place. Formal education, on the other hand, is entirely institutionalized, its agents are trained teachers and it is carried out at specified times and places (Zanolli 1971:64). Both formal and informal education systems help the child to acquire various skills, knowledge and attitudes, which will prepare him/her for personhood and the important roles he/she is expected to play in a certain society.

Concerning the links between training at home and at school in Western societies, scholars argue that *informal* and *formal education* generally go hand in hand. In this context, there are no open conflicts between traditional education and schooling since the two systems supplement each other. In times of rapid social change, however, the *formal system* gives up its *maintenance function* and becomes an organ of change. In short, the formal education system, being a future-oriented system, is a potential cause of conflict in rapidly changing societies, though some aspects of the traditional system can supplement schooling (Zanolli 1971:69).

From an anthropological point of view, ‘education’ is ‘cultural’ transmission. ‘Culture’ itself is often defined in essentially educational terms as “the shared products of human learning” (Singleton 1974:27).

In traditional African societies, traditional or indigenous education is the socialization process, the learning by doing and apprenticeship, and the learning through oral literature and rites (Odora 1994, in Banda 2002). Its being ignored in the western schooling may explain the missing link in the

battle to achieve education for all (Banda 2002). In short, in traditional African societies, including Ethiopia, there exist gaps between training at home (informal education) and training at school (formal education).

When it comes to Ethiopia, the current Education and Training Policy defines the concept of ‘education’ as “a process by which man transmits his experiences, new findings and values accumulated over the years, in his struggle for survival, and development, through generations” (Transitional Government of Ethiopia 1994:1). This definition seems to incline to the *informal* dimension of ‘education’.

In this study, the term ‘education’ is viewed in its broadest sense, including both *formal* and *informal education*. For the sake of analysis, “informal education” refers to “traditional or indigenous education” and “formal education” implies “schooling”. This context provides a significant conceptual framework for analyzing the nature of formal education in the rural settings of the study area, where informal (traditional) trainings at home have significant impacts on the formal (modern) education system.

In the light of such a conceptual framework, this study examines gender differential access to education at the primary school level among the rural communities of Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam, Northwestern Ethiopia. Indicators of access include enrolment rates, academic levels attained, illiteracy rates, dropout rates, as well as frequency of attendance at school. The study also examines causes of gender disparity in primary school participation. In other words, the study attempts to identify factors influencing girls’ access to and success in formal education in primary schools among the rural communities of the study area.

2.4.4 “Rural-Urban Settings”

There is no single definition of “rural”, as there are many different approaches to classifying what is “rural”⁴¹ (or ‘non-rural’). These include approaches based on population, on population density, on land use and on socio-economic characteristics of, and all have advantages and disadvantages depending on what the classification is being used for.

According to the Ethiopian Population and Housing Census, towns were defined as localities in which urban *qäbäle* has been established. During the Imperial Regime, localities that had 1000 or more inhabitants who were primarily engaged in non-agricultural activities were identified as towns, irrespective of whether urban *qäbäle* Administration has been established or not. Similarly, capitals of *woredas*⁴² were also identified as towns even if urban *qäbäle* Administration has not been established (CSA 1995:1).

For the purpose of this study, “rural” and “urban”⁴³ areas could be viewed in the light of the influence of “tradition”⁴⁴ on the life orientations of people who resides in the rural and urban areas of

⁴¹ The definition for “rural” varies widely. Ethiopia uses the population size for classifying population and areas as rural or urban. For water supply purposes, a community with a population less than 10,000 is identified as rural. The problems to be addressed and the goals to meet in rural water supply and sanitation are quite different (population size, settlement, education, culture, etc.) and requiring different policies (financial feasibility, technical and administrative policies) (Berhanu 1997a, in Berhanu Adugna 1999:215).

⁴² However, changes of *woreda* boundaries have occurred since the conduct of the cartographic work; and in some instances, two or more previous *woredas* have been combined to form one new *woreda*. Thus, localities that were seats of *Woreda* Administration at the time of the cartographic work, and subsequently identified as towns in the census report, may no longer be *woreda* capitals (CSA 1995:1).

⁴³ Urbanism, according to Winthrop (1991:313), entails to the existence of large, densely populated settlements within a society, creating a concentration of trade, wealth, and bureaucratic power. The major factors characterizing the State— institutionalized authority, literacy, specialization of labor, economic stratification, and centralized control of surplus— have likewise been essential characteristics of urbanism. From a culture-historical perspective, the city has been an essential element in the development of civilization.

developing countries, including Ethiopia. In this context, the rural area may be defined as settlements with traditional life-orientation, whereas the urban area refers to settlements with “modern” life-orientation. Furthermore, the rural-urban life orientation differences are reflected in differential access to and participation in modern education as well as in prevalence of traditional practices such as early marriage.

In developing countries, including Ethiopia, gender imbalance in education is often amplified by rural-urban disparities (Tilak 1993; Hyde 1993; Abraha et al 1991, in Yokozeki 1998). This gender gap in educational enrolment is more pronounced in rural communities. Furthermore, early marriage is often linked to low levels of schooling for girls (AGI 1997).

With specific reference to Ethiopia, many studies⁴⁵ indicate that there is a huge gender gap between rural and urban areas in terms of access to and participation in schooling. The rural-urban gender gap in educational access and participation gets larger as we move from primary to secondary and to tertiary education (Alem Habtu 2003:107).

From a socio-cultural viewpoint, in the rural areas, where the traditional influence is greater, the attitude that education is unnecessary for girls who will only be involved in the home is strongly prevalent and culturally supported. Therefore, the social attitude towards girls’ education as well as the culturally appropriate place for girls and women in the traditional life orientation greatly affect girls’ access to and participation in formal schooling. More specifically, the reviewed empirical studies on gender and education in Ethiopia revealed that gender disparity in formal education is wider in the rural-settings of Ethiopia, where the majority of the population resides.

Furthermore, the practice of early marriage is closely related to rural life orientation,⁴⁶ gender, poverty and level of education. At the global level, UNICEF (2001a:5) states that, “Virtually everywhere, poor women in rural areas tend to marry younger than those in urban areas and educational levels also play a critical role”. Unfortunately, in the rural areas of Ethiopia, there are no valid statistics on early-childhood marriage, as it seldom conforms to legalities and the elders of the communities conduct the marriage, without its legal registration. Furthermore, there are not accurate rates of birth within the communities, as women there deliver their babies at home, and rarely seek services of health personnel who would register the birth.

Ethiopia, and particularly the Amhara cultural areas, is among the most slowly-changing societies in the world (Molvaer 1995:19f.). With specific reference to the rural-urban life orientations in the study area, the most plausible explanation is to be found in the real conditions, namely in the fact that rural and urban populations in Mecha *Woreda*, the study area, are still strongly linked in multiple ways, through family bonds and constant contacts and communication. In other words, attitudes of people living under urban conditions differ only slightly from the attitudes of those in the countryside with whom they share the same cultural background and common problems and aspirations.

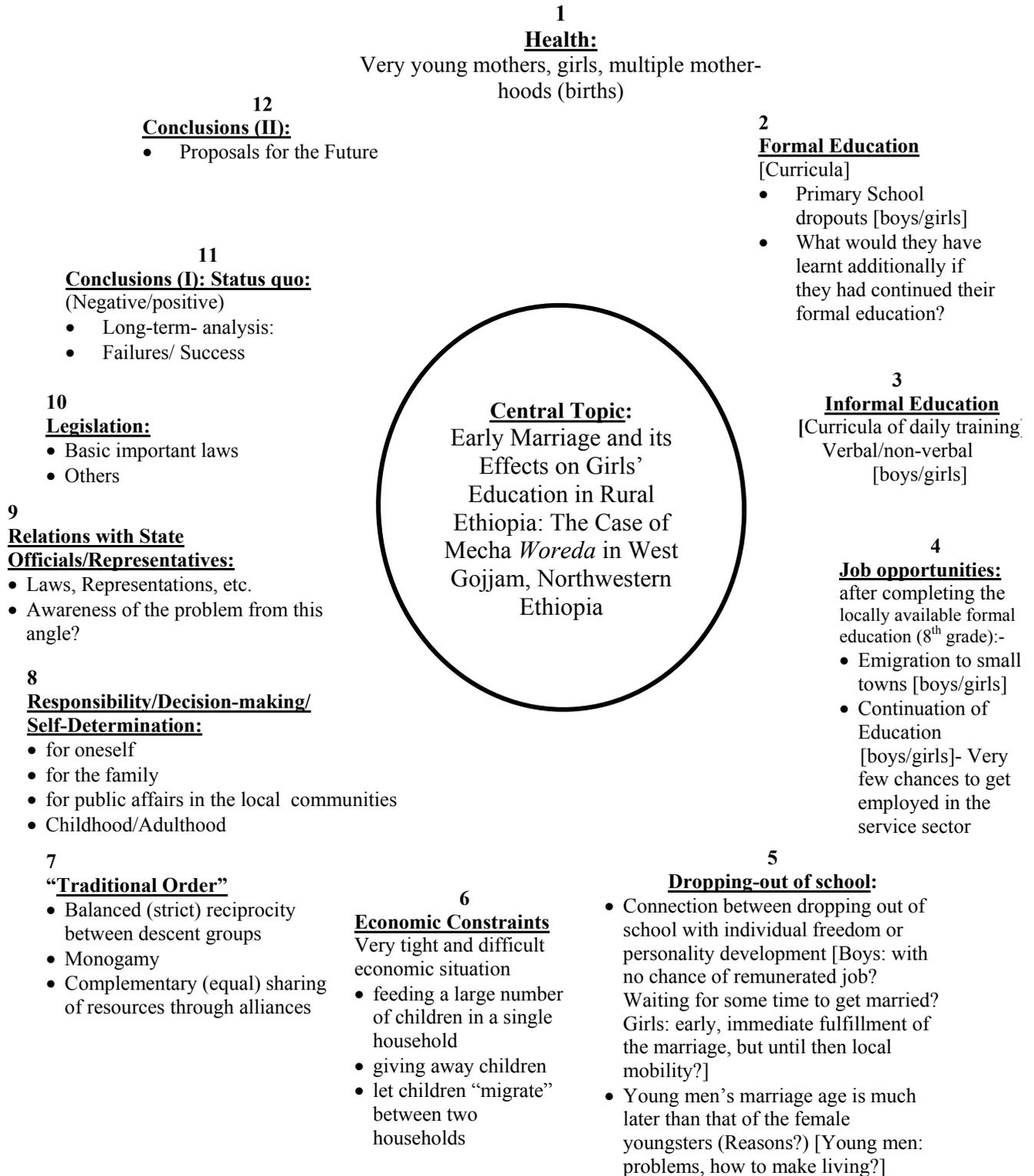
⁴⁴ *Tradition*, involves: 1) An explicit cultural form transmitted through time, the perpetuation of which is itself a value and 2) A continuity of understanding relative to some activity, way of life, or mode of expression, which guides particular acts and beliefs (Winthrop 1991:300).

⁴⁵ See empirical studies on gender and education in Ethiopia (Chapter 2, section 2.2.1. of this thesis).

⁴⁶ Savitridina’s article on “Determinants and Consequences of Early Marriage in Java, Indonesia” (1997) argues that childhood residence, the place where the respondent spent the longest period of time until reaching the age of 12, has an effect on the age at marriage. Savitridina found that: 1) Those who were brought up in villages were more likely to have married early; 2) Almost 80% of ever-married women in Java brought up in villages married early; and 3) The highest proportion (81.2%) of those who married early occurred among women who were brought up in villages and still live in rural areas.

2.5 MODEL OF THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK USED IN THE STUDY

**Figure 1: A Model of the Analytical Framework Used in the Study
(Developed by the Researcher and her Supervisor)**



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES

This chapter deals with procedures of the research, methods of data collection and analysis, the research approach used in the study and fieldwork experiences.

3.1 FRAME OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK

I have conducted seven months of ethnographic fieldwork in two selected rural communities of Mecha *Woreda* in two phases. The first round fieldwork was from 29th April 2003 to 29th July 2003. The second round was from 13th September 2003 to 30th January 2004.

In present-day Ethiopia, there are five political hierarchies: Federal Government, National Regional State, Administrative Zone, *Woreda* Council and Urban Dwellers' Association (in the urban areas) and Peasants' Association (in the rural areas). Accordingly, I had to get the necessary legal permissions to reach the lowest unit of administration in the rural setting. Finally, I selected Bachema and Rim Peasants Associations among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* (see Appendix 10, map 4), based on the presence of rural formal schools, variations in proximity to the *woreda*'s capital town, and variations in climatic conditions.

After introducing myself and the purpose of my study to the respective Peasant Association officials and the local school administrators, I conducted informal discussions and conversations with different groups of the rural population, government representatives and local community leaders in the respective research sites. This preliminary field survey enabled me to select twelve key informants (six from each peasant community) and two fieldwork assistants (one male and one female). With the help of my key informants and research assistants, I selected six enumerators among primary school teachers in the respective research sites. After giving a one-day orientation for the enumerators about the objectives of the study and the contents of the questionnaires at the respective rural primary schools, they collected base-line household data on the demographic composition and other variables directly related to the study with the supervision of the principal researcher. Based on the results of the preliminary household surveys, I selected 80 focus families (40 from each peasant community) for in-depth personal interviews.

During the first-round fieldwork, I performed the following research activities:

1. conducted the preliminary household survey and in-depth personal interviews with focus families and key informants on issues related to the nature, causes and consequences of early marriage in the local community;
2. held focus group discussions with councils of elders, religious leaders, primary school teachers, parents (mothers and fathers separately to maintain free discussion) on customs, traditions and values surrounding early marriage and girls' formal education in the local community, with the help of research assistants;
3. conducted extended case studies with selected female students, early-married young girls/adult women, and recorded biographies of seven early married girls and women;
4. closely observed the gender-based socialization of children and the day-to-day activities of the local community;
5. attended and participated in wedding ceremonies, annual religious festivals, religious and social gatherings, and women's coffee-gatherings;
6. studied local networks such as family ties, gender-relations, filial relations, fictive-kinship relations, neighborhood relations, village relations, and other social networks and examined their influence on decision-making patterns at the individual, family and community levels; and

7. kept a fieldwork dairy at the end of each day and jotted down pieces of relevant information that came in unpredictable manner.

The second-round fieldwork lasted from 13th September 2003 - 30th January 2004. During this period, I performed the following intensive fieldwork strategies and activities:

1. familiarized myself with government officials at Merawi, capital of Mecha *Woreda* Council, and with the people in the selected research sites;
2. consulted latest and relevant written documents in the local archival offices of the *woreda* in Merawi as well as in the respective Peasant Associations;
3. consulted and thoroughly examined Bachema and Rim rural primary schools' rosters;
4. conducted in-depth personal discussions with modern birth attendants in Rim Health post, Merawi Health Center and Bahir Dar Feleghiwot Hospital on problems related to early marriage and multiple pregnancies so as to understand the health impact of early marriage on very young mothers;
5. conducted in-depth discussions with knowledgeable elderly people on the procedures of arranging early marriage in the local community;
6. conducted intensive personal interviews with married and unmarried formal school-attending young girls to examine the effect of early marriage on young married girls' formal school attendance and academic performance;
7. recorded detailed biographies of early-married women (young as well as adult) to capture their life histories and actual problems related to early marriage;
8. conducted network analysis of the married woman's (young and adult) and examined the influence of kinship and social networks on parental decisions to arrange early marriage for their daughters rather than sending them to the locally available formal school or vice-versa;
9. conducted intensive discussions with key informants and focus groups to gain the general picture of the practice of early marriage in the local community; and
10. studied the lives of the rural people in both Bachema and Rim peasant communities through 'participation and observation' which was realized by: (a) developing friendship in the rural communities in the research sites and then attending wedding ceremonies, local religious holidays and festivals, local social and religious gatherings, and other local gatherings which enabled me to make video recordings and photographs of customs and traditions related to the different aspects of the local peoples' life; (b) developing friendships with women and then attending and taking part in women's coffee-ceremonies and, at the same time, recording informal conversations; and (3) attentively watching gender socialization of children and thereby studied the differential values attached to the male and the female child in the local community.

After finishing the second-round fieldwork in 30th January 2004, I have performed the following major research activities: (1) interpreted and organized the first and the second-round fieldwork data; (2) made further literature inquiry of latest written documents (published and unpublished) from the libraries of Addis Ababa University, Kotebe College of Teachers Education, Ministry of Education, Culture and Information in Ethiopia; and from other libraries internationally accessible through the Internet; (3) identified the early findings of the ethnographic data and prepared a working paper for the two-day exploratory workshop conducted in the study area; (4) organized and conducted the two-day exploratory workshop on "Early Marriage and Girls' Education in Mecha *Woreda*, the study area" from 18th -19th September 2004; and (5) prepared the draft copy of the ethnographic data in Addis Ababa.

3.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION: SECONDARY AND PRIMARY METHODS

3.2.1 Secondary Data Collection Methods

Secondary data sources related to the research subject were collected from various higher academic institutions and from different government and non-government organizations. More specifically, secondary data collection involved consultations of the following sources:

- Written documents (published and unpublished) in the Institute of Ethnology library and in the main library of Goettingen University in Germany, and other libraries internationally accessible were searched for a general and theoretical approach.
- Written documents (published and unpublished) in the different libraries of Addis Ababa University, Bahir Dar University, Kotebe College of Teachers Education, the Ministry of Education and in other higher institutions in Ethiopia were searched for relevant information.
- Official documents from the different offices of the Amhara National Regional State and West Gojjam Administrative Zone in Bahir Dar and Mecha *Woreda* Council in Merawi were consulted for relevant information.
- Non-Governmental documents (published and unpublished) from the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), the Ethiopian Chapter of Forum for African Women Educationalists' Association (FAWE), the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA) and the National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia (NCTPE) in Addis Ababa and their websites were searched for gender issues in education, legal and other issues related to early marriage and its prevalence rate in Africa in general and in the different regions of Ethiopia in particular.
- Medical documents from Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, Bahir Dar Feleghiwot Hospital, Merawi Health Center, and Rim Health Post were consulted for the health related problems of early marriage in Ethiopia in general and in the study area in particular.
- School Rosters and curricula of Bachema First Cycle Primary School (grades 1-4) and Rim Full Cycle Primary School (grades 1-8) of Mecha *Woreda*, the study area, were consulted and thoroughly examined.

3.2.2 Primary Data Collection Methods

Quantitative Method: Preliminary Household Survey

- A preliminary household survey was held in the two selected Peasant Associations (Bachema and Rim PAs). For the preliminary household survey, 350⁴⁷ households were selected using stratified random sampling techniques based on the respective Peasant Association's list and through primary school attending female and male children among the selected peasant communities.
- Primary school attending children (male and female) who were living in the two selected Peasant Associations were purposively selected and through them, their own families and their neighbors were personally studied.

⁴⁷ The surveyed households (350) were selected from total households of Bachema and Rim PAs. According to Mecha *Woreda* Information Office (MWIO 2003/04), the total number of Bachema PA households was 1597 (1460 male-headed households and 137 female-headed households) and the total number of Rim PA households was 1877 (1802 male-headed households and 75 female-headed households). In short, the surveyed households (350) were 10.75% of the total households (3474). Among the total households (3474), 212 households (6.10%) were headed by women, mostly widowed. Among the surveyed households (350), only 10 households (2.86%) were headed by women (8 widows and 2 divorcees). In other words, among the total female-headed households (212), the number of female-headed household included in the survey was 10 (4.72%) (cf. Appendix 7).

- For the preliminary household survey, two types of semi-structured questionnaires (one for parents and the other for school attending children) were prepared in the language of the local people, Amharic, and in the form of questions, whereby the interviewer took note of the responses. Both questionnaires were discussed with Amharic professionals and high-level educators at Kotebe College of Teachers Education in Addis Ababa, my work place. The parents' questionnaire consists of 36 questions (see Appendix 6A), the students' questionnaire of 35 questions (see Appendix 6B). A general guideline for each questionnaire application was developed and a pre-testing of the questionnaires was conducted at the field level.
- Six enumerators (three male and three female⁴⁸) were selected among rural primary school teachers from the two selected research sites, Bachema and Rim Peasant Associations, based on their mastery of the local language, knowledge of the people's culture and the area under study. They were introduced to the objectives of the study and the contents of the questionnaires. Finally, they collected the required data under the supervision of the principal researcher during a period of one month (from 5th May 2003 to 5th June 2003).

On the basis of the preliminary household survey, I was able to generate base-line information about: (1) spouses' age⁴⁹; (2) spouses' number of marriages; (3) spouses' age at first marriage; (4) the wife's age at first childbearing; (5) age of the eldest or first child; (6) number of surviving children by sex; (7) number of married children by sex; (8) number of male and female children having attended/attending school; (9) spouses' level of education; and (10) spouses' property ownership and occupational status (see Appendix 7)⁵⁰. In addition to the quantitative information, I was also able to gather base-line qualitative information about parents' reasons for not sending school-age girls to the locally available formal school and why girls are married off early (before the age of 18). In short, the household survey results provided base-line information, which enabled me to select focus families and focus students for in-depth personal interviews. However, my subsequent in-depth personal interviews with focus families and early-married school attending female students revealed that the preliminary findings on the size of land owned by the family and number of married daughters did not correspond to the actual information.

Qualitative Methods of Data Collection

The qualitative methods of data collection involved a combination of several methods such as participant observation, in-depth personal interviews, extended case studies, biographies, focus group discussions, information given by key informants and fieldwork assistants, and an exploratory workshop. A brief explanation of each qualitative method of data collection is given below.

⁴⁸ In Bachema first cycle Primary School (grades 1-4), there was only one female teacher among six teachers during the preliminary household survey and she was the only female teacher selected as an enumerator in that school. There was also one female enumerator from Merawi Primary School, the *woreda's* administrative town. The remaining four enumerators in Bachema Peasant Association were male teachers from Bachema Primary School. However, in Rim full cycle Primary School (grades 1-8) there were seven female teachers among nineteen teachers during the preliminary household survey. Among nineteen (seven female and twelve male) Rim Primary School teachers, six teachers (three female and three male) were selected as enumerators in Rim Peasant Association.

⁴⁹ Here it should be noted that most people from rural communities of Ethiopia, including the study area, do not know their exact age. Taking this problem into account, the parents' questionnaire was designed to address this issue by including open-questions about spouses' age at first marriage, wife's age at first childbearing and that of the age of her first child (cf. Appendix 6A). Accordingly, almost all spouses remembered their age at first marriage. Furthermore, almost all wives remembered their age at first childbearing and the age of their first child. So, in this study, the wife's age during the household survey was checked by adding her age at first childbearing and the age of her first child. Accordingly, her husband's age was checked by adding the age difference between the husband and the wife to that of the wife's age (cf. Appendix 7).

⁵⁰ Simple statistical techniques such as *percentage*, *frequency* and *average* were employed in order to back up the qualitative data with statistical evidences.

Participant Observation

I lived among Bachema and Rim rural communities of Mecha *Woreda* for a total of seven months in two rounds, which enabled me to observe daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal and annual economic activities, socio-cultural practices, curricular and extra-curricular school activities, and local formal meetings. Accordingly, I have systematically and purposefully observed various socio-cultural practices and gender-specific activities of the local people in the two selected peasant communities. I have also observed school facilities, classroom conditions, the formal teaching-learning processes and extra-curricular activities in both Bachema and Rim rural primary schools. In addition to systematic and purposeful personal observations, I have participated in four wedding ceremonies and various religious and social gatherings such as *sānbāte*, *mahbār* and *şagge* at Bachema and Rim Orthodox Christian Churches. At the school level, I participated in the extra-curricular activities like those of an anti-HIV-AIDS club and Aesthetics club activities at Bachema and Rim Primary Schools. At the *woreda* (district) level, I have participated in local formal meetings held in Merawi, the *woreda's* capital town, being invited by the organizers themselves. In short, through participant observation, I was able to obtain core ethnographic data. Above all, through participant observation, I was able to obtain information on insights, thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of the subjects under study, and thereby on the discrepancy between what is believed to be ideal patterns of behavior and what is happening on a day-to-day basis.

In general, in conducting the extensive ethnographic fieldwork, I was as much a participant observer as possible. This enabled me to acquire a great deal of knowledge of the local environment as well as a close and trust-filled relationship with the peoples involved, though I was finally faced with the problem of striking a balance between my stance as 'engaged participant' and as 'detached observer.' In other words, I was so much immersed in the field that I was sometimes acting as a 'responsible' member of the local community.

In-depth personal interviews

For in-depth personal interviews, 80 focus families (40 from Bachema and 40 from Rim peasant communities) were purposively selected based on the results of the preliminary household survey. These families were judged sufficiently reliable to be used in the analysis of the final data set.

In the selected households, husbands and wives were interviewed separately in a face-to-face dialogue. Both men and women were personally interviewed in the local language, Amharic. Women were interviewed in the household where they live in, but occasionally, they were interviewed while they visited a relative or a neighbor. Men were usually interviewed during religious holidays and social gatherings around the churches of their respective village, and occasionally they were interviewed in their farm.

In-depth personal interviews were conducted using a checklist to ensure optimum coverage of different issues related to the research subjects. The very essence of in-depth personal discussions was the establishment of a human-to-human relation with the subjects in order to get the whole picture of their life. Accordingly, the in-depth personal interviews covered a wide range of issues such as: (1) the importance of having children and the household chores children are engaged in; (2) parents' sex preference for sending or not sending their children to school, patterns of socializing children and values attached to the male and the female child; (3) parents' attitudes towards early arranged marriage for their daughters and the values or risks related to it; and (4) parents' opinion on the value of formal education in general and female education in particular, including individual facts about it, sources of information and the circumstances of information transfer, and the like. In most cases, intensive personal interviews were conducted with the same person in more than a single interview. On average,

the personal interview lasted twenty to thirty minutes. In-depth personal interviews were tape-recorded and sometimes were coupled with video-recording.

The data through personal interviews were cross-checked by personal observation and interview with key informants, close friends and relatives of the interviewed person. When checks were made, women were relatively accurate in their responses for the most part but some times exaggerations occurred, specifically in matters concerning family and personal problems. Women considered me, being a woman, as one who is responsible for alleviating their family and personal problems and thus they generally did not hide their problems. In contrast to women, men (husbands) were unwilling to uncover matters pertaining to their family and their personal affairs; especially they reported joint decision-making regarding family matters or problems, which was totally contradicted by their wives. In most cases, husbands tried to report the ideal formulations of behavior rather than the actual ones.

Furthermore, I have attempted to stratify households selected for in-depth personal interviews into two categories: “poor” and “wealthy” households based on “subjective” and “relative” ranking, which was applied by Poukouta (1997:12) in his fertility study in African households. “Subjective” ranking simply consisted of asking a woman being interviewed to rank her neighbors’ households and to say which ones she thought to be the wealthiest or the poorest in the community. In a rural environment where people know each other fairly well, this procedure gave satisfactory results. “Relative” ranking, on the other hand, is based on the importance of livestock and access to farm-land. This approach, however, did not pay off because people in both Bachema and Rim peasant communities are very close to each other so that they regard the fact of assessing a neighbor’s property in a very specific manner as improper. Consequently, I came to realize that wealth ranking in rural peasant communities is a difficult task.

Collecting Biographies of Girls/Women

On the basis of intensive personal interviews, six young married girls/women and one adult widowed woman were selected and their life histories, backgrounds and problems were personally studied. This has been tape-and-video-recorded. Their biographies were inserted in the appropriate chapters of this thesis.

Extended Case Studies

Extended case studies were made about: (1) parents not sending their children (male and female) to school and reasons for it; (2) parents sending both their son/s and daughter/s to school and factors motivating them to send their children to school; (3) parents not sending their daughters to the locally available school and their reasons for it; (4) parents who arranged marriages for their daughters at their early age and their reasons for doing so; (5) school dropout married girls/young women and their life opportunities after dropout; (6) school attending married girls and their future opportunities either to continue their formal schooling or dropping out from school; (7) school attending unmarried girls and their academic performance compared to married female pupils; (8) successful female pupils at school and factors contributing to their success; and (9) unsuccessful female pupils and factors contributing to their failure at school. The extended case studies consisted of a series of questions that involved many aspects of the selected subjects. This has been tape-recorded and sometimes was coupled with video-recording (see Appendix 8A and B).

Focus Group Discussions

In order to obtain a general knowledge about the socio-cultural values of the local people, and an insight into the extent to which early marriage, as part of the local peoples’ socio-cultural practices, affects girls’ participation in formal education at the local level, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held

with concerned and knowledgeable persons. FGDs were held with: (1) Mecha *Woreda* Education and Social Administration officers; (2) school directors and classroom teachers; (3) parents (mothers and fathers separately); (4) religious leaders; and (5) community leaders and councils of elders. Each group was formed on the basis of profession, experience, gender and age. FGDs were in the form of open discussions. FGDs were tape-recorded coupled with intensive note-taking.

Key Informants

In an attempt to validate and give further insight to personal in-depth interviews, twelve key informants (6 from Bachema and 6 from Rim peasant communities) were selected based on their mastery of the local people's language and culture. This has been tape-recorded coupled with video-recording.

Photographs, Video Films, Taping and Field Notes

I employed these techniques in order to improve the ethnographic data collection or documentation. Accordingly, photographs and video films of various occasions and activities, such as wedding preparations, and ceremonies, early marriage practices, gender-specific daily and seasonal activities, and annual religious festivals, monthly religious and social gatherings were used as supportive sources. Here, photographs, including video-images, are considered as part of culturally informed observations. However, to make the photographs "intellectually denser", the photographer must become conscious of the theory that guides his or her photography (Becker 1974:11). Given the expressive potential of photography and the intellectual ferment surrounding experiments in ethnography, the marriage of visual method and ethnography seems natural (Douglas 1994:410). Douglas further notes that most fundamentally, images allow us to make kinds of statements that cannot be made by words; and thus images enlarge our consciousness (1994:411). In short, photographing and video recording permit the study and measurement of internal dynamics of behavior that cannot be approached adequately through direct observation. Therefore, photographic and video images capture a wealth of detail that an observer can only begin to describe by physically possessing an external reality observable again and again, as well as possessing knowledge about it.

In the field, a journal of daily events and experiences was kept at the end of each day. Pieces of relevant information that came in an unpredictable manner were also jotted down.

Fieldwork Assistants

In conducting the ethnographic fieldwork in the two selected rural communities of Mecha *Woreda*, two fieldwork assistants (one male and one female) were selected on the basis of their mastery of the local language; knowledge of the people's culture and the area under study. The male fieldwork assistant was selected among the respective rural primary schools, whereas the female fieldwork assistant was selected among members of Mecha *Woreda* Women's Association.

Exploratory Workshop

In the extensive ethnographic research carried out among the two selected peasant communities, my research questions have focused on two core issues. The first issue was on local people's views on early marriage. The second issue was on local people's views on girls' education and its value. My in-depth personal interviews and longer periods of participant observation with men and women of all ages as well as with groups of community leaders, religious leaders, council of elders and local leaders reveal the general acceptance of early marriage. Based on the early findings of my ethnographic data, I conducted a two-day "exploratory workshop" in the study area for three main reasons. First, for disseminating the early findings of the research and raising consciousness of issues surrounding early marriage; Second, for further discussing with the local participants of the workshop

about the root-causes and harmful consequences of early marriage; and Third, for developing locally appropriate strategies for challenging the harmful effects of early marriage on the health as well as formal schooling of girls and then promoting girls' education in the study area (see Appendix 6). The Exploratory Workshop on "Early Marriage and Girls' Education in Mecha *Woreda*" (18th - 19th September 2004), was held at Merawi, the capital of Mecha *Woreda*, the study area. Currently the Ethiopian Government policies clearly legislate against early marriage and other harmful traditional practices affecting the overall well-being of Ethiopian women and girls. It is for this reason- the government's position on early marriage—that I wished to conduct a two-day workshop for male and female local leaders of all kinds—those active in local politics, and those engaged in religious and educational organizations. More specifically, in the workshop I was concentrated on two specific issues. First, I brought to the fore the reasons given for the continuance of the practice of early marriage. Second, I provided a forum to discuss these reasons in light of my video-recorded ethnographic data on the dangers of the practice.

3.3 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

3.3.1 Network-Analysis

Network analysis is a method for analyzing relationships between social entities and/or individuals. The relations between individuals constitute the prime target of most network studies. But obviously, married couples, families or corporations—are all candidate units of analyses. The main point is that the primary focus of the study should be identifying relations or links between units. Focus on relations does not mean that the dyadic relation of interaction between two people becomes a totally restrictive limit. Individuals cannot be studied independently of their relations to others, nor can dyads be isolated from their affiliated structures. Actual relations will vary sharply with the problem at hand (Scott 2001:1991; Degenne and Forsé 1999; Wasserman and Faust 1994).

In this study, the actual relations between/among individuals, families, kin-groups, affinal-groups, peer-groups and other forms of relations were identified and their influence on the practice of early marriage and the value of formal schooling in general were thoroughly examined. Furthermore, social networks, influential kin ties, and the presence of significant others in relation to parents' decision to send or not to send their daughters to school were investigated. In this context, network analysis is used as a means of systematic study of social structures. Thus, in order to understand the relational network and describe its structural features, I found it essential to know the complete picture of various types of networks (institutional, social, family, kinship, affinal and the like) in the area under investigation.

3.3.2 Document Analysis

Related documents collected through secondary sources were examined and analyzed. Specially, the curricula and school rosters of both Bachema and Rim rural primary schools, which teachers allowed me to use, were thoroughly examined and analyzed.

3.4 CRITICAL RESEARCH APPRAISAL AND FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES

The approach in this research stresses on households, individual girls and their socio-cultural and parental backgrounds as units of analysis. More importantly, the household often represents "the primary site for the structuring of gender relations and women's specific experience" (Brydon and Chant 1989:8). But one cannot afford to be rigid in one's approach, or, to use Guyer's expression, "to take a stance in which, because one's only tool is a hammer, every problem becomes a nail" (1986:99). To adopt a single framework would be unnecessarily restrictive, because it discounts the

various aspects of the subjects under study. Thus, issues surrounding early marriage and its effects on girls' formal schooling were viewed from various levels of analyses. In other words, the researcher utilized different units of analysis due to the complex nature of the in-depth ethnographic data, which were gathered through various methods over the period of the study. However, employing different units of analysis for a single study could result in confusion and difficulty in understanding the relationships between the different issues addressed. It may also give an image of discontinuity, as the discussion seems to jump from one topic to another. These problems inevitably arise from the nature of issues pertaining to early marriage and its effects on girls' formal education.

Furthermore, the study represents a combination of several methods because different "lenses" result from the use of different methods. Relying on a methodological "triangulation," I was able to gain a more holistic view of early marriage and its effects on girls' formal education. Even though I used a combination of several methods in order to cross-check and supplement information gathered through various methods, the issue of objectivity still remains problematic. In principle, it is stated that a researcher should avoid any prejudice or bias about the subject of the study. This may be difficult but clearly, there is no alternative. Social research is an interactive process shaped by the researcher's personal history, biography, gender, social background, and those of the people in the cultural setting. Thus, there is no value-free social research. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the world of the observer and the observed.

In conducting the ethnographic fieldwork in the rural ethnographic settings, Bachema and Rim Peasant Associations, of Mecha *Woreda*, I encountered many difficulties. The major ones are:

- *The unavailability of most male informants for in-depth personal interviews at their home since they pass the day in their farm areas and return home in the evening.* I tried to overcome this problem by arranging my schedule in accordance to my informant's convenient time, mostly during religious holidays. Among most peasants of Bachema and Rim, religious holidays and festivals, local ceremonies and feasts (such as *mahbär*, *sänbäte* and *şægge*) are the most important occasions to discuss issues related to their locality and social affairs.
- *The problem of getting access to observe family relationships, especially those between men and women.* Most husbands were unwilling to let their wives give information about their life histories to the researcher and some of them were not transparent themselves. Some husbands wanted to join the interview of their wives and therefore inhibited them. This problem was commonly encountered in both Bachema and Rim peasant communities. Especially in Rim peasant community, a relatively remote community, the husband would naturally have to answer for his wife in such a situation. In order to approach husbands and wives separately and directly, I have gone through key informants. Offering gifts such as coffee beans, salt, sugar, soaps and money for informants were the major strategy to easily approach key informants and focus families. This way of 'reciprocity' is a well-established tradition among both Bachema and Rim peasant communities. Accordingly, I used this approach of field research to work closely with local informants in recording detailed biographies, local ceremonies and celebrations. Through my longer stay in the ethnographic research settings, I developed friendships among the two peasant communities and was invited to attend wedding ceremonies, local religious feasts and holidays, and other public gatherings, which enabled me to record video films and to take photographs. Finally, the majority of the local people came to understand that I was interested in studying and recording their local traditions, particularly, their marriage customs and wedding ceremonies, though most parents, who arranged an early marriage for their very young daughters, were initially suspicious about the purpose of my research.

- The unwillingness of parents (who arranged an early marriage for their daughters) to allow me to record wedding ceremonies.* Almost all parents who arranged an early marriage for their daughters (as young as 5 years old and less) were unwilling to allow me to record wedding ceremonies. This unwillingness was because the parents were threatened by the Peasants Association's (PA) leaders and other government officials who were campaigning against early-arranged marriage. However, when the local PA and other government officials started their campaigns, parents had already made the marriage arrangement procedure, which takes a minimum of six months before the wedding day. They had also started preparing drinks and food items and it was very difficult for parents to terminate the wedding ceremony. As a strategy for stopping early arranged marriage in the locality, the PA and other government officials attempted to determine whether the would-be- bride was 15, the legal minimum age for girls to get married which was endorsed before the revision of the old family law of Ethiopia. According to the current revised family law of Ethiopia (2000), the minimum age for first marriage is 18 years for both girls and boys. However, the local people knew only the previous (old) family law, though they even failed to strictly comply with it. I closely observed that parents used to add three and more years to the actual age of the would-be- bride in order to keep the age expected by the PA leaders. In fact, the local people are aware of the illegality of arranging marriage for both girls and boys below the age of 15 and 18, respectively. Nevertheless, they do not comply with the law due to economic, social and cultural reasons, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.
- Problems of gaining the confidence of informants.* One of the problems was that informants could not understand how and why they came to be selected for the study. I was asked several personal and sensitive questions, such as: Where do you come from, to which religion do you belong, why did you select the respective research sites, and the like. I had to spend a great deal of time explaining how they came to be chosen and giving appropriate responses to all questions addressed by the local people in a very careful manner. Plainly speaking, in both Bachema and Rim rural communities, almost all of my informants were Orthodox Christians and their religion is inherited from their family of procreation. They strictly oppose the "new" (*mätte*) religion, i.e. "religion that is not Orthodox Christianity." Actually, in my first exposure to both Bachema and Rim rural communities, the local people considered me as a "modern" Christian missionary, i.e. a protestant. As a result, their initial question was "what is your religion?" My key informants in the rural villages introduced me as an Orthodox Christian and then, the local people developed trust in me and considered me as a member of their family or village. The other problem is, being the first experience for many informants to be interviewed, they were suspicious thinking that the government wanted to identify them. Most people took me for a government employee trying to investigate the level of their income for taxation. Specifically, informants were reluctant to answer a question on the size of landholding and other properties owned by the family or other sources of family income. Many people also considered me a government spy (*sällay*) who wanted to know their political opinions. I tried to overcome some of the problems through my key informants in the villages under study. Here it should be noted that, before conducting my extensive ethnographic fieldwork in the rural communities of Mecha *Woreda*, it was taken for granted that I would have no problems in observation and participation in the study area, provided I was born and brought up in the study area, speaking the local language, Amharic, and knowing the culture, but finally I came to realize that there are many things and problems that I had to learn and adjust through time to the culture of the society.

- *The malaria epidemics.* In conducting the first and second phases of my ethnographic research (from 29th April 2003 – 29th July 2003 and from 13th September 2003 - 30th January 2004), there were malaria epidemics. Especially from the end of May 2003 to the end of June 2003 (during the first phase) and from the beginning of October 2003 to the end of November 2003 (during the second phase), the malaria epidemic was severe. During these months, I could not manage to closely visit focus families because most of them were victims of malaria epidemics. I also could not manage to conduct in-depth personal discussions with some of the married female pupils at Bachema and Rim primary schools because most pupils were absent from school for the same reason. However, I managed to do the ethnographic fieldwork through alternative methods. In these times, I tried to focus on recording the oral histories of the *woreda*'s marriage customs through key informants and the elderly people. I also attended religious and social gatherings (such as *sänbäte*, *mahbär* and *şagge*) around Yidonga Maryam and Kotekotema Michael Orthodox Christian churches in Bachema Peasant Association. This gave me the opportunity to discuss with the local people about the gender socialization process and gender-specific reasons for arranging early marriage. I have also had intensive personal discussions with Bachema and Rim primary schools teachers about gender-specific barriers to formal schooling in their respective locality.
- Last but not least, in conducting my ethnographic fieldwork in the rural settings of Mecha *Woreda*, I encountered the following difficulties: (1) lack of transport facilities; (2) bad weather conditions (too hot during April and May 2003 and rainy during June and July 2003); (3) bad road (dusty during the dry season and muddy during the rainy season); (4) lack of potable water and electricity; (5) lack of prepared food items; and (5) lack of suitable living and sleeping rooms. In short, the unavailability of social amenities such as transport, electricity, prepared food, and others in my ethnographic research sites made my fieldwork arduous and stressful.

Despite the above mentioned fieldwork personal encounters, I managed to finish the first and second rounds of my ethnographic research. I interrupted the second phase of my fieldwork for fifteen days (4 October 2003 -17 2003) to attend a symposium on “Civil Society in Ethiopia,” in Goettingen, Germany, which also enabled me to organize and conduct a two-day exploratory workshop on “Early Marriage and Girls’ Education in Mecha *Woreda*, the Study Area” (18th - 19th September 2004). The workshop was aimed at discussing the root-causes and harmful consequences of early marriage with the local participants; developing locally appropriate strategies for challenging the harmful consequences of early marriage and then promoting girls’ education in the study area.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LOCAL SETTING: MECHA *WOREDA* IN WEST GOJJAM

4.1 NATURAL SURROUNDING, ECOLOGY AND ECONOMIC BASIS OF MECHA *WOREDA*

4.1.1 Natural Surrounding and Ecology

Presently, Mecha *Woreda* is located in West Gojjam (see Appendix 10, map 3), Northwestern Ethiopia. West Gojjam is one of the eleven Administrative Zones of Amhara National Regional State, Region 3 (see Appendix 10, map 2). The *Woreda's* current administrative capital town, Merawi, is located about 34 km south of Bahir Dar (the capital town of Amhara National Regional State) and about 546 km far from Addis Ababa, the capital city of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (see Appendix 10, map 3).

Mecha *Woreda* is one of the eleven⁵¹ *woredas* of West Gojjam Administrative Zone and its bordering *woredas* and zones are: Bahir Dar Zuriya *Woreda* in the North, Yilmana Denessa *Woreda* in the East, Sekela *Woreda* and Awi Zone in the South, and Achefer *Woreda* in the West (see Appendix 10, map 4). According to the 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, two *yäkätäma qäbäle* (urban dwellers' associations) and 46 *yägäṭär qäbäle gäbäre mahbär* (rural dwellers' peasant associations or PAs in short) were established in Mecha *Woreda*. Currently, both the two urban *qäbäle* (Merawi and Wotet Abay towns⁵²) and the 46 PAs of the *woreda* are restructured by splitting the urban *qäbäle* and by merging the PAs. Accordingly, there are 3⁵³ urban *qäbäles* and 37 Peasant Associations. In general, Mecha *Woreda* occupies an estimated total area of 560.27 km² or 156027 hectare (84264 hectare for cultivation, 14723 hectare for grazing (grassland), 9541 hectare for forestry, 45738 hectare for construction and other infrastructures, 1761 hectare for future irrigation and other projects (MWIO 2004).

Merawi, the capital town of Mecha *Woreda*, is located in a flat and fertile territory surrounded by fertile agricultural areas. The name 'Merawi' is derived from the *Geéz* word "bride" and in the Muslim religion it connotes "good" and "attractive" to indicate the fertility and naturally endowed beauty of the locality in which the town Merawi lays. The two stream rivers, Bäräd (northeastern) and 'Burqa'⁵⁴ (northwestern), give a natural boundary to Merawi town. Furthermore, its ideal location between Lake Tana and the Blue Nile give the town a fascinating and favorable strategic position (Ayele Tamene 2000).

Merawi and its surrounding agricultural areas are situated in different ecological zones: *däga* (highland), *wäyna däga* (mid-highland), and *qolla* (lowland). Merawi has a *wäyna däga* (mid-highland) climate with an elevation of 2000 meters above sea level. The annual average temperature

⁵¹ The eleven *woredas* of West Gojjam Zone are: 1) Achefer *Woreda*; 2) Bahir Dar Zuriya *Woreda*; 3) Yilmana Denessa *Woreda*; 4) Mecha *Woreda*; (5) Sekela *Woreda*; (6) Qarit *Woreda*; 7) Däga Damot *Woreda*; 8) Jabi Tahinan *Woreda*; 9) Burie *Woreda*; 10) Dembecha *Woreda*; and 11) Wonberima *Woreda* (cf. Appendix 10, map 4).

⁵² Towns were defined as localities in which urban *qäbäle* has been established. Localities that had 1000 or more persons whose inhabitants were primarily engaged in non-agricultural activities were identified as towns irrespective of whether urban *qäbäle* Administration has been established or not. Similarly, capitals of *woredas* were also identified as towns even if urban *qäbäle* Administration has not been established. However, changes of *woreda* boundaries have occurred since the conduct of the cartographic work; and in some instances, two or more previous *woredas* have been combined to form one new *woreda*. Thus, localities that were seats of *Woreda* Administration at the time of the cartographic work, and subsequently identified as towns in the census report, may no longer be *woreda* capitals (CSA 1995:1).

⁵³ Two urban *qäbäles* of Merawi town (*Qäbäle* 01 and *Qäbäle* 02) and one urban *qäbäle* of Wotet Abay town

⁵⁴ The name 'Burqa' is an Oromo word meaning 'spring.' There are also many Oromo terms used to designate different places in the study areas such as 'Guta,' 'Dima,' 'Ambo-Mesk' and the like. However, the local people speak only Amharic language.

and rainfall is 19.2°C (degree centigrade) and 1412.4mm (millimeter), respectively ([WGZEDP 1987 E.C⁵⁵: 142], in Ayele Tamene 2000:4).

The peasant communities (37 PAs) of Mecha *Woreda* are divided into four major *qäṭänna* (territory or region) based on their topography and ecology. These are: 1) Qolla Abole *qäṭänna*, 2) Webbo *qäṭänna*, 3) *Däga* Abole *qäṭänna*, and 4) Guta *qäṭänna*. The *Qolla Abole qäṭänna*, where my first ethnographic research site (Bachema PA) is found, is located in the *qolla* (lowland) ecological zone and it consists of twelve⁵⁶ PAs. The Webbo *qäṭänna*, where my second ethnographic site (Rim PA) is found, is situated in *wäyna däga* (mid-highland) ecological zone and it consists of eight⁵⁷ PAs. Both the *Däga Abole qäṭänna* and Guta *qäṭänna* are located in *däga* (highland) ecological zone and they consist of nine⁵⁸ and eight⁵⁹ PAs, respectively. In general, the peasant communities of the *woreda* are situated in three⁶⁰ different ecological zones: *däga* (highland), *wäyna däga*, and *qolla* (lowland). In short, the majority (80%) of the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* are situated in the *wäyna däga* ecological zone. The annual average temperature ranges from 24-27°C with annual mean rainfall of 1500mm (MWIO 2004). Furthermore, the year is broadly divided into two main seasons: *kärämt* (the rainy-season) from June to August; and *bäga* (the dry-season) from September to May. The highest rainfall comes during *kärämt*. During this season, the weather is relatively cold (compared to the *bäga* season) and rural roads are muddy. Of the *bäga* months, *gänbot* (May), is the hottest month, especially in the lowland areas of the *woreda*.

4.1.2 Economic Basis: Mixed Farming

Mecha *Woreda* has basically an agricultural economy. As indicated above, the majority (93.17%) of the *woreda*'s people are farmers. Hence, my brief description about the economic basis of Mecha *Woreda* refers to the rural settings of the *woreda*.

Peasant communities in Mecha *Woreda* are predominantly agriculturalists with a sedentary way of life. The dominant economic activity is mixed farming, which consists of crop production and livestock raising. The major types of crops cultivated in the study area are cereals and pulses. *Teff*⁶¹ (*Eragrostis teff*), millet, maize, barley, sorghum, beans, peas, lentils, chickpeas, eleusine and wheat constituted the prominent food crops. *Teff*, the principal staple food crop, is cultivated annually. *Teff* is also used as a cash crop since it accounts for the highest cereal production in the various altitudes and climate of the study area. Barely, two annual plantings with two varieties, is the second important

⁵⁵ E.C. refers to the Ethiopian calendar, which is seven years and eight months behind the Gregorian calendar. The calendar is made up of 12 months of 30 days and a 13th month of five or six days, depending on whether or not it is a leap year (Wolde-Selassie Abbute 2004:1).

⁵⁶ The twelve PAs of *Qolla Abole qäṭänna* are: 1) Bachema, 2) Kudimie, 3) Engutie, 4) Enashenefalen, 5) Andinet, 6) Enameret, 7) Amarit, 8) Ediget-Behibret, 9) Tagele-Wodefit, 10) Addis-Amba, 11) Ambo-Mesk, and 12) Mekani-Workka.

⁵⁷ The eight PAs of Webbo *qäṭänna* are: 1) Rim, 2) Qurt-Bahir, 3) Abiro-Menor, 4) Lehulum-Selam, 5) Birhan-Chora, 6) Abiyot-Fana, 7) Tiru-Meda, and 8) Goshi-Meda

⁵⁸ The nine PAs of *Däga Abole qäṭänna* are: 1) Birakat, 2) Zemen-Hiwot, 3) Wotet-Ber, 4) Midre-Genet, 5) Sira-Betegibar, 6) Tatek-Geberie, 7) Tatek-Berta, 8) Felege-Birhan, and 9) Yinesa-Lemiret

⁵⁹ The eight PAs of Guta *qäṭänna* are: 1) Tatek-Lessera, 2) Goragut, 3) Dagi-Abiyot, 4) Dil-Betigiel, 5) Addis-Alem, 6) Zemen-Birhan, 7) Tekie-Anorayita, and 8) Addis-Lidet

⁶⁰ Some reports of the *woreda*'s office, e.g. the *woreda*'s Information Office Report (July 2004) states that there are *däga* (20%) and *wäyna däga* (80%) climatic conditions in Mecha *Woreda*. But the local people reported that there are three climatic conditions, i.e. *däga*, *wäyna däga* and *qolla*. I am on the side of the local people's classification because one of my research sites, Bachema, is located in the *Qolla Abole qäṭänna* with a *qolla* (lowland) ecological zone as the name '*Qolla Abole*' itself indicates. Accordingly, the two ethnographic research sites (Bachema and Rim PAs) of this study are selected among *qolla* (Bachema) and *wäyna däga* (Rim) peasant communities of the *woreda*.

⁶¹ *Teff* (*Eragrostis teff*), above all crops, drew the greatest attention of travelers and achieved pride of across elite diets in the highlands. ... *Teff* cultivation ranges between 1700 and 2200 meters elevation and is easily the most labor-intensive crop in the highland system (McCann 1995:55).

cereal crop because it has many uses as a food item as well as it constitutes the main ingredient of *talla* (local beer) and *aräqi* (local liquor). Besides cereal crops, pulses are produced for food oils as well as for market. Among the food oils, nigerseed, linseed, sunflower, and sesame are the best marketed agricultural items in the study area.

In the rural settings of the study area, crop-production is unthinkable without livestock raising, especially cattle. Cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and chicken are the most common types of livestock. Some households also have horses and mules. Livestock is used as sources of food and draught power, offer transport services and provide insurance against possible crop failure. Furthermore, their manure is mainly used as a source of domestic energy. Cattle ranks first among livestock in socio-economic importance. Cattle is also an important assets for arranging early marriage for both girls and boys. In short, livestock raising is central to the rural communities' socio-economic as well as cultural activities.

From the economic point of view, the major factors of production in the rural ethnographic settings are land⁶², oxen and labor. Oxen are used for field cultivation. Crops are mainly produced by intensive cultivation of the land through 'ox-plow technology.'⁶³ The ox-plow revolution, which spread across the highlands over almost two millennia, brought with it a bundle of proclivities in property relations, gender divisions of labor⁶⁴ (see Chapter 6, table 6.1), rural debt structure, land use, response to ecological shocks, and management of farm household resources. This revolution changed the way rural populations conceived nature, gender roles, and the natural calendar (McCann 1995:83).

In general, the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* are predominantly agricultural communities where land is used both as the object and instrument of production, human labor is the principal sources of available power (and Child-bearing women are highly valued being "producers of producers"), and livestock are important household assets or capital. More specifically, crops and livestock are the main sources of livelihood in the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* and they constitute the basis of their socio-economic and religious organization. Both, crops and livestock, of

⁶² Before the 1975 Ethiopian revolution, most of the land was owned by kinship groups and by the Orthodox Church. But during the *därg* regime (1975-1991) and the current regime (in 1997), land was distributed and redistributed to the peasants based on the respective regime local government officials' criteria. Through closer observation of the two peasant communities during my ethnographic fieldwork, I realized that the attachment of the local people to the land is very strong. For instance, most peasants used 'early' (for the brides) arranged marriage as the best mechanism for maintaining their own land (if they have relatively large size) or to claim for additional land through their adult (18 years-old and more) sons.

⁶³ The arrival of the ox-plow technology (complex) predated the formation of the highland's large overarching states by several millennia; indeed, the labor efficiency and productivity of the system appear to have underwritten the large bureaucratic political and ecclesiastical hierarchies which came to characterize the highlands from Axum through the modernizing twentieth-century imperial state (McCann 1995:81)

⁶⁴ Gender relations and the imprint of ox-plow technology have added further divisions in socio-economic relations in the economics of highland agriculture by producing household labor patterns dominated by male cultivation, female food processing, and weak forms of cooperative labor between household units. Ambilineal inheritance allows women to claim rights to land to claim rights to land and property, but powerful social convention prevents their engaging in key agricultural activities such as plowing. This tension has concrete historical dimensions in local agricultural communities and imperial politics as well as in scholarly debate over the nature and import of class in ox-plow social relations. At the level of the farm, community, and parish, however, the struggle before 1974 revolution was less one of claiming hereditary privilege than agricultural households competing for access to resources directly relevant to agricultural production. Class was less a function of ascribed, hereditary background than success in the manipulation of political and economic networks to control productive farm capital resources (oxen, seed, and local forms of credit) and land. The production equation on ox-plow farms, that is, the balance between factors of land, capital, oxen and seed), and labor—and their aggregate effects on the countryside—depended only partly on political culture. Overall, the importance of oxen to the farming system and the possibility for seasonal transfer of cultivation rights rendered the control over land itself a relatively weak factor in determining who gained access to the full set of agricultural factors of production. ... Those who did not exercise rights over animal traction through property rights (oxen-less sons) or through gendered (all women) had little opportunity to exercise the *de jure* rights they might have enjoyed through the land tenure system (McCann 1995:77-78).

the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* are used for their households' consumption as well as for other various purposes. For instance, they are used: (1) to pay taxes levied by the local government officials, (2) to support community and family ceremonies (including wedding ceremonies), (3) to support annual festivities and religious organizations, (4) to exchange for needed and desired goods and services produced by other households, and (5) to provide seed and stock for future production of more crops and animals. In the peasant⁶⁵ communities of Mecha, agriculture determines the general social organization to which other economic, social and political activities are subordinate. The social structure and organization of the local people and related issues are discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 5) of this thesis.

4.2 ETHNOGRAPHIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF MECHA

WOREDA

4.2.1 A Bird's Eye View on the Ethnographic History of 'Mecha' *Woreda*

The ethnographic history of Mecha *Woreda*, the study area, is viewed from two different angles. On one hand, there are inconsistent oral accounts about the origin of the name 'Mecha' *Woreda* and its settlement patterns. On the other hand, there are very few written historical and anthropological documents (published and unpublished) tracing the history of 'Mecha' *Woreda* in West Gojjam.

Initially, I was interested to know why the area is called 'Mecha'. For this purpose, I personally interviewed five elderly⁶⁶ key informants who were born and brought up in the study area. The elders' oral accounts about the history of the study area and its settlement patterns were fragmented and to some extent self-contradictory. As a result, I have tried to search for written historical as well as anthropological documents on the issue at hand in the libraries of Bahir Dar University and Addis Ababa University. Unfortunately, I could not manage to get any anthropological study on the area. The only material I found was Ayele Tamene's unpublished B.A Thesis entitled "The History of Merawi up to 1991" (2000). I found this material in the History Department of Bahir Dar University. Hence, in writing the historical, political and socio-economic history of the area, I used relevant materials cited in Ayele Tamene's thesis. I have also reviewed historical and anthropological studies indirectly related to the issue at hand.

According to James Bruce⁶⁷, the name 'Mecha' is derived from "the peaceable settlers" of the 'Mecha Oromo'⁶⁸ who were settled at this territory by Iyasu the Great (Emperor Iyo'asu⁶⁹) for

⁶⁵ Defining the "peasantry" as an analytical concept and how to understand rural communities has triggered hot debates among anthropologists (Redfield [1930], Steward [1950], Wolf [1966], Shanin [1973] and Silverman [1979] have contributed to this debate). Based on early studies (Redfield's study of Tepoztlan [1930] is a good example) which conceived rural communities as a "distinct socio-economic" category within a culture [Kroeber 1948:248] in Teferi Abate 1998:1)

⁶⁶ During the second phase of my ethnographic fieldwork in Mecha *Woreda* (from 13th September 2003 to 30th January 2004), I have made intensive personal interviews with many informants (men, women, young, adult, and elder people). Among them, the relatively elder key informants were personally interviewed for the oral account of the historical background of the study area and its settlement patterns. These are: 1) *Abba* Muluneh Fentie (92 years old) 2) *Liqārād* Mulualem Kidanu (91 years old), 3) *Abba* Emirie Kassahun (78 years old), 4) *Ato* Melaku Gualie (75 years old), and 5) *Abuhay* Alebachew Tafere (71 years old).

⁶⁷ Bruce, James *Travel to Discover the Source of the Blue Nile*, London: Printed by J. Ruthuen, 1778, pp. 245-56 (in Ayele Tamene 2000:44).

⁶⁸ Mecha Oromo, who live in Wollega, western Shoa and the northern part of Kaffa and Ilubabor, are made up of a large number of named territorial groups. The Sibū group lives in the northwestern part of the Mecha area. Their territory extends from the Dabbus river in the west and some 200 kilometers eastwards, and from the Abbay escarpment and some 100-150 kilometers to the south (Hultin 1984: 451-52). Geographically Oromos' territories extend from the highlands of Ethiopia in the north, to Ogaden and Somalia in the east, to the Sudan border in the west and across the Kenya border to the Tana River in the south. The question of the original home of the Oromo has been discussed at length by several historians and anthropologists (Hirut Terefe 2000:47). The form the Oromo migration took in the gradual movement northwards of several "clan" segments from the southern regions of present day Ethiopia is controversial and little is

political purposes from the south of the Nile. By contrast, according to Aläqa Tayä,⁷⁰ it was King Amda Sion who granted lands to settle them between Lake Tana and Damot (West Gojjam) which they named by their father's name, "Mecha". Gradually, however, they were assimilated to the surrounding Christian Amhara and became speakers of the Amharic language (Aläqa Tayä 1960:63, in Ayele Tamene 2000:5). Moreover, elders disagree with the statement of James Bruce regarding the period of their settlement and support that of Aläqa Tayä. According to him, the date of settlement goes back to the reign of King Amda Sion. According to the elders, the settlers established themselves in six territories (Semä Adbara, Timtä Abuna Arägawi, Kaja Abo, Kudmi Giorgis, Abola Giorgis and Merawi Maryam, which are collectively called the Six Villages of Challia (Sedestu Daber Challia) of Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam. Yet, their exact number and the date of settlement was barely studied (Ayele Tamene 2000:4-5).

Concerning the relationship between Gojjam⁷¹ Amhara and Wollega Oromo, Oligira (1994, in Assefa Tolera 1999:74) asserts that "the Gojjames relationship with the Oromo, mainly in the form of small scale raids, large scale fighting and through trade, goes as far as the seventeenth century." These days the Oromo trade cattle in Gojjam, whereas the Gojjame trade pack-animals among the Oromo. There are many Gojjames in Wollega, particularly in Horro Gudru, who came either as traders or who started living as share-croppers, and have now established themselves as important families—some marrying Oromo women and others marrying Oromo men. There are also Oromo communities in Gojjam, which had settled there during the raids and counter raids between Oromo and Amhara of Gojjam in the Seventeenth Century (Assefa Tolera 1999:74). However, these historical and anthropological accounts of the relationship between Gojjam Amhara and that of Wollega Oromo do not explain the ethnographic history of 'Mecha' *Woreda* in West Gojjam and its settlement patterns.

Overall, there is a great lack of consistent and exhaustive knowledge about the ethnographic history of the research setting. The very limited available written historical documents as well as elders' oral accounts provide us with inconclusive information about the issue at hand. In short, the inconclusive nature of the ethnographic history of 'Mecha' *Woreda* in West Gojjam suggests the need for further research.

4.2.2 The Political and Socio-Economic History of Mecha *Woreda*

The present Mecha *Woreda* was in the hands of a few landlords before 1974 (Pre-revolutionary Ethiopia). Prior to the evolution of Merawi, the present capital town of Mecha *Woreda*, Rim Qusqam (south-east of Merawi), was the main political and administrative center under the ruling families of *Däjjazmač* Jämbäre and *Däjjazmač* Imer. Until 1945, it became a seat for several governors of the *woreda*. In the early 1930s, *Fetawrari* Täsämma was appointed governor of Mecha by his father *Ras* Hailu. Yet, he revolted against the central government, together with his brother, *Fetawrari* Admasu, opposing the imposition of non-Gojjame rulers, *Ras* Imeru and *Käntiba* Matäbe Därs⁷². The latter made unremitting effort to lull tumult. He wanted the two brothers to relegate their

known about the original homeland of the Oromo, why they began their migration from the areas they occupied in the beginning of the 16th century, and how this expansion was possible (Baxter, et al 1996:215-216).

⁶⁹ Emperor Iyasu was the child of a temporarily successful dynastic alliance between the Gondarine monarchy and the neighboring Oromo. He and his family were, however, unable to withstand the superior might of the Tigray ruler *Ras* Mikael Seul. The latter's rise to power resulted in the Emperor's murder, and hence the end of the dynastic union, and the collapse of Oromo influence at Gondär (Richard Pankhurst 1997:217).

⁷⁰ Aläqa Tayä. *Ya-Itiopiya Hizb Tarik*. Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 1960, p.63 (in Ayele Tamene 2000:4).

⁷¹ In Gojjam, there has been extensive mixing with Oromo, Kambata and Wollamo peoples (Molvaer 1995:18-19).

⁷² Seltene Seyoum. "A History of Resistance in Gojjam 1936-1941", Ph.D. thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1999:23 (in Ayele Tamene 2000:5).

repugnancy. While Admasu turned down the call, Täsamma showed his docility and was re-installed as governor of the *woreda* until 1935, when his place was taken over by *Fetawrari* Šefäraw Imere. *Däjjazmač* Mängäša Jämbäre became a successor upon the death of Šefäraw. However, his rule of Mecha was tumbled down because of the Italian invasion and occupation. Consequently, he left Rim for Dagi, the town of his residence in Guta, where he waged a patriotic struggle against the horrendous enemy. As a retaliation, the Italians devastated the territory of Mängäša, Mecha (Seltene Seyoum 1999:24-26 and 113, in Ayele Tamene 2000:5-6).

On the other hand, Mängäša Jämbäre had a territorial conflict with *Däjjac* Abärä Yemam because both were claimants of legitimacy for Mecha. *Fetawrari* Admasu descended, on his mother side, from the ruling family of Gojjam. Likewise, Mängäša validated his claim based on the marriage alliance (dynastic inter-marriage⁷³) with *Ras* Hailu (Säbläwängel). The controversy became intractable when Abärä was promoted to by *Ləğ* Yoannes Iyasu, which led them into a major confrontation where Abärä was bitterly defeated but joined the enemy camp at Mäšanti, north of Merawi. Disappointed by this incident, his (*Däjjac* Abärä's) brother, *Fetawrari* Abärä, also betrayed for another enemy garrison at little Abay (Seltene Seyoum 1999:304-305, in Ayele Tamene 2000:6).

During and after the occupation period (1935-41), Rim⁷⁴ emerged as a predominant town. Some governmental institutions such as justice and police offices were established. As a result, Rim was more firmly established and became a relatively permanent town in comparison with other, which portrayed a rather periodical character. Furthermore, its fertile territory made Rim the center of production. In spite of these economic advantages, Rim could not become a sustainable political and administrative center owing to its peripheral location (Ayele Tamene 2000: 6-7); about 40 km away from Merawi, the present capital town of Mecha *Woreda*, and about 74 km away from Bahir Dar, the capital town of the Amhara Region (see Appendix 10, Map 3 and 4). From the middle of 1940s onwards, therefore, Rim began to decline in favor of Merawi, which is located at the center of Mecha *Woreda*.

During the Italian occupation period (1935-41), the pace of urbanization got momentum (Bahru Zewdie 1991:230, in Ayele Tamene 2000:3). Some infrastructural developments, like road construction, had accelerated urban development. The road built by the Italians that extends from Debre Markos to Bahir Dar had important impact on the region. The village of Merawi, which lays along this road, benefited from it. The road brought economic and social significance to Merawi town. Accordingly, it has got access to vital services such as health and education. Regarding social amenities, the opening of a Senior Secondary School and the building of a Clinic in 1984 and 1972, respectively was an immense contribution to the development of the town (Ayele Tamene 2000).

⁷³ Dynastic inter-marriage was a notable aspect of Ethiopian statecraft, which has perhaps still been insufficiently considered. Marriage was used to consolidate the government of the realm, as well as to strengthen control over economically or strategically important areas. Prominent among these latter was the Country of the Bahr Nägash, through which most of the empire's export and imports, including fire-arms, had to pass, and the Hadeya and Enarya areas, long a valuable source of gold and slaves. Marriages were also important in resolving, or minimizing, conflicts, including those on the borders of the realm. These may be illustrated by the sometimes difficult relations between the central Ethiopian state and the Fälasha, often widely referred to as Bétä Esra'ël, as well conflicts connected with the great northward migration of the Gallas, now more generally known as Oromos. Dynastic marriages were often threatened by outside events. The murder of the Enarya leader Bénär threatened his territory's alliance with Emperor Susneyos, but his son Yämanä Krestos, who was the Emperors' son-in-law, succeeded in restoring it. However, the Emperor's subsequent fall, and that of his Roman Catholic regime, brought about the alliance's final, and total, collapse. Emperor Särsä Dengel effected an apparently successful liaison with the Fälasha Harägo, but the defeat of Emperor Suseynos's brother Yämanä Maryam, and the subsequent decline of the Bétä Esra'ël ruling house, spelt the end of any such dynastic affiliation with the Fälashas (Richard Pankhurst 1997:206-217). In short, Richard Pankhurst (1997: 206-220) examined a score of notable interregional or inter-ethnic dynastic marriages, liaisons, or proposed unions, in the economic, political and military contexts of the time and concluded that dynastic inter-marriage represented an important, and recurring, factor in Ethiopian statecraft, as well as a colorful feature of the country's social life.

⁷⁴ One of the two rural ethnographic research settings for the present study

With regard to social development, modern education had an invaluable contribution to the town development. Before its commencement, church schools offered educational opportunities. Such schooling was conducted in the church, carried out by *mārigeta* (head of clergy).⁷⁵ Modern education was, however, started in 1949 up to two-grade level with a small number of students. The smallest number of students at the initial stage was attributed to the prejudice of the people towards modern education.⁷⁶ In 1959, Emperor Haile-Selassie visited the school and ordered the concerned officials that new buildings should be constructed. Accordingly, the construction of new buildings for the elementary school (grades 1-6) was started in the same year and completed in 1962.⁷⁷ The number of students grew rapidly. Hundreds of students were enrolled and attended. Nonetheless, students could not continue further education after they had completed their first level education.⁷⁸ In line with the “point of four agreements,” signed by the Americans, additional classrooms were built.⁷⁹ As a result, a Junior Secondary School (grades 1-8) was opened in 1975. The school, however, could not accommodate the growing number of students on the one hand and lacked provisions for further education on the other. Students had to go to Bahir Dar or Dangela to complete their high school education.⁸⁰ The necessity of building other additional classrooms so as to promote a Senior Secondary School, therefore, became unquestionable. To accomplish this task, a local committee was set up and decided to build ten additional classrooms and asked assistance of trained workers from the municipality of Bahir Dar to design the building. Accordingly, the building was started in 1982 and completed in 1984. The expense was covered by the government together with the contribution of the town people. Grade 9 had begun in 1984 and from 1985-1987 consecutively, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades were opened. The number of students in the year of its opening (1984) was 144 (78 males and 46 females). Correspondingly, the number of teachers was nine (eight males and one female).⁸¹

Concerning health services, the people of the town lacked such services until the 1970’s. Several kinds of diseases appeared at different times and claimed off the lives of hundreds of people. They were obligated to go to Feleghiwot Hospital in Bahir Dar for diagnosis and treatment. The first clinic was established in 1972 by the central government. The service of the clinic became vital not only for the town but also to the surrounding rural peoples. The latter, especially had no access to health facilities due to shortage of money for transportation and time constraint. Nevertheless, the clinic could not afford to give successful treatment for the large number of patients because of shortage of medicines (Ayele Tamene 2000:26-27).

4.3 CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES AND SOCIAL AMENITIES

4.3.1 Demographic Profiles and Ethnographic Remarks

According to Mecha *Woreda* Information Office Report (MWIF 2004), the *woreda* has a total population of 326478 (154278 male and 162200 female). Of which 304173 (154724 male and 149449 female) are rural dwellers, whereas only 22305 (9554 male and 12751 female) are urban dwellers. This statistical evidence entails that the majority (93.17%) of the *woreda*’s population are rural dwellers. In other words, only 6.83% of the total population are urban dwellers. Besides the low rate of urbanization in the study area, my ethnographic fieldwork research further revealed the fact that ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ populations in Mecha *Woreda* do not yet form sociologically separate groups.

⁷⁵ Oral Informants: Alāmu Terunāh, *Grazmač* Alāmayāhu and Fenté Dénsaw (in Ayele Tamene 2000:24)

⁷⁶ Oral Informants: Qumlačāw Gālaw, Semēnāh Tālakā, and Mālaku Gualie (in Ayele Tamene 2000:24).

⁷⁷ Oral Informants: Semēnāh Tālakā and Mālaku Gualie (in Ayele Tamene 2000:24).

⁷⁸ Oral Informants: Mulunāh Fenté, Qumlačāw Gālaw and *Fétawrari* Admasu (in Ayele Tamene 2000:24).

⁷⁹ Oral Informants: Qumlačāw Gālaw and *Fétawrari* Admasu (in Ayele Tamene 2000:24).

⁸⁰ Oral Informants: Adamu Dāmelāw, Azalā Bālātā and Semēnāh Tālak (in Ayele Tamene 2000:25).

⁸¹ Oral Informants: Qumlačāw Gālaw and Mālaku Gualie (in Ayele Tamene 2000:25).

Rather they are still strongly linked together in multiple ways, through family bonds and constant contacts and communication. In other words, attitudes of people living in ‘pure’ urban conditions differ only to a slight extent from the attitudes of those in the countryside with whom they share the same cultural background and common problems and aspirations.

According to (MWIF 2004), 93% of the *Woreda*’s people are Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and the remaining (7%) are Muslims, Protestants and followers of traditional belief systems. Here, it should be noted that a slight diversity in religious denominations is observed mainly in the urban settings of the *woreda*, whereas in its rural settings, almost all people are followers of Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity which is somewhat mixed with some form of traditional belief systems.

Concerning the ethnic composition of the *woreda*’s population, according to the 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, almost all (99.9%) of the total population are Amharas and the remaining are from other ethnic groups such as Kambata, Tigray, Agew, Oromo, and Gurage. MWIF (2004) further notes that 100% of the people who reside in the *woreda* are Amharic language speakers. According to my ethnographic data, all the rural dwellers are predominantly Amhara⁸² and they speak only the Amharic language.⁸³

When we come to the literacy status of the *woreda*’s population, among all persons aged ten years and over (160,454), only 13.11% (21,038) are literate, of which females’ literacy rate is only 5.59%. In the rural areas of the *woreda*, the focus of my ethnographic research, females’ literacy rate is only 2.69% (CSA 1995). My household survey (350 households) among Bachema and Rim peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* reveals the fact that 339 wives (96.86%) are illiterate (*māhayyām*), whereas 208 husbands (59.43%) are illiterate. In other words, only very insignificant percentage of wives (3.14%) can read and write through the literacy-campaign (*māsārātā tāmārt*) under the *dārg* regime or through formal education which was interrupted due to early marriage and pregnancy; whereas a relatively greater percentage of husbands (40.57%) can read and write through the literacy campaign, church education, and formal education which was interrupted due to arranged marriage and family work. The following table depicts spouses’ literacy status or level of education among the surveyed households.

Table 4.1: Spouses’ Level of Education Among the Surveyed Households (cf. Appendix 7)

S.No	Level of Education	Husband		Wife	
		Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
1.	Illiterate (cannot read and write)	208	59.43	339	96.86
2.	Read and Write	122	34.86	8	2.29
3.	Basic Education (grades 1-4)	7	2.00	0	0.00
4.	Church Education (Deacons/ <i>Mārigetas</i> / Priests and others)	11	3.14	0	0.00
5.	Primary School Dropouts (grades 1-8)	2	0.57	2	0.57
6.	Secondary School Dropouts (grades 9-12)	0	0.00	1	0.28
Total		350	100	350	100

4.3.2 Social Amenities: Health and Education Services

The health service coverage of Mecha *Woreda*’s population is only 23.4%. In other words, the majority (76.6 %) of the *woreda*’s population does not have access to health services (MWIF 2004). More specifically, the *woreda* has only one health center (Merawi Health Center) in the *woreda*’s

⁸² “Amhara” refers to people of the Ethiopian central highlands. The Amhara are one of the two largest ethno-linguistic groups in Ethiopia (the other group being Oromo). They constitute almost one-third of the country’s populating (Encyclopedia Britannica 2005).

⁸³ The Amharic Language is an Afro-Asiatic language belonging to the Southwest Semitic group. It is related to Ge’ez, the sacred literacy language of the Ethiopian Church (Encyclopedia Britannica 2005).

capital town. In the rural areas of the *woreda*, there are only 24 health posts or emergency health services. In other words, among 37 peasant communities of the *woreda*, 13 peasant communities do not have a health post. Accordingly, among my ethnographic fieldwork sites, Bachema PA does not have a health post because it is only 5 km away from the capital town, Merawi, whereas Rim PA has a small and poorly equipped health post with two untrained female personnel, who are giving only emergency services and referral letters to the *woreda*'s health center at Merawi for the local patients. During my ethnographic fieldwork among Rim peasant communities, I have closely observed that the health post was not in a position to serve the health demands of the local people, especially early pregnant young mother's have suffered a lot due to lack of easy and quick access to both the *woreda*'s health center at Merawi (about 40 km away from their locality) and Feleghiwot Hospital at Bahir Dar (about 74 km away from there) (see Appendix 10, map 4).

When we come to educational services, there are forty primary schools and only one secondary school (Merawi Secondary School) in the *woreda* (MWIF 2004). My examination of documents from the *woreda*'s Education Office reveals the fact that among the 37 peasant communities of the *woreda*, three peasant communities (Goshi-Meda, Tatek-Geberie and Addis-Lidet PAs from Webbo, *Däga* Abole and Guta *qäṭänna*, respectively) do not have any primary school. Furthermore, most rural primary schools are at the first cycle level (grades 1-4 or 1-6 in some cases). For instance, Bachema Peasant Association has a first cycle primary school from grades 1-4 (Bachema Primary School). It has also another primary school from grades 1-6 (Yechali Primary School), but it was not my ethnographic focus due to its inaccessibility. Of course, this is the only peasant community with two first cycle primary schools among the 37 peasant communities in Mecha *Woreda*, thanks to its location across the main road from Merawi (capital of the *woreda*) to Bahir Dar (capital of the Amhara Regional State) (see Appendix 10, map 4). The nature of formal schooling and the process of gender socialization among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* are examined in Chapter six of this thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

5. AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA

The social structure in northern Ethiopia, including the Amhara of Gojjam, has been a point of controversy among historians, political scientists and anthropologists. The anthropologists' special concern was to understand the 'family system', 'intra-community relationships,' and 'state-farmer relations.' The major anthropological studies⁸⁴ on northern Ethiopia, according to Teferi Abate (1998:2), have tended to focus on land and capital in the form of oxen to the detriment of considerations of the role of labor issues in describing and explaining the social organization of peasants.

Hoben, in his anthropological studies (1963, 1970, 1973) among the Amhara of Gojjam, argues that land is the key factor of production in northern Ethiopia. According to Hoben (1973:5-7), *rast* ("land use rights") and *gult* ("fief holding rights"), the two principles of obtaining land, were "far more than a type of land tenure," or "economic values." Hoben (1970: 222 and 1975:238, in Teferi Abate 1998:2) further argues that, "access to land determines not only the economic success of farmers, but also their relationships with one another." Against Hoben's argument for the Amhara of Gojjam, Bauer [1972:130 and 1975:238, in Teferi Abate 1998:2-3) found capital in the form of oxen to be the scarcest and decisive factor of production for the culturally similar Tigre farmers. According to Bauer (1972:128-129), "oxen-owner households enjoyed high social status, power and great wealth in the community by securing both land and labor on favorable terms" (Teferi Abate 1998:2-3).

Messing, in his anthropological study on "Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia" (1957:237), argues that "some aspects of the social organization of Amhara resemble those of Medieval Europe; others the Middle East and perhaps a smaller part have some similarities with that of Africa." Donham (1986:15, in Teferi Abate 1998:3) is alone in asserting that the Ethiopian social system "appears to sit squarely within the African type of political economy." Donham (1986:15) argues that this categorization has served only to cloud our understanding of the dynamics of Ethiopian society, historically and contemporaneously. To put the Ethiopian society into its correct setting, and thereby attempt to solve this theoretical and factual problem, as Donham noted, we need to have a better knowledge of the social organization of farming communities, past and present (Teferi Abate 1998:3). Teferi Abate's anthropological study on "Land, Capital and Labor in the Social Organization of Farmers: A Study of Household Dynamics in Southwestern Wollo, 1974-1993" (1998) focuses on the role played by labor issues, which include labor supply, quality of labor, social networks and power of households, in a micro-level study of the production system of farmers and the corresponding social organization with specific reference to Southern Wollo of the Amhara Region of Ethiopia.

Tassew Shiferaw, Berhanu Mebratie and Gebrie Bedada (1996:3) describe the Amhara social structure and organization as follows:

"Traditionally, most Amhara live in small, kin-based hamlets surrounded by their farmlands, and even urban Amhara are often part-time farmers. The overwhelming majority of them are peasants practicing traditional farming. Even though there are some artisans in the community, each peasant is expected to build his own dwelling following commonly known technology and house designs... Cooperation for certain activities such as building houses, farming activities and the like is a common cultural practice. ... Members of the community share values, customs and beliefs."

⁸⁴ Hoben 1963, 1970, 1973 and 1975; Bauer 1972 and 1975; Messing 1957; Donham 1986, in Teferi Abate 1998

In the light of anthropological generalizing studies of the social structure and organization of northern Ethiopia in general and Amhara society in particular, let us proceed to factors explaining the social structure and organization of the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda*, with specific reference to the ethnographic research settings, Bachema and Rim peasant communities.

5.1 KINSHIP STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS

5.1.1 Kinship, Descent and Marriage

Kinship and descent are important aspects of peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* in general and the ethnographic research settings in particular. In this connection, Hoben (1963, 1973), Levine (1965), and Young (1970) claim that “descent among the Amhara is ambilineal,” while Messing (1937) and Lipsky (1962) claim that “it is usually patrilineal.” Messing, however, notes that “the mother’s family is only slightly lesser importance.” In either case, the descent group is non-corporate and does not usually function as a whole. Membership is not mutually exclusive, according to Hoben. The groups have no ritual functions. They are only landholding units whose members are the descendants of an apical ancestor and have a potential right to the land he owned. It is only in watching over and allocating the land that the group acts (Tassew Shiferaw, Berhanu Mebratie and Gebrie Bedada 1996:3).

Among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim, kinship through descent is one of the basic traditional institutions through which closely related families support their fellow members on various occasions. People among the studied communities trace kinship relationships through descent up to the seventh degree of consanguinity. Descent is reckoned through both, father’s and mother’s lines. Residence after construction of a house (*goğğo*) is usually patrilocal; a married son builds his own house near that of his father when his wife reaches the ages of 12 or 13. Here it should be noted that among the ethnographic settings, early-childhood marriage is a custom. In this context, we cannot say that residence after marriage is patrilocal, because early-married brides in most cases are not expected to reside in their in-laws village just after marriage (see Chapter 7). The newly-formed household is a part of the parental household. In other words, extended families are more prevalent than nuclear families. In this context, Hoben (1963:136) argues that “Amhara kinship nomenclature stresses bilateral filiations, consanguineal terms beyond the nuclear family being neither numerous nor precise.” Kinship relations among the studied communities extend beyond biological relationship. Most importantly, kinship relations extend to affinal relations. As a result, there are various terminologies used for expressing consanguineal and affinal relationships. The major ones are listed below:

Table 5.1: Local Reference-Terms Used for Expressing Consanguineal and Affinal Relationships

Consanguineal Terms	Terms of Affinal Relationships
1. <i>qədmä ayat</i> : great grand-parent	1. <i>məšt</i> : wife
2. <i>ayat</i> : grand-parent	2. <i>bal</i> : husband
3. <i>abbat</i> : father	3. <i>amat</i> : parent-in-law of either sex (mother or father of a husband or wife)
4. <i>ənnat</i> : mother	4. <i>yä-ləğ məšt</i> : son’s wife (daughter-in-law)
5. <i>set ləğ</i> : daughter	5. <i>yä-ləğ bal</i> : daughter’s husband (son-in-law)
6. <i>wänd ləğ</i> : son	6. <i>amač</i> : sister’s husband (brother-in-law)
7. <i>yä-ləğ ləğ</i> : grand-child (male or female)	7. <i>ayyät</i> : brother’s wife (sister-in-law)
8. <i>əhät</i> : sister	
9. <i>wändəm</i> : brother	
10. <i>yä-əhät (yä-wändəm) ləğ</i> : nephew	
11. <i>agot</i> : uncle (mother’s brother, father’s brother)	
12. <i>akəst</i> : aunt (mother’s sister, father’s sister)	
13. <i>yaggot (yakəst) ləğ</i> : cousin	

Consanguineal and affinal relationship is equally important⁸⁵ in the economic and social life of peasant communities of Bachema and Rim. Affinal relations are as strongly valued as consanguineal relations. Furthermore, sexual intercourse and marriage between individuals related by blood and marriage up to the seventh degree of consanguinity are strictly prohibited. Above all, the custom of early-arranged marriage plays a vital role in forging economic as well as social alliances between the two marrying families.

5.1.2 Kinship Relations through Religious and Social Ties

The web of kinship among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim denotes a flexible socio-economic system used to facilitate interpersonal relations. Thus, beyond descent and alliance relations, kinship relations extend to relations with religious and social ties. The following are the major ones:

- a. The religious institution of god-parenthood/childhood, which consists of:
 - *yäkrästanna abbat* (god-father)
 - *yäkrästanna ənnat* (god-mother)
 - *yäkrästanna ləǧ* (god-child)

- b. The social institution of breast-parenthood-childhood, which consists of:
 - *yäṭut ənnat* (breast-mother)⁸⁶
 - *yäṭut abbat* (breast-father)
 - *yäṭut ləǧ* (breast-child)

The institution of fictive-kinship relationship established through god-parenthood and childhood, locally known as *abäləǧ*, is commonly practiced by all Orthodox Christians in the studied communities. On a child's day of baptism, a god-parent is assigned depending on the child's sex: a god-father for a male child and a god-mother for a female child. During the male and female child's baptism, his *yäkrästanna abbat* (god-father) and her *yäkrästanna ənnat* (god-mother), respectively, vow to treat the child as their own child. However, according to the local people, the institution of god-parenthood-childhood is less binding than breast-parenthood-childhood. The institution of breast-parenthood-childhood, particularly the institution of breast-fatherhood-childhood is common among both Bachema and Rim peasant communities. Most of the time, such relationships are required if a person does not have many consanguineal relatives and affinal relations.⁸⁷ Sometimes, a person who lacks land and other wealth seeks to become *yäṭut ləǧ* (breast-child). On the other hand, a wealthier person who lacks an adult son becomes *yäṭut abbat* (breast-father) in order to gain a male

⁸⁵ With regard to the importance of blood-kinship and affinal relations through marriage among the Amhara resettlers in North-central Ethiopia, Wolde-Selassie Abbute (2004:212) notes that, "Kin members have stronger and closer ties and communicate with each other during important occasions. Affinal kinship, through the marriages of their children, is also strong. Among others, *amicha* ('affinal kinship') is an important institution for labor mobilization between the families of fathers-in-law and sons-in-law. It has a very high image and value for the status of both parties. This institutional arrangement is usually practiced among relatively better-off-households predominantly among those resettlers from north-central parts of the country (mainly Amhara)" (Wolde-Selassie Abbute 2004:212).

⁸⁶ *Yäṭut ənnat* ("breast-mother") refers to the woman who breast-feeds the baby or babies. In the institution of breast-motherhood, the "breast-children" of one woman, though not related by descent, are considered as related. However, this institution is not common among the ethnographic research settings.

⁸⁷ "In peasant societies, a person's existence and well-being ultimately depends upon the maintenance of complex links which, when traced through a network of kinship, unite this person with a multitude of relatives. Sometimes, a person with a rather limited kinship network may additionally unite himself with others by fictionalizing kinship through contracts of reciprocity with those to whom he is otherwise unrelated. Still other social contracts unite groups of people into associations dedicated to the welfare of members of these groups" (Gamst 1969:65).

labor support. In addition to his labor support, *yäṭut laǧ* is expected to arrange funeral ceremonies when his *yäṭut abbat* dies. Above all, both, the institutions of god-parenthood-childhood as well as breast-fatherhood-childhood are less important than affinal relations among the people in the ethnographic settings. However, it should be noted that the prohibition of sexual intercourse and marriage between individuals related by birth and marriage equally applies to individuals related by the institutions of god-parenthood-childhood and breast-parenthood-childhood.

5.1.3 Kinship, Gender and Inheritance

Kinship and inheritance refer to both male and female children's right to inherit their parents' property. At the ideological level, children of both sexes have equal rights to inherit their parents' property, usually when both parents die. In some cases, parents make a will before they die stating "who should inherit what" in order to prevent possible conflicts among their children. The rule of inheritance is based on bilateral descent through which children of both sexes can inherit their mother's and father's property, such as cattle (both daughters and sons), farm instruments (sons) and household utensils (daughters). During the Imperial Regime, children of both sexes had the right to inherit their parents' land.⁸⁸ With the Rural Land Proclamation of March 1975,⁸⁹ land was nationalized, transferring its control and redistribution to peasant associations. In principle, the 1975 land reform and subsequent rural land redistribution policies granted women the right to own land. However, in practice, women do not have access to land unless they are widowed or registered as independent heads of households within the peasant association. Even unmarried young girls, who have got the chance to inherit the "use rights" of their parents' land, are expected to pass it to their brothers or closer kin members upon their marriage.⁹⁰

5.2 RITES OF PASSAGE

Rites of passage refer to ritual elements which are formed and sustained by shared rites and symbols through which people learn what is expected of them from their communities. In this regard, the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim hold numerous values, norms, customs, traditions and belief systems. The rites of passage observed by the people there reveal the different phases of their "life cycle events" such as birth, marriage, and death. "Life-cycle events, such as pregnancy, birth, the post-partum period, circumcision and marriage, have to be discussed in this context. The welfare challenge is to avoid the conflict and outright condemnation of traditions surrounding women's life-cycle. It is not easy to distinguish the admirable from the abominable, to know where practices are best maintained, adapted or rejected" (Helen Pankhurst 1990:149). These and other rites are observed with religious and traditional ceremonies. Customs related to pregnancy, childbirth, circumcision, baptism, marriage and death are briefly presented below.

5.2.1 Pregnancy and Childbirth

In the local cultural traditions, a pregnant woman is expected to carry out limited and light tasks. However, in practice, a pregnant woman hardly gets any leisure time. She works until she gives birth.

⁸⁸ "Under the previous system the majority of women were landless tenants anyway; and even if in theory female inheritance was possible, the social structures in both Moslem and Christian families were such that priorities were almost transferred to the male heir in the family (Hanna Kebede 1990:64).

⁸⁹ The Rural Land Proclamation has given women legal access to organize themselves in peasant associations as head of household, if they have an independent residence. Although women are legally authorized to organize themselves in producer cooperatives, land (the most significant means of production) is still in the hands of peasant associations" (Hanna Kebede 1990:64).

⁹⁰ In some cases, the husband will come to his wife's parents' village and cultivate her inherited plot of land. But this could be possible, if and only if, the husband's father has no extra land to allot to his newly-married son and if the wife's parents, mostly widowed mothers, have no an adult son.

During pregnancy, according to Dicks and Eddle-Senay Bogale (1995:90), “women require higher food intake, more time to rest, social support, and a good physical environment more so than they do during non-pregnancy periods.” However, among the peasant communities of Rim and Bachema, pregnant women are traditionally prohibited from taking nutritious foods, such as meat and milk, since it is believed that such food will make the infant bigger and this will create a problem during delivery. This fear is grounded in the fact that young mothers are not fully developed themselves as well as almost all pregnant women in the ethnographic research settings deliver their babies at home being unattended by trained midwives due to the inaccessibility of health services.⁹¹ In this connection, Helen Pankhurst notes that:

“The tradition of women reducing and excluding the intake of some foods in the late stages of their pregnancy is sometimes seen as a prohibition, though women argue that they do it because they feel unwell if they eat a certain food. At the same time, a poorer nutrition results in a smaller baby, and hence in an easier birth. The dilemma for external developmentalists is whether or not to speak out against this tradition which might result from a complex internal knowledge and from a reaction to the difficult conditions women face or, on the other hand, might be part of a patriarchal environment that subjugates women” (Helen Pankhurst 1990:153).

When a woman’s day of delivery approaches, the necessary food items, like flour for *gänffo* (porridge), butter and *dəqus* (red-pepper ground and mixed with salt and spices) are prepared. A young pregnant woman gives birth to her first child at her parents’ home (in most cases) or at her in-laws’ home (in some cases). If the mother is giving birth to her first child at her parents’ home, her husband is expected to accompany her. If she gives birth to a male child, she will come back to her house after her son’s baptism, i.e. 40 days after birth. If it is a female, her parents are expected to bring her to her house with *arāqi* (local liquor) and *əngāra* (traditional bread) with *yāməṭad šəro* (roasted and ground peas stew cooked on a traditional oven) ten days after her delivery and then she starts preparing drink and food items for her daughter’s baptism.

A pregnant woman gives birth, first or subsequent, at home with the assistance of her mother-mother-in-law or a traditional female birth attendant (*yäləmd awwalağ*) of the neighborhood. After giving birth, the placenta (*yäəngəde ləğ*) has to be buried by a woman who assisted the mother during delivery. The burial place of the placental depends on the sex of the new-born child. If it is male, its placental is traditionally buried inside the house, to the right of the door, signifying that a male child will remain in his parents’ home when grown up; whereas the female child’s placental has to be buried outside the house, to the left of the door, implying that a female child will leave her parents’ home upon marriage. The woman assisting the mother giving birth to a child announces the birth by shouting *əlalta* (“verbal expression of happiness” or ululation) and the people around her express their happiness with a number of *əlaltas*, depending on the sex of the new-born child. If it is a male child, the number of *əlalta* is 12, whereas for a female child it is 9. The feelings and repeated expressions of happiness over a new-born child are usually expressed by making a loud noise of *əlalta*. Parents, especially fathers, are happier when the wife gives birth to a baby boy. More specifically, in the agricultural communities of Bachema and Rim, fathers are in need of the assistance of sons in agricultural activities. After expressing their happiness with *əlalta*, the traditional birth attendant-her mother-mother-in-law say to the woman who gave birth to a child: “*məṭəšn ərs ləğəšn anš*” (lit. “forget the pain of your labor and bring your new-born child”). A fresh butter is applied on the mother’s head thinking that her head cleaves as she gave birth to a child. After that, women who

⁹¹ In both Bachema and Rim peasant communities, there are no health centers as well as trained birth attendants. As a result, young and adult women with prolonged and complicated labor have to be carried to the only health center at Merawi, the capital of the *woreda*, 5 and 40 km away from Bachema and Rim, respectively.

assisted during child delivery and the neighboring women gather and prepare *gänffo* for the birth ceremony, locally known as *yämaryam mäšäñña.Ṭalla* (local beer), *aräqi*, and coffee are also prepared for this ceremony.

When the wife gives birth, the economically well-off husband slaughters a sheep or lamb (*täbbo*) for her or a chicken (*doro*) has to be slaughtered immediately after the child's birth. During the third day after the child's birth, the mother, the house in which the child was delivered and those who were in close contact with the mother should be 'purified' with holy water (*täbäl*) which has been prayed over and spat into by the priest (*qes*) or the spouses' confessor-father (*yänäfs abbat*). In most cases, a woman who gave birth to a first or-and a later child is expected to perform her usual domestic tasks after ten days of confinement. Anybody around in the village, including her sisters-in-law, and her neighbors, are expected to be with her and to prepare food and drinks for her and her family for 10 days.⁹² Here, it should be noted that if the mother who gave birth to a child has nobody responsible for running her household chores, she starts managing her household tasks even before her 10th days of delivery. In some cases, a woman who gave birth to a child will stay confined until fifteen days if she has a daughter capable of replacing her in domestic role or if there is a domestic servant (*gäräd*). In this regard, early-married female pupils, both at Bachema and Rim primary schools, told me that whenever their mothers give birth to a child, they are always expected to take over their mothers' domestic role at least for two weeks.

On the 10th day after childbirth, the ceremony known as *däğğ mäwuṭat* (going outside) is held. This is the first time for the mother to go out since on the beginning of her confinement. For this ceremony, *gänffo*, *ṭalla*, and *aräqi* and coffee are prepared and served for all those who have assisted during her delivery. After this ceremony, the mother is able to run her household chores and she prepares food and drinks for her child's baptism, which takes place 40 days after the birth if a boy or 80 days after the birth of a girl (see the rite of baptism presented below). In some cases, a woman who gave birth to a male child, depending on the socio-economic status of her husband, is home-bound for 10 to 40 days, breast-feeding her baby. During her confinement or before her child's baptism, neighbors and close relatives visit her with some presents such as *əngoča* (thick traditional bread), milk, *bäso* (food prepared from roasted and ground barley flour), *əngära* with *doro wät* (hot and spicy chicken stew), *aräqi*, and some times money (ranging from 2 to 3 Eth. *bərr*). This practice is locally known as *aras mäṭyāq* (lit. "visiting a woman who gave birth recently"). The practice is not only confined to one's physically close neighbors, but also extends to close relatives from distant places. This reveals the high value attached to Childbearing for a woman.

With each birth, a married woman solidifies her place within her conjugal family. However, increasing childcare responsibilities, in addition to her domestic tasks, keep her busy. By the time a woman has established a family of the socially desirable size of children, as many children as God gives, preferably many sons, she is in her thirties. Women are facing many problems related to early pregnancy and multiple births. At the same time, they have difficulties in achieving their maximum family size due to the death of children⁹³ or fetus, which is the most common problem among the ethnographic settings, where early pregnancy is a norm and pre-and post-natal care is non-existent or almost inaccessible. Taking into account many miscarriages, the average number of surviving children

⁹² There is a tradition, in many parts of Ethiopia, of ensuring that after childbirth the mother is looked after, usually by her closest female relative, for a convalescence period. In Menz, this used to be forty days. It is now twenty days, though some women return to their duties after ten, probably because of increased nuclearization of the family, looser kinship ties, and increased impoverishment, which make it difficult to find and finance the extra female labor for the full forty days (Helen Pankhurst 1990).

⁹³ It is not unheard of for a woman to give birth to ten children and lose more than half (Helen Pankhurst 1990:153).

among the surveyed households is 6 and the average age of wives (mothers) is about 37 years (see Appendix 7). Furthermore, the average age of wives (mothers) at their first childbirth is 17 years, which is currently going down to 14 years. The following tables indicate wives' age-group at first childbearing and the range of the number of surviving children among Bachema and Rim peasant communities:

Table 5.2: Wives' Age-Group at First Childbearing Among the Surveyed Households (cf. Appendix 7)

Wives' Age-Group at First Childbearing	Frequency	
	Numbers	Percentage
12-14	40	11.43
15-17	158	45.14
18-20	117	33.43
21-25	27	7.71
26-30	8	2.29
Total	350	100

Table 5.3: Range of the Number of Surviving Children Among the Surveyed Households (cf. Appendix 7)

Range of the Number of Surviving Children	Frequency	
	Numbers	Percentage
1-3	30	8.57
4-6	187	53.43
7-14	133	38
Total	350	100

At the age of 30, a married woman becomes an established wife and her daughters become able to assist her in domestic activities and taking care of younger siblings, many women desire to have elder or eldest female children for this purpose. By the time a woman is 40, her first children are ready to assume an adult status. A married woman's prestige increases with the numbers of her children, especially those raised to adulthood and most especially her sons. Between the ages of 40 and 50, a married woman reaches the highest stage of her personal influence, with adult children to care for her. Furthermore, older women, mothers-in-law in particular, gain particular social authority. They exert this power over their daughters-in-law. The result is that older women reproduce, within the community of women, the same hierarchical relations that govern relationships between elders and their dependents- younger children, daughters-in-laws, and sometimes employed female servants. However, elder women's social influence still depends on their husbands' social and economic position in the local community. In some instances, contrary to providing social security, older age or menopause makes a woman vulnerable to divorce if her husband seeks to get married to a younger woman.

In the final analysis, it should be noted that childbirth is a highly welcome social event because it is only through parenthood that men and women can achieve a privileged social status. Furthermore, children are thought to be important as laborers and as security for their parents in their old age. As a result, the local social and economic environment supports high fertility, and women's nurturing duties are highly emphasized. However, the social and economic pressures on women and young girls to give birth to as many children as possible have negative consequences on the well-being of young mothers and their children. Early and frequent pregnancies and poor nutrition, coupled with a

lack of health care facilities and medical attention, result in the highest prevalence rate of reproductive health problems, especially obstetric fistula, high infant-child and maternal mortality.

5.2.2 Circumcision and Baptism

5.2.2.1 Male and Female Circumcision

People in the studied peasant communities are predominantly followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Accordingly, children have to be circumcised between the ages of seven and eight days after birth depending on their sex. Girls are circumcised on the seventh day after birth, whereas boys on the eighth day after birth. Circumcision of boys is performed by traditional medicine-men, whereas female circumcision is performed by traditional midwives. In both cases, the “operation” is performed using a razorblade and is usually done during dawn. Traditionally, a chicken is slaughtered and *tälla*, *aräqi*, and coffee are prepared for the rite. But there is no other elaborate ceremony for this rite.

Currently, there is no question about male circumcision.⁹⁴ However, due to its harmful consequences, female circumcision is widely condemned by health experts as well as local health officers as damaging the physical and psychological health of the female child. However, the local people believe that the female child should be “circumcised” because, according to the local tradition, an “uncircumcised” girl will be unmarriageable and adulterous. According to the local people’s perception, “uncircumcised” girls break goods (*yaltägäräzu set lägočč əqa yäsäbralu*) and they do not stay at home (*wučč wučč yälalu*). There is also the belief that an “uncircumcised” girl would become sexually impenetrable. Hence, for all these reasons, the local people still practice female circumcision (clitoridectomy) though it is forbidden by the local health officers.

5.2.2.2 Male and Female Baptism

Infant baptism (*krästanna*) is a strictly observed ritual among Bachema and Rim Orthodox Christians. In accordance with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church rules, male infants are baptized forty days and female infants eighty days after birth. During the rite of baptism, the infant is held by the god-father/mother or grand-father/grand-mother depending on the sex of the child. Then the infant is bathed in a large wooden bowl of water while a priest recites prayers. When the infant is lifted from the bowl and given new clothing, he-she is considered a member of the Orthodox Church. The child is then given *yäkrästanna səm* (baptismal name,⁹⁵ usually the name of the Saints of the day unless the priest or the child’s parents prefer the name of a favorite Saint), which can be used in the church’s ritual and symbolizes his-her new status as a Christian. Since the newly-baptized male-female infant cannot witness his-her faith, a god-father-mother is named for him-her, respectively. The priest admonishes the god-parents, how great their responsibility with regard to the proper religious instructions are and that they will answer for the newly-baptized on the day of judgment if they neglected teaching and watching it in the fear of God.

The rite of baptism is followed by a feast, which could be considered as one among the many redistribution mechanisms. As per this tradition, the parents of the baby ask others to be the god-parent of their child. The choice of god-parents is usually made on the basis of strengthening ties and friendship. Sometimes, the choice of god-parents could be made before birth, where other families may demand that the fetus, either male or female, be given to their daughter or son. In this context,

⁹⁴ The circumcision of boys is absolutely unquestioned, there is no group not practicing it; the sexual mutilation of girls or young women is widespread all over the country, irrespective of religion (Benzing 2000:12).

⁹⁵ Besides the baptismal name, the child’s parents can decide on his/her *yäläm mätäriya səm* (common name, the name usually signifying the circumstances of birth).

the rite of baptism has religious as well as social dimensions. The rite of baptism as a socially shared experience renews and fortifies the sense of linkage with a tradition and the continuity of a community, spanning centuries. It also testifies that children inherit their parents' religion. Here it should be noted that not only children, but also the Orthodox Christians in general learn the order and traditions of the church not from the church, but by their assimilation as part of their culture. In short, religious denominations are taught by the culture of the parents as well as from the socio-cultural environment. In this context, the religious life of the people and the socio-cultural contexts are closely related.

5.2.3 Marriage – Childhood - Adulthood

Marriage (*gabəčča*) and the wedding ceremony (*särg*) constitute a rite of passage from adolescence to young adulthood (*akalä mäṭan mädräs*) for most males and for some females. Apart from marriage, there is no other coming-of-age ceremony for males and females among Bachema and Rim peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda*. This is also the case among the rural communities of other Amhara and Qemant people studied by Gamst (1969). In most cases, girls from cattle - “rich” families get married at their early age. In some cases, a girl from a cattle - “poor” family can marry in her youth a boy from a land and cattle - “poor” family either in the form of marriage without parental endowments such as cattle and/or other property (*kəndəš bākənde gabəčča*) or she can be a servant and wife at the same time (*yäčən gāräd*) to a married man, usually a trader in the nearby small town whose wife and children are in his home village, or to a divorced or widowed adult man (see Chapter 7).

Culturally, marriage denotes the end of childhood, but the reality is that almost all young and adult women get married before menarchy. In this connection, Helen Pankhurst notes that:

“Marriage should and usually does occur just before menarchy, which, in the area, starts as late as between fifteen and eighteen undoubtedly a reflection of poor nutrition. Blood from loss of virginity is often not differentiated from menarchy. That the two phenomena are not distinguished, or rather only reluctantly accepted as separate, is suggestive of the prevalence of marriage and intercourse prior to the start of the menses. In fact, the start of menstruation is culturally interpreted as connected with intercourse” (1990:149, 153).

Currently, young girls get married when they still are children (see Appendix 8A and B). Child-brides are also expected to move between the two families until they reach the age of 10. Afterwards they occasionally visit their natal family since they are expected (between the ages of 12 and 13) to establish their own *goğgo* (hut) around their in-laws' homestead. The establishment of one's own *goğgo* is a rite of passage socially marking individuals who are ready for taking adult responsibilities such as giving birth to a child, rearing children, being a member of the local social and religious associations such as *mahbär* and *sänbäte*, through which they become accepted members of the local community. This is a stage at which individuals are perceived to have been socialized and to have adopted the norms required for active participation in the local community, including decision-making and dispute settlement, particularly adult married men. Above all, an adult son can only become the head of the household (*abba wärra*) and claim for land from the local Peasants' Association (PA) if, and only if, he married and establishes his own *goğgo*. Currently, this is one of the major economic motives behind early-arranged marriages for girls in the studied peasant communities (see Chapter 7 and 8).

Overall, the people in the studied communities place great emphasis upon marriage as a positive good for both sexes. A female achieves the status of adulthood or womanhood through her (first) marriage. Girls who reach the age of 14 without having a marital engagement in force are labeled as

qomo qār (unmarriageable, old maids) and are not likely to achieve the status of womanhood. Older unmarried people of either sex are viewed as somewhat abnormal and not reliable. This is especially true of divorcees, who are eligible for remarriage and who do not have the tight restrictions of maidenhood placed upon them. But widows, on the other hand, are not encouraged to remarry, especially if they have adult children or natal kin to support them. The status of widow then falls somewhat below that of wife, but above that of divorcee. A woman with an absentee spouse, who does not live with her-in-laws or natal kin with her, is in a socially vulnerable position. With no adult male to guard/protect her, it is presumed that she is sexually available. In short, women among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim have a reputation for marital trustworthiness, maintained by a tight social network.

5.2.4 Death and Funeral Ceremonies

Among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim, the death of a man and a woman of married status requires two rites: a rite of *läqso* (lamentation), and a rite of *täskar* (commemoration of a person's death with a religious service).

The rite of *läqso*, the first funeral ceremony, is performed soon after the physical death of a person. This ceremony is performed to usher the deceased out of human society. Once a person has accomplished all the rites of passage and passed away, the corpse has to be buried ceremonially, irrespective of the sex and social status occupied before death. According to the local religious tradition, "the corpse of both adult sexes is respected." This, however, does not mean that all first funeral ceremonies organized and observed for all individuals are equally elaborate. There is a slight difference in the preparation and observation of funeral ceremonies of elderly men as compared to women and younger people of both sexes. The former's funeral ceremony is slightly more elaborate than the latter's. Young men accompanied by the close relatives of the deceased person, the former carrying the corpse and the latter guiding, proceed to the church to bury the corpse in a grave. The funeral of all Orthodox Christians among Bachema and Rim peasant communities is always officiated by a priest and the burial taking place in the parish churchyard, except for an infant who died before baptism. Close relatives (adult married men and women) go to the site of the grave and others mourn at home.

Mourning and the feeling of sadness is an integral part of the rite of *läqso*. But not all affinal relatives and kinsmen of the deceased person are expected to attend this rite. Among the villagers or neighbors, only those who established their own *gogġo* are expected to attend the rite and only close relatives are expected to shed tears and express their sorrow. Even among the closest kinsmen, women rather than men often express their grief by weeping loudly, crying, shouting the name of the deceased person, scratching their face, and beating and throwing themselves to the ground. The deceased is mourned for the first three days after death, then on the twelfth and fortieth day, and on the seventh anniversary of the death. During the period of mourning, the spouse and close relatives shave their heads and drape their *šamma*, in customary way, to depict grief. If the deceased's distant relatives are unable to attend the rite of *läqso*, the actual funeral ceremony, during the week of mourning, they arrange and conduct *yäqätäro läqso* (a funeral ceremony for the deceased by a special arrangement) on Sundays. This takes place in the churchyard where the corpse is buried. Overall, the mourning ceremony takes up to two weeks, since relatives or friends visit the aggrieved family to pay their respects after death as soon as the news is heard, or at their convenience.

For the rite of *läqso*, the deceased's neighbors prepare *nafro* (boiled cereal grain), *əngära* and *tälla*. Each household member of his/her *mahbär* (local social and religious association) brings a fixed number (four to five) *əngära* with *dəqus*. Depending on the economic standing of the family of

the deceased, those who attend the funeral ceremony and the ones who pay their respects after the death are served food (frequently, a cattle is slaughtered on the occasion), and coffee, *tälla* and *aräqi*. Attendants of this ceremony offer between one and two Eth. *bərr* to the sponsoring family or to the family of the deceased person.

The rite of *täskar*, the second funeral ceremony, can be held after 80 days (*sämanya qän*), after one year (*mutamät*), and seven years after the death of a person of married status. This rite is performed to allow the deceased person's soul to enter heaven and be content beyond the grave. For this rite, food and drinks are prepared in large quantity by women and kin groups, and one to three heads of livestock are slaughtered, depending on the economic status of the deceased person. Of all ceremonial and rituals of the studied communities, especially in Rim, a household loses a substantial size of its wealth in the rite of *täskar*. This rite takes place in the parish churchyard and the local priests pray to God that the soul be allowed to reach heaven. Afterwards, the priests, the invited guests, and the people around bless the deceased's family.

5.3 VALUES AND BELIEF SYSTEMS

5.3.1 Values

5.3.1.1 Values Attached to "Virginity" and "Fertility"

At her first marriage, a girl is expected to be virgin. If a girl is found not to be a virgin during her first intercourse with her first husband, it is a disgrace for her parents and for herself. In this context, the preservation of a girl's virginity until marriage is primarily a concern of the parents responsible for "watching" the girl properly, and then it becomes a moral, as well as social issue with respect to the girl. The local community blames parents more than the girl for the loss of her virginity. For this reason, parents have always a strong desire to protect their daughters from pre-marital sex, while such restrictive measures are not taken to control sons. They also believe that early marriage for daughters is essential to protect them from pre-marital sex. In addition to being a virgin during her first marriage, a girl's social status depends on her being able to accomplish her socially ascribed roles of being a mother and wife. This also motivates parents to marry off their daughters at an early age so that they can achieve social recognition in their community in these "capacities." This gender-specific social value attached to women reinforces the need for marrying girls at an early age and reduces their self-identity and opportunities for receiving formal education and other skills, which are economically useful for themselves as well as for their family. Ultimately, this also contributes to the low development of their community.

5.3.1.2 Values Attached to Children

In the study area, parents value their children for social, ideological and economic reasons.⁹⁶ From the social and ideological points of view, children are valued in: a) continuing the family lineage (*yäzärharäg lämätäkat*); and b) providing status and prestige to parents and grand-parents. Each of these values depends, in part, on the sex of the child. The gender preferential value system is closely linked with the patrilocal residence pattern. Since daughters, through cultural traditions surrounding marriage, are seen to become members of their husbands' families, sons are valued as carriers of their natal family lineage. Economically, children are valued in: a) providing labor support for the family; b) providing economic and social security for parents in their old age and up to their funeral ceremony; c) providing opportunities for forging economic alliances with other families through their marriage; and

⁹⁶ Individual reasons for having children are: old age support, generate income, family prestige, establish womanhood, preserve marriage, and win spouse affection. This wide range of possible childbearing motives can be divided into three groups: economic, emotional, and ideological (Christine 1985: 84f., in Guday Emirie 1998).

d) for inheriting the family's property. Children of both sexes are valued as a wealth/resource (*habt/nəbrāt*) since they bring a variety of economic benefits to their parents. Fathers and mothers agree on the relative value of sons and daughters in terms of their provision of social security and in terms of their value through marriage. However, sons and daughters are valued differently as means for increasing family wealth. Since the local tradition stipulates that inheritance of important family holdings, such as land, follows the male line, sons are more valued than daughters providing this security.

In general, among the traditional agricultural communities of Bachema and Rim, children are still the major sources of family labor and parental social and economic security. This motivates parents to arrange early marriage for their daughters so that they can start childbearing as early as possible. However, the social as well as economic pressures to bear as many children as possible results in girls' burdening with childbearing and child rearing. This, in turn, makes them vulnerable to health risks. They are also socially isolated and their access to educational opportunities is blocked so that they lack the necessary skills to improve their vulnerable situation.

5.3.1.3 Gender-Specific Values Attached to "Childlessness" and "Having Many Children"

In the agricultural communities of Bachema and Rim, large families are preferred due to the expected assistance of the extended family in handling the labor demands of the agricultural households. Accordingly, the social and economic position of parents, especially mothers, depends on the number, sex and age of their children raised to adulthood. As a result, there exist gender-specific values attached to "childlessness" and "having many children." In other words, a "childless (barren) woman" is perceived differently from a "childless man," and "a mother of many children" is again valued differently from "a father of a big family."

In both ethnographic research settings, "a childless woman" is locally called *māsina* (lit. "barren"). This name equally applies to cattle, a mule! Thus, in its extreme sense "a barren woman" is called a *bāqlo* (mule). The local people see the childless woman as being in a very unfortunate situation. Often she appears as an outcast. "Feminine prestige" depends directly upon Childbearing and the number of surviving children. This "traditional" value system is commonly shared by the whole community and still persists.

With regard to a man without children, the widely held belief system is that, "the man who has no children is more extinct when he dies than the man who has children." This reveals the fear of dying without children. However, the local people do not consider a married man who has no children as "a childless person." Rather, the local people assume that, "if a married man has no children it is because he has not yet found the right woman to bear children to him." As a result, the concept of "a barren man" does not exist in the same sense as that of "a barren woman" due to the local people's perception that *yāwānd māhan yālāwum* (lit. "there is no a barren man"). The question of whether the husband may be infertile is out of reach and consideration. For whatever reason, a man who has no children fails to fulfill his duty towards continuing his lineage or family line (*yāzārharäg mātākat*). He is also economically considered as *dāha* ("poor") because there are no children working in his homestead. In contrast to a man without children, a father of a big-family is considered as *habtam* ("rich") person both socially and economically. In other words, the father's being *habtam* denotes his social status as a father of a big family: a big homestead with many children working in it (the economic side of his "richness") coupled with the continuity of his patrilineage (the ideological side of his "richness"). Here it should be noted that "a mother of many children" and "a father of a big family" are locally perceived from a

different dimensions.⁹⁷ These gender-differential statuses stem from social, ideological and economic environments of their communities. Accordingly, a man's status is evaluated by his being able to accomplish his agricultural activities well and being a successful farmer capable of managing his own family well, where as a woman's value is primarily staked in her reproductive capacity.⁹⁸ Her secondary value depends on her being a 'capable' wife (being able to perform her domestic activities well, taking care of her husband and her children and running her home well). She is also expected to be loyal to her in-laws and be peaceful and cooperative with other members of the extended family in her husband's homestead (see Chapter 6).

5.3.2 Belief Systems

The Coptic Ethiopian Orthodox Church is a very important part of the life of the people in Bachema and Rim peasant associations. The rules of the church are regarded as unchallengeable laws. Priests perform all religious ceremonies and the local people hold them in high regard. Though almost all people in the studied communities are followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and their religion is somewhat mixed with traditional pre-Christian belief systems.⁹⁹ Accordingly, the local people believe in supernatural-beings such as *zar* (spirit possession), *säytan* (satan), *buda* (people with evil eye), *däbtära* or *ṭänqway* (magician), *arkus mänfäs* (evil spirit) and others. Some of the most commonly observed belief systems are briefly presented below:

1. **Beliefs associated with childbirth.** After the delivery of a child, the mother and her house are considered unclean.¹⁰⁰ To make it clean, the house has to be sprinkled with holy water (*ṭäbäl*) by the local priest or the spouses' confessor-father. All those who enter this house before it has been cleaned are also considered unclean to go to church. Especially the mother and those who assisted her during childbirth are not allowed to go to the local church until the child is baptized. Until baptism, the child should never be left alone and some iron metals such as a knife (*kara*) should be placed all the time besides it. This also applies to the mother giving birth to a child until her ten days or the ritual of *dägḡ mäwutät*. The need for these protections arises from the local people's fear that either the new-born baby or the mother will be attacked by *arkus mänfäs* (evil-spirits). There is also another belief system related to childbirth: if a woman fails to have a normal childbirth at home, the community regards this as her failure. It is also regarded as a misfortune caused by super-natural forces. As a result, discussions on issues of sexuality and reproductive health are not considered important.
2. **Beliefs associated with Children:** The belief that children are *habt* or *näbrät* (assets or wealth) is deep-rooted. Children are also considered as God's grace (*yäägziabäher ṭägga*) and parents with a large number of children are seen as blessed by God. On the other hand, spouses, especially wives, with no children are perceived as cursed (*ərgman*) or God being angered (*yäägziabäher quṭṭa*) at her. Furthermore, controlling fertility through modern contraceptives is seen as a practice against

⁹⁷ The simple fact that only women can bear children causes every society to recognize some differentiation between the behavior of men and women. Beyond the behavioral differences that are directly attributable to anatomy and physiology, however, cultures vary greatly in the degree to which they view human behavior as being properly sex differentiated (Winch 1968:6f., in Giday Emirie 1998).

⁹⁸ "If women were at once employed and despised in production, they were valued, even glorified, in reproduction. More women meant more children and greater number of kin. Women and the children they guaranteed constituted real wealth, just as cattle did in pastoral societies. The woman was mainly expected to be a good child-bearer" (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1997:17f.).

⁹⁹ The adherents of Islam and Christianity in Ethiopia have adopted many customs of pre-monotheistic religions which they share in common, like the belief in certain spirits (e.g. *Zar*), ceremonies near the tombs or memorial buildings of venerated personalities, pilgrimages to the same centers like the creator-lake Zeqwala or St. Gabriel's church at Qullubi in the Harar area (Benzing 2000:14).

¹⁰⁰ One of the features of gender symbolism which has attracted a great deal of attention from scholars who wish to explain women's inferior status' like those which many women experience after childbirth and during menstruation, provide clues as to how people categorize one another and thus structure their social world. An analysis of pollution beliefs and their relationship to sexual ideologies is revealing, because such beliefs are frequently associated with the natural functions of the human body (Moore 1987, in Giday Emirie 1998).

the will of God. In other words, the decision as to how many children to have is left to God and women in reproductive age are expected to bear as many children as God gives.

3. **Beliefs related to fertility and barrenness:** A married woman is expected to be fertile. In line with this expectation, the bride's prospect for being fertile or barren is associated with the type of animal (horse or mule) used for her riding during her wedding day. According to the local tradition, *fārās* (horse) signifies fertility, whereas *bāqlo* (mule) implies barrenness. Accordingly, on her wedding day, the bride should be placed on a *fārās* but not on a *bāqlo*. After that, if a couple cannot have children, it is the woman who is blamed of being "barren". As a result, her husband, her in-laws and the community insult her as *bāqlo* or *māsina*, and the danger of divorce hangs over her. Furthermore, sexually transmitted diseases, which often result in infertility, are also referred to as "a woman's diseases".
4. **Beliefs related to circumcision:** After the rite of circumcision, people who are in *ṭala* (a person who has had a sexual intercourse within the preceding 24 hours) are forbidden to enter the house where the circumcised child of either sex lies until the wound is cured, for fear that their presence could delay the healing of the wound.
5. **Beliefs related to marital unions:** According to the local marriage customs, the marriage alliance is based on the respective parents contribution of an equal number of cattle from the bride and the groom. If some or all of the cattle endowed to them die, parents immediately dissolve the marriage alliance since they believe that the bride's and the groom's stars¹⁰¹ are incompatible (*kokābačāw, ətafāntačāw algātəmām*). In this context, the death of the endowed cattle connotes that the bride and the groom are unlikely to be able to live together in happiness and prosperity. This belief system is strengthened by parents' initial assumption that "early marriage would make the early-wedded children prosperous" (*bä-ləğnnät sigabu habtam yəhonalu*) when they reach the age of adulthood if the endowed cattle multiplies itself.
6. **Beliefs related to death:** The death of elderly people is attributed to their old age (*bä-ədme māmot*), whereas the death of young people (usually between the ages of early-childhood to adolescence) is considered as untimely death (*yalä ədme māmot*), which is mostly attributed to injury or disease caused by supernatural-beings such as *zar, säyṭan, buda* or *ərkus mänfäs*. Above all, dead forefathers/mothers are believed to be the ultimate determinants of an individual's health and the fertility of women, female animals and fields. As a result, dead corpses of both sexes have to be respected and the *täskar* ritual has to be performed by kin-groups of the deceased person, usually close relatives. If this ritual is not performed, the following are believed to be the likely consequences and manifestations: a) members of the deceased kin-groups, particularly the first born son and/or sons fall ill, and their women, fields, and female animals are believed to become infertile; and b) those who did not observe their parents' *täskar* are excluded from going to and participating in other people's *täskar* rituals.

5.4 LOCAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

5.4.1 Household: Compositions, Structure and Decision-Making Patterns

5.4.1.1 Household: Its Compositions and Structure

Among the rural communities of Mecha *Woreda* in general and Bachema and Rim peasant communities in particular, the basic unit of social organization is the household (*betäsäb*) or the homestead (*bet*). A group of homesteads (about 40) makes up a hamlet (*mändär*). The boundaries that differentiate one *mändär* from the other are usually defined by consanguineous, affinal and social relationships of its residents. A group of *mändär* forms the parish (*däbär*), a relatively large social, religious and political- territorial unit, which is usually demarcated by physical boundaries such as

¹⁰¹ It used to be common- and the custom is far from dead- that parents and now perhaps the bridegroom-to-be go to astrologers before a marriage contract is made, to determine if the match is a good one and if the prospects for happiness, many children and prosperity are good. "Incompatible" partners (partners with contrasting "stars") would be assumed to be too unlike each other to be able to live in peace and harmony together. Often an astrologer would, for a fee, suggest remedies to counteract his own negative predictions or calculations) or a bride-groom-to-be may have (had) second thoughts, if the prediction from a "wise man" or astrologer is or was "negative" as to the future prospects of the couple (Molvaer 1995:106).

rivers, cliffs, mountains. *Däbär-mändär*, being obviously dominated by the local church, carries a “compound name” consisting of the name of the place and the name of the local church, such as Yidonga-Mariam, Kotekotema-Michael, and the like.

The household (*betäsäb*) is established through an elaborate wedding ceremony that involves parents and close relatives of the couple. The term *betäsäb* is commonly used to refer to the husband, wife and their children, possibly supplemented by close relatives and grand-children who live in a house in which they eat, work and sleep together. The term *betäsäb* also denotes “family.” However, a household varies in its composition and is headed by a husband or a widowed or divorced woman. Furthermore, members of the household may be individuals with no consanguineous relations, such as employed male farmers (*lole*) and/or employed female domestic servants (*gäräd*).¹⁰²

The developmental cycle of the household makes its composition more complex because the parents and their newly married sons form a unified labor and consumption unit. Customarily, an adult married son of 21 or 22 years, with his young wife of 13 or 14 years, sets up his own *goğğö* around his father’s homestead, but he is expected to be under his father’s authority until he establishes himself as an independent farmer with his own land and a pair of oxen. Furthermore, the younger son should not necessarily stay unmarried until his elder brother establishes his own independent household next to his parents’ homestead. In some cases, especially in Rim, the younger and elder brothers could get married at the same time. As a result, there are many households in which younger and elder married sons and their very young brides live together in their parents’ homestead. Customarily, the eldest married son establishes his own household before or during his wife’s first pregnancy. But in reality, he cannot become independent from his parents’ household because he is expected to assist his father in the field in the form of share-cropping until he manages to cultivate the land properly and has his own plots of land, either from his father or from the local PA. There are cases, that the husband (after marriage) moves to his wife’s parents’ village due to a shortage of land in his parents’ village. Most of the time, the wife is allowed to bring her husband in her parents’ village when her father is not alive or there are no adult sons to cultivate her mother’s plot, but these cases are rare.

In short, household compositions in the ethnographic research sites are far more complex than the theoretical categorization of “household” or “family” suggests. The complex compositions can be broadly classified into seven major types. The following table depicts the broad categories of household composition among Bachema and Rim peasant communities:

Table 5.4: Compositions of Households Among Surveyed Households and Focus Families

Compositions of Households	Frequency	
	Numbers	Percentage
1. A household with husband, wife and their children	84	24.00
2. A household with extended family	169	48.29
3. A household with <i>lole</i>	79	22.57
4. A household with <i>gäräd</i>	3	0.86
5. A household with a widowed woman and her children	8	2.28
6. A household with a divorced woman and her children	2	0.57
7. A household with a widowed man and his children	5	1.43
Total	350	100

¹⁰² In Bachema and Rim peasant communities, households with employed female domestic servants, unmarried adult girls, are very rare. Since unmarried adult girls are locally labeled as *qomo qär* (unmarriageable), they prefer to go to the nearby urban centers and work as domestic servants there. As a result, there is a shortage of employed female domestic servants in both peasant communities, especially in Bachema Peasant Association, which is relatively nearby the capital town of the *woreda*.

As the table shows, the extended family, which comprises a couple and their children (unmarried and/or married), grand children and relatives, is still a prominent feature of economic, social and cultural life. In fact, the concept “extended family” is so deeply entrenched in the socio-cultural environment that it is what is commonly regarded as the “real family.” The extended family is the unit of economic production and is the only source of wealth, social status, and security for its members; sons are needed to run the household and maintain the family’s line and status, and the need to maximize reproduction reinforces early marriage. According to the local tradition, certain families are known for being honest, well-educated, wise, wealthy, large, etc. The sources of prestige differentials are many. Large families, especially those with many brothers and uncles in influential positions, are prestigious. A woman’s brothers, father, uncles, are the chief source of her physical protection. Married women with adult children, especially sons, have a very high social status in their community as well as in their marital family.

According to the extended family structure of the studied peasant communities, friends and kin groups are one and the same since families related by blood and marriage settle together in large lineage compounds. These compounds are sub-divided, as new nuclear households grow within them. Visiting and mutual labor among members of the extended family are daily realities. Neighbors are expected to assist and visit a woman when she gives birth to a child, provide care when she is ill, share risks, and the like. Friend-neighbor groups also become a means of transmission of societal values, the household of a couple is an integral part of the main family (*wanna bet*) to which it is accountable.

5.4.1.2 Decision-Making Patterns in the Extended Family Structure

Among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim, the dominant family structure is characterized by formal and informal power structures based on the principles of sex, age, and relatedness. In both communities, women have little effective decision-making power in the extended family structure. The gender division of power is primary, with males (except the very young) having power over females. This is cross-cut by an age dimension, with the elder being more powerful than the younger. The relative position of daughters-in-law and adult daughters is somewhat vague. However, after closer observation of the extended family’s power structure in the ethnographic settings, I came to realize that the age principle predominates along the gender dimension of decision-making system. Furthermore, daughters-in-law without children of their own are not accorded the full authority granted to them by their adult status. They can gain this status if and only if they bear children for the family. The only practical control they have is over young children, though some deference behavior is expected from younger, unmarried daughters of the household. Similarly, adult daughters have no authority over daughters-in-law. Usually, the mother-in-law, as head of the home production unit, controls the labor of all females in the household.

Carrying out their daily role competently gives women some power within their families. With the exception of the aged, all women share heavy household maintenance, productive and reproductive burdens. Older women have daughters-in-law to care for household maintenance. Apart from household maintenance, productive and reproductive roles, some women gain influence in the family by possessing property such as cultivable land and houses. The prestige of a woman’s natal family also improves her position in her affinal family. By the time a woman’s children, especially sons, are grown, she is, indeed, in a better position in her family and in her community. In general, kinship ties provide a wide network in which people share problems and success in life.

The extended family is an economic as well as a cultural institution. The family with many children, preferable more adult sons, is socially respected and economically secured. This, in turn, encourages the need to take in girls for marriage as early as possible so that they will start bearing

children at an early age. Fertility is deliberately maximized by marrying girls at their young age and couples' decision-making on family size within the extended family structure is to a large extent dictated by concern of the extended family. Specifically, the extended family - mainly based on limited agricultural technology - encourages early marriages and reinforces women's dependence on men. Decisions of every sort concerning the household are taken by household heads, usually men (*abba wärra*). The man (father or husband), being the head of the household, has an 'absolute' authority over all members of the household. In some cases, a woman-headed household, possessing some farm plots, can make independent decisions about hiring a farm laborer (*lole*) or share-cropping her plots. However, this is possible only if there is no young son who wants to take over, nor other male relatives who desire to intervene protectively her plots. "In the cultural context of rural society, female-headed households are minority which have little influence and less effect on the 'normal' family household" (Hanna Kebede 1990:67). In this connection, Yigremew Adal's article on "Land Redistribution and Female-headed Households: A Study in Two Rural Communities in Northwest Ethiopia" (2001) argues as follows:

"Despite all the new policy initiatives and institutional measures, the condition of Ethiopian women does not seem to be improving. Rural development programs in this country since the *därg* extol the importance of land redistribution in bringing about development, social equity and in addressing women's gender-specific constraints. For example, despite the traditional and legal conception of daughters equality to sons in terms of resource access from the family and other sources, inheritance and gifts are more often channeled to boys than girls. Rural women's disadvantage in Ethiopia particularly in relation to access, utilization and control of productive resources is caused by a complex set of interactive factors. Ideology and power play key roles in such unfair relations. It was found that women could not even utilize their plots because some of them were denied access. This is a result of women's lower status in the society and lack of secure legal protection. The law by itself does not do much unless it is enforced and the social dimensions of its implementation are also given due attention. Women also could not work their plots because they lacked male labor and other necessary resources. The gender norm, among other factors, prohibits women from working on their plots in the same way as men. Women could not have access to rural credit mainly because they did not have the necessary assets (good land, movable property, good houses, etc.) that *de facto* serve as collateral. Although, at the policy level, poor women were targets of such rural services, in practice those reported on the documents and charts as 'women' were found to be the names of wives in well-to-do and male-headed households" (Yigremew Adal 2001:37-38).

Obviously, gender relations between men and women within the family were and still are dominated by men (fathers, husbands, or sons). The practice to keep the sons' homestead near the "central" father's house is a traditional mechanism whereby the stability of the extended family structure is maintained and perpetuated, which also ensures the transmission of values and the influence of the old on the young inculcated and maintained, especially in childbearing, childrearing and conjugal relationships.

At the household level, wives' decision-making abilities were and still are constrained and subjugated to the ideological, socio-economic and cultural dominance of husbands. However, some decisions are made by husbands only, others by wives only. For example, decisions regarding education and marriage of children, construction of a house, farm work schedules of the household members, hiring farm laborers (*lole*), land allocation, and the use of farm inputs are made by the head of the household. Wives make decisions on issues pertaining to childcare, food preparations and household management. Decision-making on reproductive matters, like other family decisions, are the husbands' domain. In some cases, decisions concerning the roles and activities of family members (family work schedules) are made by husbands. On other family related and personal matters, wives have to consult their husbands. In some cases, if a wife is the major contributor to

economic welfare, by possessing property such as cultivable land, she may exercise some decision-making rights over farm products, but these instances are very rare.

Male dominance is paramount among both Bachema and Rim peasant communities, but when asked to define who is the ultimate decision maker in family matters, most husbands express that both, wife and husband, make family decisions jointly. Culturally, parents, especially fathers, make decisions regarding the timing of marriage and choice of a spouse for the child, - parental authority and consent to marriage overriding the daughter's choice to get educated. Many formal school attending young girls are married off against their will, often to men 10 years or more their senior, which limits their economic and social power. When a family has the capacity to educate children, most of the time it is the son who gets the chance. Parents' preference to educate sons results from the economic and social structure of their society in which sons stay with their natal family and eventually turn out to be assets to their parents, whereas daughters leave their natal family upon marriage and finally become assets to their in-laws. In both Bachema and Rim peasant communities, girls and women are marginalized in all spheres of decision-making: In personal, family - and community - affairs. As a result, married girls and women continue to be excluded from decision-making, even on the most important aspects of their own life. Most importantly, they have no say about decisions concerning their reproductive health and alternative life options.

5.4.2 Traditional Community-Based Associations

In the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim, there are various religious and social gatherings, which take place in the compounds of the local church. *Mahbär* (monthly gatherings), *sänbäte* (weekly/ Sundays gatherings), and *Şäge* (annual gatherings of *sänbäte* members) are the most commonly observed religious as well as social meetings in the studied communities. There are also work-groups and mutual-help associations such as *wänfäl* (labor sharing arrangement) and *märrädağo* (mutual help association for funeral and other services). These associations are well rooted in the local peoples' social and economic lives. The strength of these associations lies in their social cohesion and voluntary nature of their membership.

Mahbär and *sänbäte* have special concerns in cultivating feelings of social ties and solving community problems. Members of these associations, married couples or divorced/widowed women/men, have a strong religious and social cohesion. In most cases, these associations are concerned with social issues, though they are essentially based on religious affiliation. More specifically, *mahbär* members perform important self-help activities, such as helping members at times of burials, marriage, festivities, and property damage. In addition to these, *mahbär* leaders (adult men) often arbitrate whenever conflicts break out among members. Furthermore, *mahbär* provides a kind of insurance service for members, and membership is an indicator, to some extent, of social and economic status.

Members of the local community work together turn by turn. This reciprocal labor sharing association is locally known as *wänfäl*. This is a tradition of co-operation for work. Both men and women can organize *wänfäl*. Women help each other by *wänfäl* in grinding and spinning cotton. On the other hand, men help each other by *wänfäl* in agricultural activities (mostly in harvesting seasons) and in constructing houses. During *wänfäl* in agricultural activities, the sponsoring household prepares *əngära* with *wät*, *nafro*, *tälla*, *aräqi* and coffee depending on its economic status.

Furthermore, when members of the locality are faced with disasters, like one's house being on fire, married adult members of the local *mahbär*, close relatives and neighbors have to give their helping hand to that person. Most of the time, the local church takes the responsibility of announcing such disasters and asks the church members to help in times of need. Thus, the adult members of the

locality have to help the person in need through collecting money and other necessary materials and helping in the establishing of his/her house. When the member of the locality has lost his/her cattle, especially ox/en through death or through theft, again the adult members of the locality have to contribute money so that the lost cattle can be replaced for that person. This form of mutual-help or assistance is locally known as *märädaḡo*.

5.4.3 Councils of Elders (*Yagär Šamagalločč*): Roles and Constraints

Councils of elders (*yagär šamagalločč*), elderly and respected men of the local community, are “traditional” decision-making local institutions in the studied communities. They have various duties, such as settling disputes and maintaining peace and order in their locality.

In its membership composition, the institution of the elders’ councils tends to be segmental or exclusive. As a result, to be a member of this institution, a married man has to reach a locally defined age for “elder-hood” (*šamagalle*, old-man, 50 years or above) and he has to have a good reputation in the local community. According to the local tradition, men of 50 or above (*šamagalločč*) are active in managing social activities, arbitration and settling disputes. Furthermore, elders are necessary to conduct negotiations between the marrying families. The local people value the opinions of elders in legal, social, family and other important matters. However, councils of elders are composed only men who become members by virtue of their age. Women are excluded from membership in this important local institution. The age organization does not seem relevant for women.

In general, in each parish (*mändär*), primary decision-makers on any issue in the community are the councils of elders, whose major task is arbitrating conflicts over border issues, grazing patterns, cattle and so on. Furthermore, several individuals, including church educators, *mahbär* leaders and notable elders, provide support to this institution and the local people use this institution as an alternative court to the local PA justice committee.

5.4.4 Government-initiated Political Structure: Changes and Constraints

In Bachema and Rim peasant communities, the most important state structure is the Peasant Association (PA). It is responsible for collecting taxes, managing and implementing the rural land policies. It also controls the life of the local community through the institution of judicial tribunals (*yäfärd šängo*). These courts have authority to arbitrate cases involving land disputes and other legal cases. In other words, the local PA decides on government matters, regulations and directives; and it serves as a link between the government and the people in the rural communities. As a result, the most common government activities, such as collecting taxes, maintaining peace and order (security) and land allocation are channeled through the local PA leaders, exclusively men.

With regard to membership in the local PA, the husband, at the age of 18 or above, has the responsibility to be a legitimate member. In this regard, women were and still are excluded from membership in the local PA, if not heads of households, so women are almost absent from the public sphere where legal, political and social rules are made and decided. Female household-heads could become members of the local PA, but not PA leaders. In this regard, Helen Pankhurst (1990) notes that, “Men are the most numerous and most visible members, who have the most secure rights to resources and in particular the most direct rights to land use. Women have a limited membership in the local PA. For women, almost all contact with the state is usually mediated through men on whom it has a more immediate effect” (Helen Pankhurst 1990:147-8). She further argues that:

“Women’s lives in northern Ethiopia are dominated by a peasant economy and culture - the state or other external agents provide few inputs and have little impact. Change is captured by men and only indirectly trickles down to women.... external agents of development have had a more marginal effect on women than on men because of a patriarchal structure in which change is captured by men whilst

continuity is embraced by women, as a reaction against androcentric development. The implication of this situation for policy makers is that intervention in society must be gender-conscious, rather than gender blind, since in this context blindness implies male bias. Furthermore, the token and segregated policy on women will not on its own create egalitarian forces in state and society” (Helen Pankhurst 1990:152).

In line with the foregoing argument, Yigremew Adal argues that:

Since 1975, public policies in Ethiopia have stipulated that access to rural land depends on one’s residence within the territorial jurisdiction of a given PA, as well as membership in such Association. In practice, the head is registered as a member representing the household. Women become members of PA only when they become heads of households. There are also gender biases of local PA officials, who are only men. The gender bias of local officials is also a significant factor in contributing to women’s limited access to land. PA leaders are afraid that once a woman is given land as a member of the PA, she will then re-marry a man with land, and this could result in unfair possession of land by the household. At the time of divorce, elders and local officials locate most of the children and land to the husband, as men are thought to be the ‘producer.’ Women were looked at as outsiders in the virilocal area. The same biases were found operating against widowed women; when a husband died, a disproportionately large plot was taken from the deceased household, while no land was taken from a household if the deceased was the wife. This was as a result of the expectation that a widower would marry soon after, while it was socially appropriate for a woman to remain unmarried for a long time. Land redistribution per se, without other supplementary measures, cannot be expected to bring about equitable and adequate access to land and significant improvement in the livelihood of the rural poor in general and female-headed households in particular. Legal, cultural and social constraints have to be addressed in order to secure women’s fair access to and control over resources (Yigremew Adal 2001: iii, 15-16).

Of course, women at the PA-level did not, and still do not, have the necessary institutional prerequisites to enhance their interests and protect their rights. Currently, the major exception seems to be the women’s association operating at the PA level, with links up to the *woreda*’s Women’s Affairs Desk. However, the impact of this association on the life of women in the studied communities is minimal. Moreover, there are no independent women’s or other organizations aimed at implementing women’s constitutional rights at the *woreda* level, let alone at the PA level. Therefore, “it is imperative that women establish their own organizations and strengthen their capacities at the local level. It would also be important to explore any relevant experiences of other societies in order to draw lessons that could enhance the process of gender-equitable development” (Yigremew Adal 2001:41).

In order to grasp the issue of land redistribution and gender relations at the PA level, let us have a look at the 1975 and the 1996/97 rural land policies with specific reference to the Amhara region. During the *därg* regime, the 1975 land redistribution was based on family size, families with many children got a larger size of land than families with a small number of children. The 1996/97 rural land redistribution carried out by the Amhara Regional Government was based on the criterion of being the household head. In order to be a legitimate member of the local PA, an adult boy/son has to be married, which, in turn, reinforced early marriage for girls. Hence, the 1996/97’s land redistribution policy made young girls victims of early-arranged marriage due to adult sons’ parents intention to maximize the family size, maintaining their extra farm plots or gaining additional plots from the local PA.

In the studied communities, the local PA as a modern state structure in general and the rural land redistribution policy, in particular, did not change the “traditional” gender relations. It has rather made girls and young women victims of early-arranged marriage. More specifically, the local PA leaders did not take into account the age of the legitimate PA members’ wives, who were for sure below the age of 14, as both the household survey results as well as in-depth personal interviews with

early-married female pupils suggest. It also entails that the national family-law legislating against marriage before the age of 18 for both sexes is not properly addressed by the local PA in the studied communities. In this regard, there is a need for re-examining the local PA membership criteria, as well as the land redistribution policy, from a gender-sensitive perspective, which could serve as one of the strategies for reducing the prevalence rate of early marriage among very young girls in the area. The participants of the exploratory workshop have also discussed this issue in detail and suggested the need for re-examining the existing land redistribution policy among the rural communities of Mecha *Woreda* in particular and Amhara region in general.

5.5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIFFERENTIATION AND MAJOR LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

5.5.1 Economic and Social Differentiation

In the agrarian communities of Bachema and Rim, land and cattle, especially oxen, still are one of the basic means of production. Land was and still is the major factor of crop-production. During the Imperial Regime, it was hereditary family property. As a result, there was a social as well as an economic stratification between landlords (*balä abbattočč*) and tenants (*čäsännöčč*). There was also a social stratification between farmers (*arašočč*) and artisans (*täyaybočč*), who had no access to the hereditary landholding system. However, due to the 1975 land reform (PMAC 1975) and the current rural land redistribution policies, artisans were able to get land through the local PA. Consequently, the economic stratification among farmers as well as between farmers and artisans became more and more insignificant. Socially, well-to-do farmers did not, and still do not inter-marry with artisan groups such as weaver (*šämmäni*), black-smith (*qätqaç*), silver-smith (*ančərännä*), potter (*šäkla-säri*), and tanner (*faqi*). Children from socially and economically well-to-do peasant families were married to children from families with the same economic and social status. This form of marriage alliance has restricted economic as well as the social mobility. However, this trend is slightly changing among the studied communities, especially in Rim PA. There are inter-marriages between children from land -“poor” peasant families and land -“rich” ones, or politically active individuals from artisan families in order to secure access to land through affinal relations.

Currently, there is an acute shortage of land in the studied peasant communities. Many peasant families have smaller land than before, during the *därg* regime. The resource base of these families is also deteriorating due to the excessive use of the limited resource, partly resulting from population pressure. Of course, the growing population pressure contributes to diminishing farm-size and landlessness, particularly among young men. Landlessness also results in the migration of young men (over the age of 17) to nearby towns/cities such as Merawi and Bahir Dar. On the other hand, very few land -“rich” families use to arrange marriage for their adult sons just to maintain their landholdings. Adult sons (18 years old or above) from land - “poor” families can claim land from the local PA. However, this is possible only if they are married and become legitimate members of the local PA as household heads.

Among the surveyed households and focus families, there is very slight economic differentiation in terms of land and cattle ownership and the type of house owned by a household. The following table shows the size of land owned by a household among the studied peasant communities:

Table 5.5: Size of Land/*qada* Owned by a Household Among Surveyed Households and Focus Families (cf. Appendix 7)

Land Size/ <i>qada</i> *	Frequency	
	Numbers	Percentage
0	2	0.57
1	2	0.57
2.00 -2.5	10	2.86
3.00-3.5	23	6.57
4	81	23.15
5	76	21.71
6	76	21.71
7	14	4.00
8	35	10.00
9	9	2.57
10	9	2.57
12	12	3.43
16	1	0.29
Total	350	100

**qada*: one *qada* is approximately equivalent to 0.25 hectare

As the table depicts, the gap between land-“rich” and land-“poor” peasant families is very insignificant due to farm-land fragmentation. The average size of land-holdings among the surveyed households is 5.65 *qada*. According to the local PA officials, the maximum size of land owned by a household in both communities is 12 *qada* (3 hectare). However, this study found out one household, a focus family, owning 16 *qada* (4 hectare), which is the largest size of land-holding among the surveyed households. In this family, the eldest son, among 5 sons, got married and none of them went to formal school due to the presence of extra farm plots to be endowed to each of them when they get married and establish their own *goğgo* (see Appendix 7, HH.No.11).

In addition to the size of land holdings, peasant families among the studied communities are differentiated from each other by the number of cattle¹⁰³ they possess. Oxen, among cattle, are the major factor of crop-production. Cattle are also important for arranging marriage for daughters and sons. Above all, cattle is the major source of security in times of crop-failures. The following table shows the range of the number of cattle owned by a household among the studied peasant communities:

Table 5.6: Range of Number of Cattle Owned by a Household (HH) Among Surveyed Households and Focus Families (cf. Appendix 7)

Range of Number of Cattle Owned by a HH	Frequency	
	Numbers	Percentage
0	13	3.71
1-3	58	16.57
4-6	91	26.00
7-9	96	27.43
10-12	67	19.14
13-15	12	3.43
16-18	6	1.71
19-21	3	0.86
22-24	3	0.86
31	1	0.29
Total	350	100

¹⁰³ Cattle such as oxen, cows, heifers, young bulls and calves are important household assets among Bachema and Rim peasant communities. Other types of livestock such as horses, mules, donkeys, sheep, goats and hens are also important but these animals cannot be used for arranging marriage for both daughters and sons. Furthermore, according to the results of both the parents’ and school-attending children’s questionnaires, only very few households had mules and/or horses. However, some households have donkeys, sheep and goats, and most households had hens.

As the table indicates, the average number of cattle owned by a household is seven. However, the study found out one household, a focus family, with the largest number of cattle (31 cattle) with a relatively large landholding (8 *qada*). In this family, all children (4 daughters and 3 sons) got married early and among them, only the youngest daughter and the youngest son were attending formal school after early marriage (see Appendix 7, HH. No.39).

Besides land and cattle ownership, households are further differentiated by the type of house they own: Grass-thatched roof (*yäsar bet*), tin-corrugated roof (*yäqorqorro bet*) or both types. Having a house with a tin-corrugated roof is locally used as a privilege/wealth-marker. However, a relatively larger number of households have houses with grass-thatched roofs. Some cattle-“rich” large extended families have both types of houses. The following table shows the percentage of types of house owned by a household among the ethnographic research sites:

Table 5.7: Types of House Owned by a Household Among the Surveyed Households (cf. Appendix 7)

Types of House	Frequency	
	Numbers	Percentage
1. Grass-thatched Roof	162	46.29
2. Tin-corrugated Roof	154	44.00
3. Both types	34	9.71
Total	350	100

In general, the village stratification system is a mixture of socio-economic status coupled with notions of honor. Visiting is one way of the villagers to keep track of rank. Families of equal economic and social status visit each other with roughly the same frequency. Non-reciprocated visiting is an indicator of rank disparity. It is important to note that a household can be categorized as “poor” and “wealthy” based on the importance of cattle and access to farm-land. However, wealth-ranking in the studied peasant communities is a difficult task due to lack of accurate information about the exact number of cattle and farm-plots owned by a household. Furthermore, most households have the same types of property such as a self-owned house, arable land, and cattle with little variations in size. The poorest households are those whose livelihood depends on the sale of firewood, charcoal and local drinks (*aräqi* and *ṭälla*).

5.5.2 Major Livelihood Strategies

In Bachema and Rim peasant communities, agriculture (mixed farming) is the main source of livelihood. In addition to agriculture, some men are engaged in honey production for sale. Currently, farming is not the only livelihood mechanism of men in the studied peasant communities. Some men are involved in non-farm activities such as trading livestock, grain, guarding, carpeting, and the like. On the other hand, some women are involved in home-based activities such as distilling *aräqi*, brewing *ṭälla*, and other similar activities, which are extensions of women’s domestic roles (see Chapter 6, table 6.1). More specifically, trading is the occupation of most men in land- and cattle-“average” households. Households generate cash income mostly from the sale of sheep, goats, chicken, and some crops such as *teff*. The sale of crops constitutes the smaller share of the family income. Selling *ṭälla* and *aräqi* are the most common income-generating activities of women in land and cattle “poor” households, especially in rural villages nearby a small town such as in Rim *Kätäma*. Here it is worth mentioning that distilling *aräqi* (for sale) provides most “poor” households (male as well as female-headed) with a regular source of cash. In this respect, women in poor households contribute more to

household income and they have a relatively greater say in the household compared to women in “rich” households headed by men. Selling of firewood (women) and charcoal (men) are other source of income for “poor” households, especially in Bachema Peasant Association. Off-farm activities supplementing the income of the rural households are few and limited. In addition to resources from household production and petty-trading, men and women supplement their household with social resources from their natal families or social networks. The following table shows the livelihood mechanisms of households in Bachema and Rim peasant communities:

Table 5.8: Major Means of Livelihood Among Surveyed Households and Focus Families

Means of Livelihood	Frequency		Remark
	Numbers	percentage	
1. Farming and livestock raising	289	82.57	Land and cattle - “rich”/ “average” households
2. Farming, livestock raising and trading	34	9.72	Land and cattle “average” households and husband’s with some form of formal schooling
3. Farming, livestock raising and honey collection	10	2.86	Land and cattle - “average” households
4. Farming, livestock raising and casual labor (guarding, carpeting, metal work)	6	1.71	Land and cattle - “small” households
5. Selling <i>aräqi</i> , <i>ṭälla</i> , firewood and charcoal	11	3.14	Land and cattle - “poor” and female-headed households ¹⁰⁴
Total	350	100	

As the table indicates, land and cattle “poor” households (male as well as female-headed households¹⁰⁵) tend to adopt relatively more diversified livelihood strategies than land and cattle “rich”/“average” households. In terms of wealth-ranking, land and cattle - “rich”/“average” households are an economically well-off class compared to firewood, charcoal, *ṭälla* and *aräqi* sellers who belong to the very “poor” group.

¹⁰⁴ According to Mecha *Woreda* Information Office (MWIO 2003/04), among the total households of Bachema and Rim peasant communities (3474), only 212 households (6.10%) were headed by women, mostly widows. Among the surveyed households (350), only 10 households (2.86%) were headed by women (8 widows and 2 divorcees). This percentage (6.10%) of female-headed households among the total households of the studied peasant communities is very small compared to the proportion of female-headed households in other rural communities of Northwestern Ethiopia. For example, Yigremew Adal (2001) found a relatively higher proportion of women who were divorced (39%) and widowed (26%) among the two rural communities of West Gojjam in Northwestern Ethiopia.

¹⁰⁵ “In terms of livelihood strategies, it is important to note that there are activities that are more practiced by women than men. The recognition of women’s diversified activities has important policy implications, as it points to possible areas of interventions in support of women’s livelihood” (Yigremew Adal 2001:25, 40).

CHAPTER SIX

GENDER SOCIALIZATION AND FORMAL SCHOOLING AMONG THE PEASANT COMMUNITIES OF MECHA *WOREDA*

6. GENDER SOCIALIZATION AND FORMAL SCHOOLING: AN OVERVIEW

The family is the primary setting for childhood socialization. In the extended family structure, most common in the studied communities, childhood socialization is shared among parents, grand-parents, siblings, and other close relatives. However, the extended family does not stand alone in socializing children. Various social agencies share in the process both formally and informally. The local church plays a significant role in the establishment of ideals and morals. The formal school, by establishing courses of study, devotes itself to teaching children formal skills and knowledge in accordance with the formal educational curricula. Above all, the local cultural values and norms influence the developing child at the home, in the neighborhood and at school. The “hidden curriculum” is also concerned with molding and shaping what is considered to be a “proper” social behavior. It teaches children to conform, to be neat and punctual, to respect authority, and to be patriotic citizens concerned with conserving their respective country’s way of life (Odetola and Ademola 1985). The formal school, according to Odetola and Ademola (1985), represents a formal and conscious effort by the society to socialize its young. It does this through the content of the curriculum and formally trained teachers whose attitudes and values are communicated to the child. Children perceive teachers as role models and acquire their values.

Though there are various agents of socialization, the family is the primary setting for gender socialization. In the family, children of both sexes learn to behave properly to elders: “to stand up for them, not to talk first but only when talked to, not to ask questions of their parents or talk till parents ask them questions or say that they can ask questions. The overall aim of child-rearing and upbringing thus seems to be to instill obedience, conformity and loyalty—to parents, traditions, customs and received wisdom—and to grow up and carry on in their parents’ footsteps” (Molvaer 1995:81-83). Children are expected to behave strictly according to the community’s code of behavior, which includes respecting elders, and their wishes, accepting their advice, respecting parents, abstaining from juvenile delinquency, theft and the like. Violation can lead to punishments of various kinds (Bevan and Alula Pankhurst 1996).

In the family, parents train children in the gender-specific roles of adult life. Daughters are socialized to be “feminine”, “socially conscious”, “shy”, “timid”, “obedient” and “submissive”, in preparation for an adult life. Sons are socialized to be “brave”, “clever”, “far-sighted”, and “self-sufficient”, in preparation for an adult life, a head of the household and bread-winner (Hirut Terefe 2000, Molvaer 1995, Bevan and Alula Pankhurst 1996). The gender socialization process encourages “boy-men” to be competitive, strong and bread-winners; and “girl-women” to perform feminine and domestic activities at home. These are socially constructed roles and responsibilities of men and women. Men are expected to support the family by going outside home, whereas women are expected to stay at home to perform housework and to take care of children and the family as a whole. This implies that “girl-women’s” role is confined to the “domestic sphere”¹⁰⁶ by tightly linked biological and social functions, which are blocked from direct access to material and social rewards in their community at large. As a result, “girl-women” remain socially and economically dependent on men.

¹⁰⁶ Here it is important to note that women in Bachema and Rim peasant communities participate in almost all agricultural activities, except in plowing, sowing and threshing (see table 6.1 in this Chapter).

The process of socialization of boys and girls leads to the dichotomizing of masculine and feminine roles, gender asymmetry (Hirut Terefe 2000). “Social and cultural differences are seen to be based on biology and therefore natural. Thus, the difference between the biological, the natural and the social is obliterated through the process of value internationalization within the sacred confines of the family and kinship group. These are further reinforced through religious ideology, myth and rituals” (Ardner 1978; Chanana 1988:8-9, in Hirut Terefe 2000:82).

Gender roles and relations in the traditional peasant communities of Bachema and Rim are dictated by socio-cultural values. “Boy-men” are expected to be a “strong”, successful and independent farmer. A “strong” man is a man who: 1) ploughs, sows, plants and harvests at the right time, 2) feeds his family satisfactorily throughout the year, 3) has enough oxen, milking cows, and pack animals, and 4) is sociable, brave and respectful to elders. “Girl-women” are expected to be “quiet”, “shy”, “decent”, “polite”, “kind”, “sociable”, “agreeable”, “obedient”, “submissive” and “respectful”. According to the local tradition, “girl-women”, even the knowledgeable ones, are still expected to keep quiet, especially in front of men. A talkative (*läfälafi*) woman is despised and no body asks for her daughter for marriage. A “good” woman is a woman who: 1) manages her house properly, 2) brings-up her children properly, 3) respects her husband, 4) knows how to spin cotton for clothes, 6) how to cook *wät*, 7) how to process and preserve milk and milk products, 8) how to conserve agricultural products, 9) how to handle consumption items economically, 10) how to prepare *tälla*, *tägğ* and *aräqi*, and 8) how to prepare food and local drinks for feasts. The daughter of a “good” woman from a cattle “rich” family has the high chance of getting a marriage partner at her early age. The importance attributed to marriage in the studied peasant communities make women think of themselves as subordinate to men, while the economic system makes them totally dependent on men. A wife is primarily important to her husband as a “mother of his children” (*yäləğočču ənnat*). Almost all parents and the local people feel that marriage and motherhood are socially appropriate roles of girls. In this context, girls are expected to get married at an early age because they are no longer socially categorized as children (*yäset tənəš yälləwum*).

Traditionally the local people value marriage more than education for girls. In this connection, Hirut Terefe notes that:

“Arsi mothers believe that girls working and helping their mothers from the age of seven to the day of their marriage are more instructive than what girls learn in modern schools. So women think that sending a girl to school spoils the whole process of their tradition of socializing a girl to be a responsible woman for her household. Women respondents have tried to explain to me that girls who go to school are disobedient even to her mother. This is probably why education of girls always lags behind that of men in Arsi” (Hirut Terefe 2000:86-87).

The gender socialization process in Bachema and Rim peasant communities and its effects on children’s formal schooling in general and girls’ access to and success in formal education in particular are examined in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

6.1 GENDER SOCIALIZATION: TRAINING AT HOME

Fathers and mothers among the studied communities socialize sons and daughters in accordance with their appropriate roles in the local community. In this connection, Boddy comments, “while boys learn to be men; girls could passively be absorbed into womanhood without effort” (1998:59, in Hirut Terefe 2000:79-80).

Children of both sexes are primarily taught gender-specific practical life skills and the values and norms of the local community in the family. Male and female children are trained in the men’s and women’s basic skills by the senior members of the extended family in accordance with their age. As

soon as children reach the age of seven (in some cases five), boys are trained to perform agricultural activities to become strong-successful farmers and bread-winners as household-heads, while girls receive training in domestic activities in preparation for their future married life as housewives and mothers. In this context, children are informally trained to make them fit for their future life in their society.

Fathers teach boys how to farm, how to carve wooden utensils and how to be a strong and self-sufficient farmer. Since boys are expected to be the protector of their parents' homestead and the bread-winner, they have more opportunity to be sent to the formal school than girls.

Girls' training at home focuses on how to: 1) bake *əngära*, 2) prepare *doro wät*, 3) brew *tälla* and *tägğ*, 4) distill *aräqi*; 5) spin cotton, 6) make baskets, 7) manage the household, 8) rear children, 9) treat her future husband, 10) handle her in-laws, and 11) co-operate with neighbors in her husband's village. All these trainings are possible through the close supervision of her mother. Due to the mother's responsibility to train her daughter in domestic activities at home, the local people say "*ənnatwan aytäh lägtwan*" (lit. "observe the mother and marry her daughter!"). This implies that if the mother is good at cooking, brewing local drinks, managing her household well, and rearing her children appropriately, her daughter is expected to be skilled in the same way. In addition to learning practical skills, girls are expected to learn social roles and moral norms appropriate to women in their local community. They are expected to stay at home and assist their mothers in domestic activities and at the same time learn activities such as spinning cotton and making different types of baskets for their future married life. For girls, playing and joking with adult "boy-men" is strictly prohibited. Young married daughters assist their mother-in-law in domestic activities. When their mother gives birth to a child, they are always expected to take over the domestic duty at least for two weeks. Between the age of 13 and 14, young married girls are expected to establish their own *goggo* and start their married life. Hence, before the age of 15, the "girl-child" carries a full load of adult responsibilities: domestic and reproductive responsibilities (see table 6.2 below).

6.2 GENDER-BASED DIVISION OF LABOR IN THE FAMILY

Gender-based social organization involves not only division of labor, but also values attached to each sex and behavior by which the activities of each sex are evaluated socially and culturally. Hence, the gender-based division of labor in the family is based on gender roles and behaviors assigned to a man and a woman in the studied traditional peasant communities. In this connection, Hirut Terefe notes that, "Gender roles are practices and activities carried out by men and women, which lead to an economically and socially constructed division of labor" (Hirut Terefe 2000:72).

According to the local tradition, activities that are classified as falling within the domestic domain are meant only for females and activities related to farming for males. In practice, however, there is a "third category" of work that is performed by "boy-men" and "girl-women." Both women and men participate in some agricultural tasks such as harrowing (*gulgualo*), weeding (*aräm*), field compacting (*təqtəqo*) and harvesting, while others are specific either to women or men. Most women are engaged in virtually all areas of agricultural activity, except plowing, sowing, reaping and threshing. Despite the fact that agricultural activities are the main responsibility of men, women also participate in different crop-production and livestock production activities.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Concerning rural women's active involvement in agricultural activities, Wudnesh notes that, "Rural women are actively involved in: (a) crop production such as seed cleaning, land preparation, planting, weeding, applying manure, hoeing, scaring birds, harvesting, preparation of threshing grounds, collecting and piling, winnowing, transporting and storing, food preparation for labor assistance in the field, crop storage preparation and taking care of stored grains; (b) livestock production such as cutting grass or processing hay, herding and trekking animals, provision of water, caring for sick or other animals staying at home, barn cleaning, milking and milk processing" (Wudnesh 1999, in Yigremew Adal 2001:1-2).

The following table shows gender-specific roles assigned to a man and a woman in Bachema and Rim peasant communities:

Table 6.1: Gender-Specific Roles Assigned to a Man and a Woman Among the Peasant Communities of Bachema and Rim (Ethnographic Data, April 2003 - January 2004)

Roles Assigned to a Man/Husband	Roles Assigned to a Woman/Wife
<p>1. Household leadership roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • controlling wife's and children's behavior • giving proper instruction ("job descriptions") to family members and supervising their execution • protecting and controlling the family's resources • training sons to follow in his footsteps <p>2. handicraft production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making wooden farm implements (<i>mofär, qänbär</i>) • carving and making wooden and stone household implements (<i>muqäčča, wäfčo</i>) • cutting wood and grass for house construction • repairing and building houses • fencing the homestead compound <p>3. Agricultural and animal husbandry roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ploughing the fields • sowing, planting, and threshing crops • raising and taking care of livestock • driving pack animals • slaughtering animals • co-ordinating agricultural work • protecting field crops from wild animals • constructing granaries (<i>gotära</i>) • constructing livestock barns • collecting honey from bee-hives <p>4. Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trading cattle, grain and honey • buying fertilizers for the field and iron farm implements (<i>maräša, mačəd, mäträbiya</i>) • buying the family's clothes <p>5. Community roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • playing membership and leadership roles in traditional community-based associations such as <i>mahbär</i> and <i>sänbäte</i> • being a member of the local councils of elders and resolving family and community problems • being a member of the local PA and playing leadership role in it 	<p>1. Domestic and reproductive roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparing different types of food (<i>məgəb mabsäl</i>) • baking <i>əngära</i> on <i>məfad</i> and cooking <i>doro wät</i> with <i>dəst</i> • brewing <i>čälla, päğğ</i> and distilling <i>aräqi</i> • grinding grain for food and local drinks (<i>čälla</i> and <i>aräqi</i>) • fetching water for family use as well as for small or sick animals • collecting firewood for cooking and preparing cattle dung for fuel • washing the family's clothes • taking care of children • cleaning living rooms and animal barn • handling consumption items economically and augmenting household income by distilling <i>aräqi</i> when the need arises • processing milk and curd for family consumption • processing butter for market and for family consumption • training daughters in domestic and feminine activities and preparing them for married life • bringing lunch to far away farm fields <p>2. handicraft production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spinning cotton (<i>tət mäfətäl</i>) • making baskets (<i>səfet mäsfat</i>) • making milk containers (<i>gərera mäsrət, mäsfat</i>) • making <i>gota</i> (inside grain container made up of mud) <p>3. Participation in agricultural activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collecting and removing previous crops stubble (<i>gulgualo</i>) • field compaction (<i>təqäqo</i>) and weeding field crops (<i>aräm</i>) • hand weeding and cultivation (<i>kutkuato</i>) • compacting and plastering the threshing ground with cattle dung (<i>awdəmma laqläqa</i>) • reaping and/or transporting sheaves (<i>nädo</i>) for heaping or threshing ground • transporting the threshed grain home • harvested grain storage and conservation of seeds for the next cropping season • horticultural crop gardening near the homestead • looking after calves and small livestock in the homestead • poultry production • milking cows in the mornings and evenings <p>4. Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marketing poultry, horticultural products, grain and milk products on the local market day (on Saturdays) • buying household items such as salt, soaps, coffee beans, sugar, food oil, gas oil for lamp, and candy for kids from the market • buying household utensils such as coffee cups, cooking pans, pots, etc., from the market <p>5. Community enhancing roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attending rites of passage: visiting neighboring women giving birth, attending wedding and funeral ceremonies • preparing food during social-religious gatherings and work-group associations (<i>mahbär, sänbäte, wänfäl</i>) and other social occasions such as wedding and funeral ceremonies

In Bachema and Rim, men are fully involved in agricultural activities such as farming, sowing and harvesting with the help of some hired workers/relatives or their own sons. “All male household members cooperate in agricultural activities under the command of a household head. Male children above the age of ten may be mobilized in these tasks while girls process and prepare food. Children under ten are particularly important for cattle herding” (McCann 1995:65). Women are fully involved in domestic and reproductive activities such as preparing food for the family and bearing and rearing children. Women also assist their husband in weeding (*aräm*), harrowing (*gulgualo*), and prepare the threshing ground with dung (*awdamma laqläqa*) during peak agricultural seasons. However, men cannot help women in domestic activities. The domestic sphere symbolized by the “kitchen” (*mağät*) - the processing and preparation of food is restricted to females. A male who enters the kitchen or prepares his own food is thought to be “womanish” (*seta set*). In other words, according to the local custom, males should be served by females. The only household tasks that men participate in are handicraft production for household use such as the making of wooden household implements and the grinding stone, and building and rebuilding of houses.

Women have more work than men do since women perform triple roles: reproductive, productive and community enhancing roles (see table 6.1 above). However, women’s reproductive roles (bearing and rearing children) and labor within the household obscure the fact that women also have essential productive (income generating work) and community enhancing roles (roles that promote social cohesion such as cooking or entertaining at community events). Furthermore, most of the domestic work such as cooking food for the household members need a lot of precious processing of agricultural products, and are performed everyday and cannot be avoided. These types of work force women and girls to be near the homestead for a longer time than men and boys. As a result, girls are expected to stay at home in order to assist their over-burdened mothers or mothers-in-law in household chores, such as fetching water and firewood, taking care of their younger siblings. Of all “girl-women’s” domestic activities, grinding grain, particularly *teff* for *əngära* (the daily basic food for the household) is the most arduous one. This suggests that the introduction of a mill technology might result in reducing women’s arduous labor. In addition to processing and cooking the daily food, women also fetch water for human use and for animals. They have to walk for a minimum of 30 minutes to a small stream to fetch water, particularly for drinking purposes. This also suggests the need for the construction of a water pipe.

Traditionally, labor tasks are divided on the bases of gender and age. Children above five have to assist their parents in accordance with their sex, and that their roles and duties change in line with their age. “Girl-women” are fully involved in household activities such as grinding, food preparation and cooking, buying household items from the market, and fetching fuel and water, while “boy-men” are engaged in ploughing, sowing, threshing and taking care of livestock. Girls assist their mothers in grinding grain, washing clothes, cleaning the house, and preparing food at home. Boys assist their fathers in looking after the cattle and providing animals with water, cultivating, building and rebuilding houses, and other agricultural activities in the field. Boys provide agricultural labor support for their fathers, whereas girls provide labor support for their mothers. Thus, a male child assumes his father’s work, where as a female child assumes her mother’s work at the household level. In this regard, differences in the value placed on children by men and women arise from their expected contributions as laborers. The motivations of fathers and mothers vary to the extent that they have distinct roles. For example, since women rely heavily on daughters for assistance with many of the household chores, they value daughters as more important. However, when it comes to the idea of sending children to formal school, the entire calculus changes and children of both sexes become primarily consumers and not producers for the time they spend at school.

In poor agrarian families, boys and girls begin to help with household chores from a very early age, but as they grow older, the burden on girls increases disproportionately. By the time they reach adolescence, girls carry a major share of the daily survival tasks including fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking, cleaning and caring for younger siblings. Girls of school-going age work within the household. Their work, like that of adult women, is invisible and “undervalued.” These are children who do not have a “childhood” and who are not protected by any of the legalization against child labor. Even if such laws exist, it is difficult to legislate against to what extent families do to their daughters within the household. This implies that girls cannot be released from domestic drudgery and the tyranny of family responsibilities, or avail of their right to education, without a radical change in the attitudes and values of their parents. Many women in the studied communities are of the opinion that provisions of minimum support services for adult women - childcare, fuel and water at the village level- would have a greater impact in getting girls out of work and into school, than legislation to ban domestic child labor or campaigns to universal basic education. Gender specific barriers to formal schooling among Bachema and Rim peasant communities will be examined in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

In the family without sons capable of tending cattle, young girls (between the ages of 7 and 8) are required to tend cattle in addition to domestic tasks at home. Girls work longer hours on average than boys, carrying a double work burden - a job outside the home and domestic duties on their return. Of course, young boys sometimes assist their mother in collecting firewood. However, boys are not expected to cook, to clean living as well as animals’ rooms, to fetch water and other domestic activities, which are culturally labeled as ‘women’s work.’ Thus, boys have relatively enough time for playing with their peer groups after tending cattle or doing other farm works. The following table depicts Bachema and Rim girls’ activities by age-group:

**Table 6.2: Bachema and Rim Girls’ Activities by Age-Group
(Ethnographic Data, April 2003 - January 2004)**

Age-Group	Girls’ Activities
5-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of younger siblings and cleaning living and animals’ rooms • Fetching water and collecting firewood • Cooking <i>wät</i> and boiling coffee • Looking after calves and small livestock (sheep, goats, etc.) in the homestead • Tending cattle in the field (in the household in which there are no sons capable of tending cattle)
9-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allowed to do fieldwork activities outside the home unless they are accompanied by a male or an elderly family member • Staying around home and learning all domestic activities with their mothers’ supervision as part of preparation for their married life • Fully confined to domestic and feminine activities such as: cooking <i>wät</i>, baking <i>əngära</i>, brewing <i>tälla</i>, spinning cotton, making baskets (such as <i>muday</i>), making <i>gota</i> (for their new <i>goğğö</i>) • Taking over their mothers’ role at home during their absence or when they give birth to a child • Should get married and establish her own <i>goğğö</i> between the ages of 13 and 14 (a girl who remains unmarried and not establishes her own <i>goğğö</i> until the age of 14 is locally labeled as <i>qomo qär</i>)
14-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full involvement in domestic and reproductive activities at home • Household management • Involvement in agricultural activities such as weeding (<i>aräm</i>), harrowing (<i>gulgualo</i>), field compaction (<i>təqäqo</i>) and others (see table 6.1 above) • Involvement in traditional community-based social and religious associations (<i>mahbär</i> and <i>sänbäte</i>) • Attending rites of passage: visiting neighboring women giving birth to a child, attending wedding and funeral ceremonies/preparing food during social and religious gatherings and other such occasions • Augmenting household income by distilling <i>aräqi</i> when the need arises • Marketing poultry, horticultural products, grain and milk products on the local market • Buying household items and utensils such as salt, soaps, coffee beans, sugar, food oil, gas oil for lamp, coffee cups, cooking pans, pots, etc., from the market

As the table shows, girls start attending their younger siblings (from the age of 5 or 6), fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking food and boiling coffee as early as 7. They are a source of supporting labor for their over-burdened mothers in the family. However, this reduces girls' possibilities to be sent to the locally available formal school. Girls who have got the chance to attend formal school are forced to drop out as the demand for their labor increases within the household. Especially, during peak harvest seasons when mothers are busy in the fields (see table 6.1 above), daughters are supposed to take care of cooking, house cleaning, and all household responsibilities. Even if girls are allowed to continue formal schooling, they have not enough time to do school related activities since they are predominantly expected to assist their over-burdened mothers in household chores.

In general, the socialization of children involves their increasing participation, in accordance with their age, in their family's work. Even school-attending children are required to participate in family work before/after school times and during weekends and holidays due to the nature of the agricultural community. It is "traditional" for children to go out and help their fathers in the field, to fetch water and look after their younger siblings. Most parents feel that children should work in order to develop skills useful in their future adult life, instead of taking advantage of a formal education. The attitude that children should work to support themselves or their families is deeply rooted. It is also seen as a means of acquiring practical life skills at a young age. Child labor is understood to be a form of education, which initiates the child into its future adult life. In this context, child work is part of the socialization process and is a gradual initiation into adult life.

6.3 LEVELS AND CURRICULA OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

According to the New Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (TGE 1994), the primary education has two cycles: the first cycle (grades 1- 4) and the second cycle (grades 5- 8). The first cycle deals with basic education consisting of six subjects: 1) Amharic (local language), 2) English, 3) Mathematics, 4) Environmental Science, 5) Aesthetics, and 6) Physical Education. The second cycle focuses on general education consisting of the following basic and general subjects: 1) Languages (Amharic, local language, and English, foreign language); 2) Mathematics; 3) Sciences (Physics, Chemistry and Biology); 4) Social Sciences (Geography and History); 6) Civic and Ethical Education; 7) Physical Education, 8) Art; and 9) Music. The second cycle primary education is further divided into lower and upper levels. The following table shows levels and curricula of the primary education in the current Ethiopian educational system:

**Table 6.3: Levels and Curricula of Primary Education
(Mecha Woreda Education Office, Merawi, January 2004)**

Grade-Level	Subjects	Type of Education	Medium of Instruction
First Cycle (grades 1 - 4)	1. Amharic 2. English 3. Mathematics 4. Environmental Science 5. Aesthetics and Physical Education	Basic Education	Amharic (the Local Language)
Second Cycle Lower Level (grades 5 - 6)	1. Amharic 2. English 3. Mathematics 4. Science 5. Social Science 6. Civic and Ethical Education 7. Physical Education 8. Art 9. Music	General Education	Amharic (the Local Language)
Second Cycle Upper Level (grades 7 - 8)	1. Amharic 2. English 3. Mathematics 4. Biology 5. Chemistry 6. Physics 7. Social Science 8. Civic and Ethical Education 9. Physical Education 10. Art 11. Music	General Education	Amharic (the Local Language)

6.4 PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BACHEMA AND RIM PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS (PAs)

Education in its formal or “modern” form is a recent phenomenon among the peasant communities of Mecha Woreda in general and in Bachema and Rim in particular. Education in its traditional form has been predominantly church-oriented to serve the needs of the local Orthodox churches, in which women and girls were, and still, are excluded. Such schooling was, and still, is conducted in the church, carried out by *märigeta* (head of clergy). In church schools, boys get a religious education. Nowadays, poor peasant families prefer to send their sons to church schools due to economic problems. Even, relatively well-to-do parents, especially in Rim PA, prefer to send their son to the local church school so that he will eventually be serving in one of the local churches (*däbär*) and will not stay away from them.

Currently, there are no pre-school education programs or centers in Bachema and Rim PAs, like in other peasant communities of Mecha Woreda. The formal primary school is open both to girls and boys, though girls’ access to and success in primary education is constrained by socio-cultural values, especially early marriage practices (see Chapter 9).

6.4.1 Levels and Profiles of Primary Schools in Bachema and Rim PAs

In Rim PA, the first formal school (Rim Primary School, grades 1 - 6) was established in 1976 (1968 E.C) and then up-graded to a full cycle primary school (grades 1- 8) in 1994 (1986 E.C). During the period of the ethnographic research, there was only one full cycle primary school in Rim PA, which is located about 40 km south-west of Merawi, the *woreda’s* capital town (see Appendix 10, map 4). After completing their primary education (grade 8), pupils have to go to Merawi to continue their secondary school education (grades 9-12). In Rim Primary School (grades 1-8), there were 19 teachers (12 males and 7 females) during the first phase of the ethnographic research (April 2003-

July 2003). During the second phase (September 2003 - January 2004), there were 26 teachers (16 males and 10 females).

In Bachema PA, the first formal school (Yechalie Primary School, grades 1-6) was established in 1983 (1975 E.C). The second formal school (Bachema first cycle primary school, grades 1-4) was established in 1999 (1991 E.C) with the financial assistance of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Bachema PA is the only peasant community with two first cycle primary schools among the 37 peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* due to its location across the main road from Merawi, capital of the *woreda*, to Bahir Dar, capital of the Amhara Region (see Appendix 10, map 4).

Bachema Primary School, the ethnographic research focus, is located 5km north of Merawi, the *woreda*'s capital town, and 29 km south of Bahir Dar, the Region's capital town. After completing the first cycle of primary education (grade 4), pupils have to go to Merawi to continue the second cycle of primary education. In Bachema first cycle primary school, there were six teachers (five males and one female) during the first phase of the ethnographic research. The only female teacher in Bachema Primary School taught there only for one academic year (from September 2003 to July 2004) and promoted to Merawi full cycle primary school (grades 1-8) after obtaining her Diploma in Education from Bahir Dar University through the extension program. Thus, before September 2003 and from September 2004 - January 2004, there was no a female teacher in Bachema Primary School.

According to my observations, Bachema and Rim primary schools, especially Rim Primary School, are highly impoverished in learning materials and facilities such as safe drinking water, clinic, male-female separate latrines, and the few existing latrines were inadequately equipped. There are also shortages of reading-rooms and textbooks. I have also observed a serious shortage of students' desks and learning class-rooms, especially in Rim Primary School. There are also no guidance and counseling services for students in both primary schools. In short, Bachema and Rim primary schools lack the basic facilities that are required for enhancing the teaching-learning process. Above all, the full cycle primary schools are located 5 km (on average) away from pupils' home. Thus, after completing the local primary education most pupils end up being a peasant and a peasant's wife.

Currently, the number of school attending children is beyond the capacity of the local schools since the schools are not expanded, especially Rim Primary School, so that they cannot accommodate the school-attending children, due to shortage of classrooms or learning rooms. The pupil-teacher ratio of the schools, as compared to the national standard (50:1) ranges from 76:1 to 110:1 (Rim Primary School) and from 40:1 to 96:1 (Bachema Primary School) in the academic year 2003/04 (1995 E.C).

6.4.2 Gender and Primary Education in Bachema and Rim PAs

The gender dimension of formal schooling is viewed with specific reference to enrolment, repetition and dropout rates based on Bachema and Rim primary schools rosters for the 2003/04 (1995 E.C) academic year.

According to Mecha *Woreda* Education Office, in all of the rural primary schools of the *woreda*, except in Bachema Primary School (located 5 km north of Merawi, the capital town of the *woreda*, and 29 km south of Bahir Dar, the Region's capital town), girls' enrolment ratio is lower than boys.

In Bachema first cycle primary school (grades 1-4), girls' enrolment ratio is relatively higher than boys: girls attend school by 58.48%, boys by 41.52% (see table 6.4 below). This is due to the influence of educated kin networks, especially the pressure of elder school-attending or educated brothers.

In Rim full cycle Primary School (grades 1-8), boys are represented by 59.15%, girls by 40.85% (see table 6.5 below). The figure shows that a relatively greater number of boys attend formal school as compared to girls in the 2003/04 (1995 E.C) academic year.

Table 6.4: Bachema Primary School Enrolled Male and Female Pupils by Grade Level (Bachema Primary School Roster, 1995 E.C/2003/04)

Grade Level	Male Pupils		Female Pupils		Total	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
1 st Grade	74	42.77	99	57.23	173	100
2 nd Grade	63	43.15	83	56.85	146	100
3 rd Grade	56	38.89	88	61.11	144	100
4 th Grade	37	40.66	54	59.34	91	100
Total	230	41.52	324	58.48	554	100

Table 6.5: Rim Primary School Enrolled Male and Female Pupils by Grade Level (Rim Primary School Roster, 1995 E.C/2003/04)

Grade Level	Male Pupils		Female Pupils		Total	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
1 st Grade	261	48.97	272	51.03	533	100
2 nd Grade	147	44.82	181	55.18	328	100
3 rd Grade	166	61.25	105	38.75	271	100
4 th Grade	121	55.25	98	44.75	219	100
5 th Grade	133	69.27	59	30.73	192	100
6 th Grade	114	80.28	28	19.72	142	100
7 th Grade	141	73.44	51	26.56	192	100
8 th Grade	94	83.19	19	16.81	113	100
Total	1177	59.15	813	40.85	1990	100

In Rim Primary School, grades 1-4 (first cycle), enrolment ratio of girls is higher than subsequent grades (second cycle). The participation of girls at the second cycle of primary education is low compared to boys. According to the local people, at the first cycle of the primary education (grades 1-4), children learn environmental science and hygiene which is helpful for girls to become good wives and mothers. However, education beyond the basic level (grade 4) is not necessary for girls to become wives and mother. As a result, girls' dropout rates increase with their grade level. For example, during the academic year 2003/04, only 16.81% of grade 8 pupils were females in Rim Primary School (see table 6.5). This implies that only a small number of girls manages to continue the secondary education in the *woreda's* town, Merawi. Hence, although girls' participation in the first cycle of primary education is on the increase, the gender gap still exists in the second cycle of primary education due to high dropout and repetition rates.

The repetition rates were 39.08% for boys and 60.92% for girls in Bachema Primary School; and 34.76% for boys and 65.24 % for girls in Rim Primary School (see table 6.6). The dropout rates were 47.83% for boys and 52.17 for girls in Bachema Primary School; and 51.28% for boys and 48.72% for girls in Rim Primary School in the academic year 2003/04 (see table 6.7). Many girls and a significant number of boys drop out before finishing primary schooling. The following tables show the repetition and dropout rates of male and female pupils in Bachema and Rim primary schools:

Table 6.6: Bachema and Rim Primary Schools Grade Repeated Male and Female Pupils (Bachema and Rim Primary School Rosters, 1995 E.C/2003/04)

Primary School	Male Pupils		Female Pupils		Total	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
Bachema Primary School	34	39.08	53	60.92	87	100
Rim Primary School	65	34.76	122	65.24	187	100

Table 6.7: Bachema and Rim Primary Schools Dropout Male and Female Pupils (Bachema and Rim Primary School Rosters, 1995 E.C/2003/04)

Primary School	Male Pupils		Female Pupils		Total	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
Bachema Primary School	11	47.83	12	52.17	23	100
Rim Primary School	160	51.28	152	48.72	312	100

6.5 GENDER-SPECIFIC BARRIERS TO FORMAL SCHOOLING

The overall educational participation of children in both Bachema and Rim peasant communities is low. Especially at the first cycle of primary education in Bachema, the number of male pupils is low because boys are required to assist their fathers in the field. During peak agricultural seasons (between the months of December and January), boys are highly demanded for assisting in the farm and girls for taking care of the house and younger children while their mothers assist their fathers in the farm. Thus, unless the rural school programs are flexible to accommodate the labor demands of peasant families, parents cannot afford to send their children to the locally available formal schools.

The demand for sons' labor in the field and the availability of extra land to be allotted to them when they establish their own *goggo* around their parents' homestead are the major reasons for boys' not attending school or dropping-out from school. In both peasant communities, working in the agricultural fields, tending cattle, sheep and goats, and taking care of the harvest are important reasons for boys' lack of access to or success in formal education. Working in the household and visiting their parents-in-law during holidays and feasts are the most important reasons for girls' lack of access to or success in formal education. For both, female and male pupils, illness (especially malaria infection) was the most common reason for their irregular school attendance, especially in Bachema Primary School, which is located in the lowland (*qolla*) ecological zone. Children from poor families have no the chance to be sent to the local school due to financial constraints for school-related expenses.

Among the reasons for not attending school, the major constraints are parents' labor demand of their children. For children of both sexes the cost of education is another barrier to formal schooling. Direct cost of education is the second major constraint for boys. The long distance between home and school is one of the major institutional problems which keeps girls out of school or which causes the dropout of school attending girls. Lack of awareness about the value of formal education is also a constraint to children's access to and success in formal schooling. In this regard, the availability of a formal school alone cannot solve the problem of access to and success in education for peasant children in general and for girls in particular. Hence, there is the need of addressing the problems in order to improve the low educational participation rate of peasant children, particularly girls.

School-attending girls were absent from school more frequently than boys due to domestic responsibilities at home. Female pupils in both Bachema and Rim primary schools were frequently absent from school during religious holidays to help their mothers in preparing food and drinks and to

look after the house. School-attending boys have the chance to study in groups after school while tending cattle and/or other livestock in the field, whereas girls are not permitted to do this.

In order to have a general idea about the nature of families among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim pertaining to children's marriage and education, the following table provides a complex profile of focus families purposively selected from the surveyed households (350) based on stratified purposive sampling:

Table 6.8: Categories of Focus Families by Arranging/Not Arranging Early Marriage and/or Sending /Not Sending their Children to Formal School (Focus Families, May 2003-January 2004)

Categories of Focus Families	Frequency	
	Numbers	Percentage
1. Arrange early marriage for children and send daughters-sons to school	26	32.50
2. Arrange early marriage for children and send daughter/s to school	13	16.25
3. Arrange early marriage for children, send and dropout daughters	11	13.75
4. Arrange early marriage for children, send sons to school, but not daughters	7	8.75
5. Not arrange early marriage for children and send daughters-sons to school	5	6.25
6. Arrange early marriage for children, send daughter/s to school, but not sons	5	6.25
7. Arrange early marriage for children, but not send daughters-sons to school	4	5.00
8. Neither arrange early marriage for children nor send them to school	2	2.50
9. Arrange early marriage for children, but not send daughters-sons to school	2	2.50
10. Arrange and not send daughters to school, but not arrange and send sons to school	2	2.50
11. Not arrange early marriage for children, send and drop out sons	2	2.50
12. Not arrange early marriage for children, send sons to school, but not daughters	1	1.25
Total	80	100

The educational participation of girls in the studied peasant communities, especially in Rim is low. The problem is not only their low participation, but also their lower effectiveness since school dropout and repetition are higher among girls than boys. The major barriers to girls' access to and success in formal education among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim are presented below:

- **Early-arranged marriage** is the major factor affecting girls' participation in formal education in the studied peasant communities, where the prevailing gender norms focus mainly on marriage and motherhood for girls. Here, the logic behind the need for early-arranged marriage for girls is: 1) When girls reach the age of nine, they are locally considered as sexually active; 2) When they are sexually active, they must be isolated from boys-men and controlled; 3) When they are isolated from boys-men and controlled, they will be obedient and submissive wives and responsible mothers. In order to increase girls' as well as their parents' social status in their community, girls should get married as early as possible. This motivates parents to give their daughters in marriage at an early age so that they can achieve social recognition in their community. Therefore, parents prefer to arrange an early marriage for their daughters instead of sending them to the local formal school and/or allowing them to continue formal education, which is perceived as unnecessary for becoming wives and mothers, the ultimate destiny of girls. As a result, girls enrolled in the local school do not attend schools beyond the first cycle of primary education (grades 1-4) mainly due to early-arranged marriage (see Chapter 9).
- **Work burden:** In the studied peasant communities, girls are fully involved in domestic activities. They are also involved in agricultural activities such as weeding and harrowing during peak harvesting seasons and tending cattle or small livestock when there is no son taking over this task in the family or the son being sent to the formal school. School-attending girls are also expected to assist their mothers in domestic activities before-after school times and during weekends and holidays. Especially, elder daughters are fully involved in domestic activities and sometimes, they take their mother's role at home in her absence and/or when she gives birth to a child. As a result, they have no time for school related activities and show poor performance in school leading to dropping-out.

- ***Rural family poverty and parents' son-preference to schooling:*** Parents with a certain exposure to urban life orientation have the awareness of the value of formal education through their kinship or social networks. However, most parents are not sending their children, especially daughters, to school at all due to economic reasons such as being unable to afford school related expenses such as writing and reading materials, i.e. pens, pencils and exercise books and clothes appropriate for school. When parents have the capacity to educate children, most of the time, it is the son who gets the chance to it. Parents' preference to educate sons, but not daughters, results from the economic and social structure of their society in which sons stay with their natal family and eventually turn out to be assets to their parents, whereas daughters leave their natal family upon marriage and finally become assets to their in-laws but not to their parents. Here it is important to note that children from land and cattle "rich" families have also less chances to go to the local school since they are often victims of early-arranged marriage due to the availability of cattle for their dowry (for both sons and daughters) and land (for sons). Hence, being from a "rich" peasant family does not necessarily guarantee the chance to go to the local formal school. On the other hand, cattle and land "poor" families neither arrange early marriage for both male and female children nor send them to the local school due to a shortage of cattle for their dowry and financial constraints for schooling.
- ***Fear of pre-marital sex and breaking cultural norms*** discourages parents from sending their daughters to the local formal school, especially after the first cycle level (after grade 4) of primary education. Girls, according to the local tradition, are expected to be "virgins" until marriage. Parents are reluctant to send their daughters to a distant place for education in fear of pre-marital sex and pregnancy before marriage. Parents also fear that formal education will ruin their daughters' prospect for marriage because it might make them more "assertive", less willing to stay at home, and even promiscuous. In order not to endanger their daughters' marriage prospects, they prefer to keep them at home.
- ***Parents and the local people's negative attitude towards female education:*** The local people consider females as physically and mentally "weak" by nature. Parents also believe that their daughters will not be as successful in formal schooling as their sons. As a result, they prefer to invest on educating their sons. At the community level, the axiom that, *Set tāmāra yāt tādārsalāč* ("Where could a female reach by learning") is a common saying in the studied communities, especially in Rim peasant community. This saying implies two things: Parents' lack of vision or hope in female education and their belief that girls' education will benefit her husband and his relatives, but not them, which is the result of the patrilineal ideology. At the school level, it is also believed that boys perform better, ask more questions in class and are more likely to go to the secondary school than girls. Female pupils are shy and timid so that they have no the courage to raise or answer questions in class. This is the result of the gender socialization process in the local community, in which females are expected to be "shy" (*aynaffar*), "timid" and "keep-quiet" (*čammāt*) in front of other people, especially in front of men. In this regard, female pupils should be encouraged to raise or answer question in the class and teachers should be more sensitive to girls' needs, and there should be female teachers as role models in the school to improve female pupils' participation and performance at the school level. This also requires the need for guidance and counseling services for pupils, especially females, with psychological and emotional problems.
- ***Lack of employment opportunities after completion of primary school*** affects girls' access to formal school more than boys'. Where there are little educational benefits to be gained, it is not surprising that impoverished parents think that it is not worth incurring the costs of sending a daughter to the formal school.
- ***Institutional factors:*** Institutional factors at the school level such as: (1) the remoteness of second cycle primary schools in the case of Bachema, (2) the absence of a secondary school in both rural communities in particular and in all rural communities of the study area in general, and (3) poor physical infrastructure and inhospitable school environments affect educational participation of children, particularly girls.

The following table summarizes barriers to girls' access to and success in formal education in Bachema and Rim peasant communities:

Table 6.9: Barriers to Girls' Access to and Success in Formal Schooling in Bachema and Rim Peasant Communities (Focus Families, May 2003- January 2004)

Economic and Socio-cultural Barriers	Institutional and School-Related Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early-arranged marriage (<i>bä-ləğnnätačaw səlämidaru</i>) • Fear of pre-marital sex and its social consequences (<i>satagäba təbaləgaläč, set ləğ käwänd gar əndet abrra təwläläč, təwärdänäläč bəmalät</i>) • Fear of breaking gender behaviors appropriate to females such as “modesty,” “shyness,” “obedience” and “submissiveness” (<i>set ləğ kätəmaräč bahäl əna wäg təräsäläč, təmərt läwänd əng läset adäläm, set bätäfätərowa dākama näč, set ləğ wäd bet wand ləğ wäd məsəriya bet səlämibal, set təmərt bet kähedäč atətəzəm, yäset muya atəmərəm bəmalät</i>) • Feminine skills training at home (<i>käbet yäset muya səlämimaru</i>) • Being required to assist their over-burdened mothers in domestic activities and in taking care of their younger siblings which are exclusively assigned to girls and women (<i>bet wusəṭ səra səlämitazəzu</i>) • Being involved in agricultural activities such as weeding (<i>aräm</i>) and harrowing (<i>gulgualo</i>) during peak harvesting seasons and tending cattle in the absence of a son of their age in the family and/or when the son attends formal school • Parental financial constraints and son-preference to schooling (<i>setəm wändəm, hulät ləğ mastəmar səlämančəl</i>) • Being involved in income-generating small-scale activities, such as distilling <i>aräqi</i> and brewing <i>ṭälla</i> for sell in a poor household-headed by a divorced mother • Parents' perception that investment in a daughter's education will not benefit her natal family, but her future marital family (<i>set ləğočč təməräw aytəqəmunəm bəmalät, yäset ləğ agärwa balwa səlähon</i>) • Parents' lack of awareness about the value of educating daughters (<i>yäset ləğən təmərt təkəm balä mawäq</i>) • Absence of an educated woman in the local community (<i>bakababiyačən yätmarä set səlälelä</i>) • Lack of hope in girls' education (<i>yäset ləğ təmərt təkəm täsfä səläleläw</i>) • Health problems, especially malarial infection • Divorced parents • Parental death (mother and/or father): Especially mothers' death and the need for replacing their deceased mothers' domestic roles at home. Fathers' death is also a reason for school attending boys dropout from school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long distance of the locally available primary school from girls' villages (on average 30 minutes to 1 hour walk from home to the nearest school in Rim PA) • Absence of a second-cycle primary school in Bachema PA • Absence of a secondary school in both Bachema and Rim PAs • Absence of separate toilets for female and male pupils in Rim Primary School • Absence of female teachers as positive role models in Bachema Primary School • Absence of guidance and counseling services in both Bachema and Rim primary schools • Lack of educational materials such as shortage of textbooks in both Bachema and Rim primary schools • Inadequate school facilities such as safe drinking water and clinics in both Bachema and Rim primary schools • Shortage of classrooms and absence of reading-rooms in both schools, especially in Rim Primary School • Loose school-community relationship in both schools, especially in Bachema Primary School where teachers live in Merawi, the <i>woreda's</i> capital town, 5gkm away from the local community • Limited employment opportunities in the service sector after the completion of formal education • Perceived irrelevance of formal education due to lack of linkages between subjects taught at school and children's trainings at home in Bachema and Rim traditional agrarian communities

The foregoing discussion as well as the table indicate that the major barriers to girls' access to and success in formal education in the studied peasant communities are early-arranged marriage and the economic and social structures as well as the gender socialization process, which reinforce early marriage. Hence, there is the need for challenging and bringing change in all these and other possible barriers in order to promote girls' formal education in the traditional agrarian community.

Above all, the formal school system has few direct links with girls' gender-specific trainings at home. In the researched communities, the gender-specific trainings of girls to become "obedient" and "submissive" wives and "responsible" mothers work against the need for educating girls in the formal school system, which is in most cases incompatible with the gender ideology equally shared by the local people. Girls are also socialized to stay at home or close to the homestead. They are required to obey their elder brothers, who have authority over younger siblings. They are also expected to be obedient to their future husband and their in-laws. All these have negative effects on girls' access to and success in formal schooling. In general, in order to grasp factors responsible for the persistence of traditional gender-roles and behaviors among the traditional agrarian communities of Bachema and Rim, one needs to know how various factors such as socio-cultural, ideological and even political factors interact to maintain traditional gender roles and behaviors. The gender-role belief system operates in at least two ways to restrict girls and women's life styles. "First, given a thorough socialization experience, the women may never consider roles other than the traditional ones of wife and mother. Typically, socializing agents do not present alternative attitudinal-behavioral models nor do they require the child to question the validity of her beliefs. Therefore, a woman institutionalizes this ideology non-consciously, as fact rather than opinion, and the restrictions it plays upon her self-development may be accepted as normal and irrefutable" ([Bem and Bem 1970], in Parsons, et al 1976: 3-4).

CHAPTER SEVEN

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES AMONG THE PEASANT COMMUNITIES OF MECHA *WOREDA*

7.1 MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

The marriage customs among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim are monogamous and patri-virilocal. Customarily, the wife comes to the husband's parents' village and settles there. Sometimes, if the husband's parents are "poor" in cultivable land and the wife's parents have extra farm plots, the husband will go to his wife's parents' village and settle there.

In previous times, according to elderly key informants, fathers usually wed their sons to girls who live in villages at some three or more hours' distance by foot from the son's village, to ensure a lasting married life. The elders are of the opinion that wives coming from distant villages, and not previously acquainted with their husbands, will be obedient to their husband and in-laws. Currently, fathers arrange the marriage for their children among their village, but it should not be among people who have blood relation up to the seven generation.

Marriage (*gabəčča*) is customarily a central concern for two marrying families. The two families arrange marriage for their children based on wealth, social status, and family ties (*yäzär-haräg*). Hence, marriage is primarily an alliance between socially and economically well-to-do families rather than the union between the would-be-wife and the would-be-husband.

7.2 FORMS AND TYPES OF MARRIAGE

Marriage among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim takes two major forms with various types of arrangements: 1) Primary forms of marriage; and 2) Secondary forms of marriage.

7.2.1 Primary Forms of Marriage

Primary forms of marriage refer to marriages arranged by parents on economically equal basis through a marriage bond locally known as *yäsämanya-wəl* ("eighty-bond"). The bond is called *sämanya*¹⁰⁸ and the principle underlying that bond, the right of each to claim from the common property, is called *habtš bähäbte* (lit. "your chance is mine", "your property is mine") (Kifle Wodajo 1953: 27-29). Walker (1933:25, 35-36, in Sack 1974:33) writes that the "eighty-bond" refers to the oath taken at betrothal that includes the phrase "may the Emperor die," the disavowing of which formerly imposed the penalty of 80 Maria Theresa Thaler. The "eighty-bond" oath could also be sworn on second marriages (Sack 1974:33). Messing (1957) writes that for the Amhara "civil marriage", which he refers to as *sämanya* or "eighty-bond" marriage, is the most common form of marital union and customarily it is negotiated by the respective kin groups concerned. It seems incorrect, however, to refer to *sämanya* as a type of marriage (Sack 1974:33).

Among the studied communities, *yäsämanya gabəčča* (marriage with equal contribution of cattle and/or other properties) involves elaborate wedding ceremonies and feasts. This form of marriage arrangements take either of the two types: 1) Church-sanctioned marriage (*yäqurban gabəčča*); and 2) Non-church sanctioned customary marriage (*yäläməd(bahälawi) gabəčča*). The first one is the marriage of priests/*märigetas*/deacons, which is sanctioned by the local Orthodox Church. The second one is the marriage of the laymen (*čäwa*) which is not sanctioned by the local Orthodox Church.

¹⁰⁸ "*Sämanya* refers to the number 80 and the traditional marriage contract between a couple. This custom is particularly practiced in the rural areas of Ethiopia" (Timkehet Tefera 2002:217).

Both church-sanctioned and non-church sanctioned marriages are arranged by parents, usually by fathers or grand-fathers, at an early age of the would-be- bride in most cases and the would-be-groom in some cases. Young female pupils married to church educated deacons/*mārigetas*/priests reveal the practice of early marriage arrangements in a church-sanctioned marriage (see table 7.2 under section 4 of this chapter). This practice is contrary to the Orthodox Church doctrine, which stipulates 15 years (for girls) and 18 years (for boys) as appropriate ages of marriage. This was also the basis for the 1960 Ethiopian family code during the Imperial Regime. Of course, the local priests teach parents not to arrange marriage for their daughters before the age of 15¹⁰⁹, but they still bless early marriages as confessor-fathers (*yänäfs abbat*).

In principle, the difference between the church-sanctioned marriage and the non-sanctioned one is the first is indissoluble¹¹⁰, whereas the second can be easily dissolved. As a rule, in a church-sanctioned marriage, a priest/deacon/*mārigeta* is not allowed to divorce his surviving wife. In practice, a priest whose wife become severely sick/barren divorces or abandons her and marries another woman. A case in point is a priest in Rim peasant community who abandoned his young wife (13 years old) when she suffered from fistula due to early-pregnancy and prolonged labor (see Chapter 8, Case Study 8.1).

In general, *yäsāmanya gabəčča*, with or without church-sanctions, is a monogamous marriage based on the custom of early-marriage alliance between families of equal social and economic status. According to the local people, it is the most privileged form of marriage marked with an elaborate wedding ceremonies and feasts. Here it is important to note that non-church sanctioned *yäsāmanya gabəčča* is more common than the church-sanctioned one among the studied communities.

7.2.2 Secondary Forms of Marriage

The secondary form of marriage refers to formal as well as non-formal unions between an adult man and a young and/or adult woman without parental endowments as well as without an elaborate wedding ceremonies and feasts. The formal type of this form of marriage is locally known as *kəndəš bākənde gabəčča* (marriage without parental endowments such as cattle and/or other property), where as the non-formal type refers to *yäčən gāräd gabəčča* (marriage as a servant and wife at the same time, which is based on the payment of a specified amount of money per year/month to the wife) and *qəmmət*(occasional marriage contract of a married man with an unmarried girl or a widowed/divorced woman, *concubine*¹¹¹).

Kəndəš bākənde gabəčča is an alternative type of a formal marriage arrangement between a girl (usually beyond the age of 14) and a boy (usually beyond the age of 21) from cattle and land - “poor” families. This type of marriage can be a first marriage for a wife and her husband based on equal partnership, like *yäsāmanya gabəčča*. The only thing that makes it a secondary form of marriage is the absence of parental endowments to the newly-weds (*mušərročč*) and an elaborative wedding ceremony.

Yäčən gāräd and *qəmmət gabəčča* are non-formal unions, often for short duration and can be dissolved at any time by either partner. These types of marriage contracts can be a first marital union for unmarried adult girls or a second/subsequent marital union for divorced/widowed women. An

¹⁰⁹ The local priests believe that a girl’s body develops faster than a boy’s body. So, according to them, if a girl is not married until the age of 15, she becomes a problem to her parents because she has the physical need that has to be met. This is what they believe.

¹¹⁰ “Marriage by communion is obligatory for priests and deacons who are not permitted to have extramarital sex relations, to divorce, or to remarry upon the wife’s death” (Hoben 1963:113-4, in Sack 1974:32-33).

¹¹¹ *Concubinage* has long been widespread, notably among the Amhara, although forbidden under the Fetha Nagast (Sack 1974:35).

unmarried adult girl (above the age of 14) from a cattle - “poor” family can be *yäčən gāräd/qəmmət* to a married man, usually a trader in the nearby small town whose wife and children are in his home village, or to a divorced/widowed adult man. With specific reference to *yäčən gāräd gabəčča*, Timkehet Teferra notes that:

“*Yäčən gāräd gabəčča* is contracted by men who are looking for women and thus especially selecting them just for their sexual satisfactions. This is an old form of relationship between a man and a woman, which was practiced during the feudo-bourgeois regime in Ethiopia. At that time, a beautiful woman was selected as companion to serve her master by cooking his meals as well as to fulfill his sexual amusement during his journey. Additionally, she had to take care that her master gets good meal, which is exclusively prepared by herself, because there was always fear that he possibly might be poisoned. Therefore, she was obliged to serve him the meal and feed him as well. Simultaneously, she had always been ready for his sexual amusements. A woman who fulfills all these tasks is called *yäčən gāräd*” (Timkehet Teffera 2002:70-71).

Among the studied communities, it is common for old men, especially peasant traders, to marry young girls from cattle “poor” families in *yäčən gāräd gabəčča*, which is the least valued form of temporary marital contract since it is not *yäsəmanya gabəčča*. As a result, the wife in *yäčən gāräd* relationship receives no claim to her husband’s property. However, children born under such union are considered legitimate, but they are less accepted and respected in the local community.

In general, secondary types of marriage arrangements are less common and less privileged forms of marriage compared to primary types of marriage arrangements (*yäsəmanya gabəčča* contracts), which are most common and highly valued among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim.

7.3 TYPES AND PROCEDURES OF EARLY MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS

7.3.1 Types of Early Marriage Arrangements

In the local tradition, the most common form of marriage is early-arranged marriage. Marriage agreements take place for girls as early as before birth (see Case Study under section 4 of this chapter). Almost all young girls and adult women in the studied communities got married before the age of 14. In other words, girls are eligible for marriage before the age of 14 because they are no longer socially considered as children, whereas boys are eligible for marriage usually at the age of 18¹¹² or above.

The ethnographic data suggest that girls enter into marriage at an early age, which can be classified into four:

- 1) *yäqal kidan gabəčča* (promissory marriage, betrothal before birth);
- 2) *yanqäləbba gabəčča* (marriage of a female child who is still on the back of her mother and is fed her mother’s breast, or marriage of a girl-child between the ages of one and four);
- 3) *yämadäggo gabəčča* (marriage of a girl-child between the ages of five and nine); and
- 4) *yäləğənnät gabəčča* (marriage between female and male children, females between the ages of 10 and 14, and males between the ages of 15 and 17).

Young married girls (under the age of five) are not expected to go and live in their in-laws’ village or family. Young married girls (between the ages of five and nine) are expected to move between the two families¹¹³ (between their parents’ and their in-laws’ families) until they reach the

¹¹² Of course, there are boys married under the age of 18 in the ethnographic settings. This happens when parents arrange early marriage for sons in the daughters’ marriage just not to prepare another wedding feast.

¹¹³ According to the local people, the purpose behind moving between the two families is to socialize the child-bride in accordance with the values and norms of the two families. Furthermore, the child-bride and child-groom consider

age of ten. Young married girls (between the ages of ten and eleven) are expected to go and live with their in-laws and when they reach the age of twelve to thirteen, they are expected to establish their own *goggo* next to their in-laws' homestead. Furthermore, sexual intercourse between the young married girl (below the age of nine) and her husband is formally forbidden.¹¹⁴ According to the custom of early-childhood marriage arrangements, the mother-in-law should protect the young married girl from her son's sexual advance until she reaches *lä-aqämä hewan* (the customary age of a young married girl for sleeping with her husband, usually nine years or above). The custom of protecting the young married girl from sexual intercourse with her husband is locally known as *gedo*.

7.3.2 Procedures of Early Marriage Arrangements

Pre-Wedding Procedures

Marriage (*gabäčča*) among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim is of a contractual nature and subject to negotiation between the marrying families. All first marriages, even subsequent marriages, are usually arranged by fathers or grand-fathers. Marriage arrangements involve long procedures, which take a minimum of six months before the wedding day. Especially early marriage arrangements take a long process ranging from six months to one year in order to maintain the stability of the marriage alliance, which is primarily based on economic interests.

According to the local tradition, parents' choices of spouses for their children are affected by various factors. For instance, when choosing a husband for his daughter, the father looks at the character, conduct and working habits of the would-be-husband's father. If a father wants to select a girl-child (before she reaches the biological age for marriage or *läaqämä hewan*) for his son, the father investigates the girl-child's parental as well as personal backgrounds.

On the other hand, once the father has found an appropriate girl for his son, the father himself does not accomplish the actual securing of a bride. Instead, he assigns three "trusted" elderly men (*aggabi šəmagalločč*), best known to the two families, which intend to form a marriage alliance through their children. Customarily, early marriage arrangements involve three procedures: 1) sending of *aggabi šəmagalločč* as a marriage negotiator (*šəmagalle mälak*); 2) ceremony of fixing the number of cattle endowed by each parents and the amount of bridal gift; and 3) if the two families agree on the first and second procedures, they will fix the wedding day, and then start wedding preparations.

Overall, betrothal in an early-arranged marriage takes place only after the *aggabi šəmagalločč* make three formal visits to the girl's parents. "After completing the repeated negotiations between the two marrying families, the ceremony called *yä-qal mäsäriya* ('to assert a promise') takes place" (Sharije 1993; Ali 1994, in Timkehet Teffera 2002:78). On the final visit, the would-be-bride's and groom's parents, usually the father/grand-father, must be present. During this visit, the dowry, normally in the form of cattle and *mačča* (a certain amount of money used to buy bridal gifts such as

themselves as "siblings to each other until they reach the age of maturity. However, the bad aspect of this type of marriage is that it may be cancelled if the parents of the couple quarrel or disagree, due to any personal clashes if and when the would-be partners still live with their respective parents" (Bevan and Alula Pankhurst 1996).

¹¹⁴ Usually a married young girl remains untouched by her husband until her sexual maturity. She is taken to the house of her parents-in-law to live and grow up and at the same time to get acquainted with her new family and her husband whom she even considers as her elder brother. Both families pay attention that no intimate relation and/or sexual intercourse takes place between the couple before the girl has reached the right age. This issue is usually defined in the marriage contract. Nevertheless, there are cases in which some men will not be able to wait patiently until the girl is mature and thus, force their wives to have sexual intercourse or they occasionally rape them. In such cases, the woman suffers physically and emotionally (Birara 1980:6f, in Timkehet Teffera 2002:72). A further problem lies in the fact that the spouses usually become closely acquainted with each other after the marriage without physiological preparations for the married life. It may occur that the spouses will have no feeling for each another. This leads to separations, divorces and further social problems (Timkehet Teffera 2002).

dress, bracelet, necklace, earrings, and other jewellery) would be negotiated and fixed by the two fathers/grand-fathers in front of the *aggabi šəmagalločč*. Finally, “the marriage contract will be prepared and signed by the two fathers/grand-fathers in the presence of three witnesses: one *yänägär abbat* (lit., “father’s mouth”) as a father’s surrogate he also acts as reconciliator if marital disputes arise, and stands as guarantor for the boy in the event of future legal arbitration” (Sack 1974:31). In this connection, Bevan and Alula Pankhurst (1996) note that marriage was an economic, social and political affair, in which the elders, who alone hold bargaining power and control of the group’s wealth, conduct marital negotiations.

Among the studied communities, the formal marriage contract lists the number of cattle provided by each family, because this is important for equitable common property division upon divorce. In the case of a formal school attending child-bride, the contract also stipulates that the bride will be allowed by her husband and his parents to continue her schooling. Furthermore, according to the local tradition of early-childhood marriage (for child-brides under the age of nine), the marriage contract contains “a clause prohibiting sexual intercourse between the child-bride and her husband” (*gedo*) until the bride reaches *lä-aqəmā hewan* (in principle 15 years of age, but in practice it is from the age of 9 on).

All or part of the *mačā*¹¹⁵ would be given to the bride’s parents during a ceremony known as *yäqal-mäsäriya* (lit. “concluding the bridal-promise”). This ceremony involves eating *doro wät* with *əngära* and drinking *ṭalla* and *aräqi*, which takes place at the would-be-bride’s parents’ home. This ceremony takes place one to two months before the wedding day. In the meantime, other pre-wedding formalities have to be finalized, the wedding day would be fixed and then the two marrying families begin wedding ceremony preparations. Here it is important to note that fathers make the choice of spouse for their children and all decisions on the timing of marriage, whereas mothers have very little influence either in proposing or in deciding such serious social events, but have the duties of preparing food and drinks for the wedding ceremonies.

Wedding Ceremony Preparations and the Wedding Day

Weddings are the biggest, most festive, most costly, and longest of all social events, though weddings in the various economic strata tend to differ according to the type and amount of refreshments offered to the invited guests.

Among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim, parents of the would-be-bride and groom are responsible for sponsoring an elaborative wedding feast in accordance with their economic background. Usually, there is a great competition between the two marrying families as whose feast will be more elaborate. On both sides, parents, especially mothers, prepare *ṭalla*, *aräqi*, *ṭägğ*, *dəqus*, *teff*-flour for preparing *əngära* in large quantity, which takes a minimum of one month.

Close relatives and neighbors are normally expected to contribute to the preparations of the wedding ceremony. Close relatives have the responsibility to contribute to the wedding preparation in the form of *ṭalla*, *aräqi* and *əngära*. Normally, close relatives are expected to brew five *madəga* (clay pot used by women and girls for fetching water, approximately equivalent to 20 liters) or one *gan* (large clay pot used for brewing local beer, approximately equivalent to 100 liters) *ṭalla*, and this has to be returned when each of these relatives arrange a marriage for their children. Close relatives from far away give three to four Ethiopian *bərr* to the sponsoring parents. Neighbors usually contribute

¹¹⁵ *Mačā* refers to “a certain amount of money and different presents which the bride’s family for a forthcoming marriage expects. The costs are covered by the parents of the bride-groom. The amount of the money and/or extent of the presents is adjusted to the economic status of the giving family. An exaggerated demand of presents could eventually mean that the bride’s parents do not want to agree with the marriage proposal” (Gebreyesus 1997, in Timkehet Tefera 2002:214).

five to ten *əngära* or one to two Ethiopian *bərr* to the sponsoring family, which must be returned when each neighbor arranges a marriage for his children. In addition to material and/or financial contributions, male and female neighbors are normally expected to assist the wedding sponsoring parents in labor. Male neighbors assist in building a temporary house for serving wedding guests (*das*), slaughtering cattle, cutting meat, and in organizing the preparation of food and drinks (*tälla, aräqi, əngära* and *wät*) and serving guests, whereas female neighbors assist in cooking *wät*, baking *əngära* and fetching water for the wedding ceremony.

On the wedding day, both parents invite relatives and neighbors to take part and entertain in the wedding feast. The most commonly preferred wedding (*särg*) season is during the Ethiopian Easter (*fasika*), April to May. During this season, members of the peasant communities have already gathered in their harvest so that they can enjoy the wedding ceremony without thinking about it. Furthermore, close relatives who come from far-away villages can attend the wedding ceremony even for two weeks without being worried about their harvest. In addition to the season's convenience in the agricultural cycle, there are no fasting days for the two consecutive months after Easter. In other words, wedding among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim does not take place during peak agricultural periods nor during Orthodox Christian fasting times (*yäfasika tom*) or on the usual fasting days of Wednesday and Friday. Traditionally, the wedding days take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays between the months of April and May.

The wedding day is the most important rite of passage. In this connection, Timkehet Teferra notes that, "In the Amhara tradition, the wedding day is one of the important days in a lifetime of a person. The wedding ceremony is performed with traditional songs accompanied by *käbäro* (drum), hand clapping, ululation and the traditional dance" (2002:82).

The bride-groom comes with his ten best-men (*mizewočč*) to the bride's family on the eve (*yäsärg wazema*) of the wedding day. The bride and the groom, accompanied by the groom's *mizewočč*, depart¹¹⁶ after the lunch ceremony, being blessed by a group of elders (usually 10 elderly men including the confessor-father and other local priests). But before taking the child-bride away, the first best-man (*wanna mize*) of the groom first has to perform the ritual of oath (*qalä mähälla*) to treat the child-bride like his sister, to keep her secret, and to assist her in every respect. He receives the *qalä mähälla* from her parents and he, in turn, extends this *qalä mähälla* to the bride's mother-in-law (to treat her like her child, to keep her secret and to teach her feminine activities) while the bride mounts a horse.

On arrival, the elders perform the ritual of well-coming and blessing the spouses. After this ritual, the groom performs the ritual of slaughtering a chicken and jumping over it, which customarily signifies the well-being of the newly-weds. After that, the bride and the groom enter into the bridal hut (*čagula bet*) with the groom's *mizewočč*. The bride should be carried by the *wanna mize* to the *čagula bet*. On her wedding day, a bride should not touch ground or the floor. This is just the local custom (*ləmad* or *bahəl*). During the wedding feast and celebration, the child-bride is expected to remain completely covered with the white wedding cotton (*šamma*) and only the groom's *mizewočč* and his family are allowed to see her uncovered in the *čagula bet*. If the bride is five years old or above, she and her groom, remain inside the *čagula bet* for ten days accompanied by *mizewočč*. After

¹¹⁶ The bride is then placed on a horse (not on a mule, because it is considered that she might become barren if she rode on a mule) and, among a great din of men's songs and clatter of horses' feet, she is taken to the home of her bridegroom (Ezra G/Medhin1953:29-33). "Because of the usually long-distance walk, a horse or a mule will be prepared for the bride. She is accompanied by a walking group of people (mostly men) who sing wedding songs uninterruptedly. The bride face is covered with a veil throughout the whole time. Another variation is the continuation of the evening occasion in the house of the bride's parents, so that the departure of the bridal party will be carried out on the following morning. There are also other organizational varieties" (Timkehet Tefera 2002:196)

ten days, the bride's parents invite her, her groom and *mizewočč*. This invitation is locally known as *mäls* (the date of revisiting the bride's parents).

During the wedding night and afterwards, the child-bride (below the age of 9) should be protected by her mother-in-law from the sexual advance of her husband since it is in principle agreed upon by the two marrying families in the formal marriage contract (the custom of *gedo*). However, in practice, the husband, usually 7 to 12 years older than the child-bride, forces her to sleep with him or to have sexual intercourse with him even before she reaches the age of nine.

7.3.3 The Economics of Early Marriage Arrangements

In the study area, the dominant form of marriage is early-arranged marriage. Early marriage arrangements are primarily based on parental endowments, normally cattle, to the newly weds. The size of endowments (gifts exchanged between the families) are strictly balanced and marriages are commonly between families of equal economic standing. Accordingly, the two marrying families give equal number of cattle to the newly-weds. The would-be-husband's parents are also expected to give *mača*, normally in terms of money. The amount of *mača* ranges from 60 to 100 Ethiopian *bərr* depending on the number of cattle endowed to the bride by her parents. Most of the time, the number of cattle given to the bride is two and in this case her *mača* will be 100 *bərr*. If she is provided with one cattle, the *mača* will be 50 or 60 *bərr* depending on the size of the cattle. In short, the availability of cattle as dowry for both girls and boys determines when parents arrange marriage for their children.

Normally, the newly weds live with the husband's family until they are ready to live on their own. When the newly-weds are ready to live on their own, the husband's father is responsible for building a new *goğgo* for his son and his wife near his homestead. When the newly-weds establish their own *goğgo*, they receive economic support from parents of both sides. Both parents are expected to give some grains, *teff*, *dəqus* and household utensils for the newly-weds. This is traditionally known as *goğgon mäwča* (parental economic support provided for a newly weds during they establish their own hut). The husband's father, if he has extra farm-land, is also expected to offer a minimum of one *qada* farm plot (approximately equivalent to 0.25 hectare) to his son from his own holdings. Otherwise, the married son applies to the local PA, since he is considered as an adult man, 18 years old or above, and liable for getting some land as a new household head. In some cases, the husband will come to his wife's parents' village and cultivate her inherited plot of land. However, this could be possible, only if the husband's father has no extra land to allot to his newly married son and if the wife's father is not alive and her widowed mother does not have an adult son.

With regard to the issue of "equal matching" in early (first) marriage arrangements among the Amharas, Sack notes that, "Amhara usually contract the first marriage on the basis of equal ownership of property. Parents are obliged to draw up a written agreement, signed in the presence of witnesses, enumerating the amount of land and moveable property the boy's father agrees to give his son at the time of his marriage" (1974: 31). Weissleder further notes that:

"The most important indicator of a farm's survival has been the nature of endowment through the founding marriage contract, which establishes capital stock and the initial land holdings, as well as the household's potential land claims through the two spouses' separate descent corporation. Marriage contracts have differed substantially by class and previous marital status of the partners, but the overall guiding principle for marriage has been equality of contribution. Land resources could come from parental contributions (*gulema*) or from claims made through either spouse. For many young households, tenancy- requiring a payment of a quarter or a third of the harvest—has been a common first step in building household resources. New households often expected to build land resources by claims on parental holdings once their parents' estate has been dispersed" (Weissleder 1965:106, 191, 199-204, in McCann 1995:73).

Of course, among the studied agrarian communities, rich families arrange marriage for their children with rich ones so that they can transfer their assets to their children. In the meantime, the marrying families can prepare feasts and invite each other turn by turn. In agrarian societies, according to Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2002), marriage is an event of deep economic importance for two major reasons. First, it typically marks the onset not only of a new household but also of a new production unit, e.g., a family farm. In this context, assets brought to marriage determine the start-up capital of the newly formed household. Second, in an environment where asset accumulation takes time and is particularly difficult for the poor, assets brought to marriage play a paramount role in shaping the lifetime prosperity of newly formed households. This entails that well married daughters can expect a life of relative comfort while poorly married daughters may spend most of their life in utter poverty. Consequently, assortative matching between spouses - the 'rich' marry the 'rich', the 'poor' marry the 'poor' - not only increases inequality, it also reduces social mobility due to intergenerational transfers of assets at marriage (Fafchamps and Quisumbing 2002).

Many girls and boys in cattle- and land-rich peasant families get married at an early age. In this context, early marriage is an economic reality related with parental wealth in terms of cattle and land. Here it is important to note that such kind of early marriage arrangements are common, particularly for girls from cattle-“rich” families, whereas girls from cattle “poor” families have no opportunities to get married early. In some cases, girls from cattle-“poor” families can get married to boys (employed young farmers) from cattle and land “poor” families in a less privileged type of formal marriage, marriage without parental endowments or cattle (*kəndəš bəkənde gabəčča*) or they can get married to an adult married man in the least privileged type of non-formal marriage (*yäčən gāräd gabəčča*). The other options for a girl from a “poor” family are: 1) to become a domestic servant in a “rich” peasant family in her locality, which is rare; or 2) to migrate to the nearby towns and then settle there as domestic servant or prostitute (*setəñña adari, šärmuṭa*). In short, very young girls from cattle-“rich” families are victims of early-arranged marriage due to the availability of cattle for their dowry, whereas girls from cattle “poor” families have no opportunities to get married early due to lack of cattle for their dowry. Overall, betrothal in early-arranged marriage occurs between families of equal social and economic status since parents arrange early marriages for their children just to forge economic and social alliances between the two marrying families.

In general, the marriage arrangement pattern in both Bachema and Rim peasant communities is best characterized as an “assortative matching”¹¹⁷ process driven by economic factors. More specifically, the early marriage arrangement custom favors wealth in terms of cattle since it is primarily based on equal matching or strict reciprocity between the marrying families. Parental endowments to the newly-weds are mainly cattle (for daughters and sons) and land (mostly for sons). In this context, intergenerational transfer of assets takes place principally at the time of marriage. This pattern of marriage arrangement results in a relatively low intersocietal mobility since the “rich” families marry with the “rich” ones, whereas the “poor” families marry with the “poor”.

7.4 MARITAL DISSOLUTION-DIVORCE AND SERIAL MARRIAGES

7.4.1 Prevalence and Trend of Divorce

In principle, among the studied peasant communities, monogamous marriage is encouraged and its stability is valued. However, in practice, marriage has become an extremely flexible institution. As a

¹¹⁷ Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2002) distinguished “assortative matching” from assets brought to marriage and separated factors that affect intergenerational transfers from those that reflect the relative scarcity of brides and grooms. By focusing on transfers at marriage from one family to the other, they examined the totality of assets brought to marriage, whether these were acquired from parents or other sources prior to marriage or received at the time of marriage.

result, divorce and re-marriage are common, especially before the child-bride reaches the locally appropriate age for sexual intercourse (usually 9 years or above) and childbearing. In this context, early marriage is the major cause of early and frequent divorce as well as re-marriages.

The frequency of re-marriages in the studied peasant communities indicates the highest incidence of marital dissolution or divorce. The following table shows the frequency of serial marriages (first, second, third and even fourth marriage):

Table 7.1: Spouses' Number of Marriages Among Surveyed Households (cf. Appendix 7)

Number of Marriages	Husband		Wife	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
1. First Marriage	227	64.86	241	68.86
2. Second Marriage	113	32.29	106	30.28
3. Third Marriage	9	2.57	3	0.86
4. Fourth Marriage	1	0.28	0	0
Total	350	100	350	100

The table shows that the second marriages for both husbands and wives are more prevalent than third and fourth marriages, especially for wives. Here it is worth mentioning that wives who got married for the first time above the age of 14 (locally late age of first marriage for girls) were second wives for a divorced/widowed man.

In line with the present study, Helen Pankhurst (1992:115), in her study of Menz in Amhara Region, reports that the average number of marriages was 3.3 among a sample of 95 households. McCann (1987:54) also notes that, "Rates of divorce were high, arranged first marriages were not expected to last, and an individual could expect three to four marriages over a life time. Most mature households, therefore, were based on second or third marriages."

Concerning the high frequency of divorce and re-marriage among rural households in North Wollo of the Amhara region, Sørensen notes that:

"Despite the high frequency of divorce, most people re-marry very soon after divorce. One reason is the division of labor in the Amhara household in which both genders are needed to fulfill all of the working tasks within it. Re-marrying immediately after a divorce counts especially for men, who have no experience of domestic tasks (for example, cooking), since this is regarded as exclusively the women's domain. A woman is able to manage without a husband to a greater extent, although female-headed households often suffer from the absence of male labor, especially for agricultural tasks, as this is regarded as the men's domain" (Sørensen 2003:14-15).

In general, according to Sørensen (2003), a particular characteristic of Amhara household is the high frequency of divorce and serial marriages.

According to elderly key informants, divorce was undesirable and less frequent in previous times, but now it has become frequent and accelerated among the studied peasant communities.

Currently, in both Bachema and Rim peasant communities, many young girls who are still attending primary school are already divorced. The following table shows Bachema and Rim Primary School early-married girls' marital condition:

Table 7.2: Early-Married Female Pupils' Marital Conditions (Bachema and Rim Primary Schools, cf. Appendix 8A and B)

Husband's Profession	Frequency		Conditions of Marriage			
			Dissolved		Not-Dissolved	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1. Young farmer	95	62.50	76	80.00	19	20.00
2. Formal school student/teacher/trader	45	29.61	9	20.00	36	80.00
3. Church educated/ <i>mārijetas</i> /priest/deacons	12	7.89	1	8.33	11	91.67
Total	152	100	86	56.58	66	43.42

In the case of a divorce in early-arranged marriages, the marrying families equally divide cattle endowed to their children upon their marriage. This is possible through elderly men (*aggabi šamagalločč*) who are responsible for settling marital dissolutions in their locality. This is not the case for secondary forms of marriage such as *yäčän gāräd gabäčča* in which the wife is at the same time a servant since the marriage is based on the payment of a specified amount of money per year/month to the wife. The following studies among the peasant communities of Amhara region also confirm the case in point.

During early divorce, young women have little share of the property except what they brought in the form of parental endowments. In the case of divorce, each of the spouses retains the ownership of the assets they brought into the marriage. Assets, apart from land and livestock, are often divided so as to reflect the gender division of labor: the husband keeps the farm utensils, the wife the domestic utensils (Sørensen 2003:16). Helen Pankhurst (1992:112) further notes that, “Overall, the position of endowments in the marital scene is determined in a way that allows mobility. Feasts are, in general, of an almost equal nature, although the parents of the bride can spend more on the first *sārg* ceremony; wedding gifts are on a small scale and are made by the groom; land is not exchanged, livestock rights are clearly defined for ease of separation, and labor expended on a homestead can theoretically be translated into grain or money, and thus be repaid.” In the case of divorce, the wife takes her counted property plus a share of the wealth (*habtš bā-habte*); in reality, women take from the moveable assets, which are livestock and grain (Bevan and Alula Pankhurst 1996).

7.4.2 Gender-Specific Reasons for Marital Dissolution-Divorce

With regard to gender-specific reasons for marital dissolution, Helen Pankhurst notes that, “men complained about women’s adultery, barrenness, not keeping the house properly, disobedience and challenging their authority. Women, on the other hand, indicated being beaten by their husbands, men’s wastage of money, men’s adultery, restrictions on their mobility and giving them too much work as reasons for divorce” (1992:115).

Among the studied peasant communities, there are various reasons for marital dissolution or divorce. A married adult woman (aged 20 or above) can be divorced for infertility, reproductive health problems or for bearing only daughters. The infertility of a marital union is one of the causes of marital dissolution because bearing children, especially sons, is considered as the goal of married life, but that husbands could be infertile, or marriages having off-springs which are genetically “programmed” (more daughters than sons, certain inheritable diseases etc) is not known. Husbands also desert their wives due to economic problems. In other words, aggravated rural poverty and being unable to carry out marital roles properly lead to divorce. Here it is important to note that socio-economic changes are the major driving force for both the increasing trend of early marriage and divorce in the studied peasant communities.

In both Bachema and Rim peasant communities, very young girls who are still attending primary school are already divorced (see table 7.2 above and Appendix 8A and B). The major reasons for such divorces are:

1. parents’, especially fathers’, unwillingness to continue the marriage alliance,
2. in-laws unwillingness to allow married girls to attend formal school,
3. husbands not attending school or being farmers,
4. educated/school attending elder brothers’ pressure on their fathers’ to dissolve their sisters’ early-arranged marriage and then to allow them to attend/continue formal schooling, despite their fathers’ desire to continue the marriage alliance,
5. educated relatives’, especially aunts’ and/or uncles’, influence,
6. formal school-attending village girls’ influence or peer-group pressure,

7. young farmer husbands' migration to towns due to parents' impoverishment in cultivable land, and
8. cattle impoverished fathers' desire to get their early-married daughters' equal share of cattle (see Case Study below).

For these reasons, early-arranged marriages are subject to early dissolution. In most cases, when parents, usually fathers, of either a child-bride or a groom do not want to continue the marriage alliance, they easily dissolve the alliance without the knowledge of the child-bride and her groom. Marital dissolution in the case of early-married children is fully initiated by either of the marrying families. Sometimes, the grown-up bride or groom ask for the dissolution of the arranged marriage when either of them or both of the youngsters want to attend the formal school, which is mostly initiated by the presence of a formal school in the local community and by seeing school attending children in their locality. Sometimes, in the absence of school attending children in a village, educated close relatives who live in the nearby town would motivate early-married girls to attend school by convincing their parents, especially fathers. Above all, educated elder brothers are playing vital roles in convincing their fathers to allow the younger sister/sisters to attend/continue formal schooling after divorce (in the case of farmer husbands) or within their marriage (in the case of formal school attending husbands). Here it is important to note that young girls who got married to a priest are high-risk groups because of their husbands' unwillingness neither to dissolve the marriage nor to allow them to continue their formal schooling (see Chapter 9, Case Study 9.3).

7.4.3 Divorce as a Survival Strategy

Land shortages and rural family impoverishment resulted in the highest prevalence rates of early marriage and divorce.

Currently, a husband who owns a small plot or infertile land divorces his wife and re-marries a divorced woman who has a better plot of land. On the other hand, a divorced woman can get land from the local PA as a female-headed household and re-marries a divorced land-poor man. This is the case for adult spouses. However, in the case of young spouses, or child-brides, the impoverished parents, especially fathers, can dissolve their children's, especially daughters', marriage in order to get their equal share of cattle back as a survival strategy. The following case study illustrates the economics of early marriage and divorce as a strategy for survival among the studied peasant communities.

Case Study: Chekilit Muchie,¹¹⁸ a female pupil who got married during her baptism and got divorced at the age of 10, from Bachema Peasant Community of Mecha *Woreda*

Chekilit, 16 years old, was a 6th grade student in January 2004. She was betrothed before her birth and got married at the day of her baptism (80 days after birth). This is locally known as *yāqal kidan gabəčča* (promissory marriage). For Chekilit, now 16, her early marriage arrangement was outside her memory.

Chekilit's father had promised to give her in marriage to a 7-year-old son from a cattle-'rich' family residing in a different peasant community within the same district, Mecha *Woreda*. During that time, Chekilit's father was 'rich' in cattle. After her birth, her would-be parents-in-law came to visit her mother in her confinement, and the parents from both sides discussed on the wedding day as well as on the number of heads of cattle to be endowed for their marrying children. The wedding day

¹¹⁸ This is a fictive name given by the researcher. Checklist's life story is a result of a three-year follow-up case study among one of the rural villages of Bachema Peasant Association.

was decided to be on the day of Chekilit's baptism. They also agreed that each side would endow three heads of cattle as a dowry for the would-be child-bride and child-groom.

The wedding ceremony for Chekilit, eighty-day child-bride, and her 7-year-old child-groom, was simply a formal ceremony to declare that the two children had got married formally and that the respective families got allied through their children's formal marriage ceremony. After this wedding arrangement, there would be no other wedding ceremony. The married children were expected to grow-up together as brother and sister¹¹⁹ in the child-groom's parents' house and finally they would live together as husband and wife, provided their parents' willingness to continue the marriage alliance. Otherwise, the marriage would be subject to dissolution at any time based on the parents', particularly the fathers', decision.

According to the local marriage custom, Chekilit's parents endowed her with three *tağa* (calves) as dowry and her husband was also given the same number of cattle by his parents. This early marriage alliance was based on 'strict reciprocity' or equal economic alliance between the two marrying families. This was the case 16 years ago in 1980 E.C. In those days, there was no nearby formal school¹²⁰ in Chekilit's parents' village. It was not also common to send children, especially girls, to a formal school.

In 1991 E.C, 10 years after Chekilit's early-childhood marriage, her father lost his cattle. He had not even a pair of oxen left for ploughing, nor cows for milking. Until then, Chekilit's three heads of cattle, endowed to her as dowry, had multiplied and became 12 (4 oxen and 8 cows). These heads of cattle were herded in her husband's village together with her husband's cattle, which had also multiplied.

Chekilit's father tried to devise a strategy for getting his early-married daughter's equal share of cattle back from her parents-in-law's village. At this time, a new first cycle primary school, the present Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), was established nearby their village, and the school committees and the local government officials (PA leaders) were agitating so that parents in the village would send their children to the newly established formal school. This was a good opportunity for Chekilit's impoverished father, and a basic justification for dissolving his daughter's early-arranged marriage by sending her to school, so that he could easily get her equal share of cattle from her in-laws. His early-married daughter would get the chance to attend formal school after the dissolution of the marriage alliance.

In order to convince Chekilit's father-in-law, her father related the idea of divorcing his daughter to the need for girls' education, which was and still is the concern of the government. He justified his decision by saying:

"Previously I was not aware of the value of female education and I wrongly decided on my daughter's fate. But now, since a new school is established in front of our village and since the school committees are informing us to send our children to school; and since the government is against early marriage for girls, I have now decided to get my daughter divorced and then to send her to school".

Since Chekilit's father's justification was supported by the government at the local (PA) level, Chekilit's father-in-law has accepted the decision. Consequently, Chekilit got divorced at the age of

¹¹⁹ Parents believe that when the would-be child-bride and child-groom grow-up together as sister and brother, they would develop an intimate relationship and this would be the basis for a stable marital union. Of course, this idea is commonly shared by the local people and viewed as a positive result of early-arranged marriage.

¹²⁰ Of course, there was one first cycle rural primary school, Yechalie Primary School (grades 1 - 6), in the same Peasant Association. This school was established in 1975 E. C (1983), but it was far from Chekilit's parents' village. There was also a full cycle primary school, Merawi Primary School (grades 1 - 8) in the capital town of the study area, which is 5 km away from Chekilit's village.

10 before she established her own *goğğo*. Since the marriage had been arranged on economically equal basis, her father took her share of cattle (4 oxen and 8 cows)

After getting divorced in 1991 E.C (1998/99), Chekilit got registered in Grade 1 at Bachema first cycle Primary School (grades 1- 4), nearby her parents' village, Kotekotema. After successfully completing her first cycle education, she was transferred to Merawi full cycle primary school, 5 km away from her parents' village. The way from home to school is a 90 minutes walk. Every school-day, she and her elder brother with other pupils from their village, Kotekotema, make the 5 km journey to attend the second cycle primary school in Merawi, the capital town of the *woreda*. During the 1996 E.C (2003/2004) academic year, she was attending Grade 6 and her academic performance was good.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PREVALENCE, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF EARLY MARRIAGE AMONG THE PEASANT COMMUNITIES OF MECHA *WOREDA*

8.1 PREVALENCE AND TREND OF EARLY MARRIAGE

In Bachema and Rim peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda*, almost all adult women were married before the age of 18. Of course, marriage before the age of 18 involves girls as well as boys. However, early-childhood marriage, as early as 80 days of birth, is most common for girls. There is also a big age difference between husbands and wives, with husbands usually 8 years older than their wives (see Appendix 7). Currently, the practice of early-childhood marriage, particularly for girls, has become a norm. As a result, almost all young girls are married off at the age of 12 (see Appendix 8A and B). The following table reveals the trend of early marriage among the studied peasant communities:

**Table 8.1: Mothers' and Daughters' Age-Group at First Marriage
(cf. Appendix 7 and Appendix 8A and B)**

Age-Group at First Marriage	Mothers		Daughters	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
80 days - 3 years	0	0	16	10.53
4-6	6	1.71	63	41.45
7-9	68	19.43	71	46.71
10-12	181	51.71	2	1.31
13-14	73	20.86	0.00	0.00
15-17	21	6.00	0.00	0.00
18-20	1	0.29	0.00	0.00
Total	350	100	152	100.00

The table indicates that almost all daughters (98.69%) got married between 80 days of birth to 9 years, whereas almost all mothers (99.71%) got married between the ages of 10 to 17. More specifically, the majority of mothers (51.71%) were married between the ages of 10 to 12, whereas the majority of daughters were married between the ages of 7 to 9 (46.71%), followed by 4 to 6 years (41.45%). In short, the average age at first marriage for the mothers' generation is 11, whereas it is 8 years for the daughters' generation. This entails that the trend of the age at first marriage is getting down from 10 to 7 years and from 12 to 9¹²¹ years in the studied peasant communities. This trend is contrary to the general assumption that early marriage was the norm for the "older generation." Of course, older women were also married before the age of 18, but their age at first marriage was not as early as the "younger generations of women." The elderly key informants also confirmed this trend by stating that in previous times, both girls and boys were expected to get married at the age of 13 to 15 years (for girls) and 18 to 23 years (for boys).

8.2 CAUSES OF EARLY MARRIAGE

The reviewed studies on the practice of early marriage have attempted to identify various reasons for the persistence of the practice at the international, regional and national levels. International and regional research reports on the issue at hand focus on the economic factor because of the commonly shared view that poverty is its driving force. At the national level, the reviewed studies on the forces

¹²¹ Alemante Amara (2004) also found that the age at first marriage for girls is going down from 12 to 9 years among the peasant community of East Gojjam Administrative Zone of the Amhara Region of Ethiopia.

promoting and sustaining early marriage in the Ethiopian context revolve around economic and socio-cultural factors.

In the present study, the ethnographic data gathered through in-depth personal interviews with parents, key informants, councils of elders, community and religious leaders among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim reveal various interactive and complex socio-economic and socio-cultural explanations for the persistence, and even the increasing trend of the practice, which are further elaborated by the exploratory workshop participants. The most commonly mentioned reasons for early marriage among the peasant communities of the study area are listed under the following table:

Table 8.2: Parents and Local Peoples’ Reasons for the Practice of Early Marriage (Ethnographic Data and Workshop Participants’ Group-Discussion Results, May 2003 - September 2004, Mecha Woreda)

Socio-Economic Reasons and Life Insecurities	Socio-Cultural Reasons, Gender Ideologies and Awareness-Legal Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to get land from the local Peasant Association (PA) • to forge marriage alliances with those in power (<i>haylna seltan kalačāw gar lāmāwādağāt</i>) • to maintain the family’s land holding (<i>yā-betāsāb yāmāret yəzota lāmāskābār</i>) • to forge an economic alliance with the “rich” family and to consolidate-improve the family’s economic status-wealth (<i>kā-habtam betāsāb gar lāmāwādağāt, habt lāmčāmār</i>) • to strengthen ties between the marrying families for social as well as economic protection and security (<i>yagābuñ zəmdānna lāmātānakār</i>) • availability of assets (cattle and land) and other properties (<i>habt, nəbrāt bāmānoru</i>) • well-to-do parents’ desire to gain fame by sponsoring an elaborative wedding feast as a demonstration of wealth and respect (<i>habt lāmasayāt, dəggəs lāmablat, kəbər əna muggāsa lāmāgnāt</i>) • impoverished parents’ desire to avoid the expense of preparing wedding feasts for each of their children (<i>yā-sārg wāčč lāmāqānās</i>) • to get betrothal gifts from the groom’s family (<i>mač’a lāmāgnāt</i>) • to reduce the number of daughters in the family (<i>set ləğoččən bāmādar betāsāb lāmāqānās</i>) • to get additional labor support in the family: daughters-in-law’s labor (in most cases) and sons-in-law’s labor (in some cases) (<i>tāčāmari gulbāt lāmāgnāt-- yāləğ məšt, yāləğ bal gulbāt fəlāga</i>) • to prepare wedding feasts in order to invite those who invited them (<i>wānfāl lāmāmālās</i>) • to get back one’s material or financial contributions in another’s wedding feast (<i>yāšomutən fälla, yāgagārutən əngāra, yāsātutən arāqi, bərr lāmasəmālās</i>) • the local “economic belief system” that “early marriage would make the early-wedded children prosperous” when they reach the age of adulthood if the endowed cattle multiplies itself (<i>bā-ləgnāt sigabu habtam yəhonalu bāmālāt</i>) • parents’ desire to inherit their property, mainly land, to their children before passing away (<i>sanmot habtačāwən lāmasawāq, habt lāmākāfāfāl, māret lāmawurās</i>) • parents’ desire to see their children married and settled before passing away or becoming old (<i>salmot-guləbāte saydākəm yāləğ abāba- wog lāmāyāt</i>) • to continue and extend the family lineage (<i>yāzār harəg lāmātkat əna lāmabzat</i>) • to have “many children” for social as well as economic supports and to maximize girls’ reproductive capacity (<i>ləğoččə fwuari qābari səlāhonu bəzu ləğ əndiwoldu bāmālāt</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents’ desire to secure their daughter’s future and protect her from the dangers of pre-marital sex and its social consequences (<i>təgg təyaz bāmālāt əna fəračča əna səgat lāmaswogād, argəza-wolda bətmāta tawardānnaləč bāmālāt</i>) • parents’ fear of their daughters’ being unmarried after the age of 14 (<i>ədmiyačāw saygāffā lāmādar, yākāle ləğ qoma qārūč əndayəbal, kāmṭalat əndaymālṭat, kadāgāč tasamanaləč bāmālāt</i>) • to ensure girls’ obedience and subservience in their marital family (<i>lābaloččačāw əna lā-amatoččačāw tazaž əndihonu</i>) • to establish one’s own house and lead a married life (<i>goğgo lāmawuṭat, tadar lāmāyaz</i>) • respect for the words of the elderly people negotiating the marriage alliance between the marrying families (<i>yā-aggabi šəmagəlloččən qal lāmākbār</i>) • need for social and cultural entertainment through wedding feasts (<i>dəggəs lāmablat əna lāmādāsāt</i>) • high social respect given to parents who have married children (<i>mādar əndkəbər səlāmiqotūr</i>) • lack of awareness about the dangers of early marriage (<i>yālə ədme gabəčča yāmiaskātəlāwən gudad alāmawāq</i>) • lack of giving enough attention to the girl-child and mothers at the woreda and PA levels (<i>lāset ləğoččə əna lāənnatoččə təkurāt alāmāsṭūt</i>) • lack of awareness and effective enforcement of the current law legislating against early marriage at the woreda and PA levels (<i>yālə ədme gabəčča yāmikāklāwun həgg bāmīgābba alāmawāq əna tīgəbarawi alāmādarəg</i>)

The table reveals that the reasons for the practice of early marriage among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* are diverse and complex. The most common explanations for the persistence, even for the increasing trend of early marriage revolve around socio-economic reasons and life insecurities. Among the socio-economic reasons, the need to forge economic, social and even political alliances with families or individuals who are economically, socially and politically powerful is the major contributing factor to the prevalence of the practice in the study area. With specific reference to the need for forging an economic alliance through early marriage, the marriage arrangement practice is primarily based on “equal-matching” (mainly in terms of cattle) or “strict reciprocity” (parental endowments and bridal gifts) between the marrying families (see Chapter 7). As a result, in order not to miss the opportunity of creating an alliance with economically powerful families, parents promise to give their daughter in marriage even before her birth (see Case Study in Chapter 7). In short, among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim, parents arrange early marriages for their children mainly for socio-economic reasons and the increasing trend of the practice can be attributed to aggravating rural poverty and life insecurities due to the prevalence of epidemic diseases, such as malaria. Besides socio-economic reasons and life insecurities, socio-cultural reasons and gender ideologies contribute to the relatively higher prevalence rate of early marriage for girls. From the parents’ point of view, the need to secure their daughters’ future and to protect them from the dangers of pre-marital sex and its social consequences are the main socio-cultural reasons why they marry off their daughters at an early age. As a result, the custom of giving very young girls (as young as two years or below) away in marriages prevails (see table 8.1 and Appendix 8A and B).

Based on the ethnographic data and the results of the exploratory workshop, the underlying motives behind early marriage, particularly for girls, are presented below.

8.2.1 Economic Motives and Life Insecurities

The economic motives behind early marriage and life insecurities contributing to its increasing trend among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim are highlighted as follows:

- ***Early marriage as a strategy to get a farm plot from the local Peasants’ Association (PA):*** An adult son (18 years or above) can only become the head of the household and claim for land from the local PA if, and only if, he gets married and establishes his own *goğğo*. Currently, this is one of the major economic motives behind early-arranged marriages for girls in the studied peasant communities. In this context, there is a need for assessing the effect of the current rural land redistribution policy on the prevalence rate of early marriage among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* and then to devise locally appropriate strategy to address the issue.
- ***Early marriage as a strategy to maintain the existing family landholding:*** The local tradition stipulates that inheritance of important family holdings, such as land, follow the male line. Accordingly, the family landholding passes on through married adult sons (18 years or above). Land-rich peasant families with adult sons arrange a marriage for them in order to maintain their landholdings. In most cases, their wives are below the age of 11 (see Appendix 8A and B).
- ***Early marriage as a strategy for forging an economic alliance between families:*** Economically well-to-do peasant families forge economic alliances with families of the same economic background through their children’s marriage.
- ***Early marriage as a strategy to forge marriage alliances with those in power:*** The local PA leaders are responsible for administering the local land and redistributing the extra farm-land to

the peasant households. In order to secure access to farm-land, peasant families use early marriage as a strategy for forging and strengthening social, even political ties with locally respected and powerful families or individuals.

- ***The need to have many children for family labor and parental social and economic security:*** Among the traditional agricultural communities of Bachema and Rim, children are still the major sources of family labor and parental social and economic security. This motivates parents to arrange early marriages for their daughters so that they can start childbearing as early as possible (see Chapter 5).
- ***Large family size and rural family poverty:*** Due to the aggravating rural poverty, peasant families with many children use to arrange an early marriage for all of their children at the same time in order to avoid the problem of preparing wedding feasts for each of them. For example, a two-year-old was married in the same batch as a 9-year-old (see Chapter 9, Case Study 9.4).
- ***Early marriage as a strategy for reducing poor parents' economic vulnerability:*** Poor parents use the early marriage of their daughter as a strategy for reducing their own economic vulnerability, shifting the economic burden related to a daughter's care to the husband's family. In this context, a daughter is seen as an economic burden and married off as a means of economic survival, i.e., if the daughter is married early her parents has one mouth less to feed. Poor parents also hope that their daughter could lead a better life. The underlying reason behind this strategy is closely linked with the patrilocal residence pattern (see Chapter 5).
- ***Early marriage as a strategy for securing children's future:*** Securing children's future through marriage alliance is the major concern of peasant families due to aggravated rural poverty and epidemic diseases such as malaria among the studied peasant communities. As a result, the parents desire to see their children married or settled before becoming sick, old or passing away.

In short, economic motives and life insecurities are the major driving forces of early marriage among the studied peasant communities. However, these factors do not tell us why particularly girls are married off early, rather than boys in the studied peasant communities.

8.2.2 Socio-Cultural Justifications and Gender Ideologies

Though the economic motives and life insecurities are the major driving forces of early marriage for both sexes among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim, the socio-cultural justifications for early marriage are gender-specific. More specifically, parents' decisions on arranging an early marriage for their daughters are usually based on gender differential socio-cultural expectations and values. As a result, compared to boys, most girls got married at an early age for the following reasons:

- ***to avoid the qomo qär-stigma (fear of girls being unmarriageable after the age of 14):*** If a girl is not married until the age of 14, she is locally considered as undesirable for marriage, which is a shame to her family and herself. In order to avoid this social stigma and ensure that their daughter gets a husband at the socially acceptable age, parents promise to give the female-child in marriage even before her birth, which, in turn, has a negative impact on young girls' health and education. Of course, some parents are aware about the dangers of early marriage for young girls, but at the same time, they worry about the social consequences of delaying their daughter's marriage.

- ***for securing girls' future and protecting them from the dangers of pre-marital sex and its social consequences:*** Virginity until marriage for girls is highly valued among the studied peasant communities. The preservation of a girl's virginity until marriage is primarily a concern of the parents responsible for "watching" the girl properly. For this reason, parents believe that early marriage for daughters is essential to protect them from pre-marital sex. Parents also believe that daughters must be married young to avoid social as well as economic risks and hoping that the carefully arranged marriage would benefit their daughters both socially and economically. In short, socio-cultural customs related to "virginity" encourages parents to arrange an early marriage for their daughters, which, in turn, affects girls' overall-development. The ways in which young married girls manage to balance social expectations and real life challenges are demonstrated and analyzed in the extended case studies (see case studies in Chapter 8 and 9).
- ***to ensure girls' obedience and subservience in their marital family:*** According to the local tradition, girls and women are expected to be obedient and subservient to their husband and in-laws. In order to ensure this expectation, girls are married off at an early age. This, in turn, negatively affects girls' educational participation since formal schooling, especially above the first cycle of primary education, is perceived as making girls more assertive and disobedient to their husband (see Chapter 6).
- ***for maintaining gender roles appropriate to girls and women:*** In the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim, a girl's social status depends on her being able to accomplish her socially ascribed roles of being a mother and wife. This also motivates parents to marry off their daughters at an early age so that they can achieve social recognition in their community in these "capacities." This gender-specific social value attached to the social status of "girl-women" reinforces the need for marrying girls at an early age and reduces their self-identity and opportunities for receiving formal education and other skills, which are economically useful for themselves as well as for their family. Ultimately, this also contributes to the low development of their community. Of course, this consideration stems from the unavailability of social and economic options for girls and women other than being a wife and mother in the local community. Hence, in order to maintain the locally available options for girls, parents' choose to marry off their daughters at an early age. In this context, formal education, especially beyond the basic level (grades 1-4), is considered as unnecessary for girls to become wives and mothers (see Chapter 6). In this connection, Alem Habtu notes that, "Instead of becoming an avenue of change for women's social status, schooling ends up being primarily an instrument for the reproduction of gender roles" (2003:112).
- ***to maintain the status quo:*** In general, the themes of the *qomo qär*-stigma, the dangers of pre-marital sex, ensuring obedience and subservience, and maintaining the ascribed roles of being a wife and mother are the gender ideologies used for maintaining the *status quo* in the studied traditional peasant communities. Above all, the daughters "marry out" early because of patrilocality after marriage, so that their parents consider "investments" in them as a lost. In other words, since daughters, through cultural traditions surrounding marriage, are seen to become members of their husband's families, sons are valued as carriers of their natal family lineage (see Chapter 5). In short, the gender ideologies hamper girls and women in achieving a "status" beyond the "domestic" sphere.

In general, current economic pressures and life insecurities coupled with socio-cultural customs and gender ideologies result in the highest prevalence rate of early marriage for girls. This, in turn, negatively affects the overall-development of girls in general and their participation in formal education in particular.

8.3 CONSEQUENCES OF EARLY MARRIAGE

In terms of the consequences of early marriage, reproductive health problems and psychosocial impacts, in most studies, and lack of educational opportunities for girls, in some studies, are some of the multi-dimensional impacts of early marriage discussed in the reviewed studies on early marriage. This study, in line with most of the reviewed studies on the issue at hand, underlines reproductive health and psychosocial problems, illiteracy and poverty as the major harmful consequences of early marriage, particularly for young girls, with special focus on case studies.

8.3.1 Health and Psychosocial Consequences of Early Marriage

In the reviewed studies on the consequences of early marriage in the Ethiopian context, the health risks of early marriage have attracted relatively more attention. The health risks from early pregnancy and childbirth are numerous and contribute to the high rates of maternal and child mortality. The health risks from early pregnancy and childbirth are exacerbated by poverty and lack of information and services. In the studied rural communities, early marriage poses many dangers to young girls' reproductive health and psychosocial well-being resulting from early and multiple births, lack of health care services and educational opportunities.

The most widely documented health consequences of early marriage are early pregnancy complications leading to obstetric 'fistula'.¹²² Fistula victim young girls are usually abandoned by their husband, become social outcasts from their community, and vulnerable to social sufferings and abject poverty. The following case study illustrates the health and psychosocial consequences of early-arranged marriage among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam, Northwestern Ethiopia.

Case Study (8.1): A life story of Alem Tesfaye, 14 years old, a fistula victim, from Rim Peasant Community of Mecha *Woreda*

Alem Tesfaye,¹²³ now 14 years old, got married at the age of 11 to a 21 years old husband. Her husband, a priest at the local church, was chosen by her grand-father.¹²⁴ She got pregnant when she was 12, just before her first menstrual period. Her pregnancy was difficult since her body was not yet developed for it.

After nine months of troublesome pregnancy, Alem started her labor at home, like other pregnant women in her village. When she started her labor, her mother-in-law and the traditional birth

¹²² 'Fistula' is a health risk commonly associated with child marriage because of the mother's physical immaturity at the time of childbirth. A girl whose pelvis and birth canal are not fully developed at the time of delivery often endures labor that lasts for many hours or days. Unless emergency obstetric care is available, the pressure from the baby's head in the birth canal may cause tearing of the young mother's vagina, bladder and rectum, causing uncontrollable leakage of urine or feces. This condition can only be repaired with reproductive surgery, which is usually inaccessible to the girls who need it (Murray and Lopez 1998; UNFPA 2002a; World Vision 2002; Fistula Foundation 2004).

¹²³ I gave her a fictive name. I studied her life story through a series of four visits. The first two visits were held at Feleghiwot Hospital in Bahir Dar, the capital town of Amhara Region. The last two visits were at her mother's house in Rim Peasant Association, one of the ethnographic research sites. These follow-up studies were conducted between July 2003 and September 2004.

¹²⁴ Her mother and father got divorced when she was 5 years old. She was brought up with her mother's father since her mother got married again. Her father was also married to another wife.

attendant (*yälämd-awwalağ*) were there with her. She was in very painful labor for four days. On the fourth day, a traditional birth attendant told her mother-in-law to take her to the local health post.

When it became clear that Alem would not deliver at home, her father and her husband, accompanied by her grand-father and her mother-in-law, carried her on a home-made stretcher and took her to the local health post. At the health post, the emergency worker told her father to take her to the *woreda's* health center at Merawi, about 40 km away from her parents' village.

When she arrived at Merawi Health Center, carried on a local stretcher, the nurses told her father to take her to Bahir Dar Feleghiwot Hospital, 34 km away from the *woreda's* health center. They passed the night in Merawi Health Center, and in the next morning, her father and her mother-in-law took her to Bahir Dar Feleghiwot Hospital, where a surgeon operated her to take out the baby. As a result of the prolonged, painful labor, her baby died and she sustained internal tissues' injuries. The damage in the tissues created a hole between her bladder, vagina and rectum, an injury medically known as "obstetric fistula." Because of this damage, Alem was unable to control her urine and feces. After the operation, she stayed in bed for two weeks, cared for by her grand-father. After two weeks, a nurse at the hospital informed Alem's grand-father that, "after six months she has to go to Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital for further specialized treatment since her injury was very serious."

After six months of sufferings at her mother's house, Alem's grand-father took her back to Bahir Dar Feleghiwot Hospital. The Hospital referred her case to the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, the only Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia, for specialized treatment. She and her grand-father took a bus and after two days travel, they arrived at Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital¹²⁵, where she was operated for the treatment of the birth-injuries she sustained. Unfortunately, her treatment was not a success, so she still could not control her urine. Finally, she went back to her mother's village with her grand-father. In her absence, her husband was married to another woman. Now, she lives with her divorced mother who survives by selling *aräqi* (local liquor). At present, Alem cannot control her urine and she suffers from her childbirth injuries a lot. She now feels 'ashamed' of herself and she feels as if she is an 'outcast'. She always expresses her desire to go to school if she manages to control her urine.

Alem and her divorced mother were participants of the exploratory workshop on "Early Marriage and Girls' Education in Mecha *Woreda*" (18th - 19th September 2004), held at Merawi, the *woreda's* capital. After the workshop, I had personal discussions with Alem and her divorced mother in order to have latest information about her health conditions as well as her mother's livelihood mechanisms.

The following is a summary of Alem's life story in her own words,

"I was married to a priest at the age of 11. My husband was 10 years older than me. I got pregnant when I was 12 years. My pregnancy was difficult. My labor was painful and prolonged. It stayed on for four days. After a prolonged stressful labor, I lost my baby and I suffered from terrible childbirth injuries. I could not control my urine and feces. As a result, my grand-father received my equal share of cattle, half the price of an ox (estimated at 200 Ethiopian *bərr*) from my father-in-law. With that money, I and my grand-father went to Bahir Dar Feleghiwot Hospital to get the referral letter to Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. Then, we traveled to Addis Ababa for two days by bus. At the hospital, they tried to repair my damaged tissues but still I cannot control my urine. Then, I came back to my mother's village with my grand-father. When I was in Addis Ababa, my husband married another woman. Now, I live with my divorced mother. My mother makes a living by distilling and selling *aräqi*. I do not like any man (*wänd*) to come near to me due to the ordeal that I have experienced as the result of early-pregnancy and childbirth. Still I cannot control my urine. When I manage to get dry, I want to go to school and I want to teach the local people about the health risks of early marriage and early pregnancy. Most people in our community are not aware about the fact that my problem, and

¹²⁵ "All women who reach the gates of the hospital feel that their lives have been ruined...They have no self-worth and have become social outcasts from their community at a very young age through no fault of their own. They have suffered all this injury unnecessarily because they have not got enough obstetric care in the province" (Dr. Catherine Hamlin; in Inbaraj 2004b).

problems of others like me, is related to early pregnancy. Traditionally, the community regarded a woman as a failure if she does not have a normal childbirth at home. They, therefore, believe that my problem is a misfortune” (14 years old fistula victim from Rim Peasant Association, 23rd January and 20th September 2004, Merawi).

Alem’s life story is not the only case among the rural communities of Mecha *Woreda* in particular and Amhara Region¹²⁶ in general, where early marriage is widespread. Though the exact number of fistula victims is not known due to the inaccessibility of victims in remote rural villages, there are many empirical evidences of very young married girls suffering from reproductive health problems as well as psychosocial problems arising from early sexual intercourse and early pregnancy complications in the remote rural villages of the Amhara Region of Ethiopia in general and the study area in particular, where the maternal health care, facilities and well-trained nurses and doctors are non-existent.

As the case study reveals, for a woman in obstructed labor the closest skilled doctor able to provide a specialized treatment (a caesarean section) is more than 74 km away. Traditional beliefs may mean that a woman is regarded as a failure if she does not achieve a normal delivery at home. People in the local community know nothing about the real causes of “obstetric fistula”. In this regard, there is a need for raising the local people’s awareness about how early marriage results in reproductive health problems, especially “obstetric fistula”.

In general, reproductive health problems related to early marriage reveal the socio-cultural dimensions of young girls’ life who are victims of early pregnancy and multiple births. More specifically, health problems related to early pregnancy and multiple births interfere with their opportunities to education, the source of their personal as well as social development and destroy girls and women’s ability to fulfill an active economic and socio-political role and to develop their sense of worth. This has also negative implications for family life and for the society at large. This problem calls the need for broad community involvement, alongside focused and effective interventions.

8.3.2 Illiteracy, Divorce-Widowhood and Poverty

The reviewed studies show that poverty and illiteracy are the main causes for early marriage and its continuance. Both are also the major consequences of early marriage for many girls and women. The social norms and gender-related inequalities reinforce poverty and illiteracy in girls and women who marry early.

Girls and women are the most affected population group in the studied communities. They are receiving little or no formal education. The gender socialization process and local customs, especially early-arranged marriage, have continued to work against gender equality in formal education (see chapter 6). The majority of the illiterates in the peasant communities of the study area are women and girls. In other words, females’ literacy rate is extremely low (2.69%) (see Chapter 4, CSA 1995). The household survey (350 households) among Bachema and Rim peasant communities reveals the fact that 339 wives (96.86%) are illiterate (cannot read and write), whereas 208 husbands (59.43%) are

¹²⁶ Among the nine regional states of present-day Ethiopia, the prevalence rate of ‘obstetric fistula’ is highest in the Amhara Regional State, where early marriage is most common. In this connection, at the inaugural Ceremony on the opening of the Fistula Center in Bahir Dar town, Dr. Catherine Hamlin, the founder of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, said that, “33% of women suffering from fistula came from the Amhara State” (WIC, 26th February 2005). The Amhara State’s Health Bureau Head, Assefa Demeke, said on the Occasion that ‘the opening of the Center in the town is instrumental in curing the suffrage in which women are facing in the efforts of accessing the treatment in Addis Ababa’ (WIC, 26th February 2005).

illiterate (see Chapter 4, table 4.1 and Appendix 7). In short, almost all married adult women in the studied communities are illiterate. They are also divorced and widowed at their early age, which ultimately make their life more vulnerable to abject poverty and pass it to their children, particularly to their daughters. The fate of children, especially daughters of a young widowed woman is migration to the towns and ending in becoming prostitutes or domestic servants there due to their widowed mother's economic constraints to send them to school and a shortage of cattle to arrange early marriage for them. The following case study illustrates how early marriage results in a circle of illiteracy and poverty.

Case Study (8.2): A life story of Wuditu Alemu,¹²⁷ widow, from Bachema Peasant Community of Mecha Woreda

Wuditu, 42 years old, is widowed. Her 15 years older husband died 15 years ago at the age of 42. The deceased was her second husband, but she was for him third wife. She and her deceased husband were illiterate.

Wuditu got married to her first husband when she was three years old. She got divorced at the age of 11 before establishing her own *goğgo* and before giving birth to a child. Her first marriage was dissolved because her father did not want to continue the marriage alliance with her parents-in-law. After the divorce, she got married to her second husband at the age of 14. She gave birth to her first child at the age of 15, followed by four other children (3 daughters and 2 sons). Her husband already had 3 sons from his former marriages.

Wuditu's deceased husband had 8 *qada* (2 hectare) land. When he died, his three elder sons took 6 *qada* (1.5 hectare) of his land. Finally, only 2 *qada* (0.5 hectare) were left for Wuditu's two sons from her late husband, without considering an equal share of the three daughters from the same father. Legally, daughters had and still have equal inheritance rights to their father's land. But the family and the community regarded sons' inheritance right to their father's land as more acceptable. Furthermore, Wuditu's right to her deceased husband's land was not taken into account. Legally, wives had and still have the right to inherit their husbands' property, including land, though the local custom deprives them of that right.

Wuditu's three elder daughters (27, 21 and 18 years old) neither got married nor attended formal school due to a shortage of cattle and financial constraints. Step by step, all the three elder daughters migrated first to Merawi, the *woreda*'s capital town, then to Bahir Dar, the Region's capital town, and finally to Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, and eventually settle there as domestic servants.

Wuditu's elder son (24) has been working as cattle tender (*käbbt täbaqi*) and as an employed farmer (*lole*) in cattle and land -"rich" peasant families for 10 years. His payment was in kind, in grains (one-fourth of the farm product). By saving the money that her son got from the sale of grains, his mother bought him one ox. Using this ox to earn a living, Wuditu's elder son got married at the age of 23 to a 14-year-old girl who brought in one ox. Immediately after the marriage, he established his own *goğgo* next to his deceased father's homestead, where Wuditu, his widowed mother, lives.

Previously, Wuditu's 2 *qada* land, her two sons' share from her deceased husband, was sharecropped. After her elder son got married and established his *goğgo*, he started to cultivate this plot on *arattännä* basis (three-fourth of the harvest is for her son and one-fourth for her). The younger son (16) is still working as an employed farmer in a land -"rich" peasant family, like his elder brother. Wuditu's sons have not attended school due to financial constraints.

¹²⁷ This is a fictive name given by the researcher.

Seven years after the death of her second husband, Wuditu gave birth to two daughters from a land and cattle-“rich” farmer in her village. Giving birth from such kind of people is not unusual in the area. Locally, she is known as her two young daughters’ father’s *qəmmət* (lit. “kept person” or concubine). The two young daughters live with Wuditu in the vicinity of her elder married son. Her family’s sources of income are one-fourth of the farm products from her deceased husband’s 2 *qada* cultivated by her married son, and the sale of *arāqi* (local liquor). Her two younger daughters’ father also gives her some grain (about 200 kg) during harvest time, once a year.

8.3.3 Educational Consequences of Early Marriage

Early marriage is a powerful deterrent to girls’ access to and success in formal education. It blocks young girls’ educational opportunities and other life choices and seriously hampers their personal and social development. The younger the age at the time of marriage is the lower the probability that girls will have acquired critical skills and developed their personal capacity to manage adverse situations that may affect their overall welfare and economic well-being. In short, early marriage diminishes girls’ opportunity to acquire life skills, which will enable them to escape poverty related conditions.

Early-arranged marriage is the major factor affecting girls’ access to, participation in, and success in completion of primary education in the studied peasant communities, where the prevailing gender norms focus mainly on marriage and motherhood for girls (see Chapter 6). Many young girls drop out from school due to an early-arranged marriage (see Appendix 8A and B). Once married, especially when they reach the age of 13, female pupils have very little chance to continue formal schooling since they are socially expected to establish their own *goggo* and raise another generation of daughters with no opportunities to break out the intergenerational circles of early marriage and poverty. The custom of marrying girls early and dropping-out them from school has become a common practice among Bachema and Rim peasant communities. Without intervention, the problem could become worse, as more of the girls reach the second cycle of primary education (grades 5-8). The gender gap in primary education is more pronounced in grade eight (see Chapter 6, table 6.5). In fact, all early-married female pupils in Bachema and Rim primary schools expressed that they do not want to marry, but in their local communities, nobody consults their opinions. From a human rights’ perspective, this practice violates girls’ rights to education, through which they can develop their human and social capital. In short, early marriage seriously affects young girls’ educational and social development in the studied traditional peasant communities (see Chapter 9, Case Studies).

8.3.4 Personal, Social and Economic Consequences of Early Marriage

Early married girls suffer from reduced self-identity and opportunities for receiving basic life skills, which could be a means for a better life. Early marriage for a very young girl (as early as five and below) means a change of those who exercise control over her life. In other words, young married girls remain in subservient roles both as daughters within their natal family and as early brides in their marital family since the child-bride is absorbed into the household of her in-laws and take on the role of the mother-in-law dependent and helper. The big age difference (eight years and above) between the “child-bride” and her husband also limits her say in making personal as well as family decisions throughout her married life. Lack of personal decision-making on sexual and reproductive matters and the social pressures to bear many children, preferably sons, are possible results in young married girls being preoccupied with childcare and household management (see Chapter 5). Being over-burdened with domestic and reproductive tasks as well as other diversified economic, including agricultural, activities, married women and girls have no time as well as personal freedom for learning and developing skills (see Chapter 6, table 6.1 and 6.2).

Young married girls are bound to family and they have no access to educational opportunities leading to a better living condition. At the same time, early-married girls lack of literacy and life skills limit their life opportunities and perpetuating their low status and passing it into the next generation, particularly to their daughters. Above all, early marriage, couple with lack of personal decision-making on sexual and reproductive matters, exposes young girls to the risk of becoming pregnant before they are physically and biologically prepared for motherhood. In this context, early marriage restricts young girls' opportunities to develop the psychological and social skills necessary to make strategic decisions and life choices.

In general, early marriage hinders young married girls from reaching their full human potential, participating in and benefiting equitably from economic activities and decision-making in the communities of which they are a part. Furthermore, very young married girls are not well-prepared to handle household management burdens and child-care responsibilities. Above all, early and loveless marriages usually end in early divorce. Divorced young girls usually migrate to the nearby urban centers and end in becoming domestic servants or prostitutes, which exposes them to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. In this context, early marriage perpetuates women's subordinate status in society in terms of their lack of access to education, economic opportunity and health. The economic consequences of early marriage are very severe. Elaborate wedding feasts customarily accompany early-arranged marriages, which frequently end in early divorce (see Chapter 7). This has economic implications for the wedding sponsoring peasant family as well as the community as a whole.

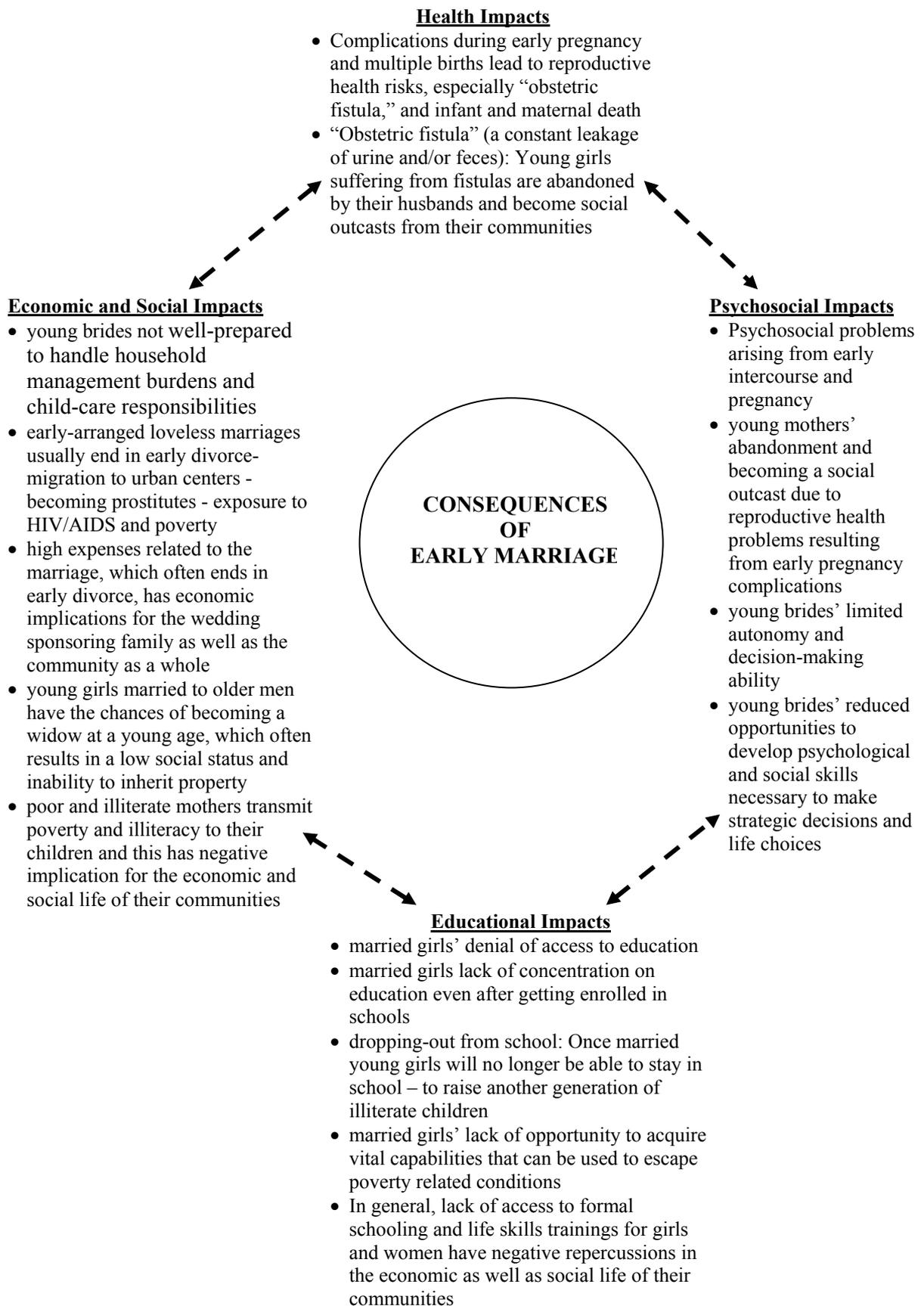
8.3.5 Overall Consequences of Early Marriage

Early marriage has serious health and social implications for young brides, for the well-being of the family, and for society as a whole. Early marriage poses many dangers to young girls' health, psychosocial well-being, personal and social development, educational opportunities and other life choices. Poor health, especially reproductive health, social exclusion and powerlessness affect young married girls and make them vulnerable to abject poverty. The disempowerment of young married girls results from lack of schooling, ability to earn income and inability to make strategic decision. It also results in marital instability, psychological trauma and limited alternatives, which often end in poor employment and even exposure to HIV/AIDS. In short, the lack of other opportunities and the powerlessness that accompanies early marriage perpetuate the gender roles of girls and women and reinforce cultural traditions that support early marriage as a desirable practice.

Early marriage threatens young girls' health and closes their educational prospects and other life choices. Here it is important to note that early marriage negatively affects girls more than boys because early and multiple pregnancy puts girls' health and lives at risk and then closes their access to formal education and other life opportunities. Above all, early marriage prevents young girls, the next generation of mothers, from receiving formal education, the basis of their personal and social development, and makes them vulnerable to illiteracy, poverty and social sufferings. Where girls are uneducated and not well-prepared for their roles as mothers and contributors to society, there are costs to be borne at every level, from the individual to the household to the national as a whole. In short, early marriage overwhelmingly affects the overall well-being of girls, the next generation of mothers. It has also a negative repercussion on family life and on the society as a whole. This calls the need for integrated efforts and locally appropriate strategies to challenge the magnitude of the problem.

In line with most of the reviewed studies on early marriage in the Ethiopian context, the following figure summarizes the overall consequences of the practice among the studied peasant communities:

Figure 2: Overall Consequences of Early Marriage Among the Peasant Communities of Mecha Woreda



CHAPTER NINE

EFFECTS OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON GIRLS' FORMAL EDUCATION AMONG THE PEASANT COMMUNITIES OF MECHA *WOREDA*

This chapter examines the extent to which early marriage affects girls' formal education among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda*, with special emphasis on problems of early-married female pupils in Rim and Bachema primary schools.

9.1 EFFECTS OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON GIRLS' ACCESS TO FORMAL EDUCATION

Girls and women in the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* have little access to formal education. The available sources and the household survey results indicate that females' participation in formal education is very low by national as well as regional standards.

According to the 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, the literacy rate of the female population in the peasant communities of the study area is only 2.69%. The surveyed households (350) among Bachema and Rim peasant communities also reveal the fact that almost all married adult women (96.86%) are illiterate (*mähayyäm*). In other words, only very insignificant percentage (3.14%) of married women can read and write, whereas a relatively greater percentage (40.57%) of married men can read and write (see Chapter 4, table 4.1 and Appendix 7). Here it is important to note that among literate (*yätamarä*) married men (40.57%), 34.86% can read and write through the literacy-campaign (*mäsärätä tämört*) under the *därg* regime, whereas the remaining (5.71%) can read and write through church and formal education. On the other hand, among the few literate married women (3.14%), 2.29% can read and write through the literacy-campaign, whereas the remaining (0.85%) can read and write through formal education, which was interrupted because of early-arranged marriages.

Currently, early-arranged marriage has continued to work against gender equality in formal education. In the same family environment, parents do not give equal opportunities to daughters as well as sons in gaining access to the locally available formal school. Among the focus families, most parents (see Chapter 6, table 6.8) prefer to arrange an early marriage for their daughters instead of sending them to the local formal school and/or allowing them to continue formal education, which is perceived as unnecessary for becoming wives and mothers, the ultimate destiny of girls. As a result, many girls enrolled in the local schools (see Chapter 6, table 6.4, 6.5) do not attend schools beyond the first cycle of primary education (grades 1-4). Accordingly, the educational participation of girls in the studied peasant communities, especially in Rim, is very low. In Rim full cycle Primary School (grades 1-8), there are very few girls in the second cycle of primary education, particularly in grade eight (16.81%) mainly due to early-arranged marriages coupled with work burdens at home and in the field (see Chapter 6).

In short, the practice of early-arranged marriage, which is reinforced by the local economic and social structures as well as the gender socialization process, is the major obstacle to girls' access to the locally available formal education in the studied peasant communities, where the prevailing gender norms focus mainly on marriage and motherhood for girls.

9.2 EFFECTS OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON GIRLS' SUCCESS IN FORMAL EDUCATION

The effect of early marriage on girls' success in formal education can be expressed in terms of academic performance, repetition and dropout rates, with special reference to early-married female pupils in Bachema and Rim primary schools.

The major educational problems of early-married female pupils in Bachema and Rim primary schools are: 1) low academic performance due to irregular attendance/frequent absenteeism, lack of time to do school related activities and lack of concentration on education; and 2) high repetition and dropout rates due to academic difficulties and problems related to their early-arranged marriages. Here it is important to note that early-arranged marriages in the studied communities involve both girls and boys. However, compared to male pupils, most female pupils are victims of an early-arranged marriage, which is customarily the only vocation for girls and women. Accordingly, there are a relatively larger number of married female pupils than males in Bachema and Rim primary schools. The following table shows the percentage of married male and female pupils:

Table 9.1: Percentage of Married Male and Female Pupils in Rim and Bachema Primary Schools (Ethnographic Data, May 2003 - July 2004)

Primary Schools	Married Male Pupils		Married Female Pupils		Total	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
Rim Primary School	89	44.50	111	55.50	200	100
Bachema Primary School	24	36.92	41	63.08	65	100
Total	113	42.64	152	57.36	265	100

As the ethnographic data (see Appendix 8A and B) indicate, early marriage has gender differential effects on male and female pupils. Compared to married male pupils, married female pupils' academic performance is low (see table 9.2 below), whereas their repetition and dropout rates are high (see table 9.3 and 9.4 below). In short, early marriage has negative effects on girls' success in formal education.

Here it is important to note that unmarried female pupils' academic performance is relatively better than married female pupils in Bachema and Rim primary schools. Married female pupils' academic performance is very low due to irregular attendance/frequent absenteeism and lack of concentration on education since they move between the two families (their parents' and in-laws' families).

Among 152 early-married female pupils in Rim and Bachema primary schools, only very few (two girls) were in a rank (1st - 3rd) list during the 1996 E.C (2003/04) academic year. The following table shows the percentage of rank-holders among 152 early-married female pupils in Rim and Bachema primary schools:

Table 9.2: Percentage of Rank (1st - 3rd) Holders Among Early-Married Female Pupils in Rim and Bachema Primary Schools (May 2003 - July 2004, cf. Appendix 8A and B)

Number of Married Female Pupils in Rim and Bachema Primary Schools	Rank (1 st - 3 rd) Holders	
	Numbers	Percentage
Number of married female pupils in Rim Primary School (111)	1	0.66
Number of married female pupils in Bachema Primary School (41)	1	0.66
Total (152)	2	1.32

As the table indicates, one of the two rank-holder female pupils was from Rim Primary School. She was married to a farmer and got divorced in favor of her education being motivated by her younger unmarried formal school attending sister and her father's positive attitude towards female education (see Appendix 8B, No.15). The second rank-holder female pupil was from Bachema Primary School. She was married to a formal school attending boy (7th grader at Merawi Primary School). Her marriage was not dissolved since both parents want to continue the marriage alliance. She is performing well in her study due to her parents', in-laws' and school-attending husband's

support and encouragement (see Appendix 8A, No.20). Besides the two married female pupils who were in the rank list, some married female pupils were performing well in the first cycle of primary education (grades 1-4) in Bachema and Rim primary schools. However, their academic performance was declining in accordance with their greater involvement in household management and reproductive responsibilities, especially in Rim Primary School (see Appendix 8B and Case Study 9.2, 9.4 below). The academic performance of early-married female pupils in Bachema first cycle Primary School began to decline when they were promoted to Merawi second cycle Primary School due to the long distance between their home and the school as well as work burden at home and in the field (see Appendix 8A, Grades 5 and 6). In short, the majority of early-married female pupils' academic performance is very low compared to married male pupils as well as unmarried female pupils.

Early married-female pupils' low academic performance led them to repeat grades (see Appendix 8A and B). The following table reveals the percentage of grade-repeaters among 152 early-married female pupils in Rim and Bachema primary schools:

Table 9.3: Percentage of Grade-Repeaters Among Early-Married Female Pupils in Rim and Bachema Primary Schools (May 2003 - July 2004, cf. Appendix 8A and B)

Number of Married Female Pupils in Rim and Bachema Primary Schools	Grade-Repeaters	
	Numbers	Percentage
Number of married female pupils in Rim Primary School (111)	21	13.82
Number of married female pupils in Bachema Primary School (41)	9	5.92
Total (152)	30	19.74

As the table shows, a relatively larger number of married female pupils in Rim full cycle Primary School (grades 1-8) repeated grades compared to married female pupils in Bachema first cycle Primary School (grades 1-4). It entails that early-married female pupils' grade repetition rates increase with their grade level leading to dropout from school.

At the middle grades (grades 5-6) of the primary education, early-married female pupils are expected to establish their own *goggo* so that they cannot continue their primary education after grade 5. Here it is important to note that for girls in general and early-married girls in particular, formal schooling beyond the first cycle or basic level (grade 4) is locally perceived as unnecessary to become wives and mothers, the ultimate destiny of girls in the studied peasant communities (see Chapter 6). As a result, many early-married female pupils dropped-out from school, especially from the second cycle of primary education (grades 5-8) due to early pregnancy and childbirth (see Case Study 9.2, 9.3). Some early-married girls attending the first cycle primary education are also forced to discontinue their education under pressure from their parents, in-laws and husbands (see Case Study 9.1 below). In short, early-married girls drop out from school due to their parents' desire to continue the marriage alliance, early pregnancy and childbirth. The following table shows the percentage of dropouts among 152 early-married female pupils in Rim and Bachema primary schools:

Table 9.4: Percentage of Dropouts Among Early-Married Female Pupils in Rim and Bachema Primary Schools (May 2003 - July 2004, cf. Appendix 8A and B)

Number of Married Female Pupils in Rim and Bachema Primary Schools	Dropouts	
	Numbers	Percentage
Number of married female pupils in Rim Primary School (111)	33	21.71
Number of married female pupils in Bachema Primary School (41)	8	5.26
Total (152)	41	26.97

As the table depicts, a relatively larger number of married female pupils in Rim full cycle Primary School (grades 1-8) dropped-out from school compared to married female pupils in Bachema first cycle Primary School (grades 1-4). This implies that early-married female pupils' dropout rates increase with their grade level (see also Chapter 6, table 6.5). In short, the custom of marrying girls early and dropping-out them from school has become a common practice among the studied peasant communities, especially in Rim.

In general, irregular school attendance/frequent absenteeism and lack of concentration on education resulting in low academic performance and high repetition and dropout rates work against early-married girls' success in formal education, through which they can develop their human and social capital, and which could be a means for escaping poverty related conditions. Once married, especially when they reach the ages of 12 to 13, girls have very little chance to continue formal schooling since they are socially expected to establish their own *goggo* and raise another generation of daughters with no educational opportunities to break out the intergenerational circles of early marriage and poverty. Without intervention, the problem could become worse, as more of the girls reach the second cycle of primary education (grades 5-8).

9.3 CONDITIONS OF EARLY MARRIED FEMALE PUPILS

In Rim and Bachema peasant communities, early-childhood marriage, particularly for girls, has become a norm. The ethnographic data suggest that girls enter into marriage at an early age (as early as 80 days of birth) (see Appendix 8A and B, Chapter 8, table 8.1). Almost all married female pupils in Rim and Bachema primary schools got married before they reach the age of 12. Of course, there are boys married under the age of 12 in the ethnographic settings due to economic reasons (see Chapter 8, table 8.1 and Case Study 9.3 below).

Early married female pupils are expected to move between the two families until they reach the age of 10. Between the ages of 10 and 11, they are expected to go and live with their in-laws and when they reach the ages of 12 to 13, they are expected to establish their own *goggo* next to their in-laws' homestead. Accordingly, many early-married female pupils are far from formal education and forced to discontinue their schooling (see Appendix 8A and B). Most early-married female pupils are forced to drop out from school for the following reasons: 1) parents', especially fathers', desire to continue the marriage alliance, 2) in-laws' and/or husbands' unwillingness to allow them to attend/continue formal education, 3) full involvement in domestic tasks and feminine trainings for becoming skilled or accomplished wives and mothers, and 4) being burdened with household management and reproductive responsibilities. Some parents also withdraw their daughters from school to arrange an early marriage (see Case Study 9.1 below). In short, currently married female pupils in Rim and Bachema peasant communities are encountering problems in their natal family as well as in their marital family. Their social relationships are restricted since they are confined to home and fully involved in domestic and reproductive responsibilities at an early age. In this regard, all early-married female pupils in Rim and Bachema primary schools expressed that they do not want to marry, but in their local communities, nobody consults their opinions. They also expressed their unwillingness to go back to their in-laws' village. Their real desire is to continue with their formal schooling, though most of them are still forced to drop out of school, especially when they reach the ages of 12 to 13.

The marital and educational conditions of married female pupils can be viewed in line with their husband's profession. Accordingly, early-married female pupils in Rim and Bachema Primary Schools are categorized as follows: 1) female pupils married to a farmer; 2) female pupils married to a formal school-attending boy/formal school dropout trader; and 3) female pupils married to a

priest/*mārigeta*/deacon. The conditions of these categories of early-married female pupils are presented below, with special reference to case studies.

9.3.1 Conditions of Female Pupils Married to a Farmer/Peasant

In the peasant communities of Rim and Bachema, sending children, even boys, to formal school has not been the norm (see Chapter 6). As a result, among 152 early-married female pupils, 95 (65.50%) female pupils' husbands had not been to school and would not want them (school-attending wives) to continue their education.

76 (80%) female pupils married to a young farmer got divorced in favor of continuing their formal schooling. This was made possible due to: 1) parents', especially fathers', unwillingness to continue the marriage alliance, 2) in-laws' unwillingness to allow married girls to attend or continue formal school, 3) husbands being a farmer, 4) educated/school attending elder brothers' pressure, 5) educated aunts' and/or uncles' influence, 6) formal school-attending village girls' influence, 7) young farmer husbands' migration to towns due to a shortage of cultivable land, and 8) cattle impoverished fathers' desire to get their early-married daughters' equal share of cattle (see Chapter 7, table 7.2, Case Study). For these reasons, the majority of female pupils married to a farmer have got the chance to continue their formal schooling after divorce.

However, 19 (20%) female pupils married to a farmer are still in their early-arranged marriages. Most of them were forced to drop out of school due to: 1) parents', especially fathers', desire to continue the marriage alliance or to forge a marriage alliance; and 2) parents' lack of awareness about the value of educating daughters (see Appendix 8A and B). The following case study illustrates the effects of being married to a farmer at an early age among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda*.

Case Study (9.1): A life story of Workie Abera,¹²⁸ 9 years old married girl, from Rim Peasant Community of Mecha *Woreda*

Workie was forced to marry at the age of 8 while she was attending first grade. Her husband, 20, was a full-fledged farmer in another peasant community in the same *woreda*. After her marriage, she dropped-out from first grade because her husband who was and still is a farmer did not give her any support. Her husband, 12 years older than her, waited until she was 9 years old before they had the first sexual intercourse. For Workie, a 9-year-old girl, it was a very painful experience so she hated living with him.

When her parents invited her and her husband, they came for a visit, and she stayed with her parents for one month. During this stay, she had the opportunity to go to an alternative-education program (*ammarač tāmārt*) which was opened as alternative path to basic education in January 2004 in her parents' village. After one month, her husband came to take her back to his parents' village. She expressed her unwillingness to go. But her parents forced her to go back to her in-laws' village since they sought to continue the marriage alliance. However, Workie's desire was to continue with her education, like her two elder brothers who were 7th and 8th graders at Rim Primary School, one hour walk from their parents' village.

On Saturday 22nd January 2004, a weekly market day, Workie's parents forced her to go back with her husband to her in-laws' village which is a 90 minutes walk from her parents' village. I was walking across the market with my research assistant when I saw Workie at a distance crying loudly.

¹²⁸ Fictive name

I asked her about what had happened to her, and she told me everything.¹²⁹ I came to realize all her problems and desires. Then I talked to her husband about their marriage and his attitude towards his child-bride. He mentioned that, “Our marriage has been arranged by our parents without our consent. She does not want to go to my parents’ village and I do not mind if she goes back to her parents’ village.” I also asked her brother why he had forced her to go back. He said, “I am ordered to do so by my father.” I further discussed Workie’s problems and desires with the local people around there. After a discussion of about 30 minutes with Workie, her husband, her elder brother and the local people around, her husband decided to let Workie go back to her parents’ village.¹³⁰ Consequently, she went there with her elder brother, and her husband went to his parents’ village accompanied by some neighbors whom he had met on the market.

Afterwards, I tried to convince Workie’s father and her two older brothers, 8th and 7th graders, to allow her to attend school. I could convince her father so that he allowed her to continue her education. The marriage was dissolved since her husband, a farmer, did not attend school.

Workie, her father and her elder brother were participants of the exploratory workshop¹³¹ on “Early Marriage and Girls’ Education in Mecha *Woreda*” (18th - 19th September 2004), held at Merawi, the *woreda*’s capital. After the workshop, Workie’s father came to realize the value of educating his daughter and the dangers of her early-arranged marriage. He allowed her to continue school attendance, like her elder brothers.

Workie’s life story is briefly summarized in her own words as follows:

“My parents married me at the age of 8 to a 20-year-old farmer when I was 1st grade student. I dropped-out from school and started to live with my husband’s family. My parents-in-law regarded me as an adult woman so that I had to work very hard all the time. My husband, who was 12 years older than me, waited until I was nine years old before he had the first forced sexual intercourse with me. It was so painful that I did not want to sleep with him again. He was beating me every time I refused to sleep with him. Eventually, I, together with my husband, went to visit my parents upon their invitations. I stayed for one month with my parents. During that time, I started to attend a school established as a centre for alternative-education (*ammaraç tāmārt*). After one month, my husband came to take me back to his parents’ village. I said no, but my parents forced me to go back to my in-laws’ village with him since they did not want to dissolve the marriage alliance. I wanted to get divorced and to continue with my education” (Rim Peasant Association, 22nd January 2004).

¹²⁹ She told me that her two elder brothers are attending 8th and 7th grades at Rim Primary School and that she is the only female child of her parents since her elder sister had died a year ago. She informed me that her elder brother, 7th grader, forced her to go to her husband’s village against her will, while attending his own education. She also told me that she was not happy with her early-arranged marriage and she had psychological problems related to early sexual intercourse with her adult husband. Her husband was forcing her to sleep with him without her interest. According to the literature on ‘gender-violence and early marriage’, this is termed as “a tradition of child rape in the name of marriage.’ At her very young age, not even fully 9, she was culturally forced to have intercourse with her husband. From a health and psychological perspective, this is a medical fact and psychological reality, which has nothing to do with “cultural relativism” or past or present conditions. Of course, the developed nations have recognized this fact, and have prohibited child marriages and the United Nations are working to eliminate such harmful traditional practices affecting the overall-well-being of girls and women. However, in traditional societies, including Ethiopia, there is a need for developing locally appropriate strategies or initiatives to challenge the issue of early or child marriage (see Chapter 10).

¹³⁰ When Workie arrived at her parents’ village, her father asked her brother what happened to her and he said: ‘A female police from Merawi town, the *woreda*’s capital, ordered me to do so otherwise you will be in prison.’ These news spread in their village and when I interviewed a married female student from that village about what would like to be after completing her education, she said: “I would like to be a female police, like you, in order to get fathers and brothers, who forced young girls to get married and go to their husbands’ village without their interest, imprisoned.” This entails that the new family law, even the old one, pertaining to the legal age at marriage is not enforced at the local level for socio-cultural and economic reasons (see Chapter 8, table 8.2).

¹³¹ The workshop was aimed at: (1) discussing issues surrounding early marriage and its negative effects on girls’ education with the local participants; (2) raising consciousness of the issues and to arrive at a culturally acceptable change in this practice; and then (3) to promote girls’ formal education through which they can develop their human and social capital. Overall, the workshop had significant implications for raising awareness about the dangers of early marriage and then initiating the local participants to take responsible actions for combating it (cf. Appendix 9).

Workie's life story entails that currently school-attending girls are still forced to enter into marriage at an early age. Fortunately, Workie has got the chance to continue her education after divorce. There are also some female pupils married to a farmer who managed to continue their formal schooling after divorce mainly due to their formal school attending/educated elder brothers' pressure. Here it is important to note that educated elder brothers are playing vital roles in convincing their fathers to allow the younger sister/sisters to attend/continue formal schooling after divorce. With specific reference to Workie's case, and other similar cases, lack of awareness about the value of educating girls and the dangers of early arranged-marriage is among the main reasons for parents forcing their daughters to get married at early age. In this regard, there is a need for informing parents about the values of educating girls and the dangers of early marriage based on practical terms. Above all, parents among the peasant communities of the study area have no hope in educating their daughters since there are no educated women which could serve as positive role models for peasant parents (see Chapter 6).

9.3.2 Conditions of Female Pupils Married to a Formal School-Attending Boy/Formal School-Dropout Trader

Among 152 early-married female pupils in Rim and Bachema primary schools, 45 (29.61%) female pupils were married to a formal school attending boy/formal school dropout trader. Among them, only 9 (20%) female pupils got divorced, where as the majority 36 (80%) were still in their early-arranged marriages (see Chapter 7, table 7.2). Among those female pupils whose marriages were not dissolved, those who got married to a formal school attending boy are more likely to continue their formal schooling compared to those married to a formal school dropout trader. The following case study illustrates the problems of female pupils married to a formal school dropout trader among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda*.

Case Study (9.2): A life story of Agerie Maru,¹³² 16 years old, from Rim Peasant Community of Mecha *Woreda*

Agerie got married at the age of 6 together with her 3 years older sister. Her husband was 12 years older. Her father was neither happy with her in-laws nor her husband's behavior. So, he dissolved the marriage at the age of 11, and she got registered in 1st grade at the local primary school. While she was attending 3rd grade at the age of 14, her father arranged a second marriage for her. Her father did so because he feared that his 14 years old daughter would be exposed to pre-marital sex. Her second husband, a 6th grade dropout, was a trader in a small rural town, Rim *Kätäma*, nearby her parents' village. After her second marriage, she continued her education while living with her husband. A year after her marriage, attending 4th grade, she got pregnant. In the course of time, she stopped going to school and gave birth to a baby girl at the age of 16.

Before getting married to her second husband, Agerie's academic performance was very good. Starting from her second marriage, particularly, starting from the time she got pregnant, she was getting weaker and weaker in her academic performance. Finally, her formal education was interrupted for one academic year due to pregnancy and childbirth.

Agerie's life story is briefly summarized in her own words as follows:

"I got married with my first husband when I was 6, but my husband was 12 years older than me. My father did not want to continue the marriage alliance with my in-laws. So, he divorced me at the age of 11 and received my equal share of cattle. After getting divorced from my first husband, I studied in

¹³² This is a fictive name given by the researcher.

school until 3rd grade and my academic performance was very good. I got married to my second husband when I was 14. My second husband was 10 years older than me. He dropped-out from 6th grade and became a trader in the peasant community where I was born and brought up. Until I got pregnant and gave birth to my child, I attended school up to the 4th grade. I got pregnant when I was in 4th grade and I found it difficult to attend class since the seats in the school were not comfortable. Furthermore, I was afraid of going to school as my pregnancy began to be visible. Then I had to quit my schooling though I had a strong motivation to learn” (Rim *Kätäma*, 3rd May 2003).

In fact, Agerie, who had a strong interest to continue her education, was not happy with the discontinuance of her education. Accordingly, when her baby-girl reached one year, she asked her husband for permission to continue her education. Her husband was not happy with it since he had already giving up school to become a trader. He had also the fear that Agerie would not be a good wife any longer after schooling beyond the first cycle of primary education (above grade 4). Despite her husband’s unwillingness to allow her to attend school, Agerie managed to continue her education because of her father’s influence or pressure. Her husband’s younger sister, who was three years older than Agerie, was assigned to take care of her child. However, Agerie could not fully concentrate on her education. She was worried about the well-being of her one-year-old girl in her absence. She was also disturbed by her husband’s negative attitude towards her further education. As a result, her academic performance was not good.

9.3.3. Conditions of Female Pupils Married to a Priest/*Märigeta*/Deacon

Among 152 early-married female pupils in Rim and Bachema primary schools, 12 (7.8%) female pupils were married to a priest/*märigeta*/deacon. In principle, this form of marriage is indissoluble. However, one female pupil, 8th grader at Rim Primary School, married to a priest got divorced (see Appendix 8B, No.106). This was made possible due to her father’s strong desire to get her educated, which was and still is supported by the government, even at the local level. When the marriage was dissolved, her husband has lost his priesthood status, which is locally known as *yaferse-qés*. Of course, among 12 female pupils married to a /priest/*märigeta*/deacon, this is the only dissolved marriage. In most cases, female pupils who got married to a /priest/*märigeta*/ are high-risk groups in terms of dropout from school mainly because of their husbands’ unwillingness neither to dissolve the marriage nor to allow them to continue their formal schooling. Hence, husbands’ religious status, especially in Rim peasant community, is the major obstacle on married girls’ success in formal education. Of course, female pupils married to a local priest/*märigeta* expressed their wish to continue their formal schooling after divorce (e.g. see Appendix 8B, No. 96, 99, 102, 103, 107, 108). Unfortunately, it was not possible because of their fathers’ desire to maintain the marriage alliance as well as their husband’s desire to maintain their religious status. At last, they are forced to dropout from school, even from 8th grade, the highest-grade level of primary education. The following is a case in point.

Case Study (9.3): A life story of Ennat Alemu,¹³³ 16 years old mother who dropped-out from 8th grade due to early-arranged marriage and pregnancy from Rim Peasant Community of Mecha *Woreda*

Ennat’s life story is briefly stated in her own words as follows:

“I was married to a priest when I was in grade 3 at the age of 10 because of a strong pressure from my father who wanted to form an alliance with my parents-in-law. I got pregnant when I was promoted to 8th grade and dropped-out from the same grade due to early pregnancy. I gave birth to a daughter at

¹³³ Fictive name

the age of 16. My husband, a priest, did not want me to continue my study. So, I was disappointed for I was not able to continue my study” (Rim Peasant Association, 26th Januray 2004).

Here it is important to note that among 12 female pupils married to a priest/*mārigeta*/deacon, three female pupil’s husbands, a deacon, transferred from the local church school to the “modern” (formal) one (see Appendix 8B, No. 33, 77, 109). In these cases, both husbands and wives attend formal school. For these husbands, the marriage does not pose any problem, but it has a negative effect on their wives’ academic performance. The following case study illustrates this problem.

Case Study (9.4): A life story of Fanaye Getu,¹³⁴ 16 years old mother, 8th grader, whose academic performance is declining due to early marriage and early childbearing from Rim Primary School of Mecha *Woreda*

Fanaye’s life story is briefly stated in her own words as follows:

“I was married to a deacon, who attended a modern school, at the age of 9, when I was a grade 1 student. My marriage took place together with my three younger siblings (2 sisters and 1 brother). I am my parents’ eldest child. My brother was only 7 years old, and my two sisters were 5 and 2 years old when we got married. My younger brother’s wife was 2 years old. My parents arranged an early marriage for all of their four children at the same time in order to avoid the problem of preparing wedding feasts for each of us. Fortunately, all of us got the chance to continue our schooling. My parents, my husband and his parents encouraged me to study hard. When I was living with my parents, until grade 4, I was one of the best students in the rank list. But when I started to live with my husband, my academic performance began to decline because of the heavy domestic responsibilities that I had to shoulder. At the age of 14, when I was in grade 6, I got pregnant and gave birth to a daughter. I did not discontinue my schooling but still, my academic performance continued to decline. This was mainly because I was burdened with household management and child-rearing. My husband, 9th grader, was a rank student. He assisted me in doing school related activities during Saturdays and Sundays” (Rim Primary School, 27th May 2003).

Fanaye’s case reveals the fact that early marriage poses more problems for female pupils than male pupils since female pupils are the one who manage the household, get pregnant and give birth at an early age. Despite all these burdens, Fanaye was promoted to 9th grade in September 2003. She was attending 9th grade in Merawi Secondary School while living with her husband, 10th grader in the same school. Her in-laws, who live in a peasant community in Mecha *Woreda*, were taking care of her 3 years old daughter. In September 2004, she and her husband were attending 10th and 11th grades, respectively, in Merawi Secondary School, the only secondary school in Mecha *Woreda*. Of course, she is the only female pupil who managed to continue her formal education after giving birth due to her literate parents’, in-laws’, and her husband’s supports and encouragements.

For many girls in Bachema and Rim peasant communities, formal education is over almost before it begins because most of them got married before the age of 8 and those enrolled in school are forced to drop out. Currently, early-married female pupils in Bachema and Rim primary schools are encountering three major difficulties related to early-arranged marriages: 1) irregular attendance/frequent absenteeism and lack of concentration on education since they are expected to move between the two families (their parents’ and in-laws’ families); 2) low academic performance and high grade repetition rates; and 3) high dropout rates, especially between the ages of 12 to 13 to establish their *gogḡo* and then to become accomplished housewives and mothers, though their desire is to continue their formal education. In general, the custom of early marriage is the main challenge to girls’ access to and success in formal education among the studied peasant communities, especially

¹³⁴ Fictive name

in Rim where the majority of female pupils dropped-out from the local school either to get married or due to early-arranged marriages (see Appendix 8B and Case Study 9.1, 9.2, 9.3). When girls drop out of school to get married or due to early-arranged marriages, there is a knock-on effect for the community as a whole and for future generations. Hence, there is a need for finding ways of reducing the negative effects of early-arranged marriages on girls' formal education, and enabling those that are married at an early age to benefit from a continued formal education - to the benefit of their families as well as their communities as a whole.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter a summary of the major findings and lessons learnt from the study are briefly presented and possible areas of further research and future intervention are proposed.

10.1 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The leading premise of this study is that early marriage is one of the major socio-cultural customs that influence the primary and secondary socialization of girls in the studied peasant communities. Based on this premise, the study examined current trends, underlying causes and overall-consequences of early marriage in general and its effects on girls' education in particular from economic, socio-cultural and gender perspectives. It also examined the extent to which the local practices are related with national laws/policies pertaining to early marriage and girls' education. The major findings of the study are briefly summarized under the following headings.

Prevalence and Trend of Early Marriage

The ethnographic data gathered through participant observation; in-depth personal interviews with parents, married male and female pupils, key informants; and focus group discussion with councils of elders, community and religious leaders, local government officials, local health post workers, rural primary school teachers, and victims of early marriage, reveal the general acceptance of early marriage, particularly for girls. Of course, the practice of early marriage involves both girls and boys in the study area. However, girls are married off earlier (five to seven years) than boys because they are no longer socially categorized as children. The local people believe that girls need fewer years to prepare for marriage as their duties are confined to childbearing and domestic roles. Accordingly, marriage before the age of 14 is the norm for girls. Currently, the average age at first marriage for the daughters' generation is getting down to 8 years compared to their mothers' generation, which was 11 years. This entails that the trend towards early marriage is now becoming more common than ever in the studied communities (see Chapter 8, table 8.1). This is contrary to the general assumption that early marriage was the norm for the "older generation." Of course, older women were also married before the age of 18, but their age at first marriage was not as early as the "younger generations of women." The elderly key informants also confirmed this trend by stating that in previous times, both girls and boys were expected to get married at the age of 13 to 15 years (for girls) and 18 to 23 years (for boys).

Root-Causes of Early Marriage

The reasons for early marriage are diverse and complex. As a result, various explanations have been given for the persistence of early marriage in the studied peasant communities (see Chapter 8, table 8.2). The most common explanations for the persistence, even for the increasing trend of early marriage, revolve around current economic pressures and life insecurities. There are also socio-cultural justifications for why girls get married earlier than boys. The underlying motives behind early marriage among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim are briefly presented below:

The Economics of Early Marriage and Life Insecurities

- *Early marriage as a strategy for forging an economic alliance between families:* Economically well-to-do peasant families used to forge economic alliances with families of the same economic background through their children's marriage.

- *Early marriage as a strategy for securing children's future:* Life insecurities due to aggravated rural poverty and epidemic diseases such as malaria are currently reinforcing early marriages among the studied peasant communities since parents desire to see their children married or settled before their own passing away or becoming old and sick.
- *Early marriage as a strategy to maintain the existing family landholding and/or to get a new land from the local PA:* Customarily, the family landholding passes on through married adult sons (18 years or above). On the other hand, adult sons are allowed to obtain land from the local PA only if they get married and become a legitimate member of the local PA as a household head. In order to secure adult sons' access to land, girls are married off at an early age. In this context, the traditional lineage organization and inheritance of property, mainly land, as well as the current local political structure, contribute to the prevalence of early marriage in the studied peasant communities.
- *Economic value of children:* The traditional extended-family structure—mainly based on limited agricultural technology- requires children's, particularly sons', - labor support. Girls are married off at an early age in order to maximize their reproductive capacity and at the same time, use their reproductive capacity. The need for having a large family and the expected assistance of the extended family in traditional peasant communities reinforces early marriage, especially for girls.
- *Large family size and rural family poverty:* Impoverished peasant families with many children use to arrange an early marriage for all of their children at the same time in order to avoid the problem of preparing wedding feasts for each of them.

Socio-Cultural Values and the Gender Ideology

- *Early marriage as a strategy for securing girls' future and protecting them from the dangers of pre-marital sex and its social consequences:* Virginity until marriage is highly valued among the studied peasant communities. Accordingly, parents believe that early-arranged marriage would provide safety to their daughters with male protection or a sense of security and better social status in the eyes of the local community. In other words, parents believe that daughters must be married young to avoid social as well as economic risks and hoping that the carefully arranged marriage would benefit their daughters both socially and economically. However, early-married female pupils (see Appendix 8A and B) felt that their social as well as economic status was not be better off by living with their marital family, since they were separated from their natal family as well as far from formal education, which could be a means for better life.
- *Early marriage as a strategy to promote gender behaviors appropriate to girls and women:* Girls and women are culturally expected to be obedient and subservient to their husband and in-laws. Hence, girls are married young in order to ensure obedience and subservience in their marital family. In this regard, formal education is considered as inappropriate for girls because it makes them more assertive and disobedient to their husband.
- *Early marriage as a strategy to maintain gender roles appropriate to girls and women:* Almost all parents and the local people believe that marriage and motherhood are appropriate roles of girls and women. In order to achieve these roles, girls are married off at an early age. In this context, formal education is considered as wastage of time for girls. In short, the social values attached to femininity, virginity, and fertility on one hand and the gender socialization process on the other hand encourage parents to marry off their daughters early rather than sending them to the locally available formal school.

In general, economic and social structures and life insecurities encourage early marriage among the studied peasant communities. More specifically, current economic pressures and life insecurities coupled with socio-cultural customs and the gender ideology result in the highest prevalence rate of early marriage for girls, which, in turn, negatively affects their access to and success in formal education. Here it is important to note that the economic motives behind why girls are married off early among the studied agrarian communities are currently covered with socio-cultural justifications. This is evidenced by the fact that girls from cattle “rich” peasant families and girls from cattle “poor” peasant families have no equal opportunities to an early arranged-marriage which is primarily based on “equal-matching” (mainly in terms of cattle) or “strict reciprocity” (parental endowments and bridal gifts) between the marrying families (see Chapter 7). In this regard, girls from cattle “rich” families have more opportunities to get married earlier than the others of “cattle –poorer” families, though the socio-cultural environment is the same for both groups. Here, it is important to note that daughters from “cattle – poorer” families have neither the opportunities to get married earlier due to a shortage of cattle nor the chances for schooling because of parental financial constraints (see Chapter 8, Case Study 8.2). In short, the underlying motives behind early marriage arrangements among the studied peasant communities are mainly economic and its increasing trend can be attributed to increasing rural poverty and life insecurities.

Major Consequences of Early Marriage

As to the consequences of early marriage, especially for girls, reproductive health and psychosocial problems resulting from early and multiple births, lack of educational opportunities and poverty are the major harmful consequences of the practice among the studied peasant communities. Reproductive health problems and psychosocial impacts (in most studies) and lack of educational opportunities for girls (in some studies) are some of the multi-dimensional impacts of early marriage discussed in the reviewed studies on early marriage in the Ethiopian context. This study, in line with most of the reviewed studies on the issue at hand, underlines reproductive health and psychosocial problems, illiteracy and poverty as the major harmful consequences of early marriage, particularly for young girls (see Chapter 8). However, unlike most of the reviewed studies, the present study focuses on examining its effects on girls’ access to and success in formal education at the local level (see Chapter 9). The major harmful consequences of early marriage, especially for girls, among the peasant communities of Bachema and Rim, are briefly summarized below:

Reproductive health and psychosocial problems resulting from early pregnancy and multiple births

- Early marriage usually results in early and multiple pregnancies. Early pregnancy exposes young girls to the risk of prolonged labor leading to obstetric fistula (a constant leakage of urine and/or feces). Fistula victim young girls are usually abandoned by their husband and become social outcasts from their community (see Chapter 8, Case Study 8.1). Here it is important to note that there are many empirical evidences of very young married girls, from the Amhara Region of Ethiopia in general and from the study area in particular, suffering from reproductive health problems as well as psychosocial problems resulting from early sexual intercourse and early pregnancy complications. Early pregnancy and multiple births also carry high risks for both the mother and the child, since it usually leads to maternal and infant mortality. Above all, the exact number of fistula victims as well as maternal and infant deaths due to early pregnancy and multiple births is not exactly known because of the inaccessibility of victims in remote rural villages.
- In general, health problems related to early pregnancy and multiple births destroy girls and women’s ability to fulfill an active economic and socio-political role and to develop their sense of worth. This has also negative implications for family life and for the society at large.

Illiteracy, Divorce-Widowhood and Poverty

- Almost all early-married adult women in the studied communities are illiterate (see Appendix 7) and were divorced and widowed at their early age. These conditions ultimately make their life more vulnerable to abject poverty and pass it to their children, particularly to their daughters (see Chapter 8, Case Study 8.2)). In short, early marriage results in a circle of illiteracy and poverty. In other words, illiteracy and poverty are both causes and consequences of early marriage.

Personal, social and economic consequences

- Early marriage for a very young girl (as early as five and below) means a change of those who exercise control over her life as experienced as a child in her natal family. The big age difference (eight years and above) between the child-bride and her husband also limits her say in making personal as well as family decisions throughout her married life. Lack of personal decision-making on sexual and reproductive matters and the social pressures to bear many children, preferably sons, are possible results in young married girls being preoccupied with child care and household management. Being burdened with reproductive and domestic tasks, early-married girls have no time as well as personal freedom for learning and developing skills. Early-married girls suffer from reduced self-identity and opportunities for receiving basic life skills, which could be a means for a better life.
- Very young married girls are often not well-prepared to handle household management burdens and child-care responsibilities.
- Early and loveless marriages usually end in early divorce. Divorced young girls usually migrate to the nearby urban centers and end in becoming domestic servants or prostitutes, which exposes them to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.
- Early arranged marriage, which frequently ends in early divorce, is normally accompanied by elaborate wedding feasts, and it consumes a year's harvest of a peasant household and makes peasant families vulnerable to poverty (see Chapter 7).

Early marriage closes girls' educational opportunities and other life choices

- Early marriage is a powerful deterrent to girls' access to educational opportunities and personal as well as social development. As a result, early-married girls lack the necessary life skills and confidences to lead an independent and productive life. These conditions ultimately make them vulnerable to poverty which they pass to their children, particularly to their daughters, the next generation of mothers.
- Many young girls also quit school either to get married or due to an early-arranged marriage. Among the studied peasant communities, once married, especially when they reach the age of 13, female pupils have very little chance to continue formal schooling since they are socially expected to establish their own *goğğo* and raise another generation of daughters with no opportunities to break out the intergenerational circles of early marriage and poverty. As a result, many girls dropout from school to get married or due to early-arranged marriages (see Appendix 8A and B, and Chapter 9, Case Study 9.1, 9.2, 9.3). The custom of marrying girls early and their dropping-out from school has become a common practice among Bachema and Rim peasant communities. Without intervention, the problem could become worse, as more of the girls reach the second cycle of primary education (grades 5-8). In fact, all early-married female pupils in Bachema and Rim primary schools expressed that they do not want to marry, but

in their local communities, nobody consults their opinions. From a human rights' perspective, this practice violates girls' rights to education, through which they can develop their human and social capital.

In general, early marriage poses many dangers to young girls' reproductive health, psychosocial well-being, personal and social development, educational opportunities and other life choices. Here it is important to note that early marriage negatively affects girls more than boys because early and multiple pregnancy puts girls' health and lives at risk and then closes their access to formal education and other life opportunities. Above all, early marriage prevents young girls, the next generation of mothers, from receiving formal education, the basis of their personal and social development, and makes them vulnerable to illiteracy, poverty and social sufferings. In short, the study found that early marriage overwhelmingly affects the overall well-being of girls and women and it has also a negative repercussion on family life and on the society as a whole. This calls for the need for integrated efforts and locally appropriate strategies to challenge the magnitude of the problem.

The Gap between National Laws-Policies and Local Practices

Currently the Ethiopian Government laws-policies, such as the Revised Family Law (2000) and the new Education and Training Policy (1994), legislate against early marriage and promote girls' participation in formal education. However, during the period of the ethnographic fieldwork, the local people, even local PA leaders, were not aware of the revised Family Law legislating against early marriage (marriage before the age of 18 for both girls and boys). They knew only the old family law which legislates against the marriage of girls before 15 years and boys before 18 years. In this regard, there is a need for raising the legal awareness of the local people, including local administrators, about the national laws and policies pertaining to early marriage and girls' education. However, this is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for stopping early marriage practices among the studied peasant communities.

During the first phase of the ethnographic fieldwork, there was a campaign against early-arranged marriage (marriage before the age of 15 for girls) at the PA level. As a strategy for stopping early-arranged marriage for girls in the locality, the local PA and other government officials attempted to determine whether the would-be-bride was 15, the old National Family Law's minimum age for girls to get married. Furthermore, the local Orthodox Church priests advocate for 15 years as the appropriate age of marriage for girls and 18 for boys, which was the basis for the old Ethiopian Family Law. Of course, the local people are aware of the illegality of arranging marriage for children, especially for girls below the age of 15. Nevertheless, they do not comply with this old family law. I closely observed that parents used to add three and more years to the actual age of the would-be-bride in order to keep the age expected by the local PA leaders. Some parents attempted to lobby with the local committee established for evaluating the age of the would-be-brides through family and kinship networks because those who are active in the local politics are those who were born and brought up in that locality. Government officials at the local level are themselves part of the local community and they are more loyal to the customs and norms of their community than to enforce national laws which contradict the local practice. In this regard, local leaders need to have the commitment towards changing the harmful aspects of local traditions, including early marriage. There is an official tolerance of cultural, societal and customary norms that shape and govern the institution of marriage and family life among the studied peasant communities. Given the widespread nature of the practice and its being a norm, no one considers early marriage as an illegal issue. As a result, there is not a single case of an early-arranged marriage reported to the *woreda's* Justice Office as an illegal marriage.

There is a huge gap between the legal minimum age of marriage (18 years for both boys and girls) and the actual age of marriage, particularly for girls in the studied peasant communities. Most young girls got married seven to twelve years younger than boys. Both the household survey-results as well as in-depth personal interviews with early-married female pupils revealed the fact that girls got married at their early age, as early as 80 days after birth (see Appendix 8A and B, and Chapter 8, table 8.1). As a result, the practice of early marriage, particularly for girls, has become a norm and it is even in the increase. Currently, most parents marry their daughters off at a very young age (as young as 2 years old or below) due to economic as well as socio-cultural pressures and life insecurities. This calls for the need of improving the living standard of the people in the local communities beyond raising the awareness of the local people about the dangers of early marriage and the values of educating girls.

10.2 FUTURE PROPOSALS

10.2.1 Possible Areas for Further Research

This study identified the following as possible areas for further research with specific reference to the present study area. Research on:

- why early marriage is on the rise and how to change this trend
- identifying the overall impacts of early marriage
- legal and gender issues related to land, property and inheritance rights
- assessing the impact of the current rural land redistribution policy on the prevalence of early marriage and divorce
- investigating the link between rural poverty and early marriage
- identifying and examining sources of life insecurities and their effects on early marriage
- assessing the link between the primary education curriculum and real life conditions of peasant communities
- examining the gap between gender-based socialization at home and formal schooling
- mechanisms by which rural formal schools can create the link between school and rural communities
- examining deeply entrenched attitudes, practices and power structures that perpetuate gender inequalities in all spheres of life: Personal, in the family and community

10.2.2 Possible Areas for Future Intervention

Based on the ethnographic data and the results of the two-day exploratory workshop conducted in the study area, this study proposes the following as possible areas for future intervention in challenging early marriage and promoting girls' formal schooling in the study area:

Challenging the dangers of early marriage and promoting the values of educating girls by:

- *Creating legal awareness about the current national laws-policies pertaining to early marriage and girls' formal education:* The current national laws-policies legislating against early marriage and promoting girls' formal education are not well-known, let alone implemented, in the studied peasant communities. In this regard, the *woreda's* Justice Officials should create legal awareness about the illegality of early marriage among the local community through continuous training programs at the grassroot level involving councils of elders, religious and community leaders, and local PA leaders. Of course, during the second phase of the ethnographic fieldwork, there was legal awareness training programs at the *woreda* level. However, these programs in most cases involved only administrative officers, local PA leaders, and religious leaders (in some cases). In this respect, there is a need of empowering parents to

refute early marriage for their daughters as well as to value girls' education at the local level. Even parents aware of the danger of early marriage are still practicing it because of ostracization from their community, which attaches a high social value to virginity and early marriage for girls.

- *Changing the attitudes of the local social structure's "gate-keepers"*: At community level, a lot of power, status and authority is bestowed upon local councils of elders, religious and community leaders. These groups are the local social structure's "gate-keepers", they are the ones who keep cultural practices, including early marriage, alive. In this regard, there is a need to change the attitudes of these "gate-keepers". In the process, these "gate-keepers" would lose their status and role of negotiating between marrying families, but their role and status would be replaced by educating the local people about the harmful consequences of early marriage practices. By doing so they have to be supported and rewarded by the local people and government officials, so that the fight against early marriage should be pursued with a lot of social and cultural sensitivity to what the local people stand for, and with reward for what they lose through this cultural and social change in terms of respect of the community for their commitment to this kind of change.
- *Developing locally binding rules and regulations legislating against the practice of early marriage and promoting girls' formal education*. To bridge the gap between national laws-policies and local practices, there is a need for developing locally binding rules and regulations legislating against the practice of early marriage and promoting girls' formal schooling in line with the current national family law, education policy and constitutional provisions. This requires a need of establishing a committee in charge of strictly monitoring their implementations. To facilitate their enforcement, there is a need for educating the local people through the local churches and schools. To this end, the local government officials should give support to local groups, civil society groups taking the initiative to challenge the harmful consequences of early marriage.
- *Organizing broad and continuous "Awareness Raising Programs" or "Discussion Forums" on the dangers of early marriage based on practical terms to make it socially unacceptable*. Discussion forums could be conducted at community level through school teachers, health post workers, councils of elders, community and religious leaders, traditional community-based associations such as *mahbär* and *sänbäte*. At the household level, parents, especially fathers, are the key stakeholders in the local initiatives to the campaign against early marriage. In this regard, there is the need for giving awards for those who are active in challenging the practice and bring about attitudinal change.
- *Convincing the local people of the values of girls' education and postponing their marriages based on positive role models and evidence-based advocacy work*: Parents among the studied rural communities have no hope in educating their daughters due to a lack of educated women, who could be positive role models. In this regard, the few educated women at *woreda* level (Merawi primary and secondary school female teachers) and rural primary school female teachers at the PA level, can play a leading role in championing the cause of education for girls. To this end, the *woreda* Education Office, the *woreda* Women's Affairs Desk, and local schools should play an active role in promoting the value of educating girls in rural communities of the study area.
- *Organizing projects to address issues pertaining to early marriage and girls' formal schooling at the local level*: This requires an integrated and collaborative effort of the government, the local community, the local school, and civil society organizations concerned with tackling major barriers to girls' formal education. It also requires the need for networking with groups whose activities focus specifically on harmful traditional practices, girls' education, and the overall well-being of girls and women. These include Women's Affairs Bureaux in the Amhara Region, Women's Associations at the zone and *woreda* levels, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with the same focus of activities like the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA), the National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia (NCTPE),

and the Ethiopian Chapter of Forum for Women Educationalists in Africa (FAWE). Above all, there is the need for strengthening the Women's Association at local level by extending the activities of Women's Affairs Desk and Women's Association operating at the *woreda* level to the PA level, in order to address girls and women's problems at the grassroots. In this regard, there is a need of establishing a committee in charge of following up the practice of early marriage at the *woreda* and PA levels. The committee should consist of local government officials, women's associations, councils of elders, community and religious leaders.

- *Using Public Media:* In order to undertake persistent advocacy aimed at sustainably changing the harmful consequences of early marriage at local level, there is a need for strengthening the use of the existing media and disseminating the dangers of early marriage through communication channels, in particular using the radio, which is relatively accessible to the rural communities. More technically, there is the need for increased Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and advocacy to change the attitudes of the local people. This, in turn, requires networking and an integrated approach involving an extensive range of stakeholders and devising multiple strategies, including full-fledged campaigns through the use of multiple and accessible media.
- *Establishing a local NGO* aimed at: 1) providing support for the physical and psychological well-being of young girls and emergency assistance for those at high risk (e.g. fistula victims due to early pregnancy complications), developing special social and health support structures to young married girls; 2) providing support and skills development for school dropout girls and women; 3) assisting school attending early-married girls materially-financially; and 4) preventing early marriage through education, advocacy and working in partnerships with parents, families, opinion leaders and communities to improve the status of young girls and women. To this end, local government officials need to assist the establishment of structures necessary for protecting young girls at risk of early marriage and improving the well-being of girls and women.

Changing the social and economic structures of the traditional peasant communities by:

- *Re-orienting the local people's attitude and value pertaining to socially appropriate gender roles and behaviors* that lead to sex preferences for formal schooling, in which the boy-child enjoys more preferences to formal schooling than the girl-child in the same family environment. This could be possible by encouraging parents to give equal opportunities to daughters as well as sons in gaining access to formal education.
- *Challenging the ideological and social system*, which results in traditional gender division of labor and gender-specific roles and behaviors that restricts girls and women in the domestic sphere with household chores and reproductive burdens. In the studied peasant communities, there is a "gendered belief system" supported by ideology and practices which ensures the appropriate roles of females in the given social system. The socio-cultural system requires women and girls to be housewives and mothers. In this regard, there is the practical gender need for reducing the domestic as well as reproductive burdens of girls and women. This, in turn, calls for the strategic gender need for changing the economic and social structures reinforcing early marriage for girls and closing their opportunities to education and other life choices. In order to challenge the negative aspects of traditional practices, including early marriage, and then promote girls' education, there is a need for changing the repressive aspects of the economic and social structures of the society in general and the gender-socialization process in particular.
- *Reducing women's domestic burdens and reproductive responsibilities:* In the studied peasant communities, girls and women are over-burdened with labor-demanding domestic tasks and childcare responsibilities. There is a need for introducing modern technology such as grinding mills and pipe water; establishing local childcare centers or pre-school education programs; and establishing rural social amenities and infrastructures such as health centers, all-weather roads, and electricity. In short, any attempt to transform the position of girls and women by increasing their participation in formal education would end up in over-burdening them and is

doomed to fail. Girls and women's involvement in formal education is important, but improvements that would reduce the energy and time spent by girls and women at home have to be accomplished before anything else. Furthermore, the societal views towards the association of childbearing with the social status of women should be changed. Only then would girls be able to participate more in education.

Improving the economic conditions of rural communities and peasant families by:

- *designing income-generating schemes* in accordance with the objective reality of the area and supporting parents who fail to send their daughters to school due to poverty,
- *providing cash incentives for parents* to keep their daughters in school as long as possible, for example by covering expenses for buying learning materials,
- *creating job opportunities for girls* completing primary education or dropping out from the second cycle of primary education, and
- *expanding non-formal education* at the community level and providing life skills trainings on nutrition, health, rights and responsibilities of married life in order for girls' completing primary education or dropped-out from primary schools, to increase their opportunities for employment outside the domestic sphere.

Introducing some changes aimed at promoting girls' education at the school level by:

- *educating the younger generation about gender issues* with specific reference to harmful traditional practices, including early marriage. This could be possible by incorporating these issues in related subjects such as social studies and/or civic education,
- *teaching the dangers of early marriage* through extra-curricular activities, such as anti-HIV-AIDS clubs,
- *establishing a Girls' Education Committee* composed of teachers, pupils, and parents,
- *strengthening the school-community connections* in collaboration with pupils, parents, and community leaders. This could serve as a forum for discussing pupils' academic problems, especially early-married girls', and then developing appropriate strategies to address the issue,
- *improving rural school teachers' working conditions*: In rural schools, especially in Bachema Primary School, teachers are teaching after a walk of a minimum of two hours from their living place (Merawi town) to their teaching place and from the school back home. This has a negative impact on the teaching-learning process. In the first place, teachers are tired of walking from their home to school so that they are not attentive in imparting their knowledge to the pupils. On the other hand, the pupils' parents have no close contact with the teachers because after the daily lessons they have to return home. This condition is very difficult, especially for female teachers (though there was no a female teacher in Bachema Primary School during the second phase of the ethnographic research). In this regard, the provisions of housing, electricity and potable water and other basic infrastructures for teachers in rural schools are essential, especially to attract female teachers to rural villages, and to encourage teachers to live within local communities to serve as positive role models,
- *improving rural school facilities*: Rural schools in the ethnographic research settings are under-supplied in terms of basic infrastructure and social services such as health services, potable water and electricity supply. In this regard, there is a need for bringing potable water closer to rural schools and establishing clinics near rural schools where prevalent epidemic diseases such as malaria can be treated,
- *making the school calendar flexible*: In the studied peasant communities, child labor demand is very high, especially during peak agricultural seasons, and it hinders children's, particularly girls', enrolment, retention and performance in the local school. Girls are more at risk because they take part in farm activities such as harrowing (*gulgualo*) and weeding (*aräm*) during peak agricultural seasons in addition to their full involvement in domestic tasks at home. In other words, girls work longer hours than boys, carrying a double workload - a job outside the home and domestic duties on their return. In this regard, there is the need for identifying the peak agricultural seasons and taking these seasons into account while preparing the local school

calendar in a manner that does not affect the total number of school days. In doing so, the local schools should be given the mandate to arrange flexible programs in consultation with the community and this needs the approval of the *woreda* Education Office before implementation,

- *establishing a school feeding program*: The study found that one of the basic causes for low enrolment of children, particularly girls, are nutritional problems due to rural family poverty. In this regard, there is a need for a sustainable school-feeding program.

Making rural schools conducive for girls by:

- *Establishing schools at proximity of villages*: Rural primary schools in the ethnographic research settings are on the average 5 km away from girls' villages. Traveling such a long distance exposes girls to pre-marital sex, which is a taboo. It also consumes girls' time for domestic activities. In both cases, the long distance from home to school discourages parents to send their daughters to the local school or to allow school attending daughters continue their formal education. Above all, the establishment of schools close to the villages would encourage parents to send their daughters to the local school or to allow them to continue their formal schooling since it minimizes parents' worries about their daughters' safety.
- *Employing female teachers*: In the studied communities, specifically in Bachema Primary School, there was no female teacher during the second phase of the ethnographic fieldwork. There had been one female teacher for one academic year (from September 2003 - July 2004). In this regard, there is a need for assigning female teachers in Bachema Primary School so that parents would be encouraged to send their daughters to the local school for two reasons: 1) parents can develop a positive attitude towards the achievements of female teachers and can aspire similar opportunities for their daughters outside the domestic sphere; and 2) parents can develop a sense of security for their school attending adolescent daughters since they show deep concern for protecting their adolescent daughters from male teachers' sexual advances. However, due to stressful teaching conditions in rural schools where there are no facilities (such as housing, electricity, pipe water, and transportation) female teachers are not motivated to get transferred there. In order to motivate female teachers to teach in rural schools, there is a need for providing them with some incentives such as the provision of housing near the school, measures to ensure their-security, transportation facilitates, and even some financial inducements.
- *Providing guidance and counseling services for girls*: Rural primary schools in the ethnographic research settings do not have guidance and counseling services for girls. This calls for the need to establish such services, so that female pupils can get academic and/or psychological advice when they face academic and/or emotional difficulties.
- *Providing tutorial support* for girls who have academic difficulties due to early-arranged marriage and/or domestic burdens at home.
- *Providing girls with learning materials* (exercise books, pencils, pens) since most poor families do not send their children, especially daughters, to school since they cannot afford to spend enough money for educating all their children. In this regard, there is a need for establishing local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or community-based-organizations (CBOs) providing stationery and other materials to help girls from poor families.

In general, without challenging the negative effects of early marriage on girls' education as well as other economic, socio-cultural and institutional barriers, the idea of promoting girls' education will remain more of a myth than a reality. Hence, in order to increase girls' participation in formal education, the first step is to overcome all barriers that constrain the education of girls. In Bachema and Rim peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda*, there are very complex economic, socio-cultural as well as institutional challenges in promoting girls' formal schooling. In short, the realization of the idea of promoting girls' formal education in the traditional peasant communities requires a lot of multi-dimensional efforts and locally adapted measures.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ABSTRACT

This study examines issues pertaining to early marriage and its effects on girls' education in rural Ethiopia, with special reference to Mecha *Woreda* in West Gojjam, Amhara Region, where early marriage is most common and girls' participation in formal education is very low by national as well as regional standards.

The study employed primary and secondary methods of data collection. The primary data collection took seven months (between April 2003 and January 2004) in two phases of fieldwork. The first month was devoted to conduct preliminary household surveys, based on which baseline information was gathered and focus families were selected. The remaining months were devoted to conduct personal in-depth interviews with focus families and key informants, participant observation, extended case studies and focus group discussions coupled with video-tape recording and photographing. In short, in the field, most of the data were collected through the "classical" combination of ethnographic methods.

I conducted the ethnographic fieldwork research among Bachema and Rim peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda* (District). Bachema, 5 km away from the *woreda's* capital, is situated in the lowland (*qolla*) ecological zone, whereas Rim, about 40 km away from the *woreda's* capital, is situated in the midland (*wäyña däga*) ecological zone. I also made shorter visits to other peasant communities in the highland (*däga*) ecological zone and conducted informal discussions there about marriage customs and early marriage practices.

In conducting the ethnographic fieldwork among the rural communities of Mecha *Woreda*, the local language (Amharic) was used as a means of communication. The study lays emphasis on in-depth and detailed aspects of the issue at hand rather than on generalization. From this emerged an ethnographic fieldwork approach as little formalized as possible, with special attention paid on focus families and extended case studies. Studies on early marriage as well as girls' education in Ethiopia have focused on meso-level generalizations based on base-line surveys and quantitative methods. As a result, the local socio-cultural and economic structures surrounding early marriage and girls' education have been neglected.

In everyday observation and participation over the period of the ethnographic study, I documented the daily life as well as numerous social, religious and especially wedding ceremonies. In a network study, I observed and investigated factors motivating parents to arrange early marriages for their children, particularly for daughters; and to send or not to send them to the locally available formal school. Through this method, I detected the impact of family or kinship networks as well as of social-village networks on parents' decision to arrange an early marriage for their daughters, or sending them to the local formal school.

The local socio-cultural pressures and economic structures underlying gender socialization and formal schooling among the ethnographic research settings are the core of this research. From this perspective, I examined the social as well as economic dimensions of both, "boy-men's" and "girl-women's" lives. In the studied agrarian communities, the social and cultural pressures on girls to marry at an early age are very strong. A high social and cultural value is attached to virginity until marriage for girls, and an unmarried girl above the age of 14 is locally labeled as *qomo qär* (unmarriageable), which is an embarrassment or a disgrace to her family as well as to herself. She is also considered an economic burden to her family since her involvement in domestic tasks at home, like her mother's, is valued as unproductive, though her contribution in terms of time invested in diversified economic, including agricultural, activities is higher than males'.

Based on personal in-depth interviews with focus families and with early-married female pupils in the ethnographic research sites, the study reveal that the trend of the age at first marriage is getting down from 10 to 7 years and from 12 to 9 years. In other words, the majority of mothers were married between the ages of 10 to 12, whereas the majority of the daughters are now married between the ages of 7 to 9. More specifically, the average age at first marriage for the mothers' generation is 11, whereas it is 8 years for the daughters' generation. Though it is commonly acknowledged in the literature that early marriage is most common among the rural communities of the Amhara Region of Ethiopia, this study reveal the trend, contrary to my expectation, that the prevalence rate of early

marriage is increasing among the ethnographic research settings. The underlying reason behind this trend remains to be further investigated and analyzed.

On the basis of the preliminary findings, I have organized a two-day exploratory workshop on “Early Marriage and Girls’ Education in Mecha *Woreda*” (September 18-19, 2004) at Merawi, the *woreda*’s capital. The workshop has proved to be a good opportunity to discuss the ethnographic material which I had collected so far and to identify the root-causes of early marriage and reasons for not sending girls to the locally available formal schools. The workshop has proved to be a good opportunity to identify locally appropriate strategies for challenging the negative aspects of early marriage and then to promote girls’ formal schooling in the study area.

Of course, there are various interactive and complex economic and socio-cultural structures and pressures accounted for the endurance, acceptance, and even the increasing trend of the practice of early marriage among the studied peasant communities. The most critical factors contributing to the highest prevalence rates of early marriage among the ethnographic research settings are family poverty, shortage of land due to fragmentation of family farm plots, and life insecurities.

The major factors forcing parents to arrange early marriage for their children, particularly for daughters, can be summarized as follows: (1) Economically well-to-do peasant families can forge economic alliances with the relatively well-to-do families only through their children’s marriage; (2) Sons who attain the age of 18 from land-poor families can claim land from the local Peasants’ Association only if they got married, without taking into account the age of their brides. On the other hand, land-rich families with adult sons arrange a marriage for them just to maintain their landholdings. In both cases, the brides are usually below the age of 11; (3) Due to the aggravating family poverty, peasant parents tend to arrange the marriage for all of their children at the same time, in order to avoid the problem of preparing wedding feasts for each of them; (4) Securing children’s future through marriage alliance is the major concern of peasant families due to life insecurities. As a result, the parents desire to see their children married or settled before becoming old or passing away. The daughters “marry out” because of patrilocality after marriage, so that their parents consider “investments” in them as a lost.

Here it is worth mentioning that the socio-cultural motives behind early marriage are gender-specific. As a result, compared to boys, most girls get married at an earlier age just to avoid the *qomo qār*-stigma (fear of girls being unmarriageable after the age of 14) and to protect them from pre-marital sex, which is not equally scorned for boys. In this context, though economic motives and life insecurities are the major driving forces of early marriage for both sexes, socio-cultural values related to “femininity” and “virginity” have also contributed to the comparatively higher prevalence rate of early marriage among girls. Hence, there is a need for examining the pre-marital life of girls in the light of the overall control of women’s life through men, on the one hand, and how this affects girls’ access to and success in formal education, on the other.

The ways in which girls and women manage to balance social expectations and real life challenges are demonstrated and analyzed in the extended case studies. My observations reveal that, in reality, the range of possible behavior is far wider than the superficially accepted social norms would suggest. In this context, the gap between the ideal patterns of behavior and the real ones becomes obvious. Furthermore, the gap between the national laws/policies legislating against early marriage/promoting girls’ education and that of the local practices and realities is thoroughly examined in the light of the local peoples’ reasons for arranging early marriage for their daughters, instead of sending them to the locally available formal school. The study reveals that parents’ decisions on arranging early marriage for their daughters are usually based on gender differential expectations and values. In the first place, parents have the fear that their daughters will be unsuccessful in the formal schooling as compared to their sons. For most parents, the only successful vocation for the “girl-child” is to be a wife and mother. This motivates parents to give their daughters in marriage at an early age so that they can achieve social recognition in their community. As a result, parents prefer to invest on educating their sons rather than their daughters. In general, economic and social structures, life insecurities and the gender ideology are the main causes of early marriage, particularly for girls.

The study examines the harmful consequences of early marriage on girls’ overall-development in general and their participation in formal schooling in particular and concludes by suggesting possible areas for further research and future intervention.

CHAPTER TWELVE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Studie untersucht die Gründe und Probleme der Kinderheirat und deren Auswirkungen auf die Schulbildung von Mädchen im *Mecha* Distrikt von West Gojam, Amhara Region, Äthiopien, wo Kinderheirat die Regel ist und wo die Einbeziehung von Mädchen in die formale Bildung im nationalen, wie auch im regionalen Vergleich, gering ist.

Diese Studie basiert auf primären und sekundären Methoden der Datensammlung. Die primäre Datensammlung dauerte sieben Monate von April 2003 bis Januar 2004 in zwei Feldforschungsphasen. Im ersten Monat wurden Vorab-Befragungen in Haushalten durchgeführt, mit deren Hilfe Grundinformationen gesammelt und Fokus-Familien ausgewählt wurden. In den folgenden Monaten wurden Tiefeninterviews in Fokus-Familien und mit Schlüsselinformanten durchgeführt, sowie die Zeit zu teilnehmender Beobachtung genutzt und es wurden Fallstudien und Diskussionen mit Fokus-Gruppen durchgeführt, begleitet von Video- und Foto-Dokumentation. Die Daten wurden also in der Feldforschung nach der "klassischen" Kombination mehrerer ethnologischer Methoden gesammelt.

Ich habe meine ethnologischen Feldforschungen in zwei Bauernsiedlungen im *Mecha* District durchgeführt. Bachema, 5 km von der Distrikthauptstadt entfernt, befindet sich klimatisch in der Tiefland-Klimazone (*qolla*), während sich Rim, in etwa 40 km Entfernung von der Distrikthauptstadt, auf mittlere Höhe in der *wäyna däga* zone befindet. Ich habe auch kurze Besuche bei anderen Bauernsiedlungen gemacht, die weiter oben in der *däga*-klimazone liegen, und habe mich dort in Gesprächen über Heiratsbräuche und Kinderheiratspraktiken informiert.

Während meiner ethnologischen Feldforschung in den Siedlungen im *Mecha* Distrikt wurde die lokale Sprache, Amharisch, als Kommunikationssprache verwendet. Die Studie gibt einer Annäherung an "emische" Sichtweisen und "Detailaufnahmen" den Vorrang vor Generalisierungen. Daraus ergibt sich ein ethnologischer Feldforschungsansatz, der so wenig formalisiert wie möglich ist und sich auf ausgewählte Familien und deren Netzwerke konzentriert. Studien über Frühheirat und Schulbildung von Mädchen wurden bisher auf der Meso-Ebene behandelt und generalisiert, die auf quantitativen Basisdaten beruhten. Folglich wurden die Einflüsse der lokalen sozio-kulturellen Umgebung und der ökonomischen Strukturen auf Frühheirat und Schulbildung von Mädchen vernachlässigt.

Während meiner Feldforschung habe ich durch Beobachtung und Teilnahme den Alltag dokumentieren können und konnte an vielen sozialen, religiösen Ereignissen teilnehmen, insbesondere an Hochzeitsfesten. In einer Netzwerkstudie habe ich die Motive, die Eltern dazu bewegen, ihre Kinder, vor allem die Töchter, früh zu verheiraten, genauer untersucht, die ihrerseits den Schulbesuch verhindern, erschweren oder zum Abbruch bringen. In diesem Zusammenhang habe ich den großen Einfluß der Familie, der nahen Verwandtschaft und der Dorfgemeinschaft auf die Frühverheiratung erkannt.

Der lokale soziokulturelle Druck und die ökonomischen Strukturen in ihrer Auswirkung auf die "Gender"-Sozialisation und die Schulbildung bilden den Kern dieser Studie. Aus dieser Perspektive habe ich den sozialen und ökonomischen Druck beider Geschlechter, Mädchen/Jungen, und Frauen/Männer, untersucht. Im Untersuchungsgebiet wird der Jungfräulichkeit vor der Ehe hoher soziokultureller Wert beigemessen und ein Mädchen über 14 Jahre alt gilt als *qomo qär* (unverheiratbar, d.h. eheuntauglich). Dieser Umstand wird als Peinlichkeit und Blamage von den Eltern und vom Mädchen selbst empfunden. Das Mädchen wird als ökonomische Last für die Eltern angesehen und ihre häuslichen Aufgaben, wie die ihrer Mutter, werden als unproduktiv gewertet – obwohl ihr Beitrag, allein in Arbeitszeit bemessen, aber auch in ihrer Diversifizierung ökonomischer Aktivitäten, einschließlich der Landwirtschaft, höher ist als der der Männer.

Auf der Basis eingehender Interviews mit Familien und mit frühverheirateten Schülerinnen im Untersuchungsgebiet hat diese Studie zu Tage gefördert, daß der Trend des Alters bei der ersten

Heirat von 10 auf 7 und von 12 auf 9 Jahre gefallen ist. Mit anderen Worten, die Mehrheit der Mütter hat zwischen 10 und 12 geheiratet, wogegen die Mehrheit der Mädchen heute im Alter zwischen 7 und 9 heiratet.

Genauer, das Durchschnittsalter bei der Erstheirat für die Generation der Mütter ist 11 Jahre, hingegen für die Generation der Töchter ist es auf 8 gesunken. Obwohl in der Literatur allgemein bekannt ist, daß Frühheirat in den bäuerlichen Gesellschaften in der Amhara Region Äthiopiens vorkommt, wurde in dieser Studie festgestellt, daß der Trend, entgegen meinen Erwartungen, im Untersuchungsgebiet wächst. Der Grund dieses Trends muß weiter untersucht und analysiert werden.

Auf der Basis der vorläufigen Ergebnisse dieser Studie habe ich einen zwieltägigen Erkundungsworkshop "Early Marriage and Girls' Education in Mecha *Woreda*" (Sept. 18-19, 2004) in Merawi, Verwaltungssitz des *Woreda*, durchgeführt. Dieser Workshop bot die Gelegenheit, das ethnographische Material, das ich gesammelt habe, zu diskutieren und die tieferen Gründe für die Frühverheiratung herauszuarbeiten.

Naturgemäß gibt es vielfältige interaktive und komplexe sozio-kulturelle Strukturen und Druck für die Bewahrung, Akzeptanz und sogar zunehmende Praxis der Frühverheiratung im Untersuchungsgebiet. Die kritischen Faktoren für die Zunahme der Frühverheiratung sind Armut, Landknappheit, daher Fragmentierung des Familienbesitzes, und Lebensunsicherheiten.

Die Hauptursachen, warum Eltern ihre Kinder, vor allem die Töchter, früh verheiraten, können folgendermaßen zusammengefasst werden: 1) Ökonomisch gut situierte Bauernfamilien können mit anderen gut situierten Familien nur durch die Heirat ökonomische Allianzen bilden; 2) 18-Jahre alte Söhne aus ärmlichen Bauernfamilien können Land von der lokalen Bauernorganisation nur dann beanspruchen, wenn sie verheiratet sind, wobei nach dem Alter der Braut bzw. Ehefrau nicht gefragt wird; 3) Aufgrund der zunehmenden Armut neigen die Eltern dazu, alle ihre Kinder zeitgleich zu verheiraten, um die hohen Kosten im Zusammenhang mit den Hochzeitsfeierlichkeiten zu verringern; 4) Hauptanliegen von Bauernfamilien ist es, aufgrund der Lebensunsicherheiten, die Zukunftssicherung durch Heiratsallianzen zu bewerkstelligen. Als Ergebnis wünschen sich die Eltern, ihre Kinder verheiratet zu sehen, bevor sie selbst alt werden und sterben. Die Töchter "heiraten aus" aufgrund der patrilokalen Residenz nach der Eheschließung, was aus Sicht der Eltern "verlorene" Investition, z. B. für die Schulbildung, bedeutet. Die "einheiratenden" Mädchen, ihrerseits, kommen mit Pflichten, aber nicht mit Rechten.

An dieser Stelle ist erwähnenswert, daß die soziokulturellen Motive der Frühheirat geschlechtsspezifisch sind. Im Vergleich zu den Jungen werden die Mädchen früher verheiratet, um das Alt-Jungfer-Stigma zu vermeiden und um sie vor vorehelichem Geschlechtsverkehr zu schützen - was bei Jungen weniger restriktiv gehandhabt wird. Obwohl ökonomische Motive und Lebensunsicherheiten treibende Kräfte für die Frühverheirat beider Geschlechter sind, tragen auch die soziokulturellen Wertvorstellungen, die man der "Fraulichkeit" und "Jungfräulichkeit" beimißt, zur hohen Rate der Frühverheiratung bei Mädchen bei. Daher besteht ein Bedarf, das kindliche Leben und das Leben von Mädchen unter der Herrschaft der Männer zu untersuchen, und wie diese den Zugang zu formaler Erziehung und deren Erfolg, insbesondere der Töchter, behindert.

Die Möglichkeiten, mit denen Mädchen und Frauen sich behelfen, die sozialen Erwartungen und die realen Herausforderungen des Lebens in Einklang zu bringen, sind in den Fallstudien dargestellt. In der Tat ist die Spanne der möglichen Verhaltensweisen viel größer, als die akzeptierten sozialen Normen sie ahnen lassen. Die Kluft zwischen dem idealen Verhaltensmuster und dem tatsächlichen Auslebensspielraum ist offenkundig.

Diese Arbeit will einen Beitrag leisten zu einer Aufklärung über die schädlichen Folgen der Kinderheirat am Beispiel der Mädchen, deren Entwicklung im allgemeinen sowohl bildungsmäßig, gesundheitlich und sozial behindert wird. Es werden auch Vorschläge für weitere Forschung und für Gegenmaßnahmen unterbreitet.

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APPENDIX 4: GLOSSARY¹³⁷ OF AMHARIC (LOCAL) TERMS

<i>abäləǵ</i>	fictive-kinship relationship established through god-parenthood and childhood
<i>abbat</i>	father
<i>abba wärra</i>	household head (male)
<i>aggabi šəmagalločč</i>	three trusted elderly men who are responsible for conducting marital negotiation and settling marital dissolutions in their locality
<i>akalä mäḥün mädräs</i>	to reach the age of adulthood (manhood, womanhood)
<i>akəst</i>	aunt (mother's sister, father's sister)
<i>amač</i>	sister's husband (brother-in-law)
<i>amat</i>	in-law (mother or father of a husband or wife)
<i>ammarač təmərt</i>	alternative-education program
<i>anṭrähña</i>	silver-smith
<i>aräm</i>	weeding
<i>aräqi</i>	home-made (local) liquor
<i>araš</i>	farmer, peasant, tiller
<i>aras mäḥiyäq</i>	visiting a woman who gave birth recently
<i>arattühña</i>	a share cropping system based on one-fourth share for the cultivator
<i>awdəmma</i>	threshing floor for crops, grains and cereals
<i>ayat</i>	grand-parent
<i>aynaffar</i>	shy
<i>ayyət (warsa)</i>	brother's wife (sister-in-law)
<i>bäga</i>	the dry-season from September to May
<i>bäqlo</i>	mule, also used to refer to an "infertile woman"
<i>bässo</i>	food prepared from roasted and ground barely flour
<i>bal</i>	husband
<i>balä abbat</i>	landlord, nobleman
<i>balä habt</i>	property-owner
<i>balä muya set</i>	skillful housewife, skilled in cooking, basket-making, spinning cotton, brewing local drinks such as <i>talla</i> , <i>aräqi</i> , and <i>ṭäǵǵ</i>
<i>balä wəqabi</i>	a person possessed with a 'protective' spirit
<i>baləngära</i>	a trusted and close friend
<i>bet</i>	homestead, home, house
<i>betäsäb</i>	household members (family)
<i>bərr</i>	the currency unit of Ethiopia
<i>buda</i>	people with evil-eye
<i>čagula bet</i>	nuptial house, small hut where the bride and the groom with his best men stay for 10 days
<i>čäqila</i>	a child upto the age of 3 in the studied communities
<i>čäwa</i>	layman
<i>čəmmət</i>	quiet, reserved, or not talkative (girl, woman)
<i>čəsühña</i>	tenant
<i>däbər</i>	church, monastery
<i>däbtära</i>	a church-educated person who can participate in church ceremonies or religious education, or who could deal in magic and medicine as well as in church-related matters (such as the church music)
<i>däga</i>	highland ecological zone
<i>däǵǵ mäwuṭat</i>	a first going-outside ceremony for the mother who gives birth to a child
<i>därg</i>	the name of the military government which ruled Ethiopia from 1974-1991

¹³⁷ This glossary is prepared based on the transliteration system used in Leslau (1976) and Kane (1990a and 1990b). Most common Amharic terms are defined by consulting Leslau's *Concise Amharic Dictionary*, Kane's *Amharic-English Dictionaries* (Vol. I and II), and Dr. Getie Gelaye, a social anthropologist as well as Amharic language professional at Hamburg University in Germany. Local-specific terms such as *qada*, *qomo qär* and the like are defined in accordance with local meanings.

<i>das</i>	booth, hut made from poles and covered with leaves and branches used for serving wedding guests or other purposes such as learning-room
<i>dəggəs</i>	feast, party
<i>dəha</i>	poor
<i>dəqus</i>	red-pepper ground and mixed with salt and spices
<i>dəst</i>	clay pot used for cooking <i>wät</i> (stew)
<i>doro wät</i>	hot and spicy chicken stew
<i>əgziabəher (fäṭari)</i>	God (Creator)
<i>əhət</i>	sister
<i>ələta</i>	utter cries of joy, verbal expression of happiness or ululation
<i>əngära</i>	traditional Ethiopian bread made from a batter and is cooked like a pancake, the daily basic food for the household
<i>əngoča</i>	thick traditional bread, usually made from wheat flour
<i>ənnat</i>	mother
<i>ərgman</i>	curse
<i>ərkus mänfäs</i>	evil-spirit
<i>faqi</i>	tanner
<i>färäs</i>	horse
<i>fasika</i>	Easter, also refer to a “proper name”, joy, happiness
<i>fəračča (səgat)</i>	fear, worry
<i>gabəčča</i>	marriage
<i>galämota</i>	dissolute woman, usually divorced or widowed who lives alone
<i>gänffo</i>	porridge
<i>gan</i>	large clay pot used for brewing <i>ṭalla</i> (local beer), approximately equivalent to 100 liters
<i>gäräd</i>	a female servant who takes care of all domestic activities including cooking as well as taking care of children
<i>gašša</i>	a measure for land equivalent to 40 hectares
<i>gäṭir</i>	rural area, countryside
<i>gedo</i>	the custom of protecting the young married girl (below the age of 9) from sexual intercourse with her husband
<i>gənbət</i>	May
<i>goğšo</i>	a traditional small round hut made of wood, mud and grass or a small house with a thatched roof
<i>goğšo mäwča</i>	parental economic support provided for a newly-weds when they establish their own hut
<i>gota</i>	inside grain container made up of mud
<i>gotära</i>	outside granary
<i>gulgualo</i>	harrowing
<i>gult</i>	conditional land rights to the tribute and corvée labor due from the peasant on a certain plot of land
<i>habt (nəbrät)</i>	wealth, property, possession, belonging, etc.
<i>habtam</i>	a rich, wealthy person
<i>käbäro</i>	drum
<i>käbbt</i>	cattle
<i>Käbbt ṭäbaqi</i>	cattle tender or herder
<i>kätäma</i>	town
<i>kəbər</i>	honor, prestige
<i>kəndəš bükənde gabəčča</i>	a type of marriage arrangement without parental endowments such as cattle and/or other property (see types of marriage arrangements in Chapter 7)
<i>kərümt</i>	main rainy season from June to August
<i>krəstənnä</i>	infant baptism, male infants are baptized forty days after birth and female infants eighty days after birth
<i>kul</i>	traditional eye-liner
<i>kurat</i>	pride
<i>lä-aqəmä hewan düräsüč</i>	to reach puberty or the customary age of a child-bride for sleeping with

<i>lüföläfi</i>	her husband, usually nine years or above in the studied communities
<i>lümddüsät</i>	talkative (woman)
<i>lüqso</i>	marry-making, joy, to have fun
<i>läğagärüd</i>	funeral ceremony, weeping, lamentation
<i>läğ</i>	girl
<i>lämad (bahäl)</i>	child
<i>löle</i>	custom, tradition, culture
<i>maça</i>	a male-servant or employed farmer
	a bridal-gift in the form of money, i.e., the parent of the would-be-husband gives a fixed amount of money to the parents of the would-be-wife for buying her bridal clothes and ornaments
<i>madäga</i>	a clay pot used by women and girls for fetching water, approximately equivalent to 20 liter
<i>mağät</i>	kitchen, inner part of a house where women keep food and drinks
<i>mahbär</i>	voluntary monthly religious (EOC) association organized around a parish church in honor of a chosen Saint and members take turns providing food and drinks
<i>mähayyäm</i>	illiterate, uneducated person who cannot read and write
<i>mälkä mälkam</i>	good-looking, attractive
<i>mäls</i>	a return visit of the bride to her parents—usually 10 days after the wedding day
<i>mändär</i>	hamlet or the smallest level of the community
<i>mürigeta</i>	teacher, head or master of the clergy in the EOC
<i>mürrüdağo</i>	mutual-help and providence association
<i>müsina</i>	sterile (cow), also used to refer to barren (woman)
<i>müsärütä tәмәrt</i>	basic education, literacy-campaign
<i>müttę</i>	new-comer
<i>mädäğğa</i>	a traditional oven, a traditional fireplace, hearth
<i>mägәb mabәsäl</i>	cooking food
<i>mәšt (mist)</i>	wife
<i>mәtud</i>	traditional oven made from clay and used for baking <i>әngära</i> and <i>әngoča</i>
<i>mido</i>	wooden comb
<i>mize</i>	best-man upon a wedding day
<i>mofär</i>	beam of plough
<i>muday</i>	small basket of colored straw in which women and married girls keep their feminine belongings such as <i>kul</i> , <i>mido</i> and <i>šәtto</i>
<i>muggäsa</i>	praise
<i>muqäçça</i>	Wooden made mortar used for pounding crops, grains and cereals
<i>mušәrra</i>	bride, bride-groom (newly-weds)
<i>mutamät</i>	one year or seven years funeral ceremony for the commemoration of the death of a person of married status with prayer and feasts in the parish churchyard
<i>nädo</i>	sheave
<i>nәfro</i>	boiled cereal grains
<i>qäbäle</i>	the smallest administrative unit in town or rural areas
<i>qada</i>	one <i>kada</i> is approximately equivalent to 0.25 hectare
<i>qalä mähalla</i>	oath, promise, pledge
<i>qänbär</i>	yoke
<i>qäñinna</i>	territory or region
<i>qäñqaç</i>	black-smith
<i>qes</i>	priest
<i>qәdmä ayat</i>	great-grand parent
<i>qәmmәt</i>	concubine (lit. “kept woman”, see Case Study 8.2)
<i>qolla</i>	hot lowland ecological zone
<i>qomo qär</i>	“unmarriageable”, a stigma referring to a girl who remained unmarried after the age of 14 in the studied communities
<i>qurban</i>	holy-communion or commemoration of a person’s death with prayer in

<i>rəst</i>	the parish church a form of land holding system based on hereditary rights to the use of land
<i>sällay</i>	spy
<i>sämanya qün</i>	the 80 th day on which a baby girl is baptized or the commemoration of a person's death with prayer and feasts on the 80 th day of the actual funeral
<i>sänbäte</i>	voluntary weekly (on Sundays) religious as well as social gatherings around a parish church (EOC) and members take turns providing food and drinks
<i>särg</i>	wedding
<i>säyʔan</i>	satan, demon, devil
<i>seta set</i>	“womanish”, a male who enters the kitchen (<i>mağät</i>) or prepares his own food
<i>setəñña adari (šärmuta)</i>	prostitute
<i>set læğ</i>	daughter
<i>səfet mäsfat</i>	making baskets, female's task
<i>şegge</i>	annual gathering of <i>sänbäte</i> members around a parish church (EOC) and members take turns providing food and drinks
<i>siso(sostäñña)</i>	a share cropping system based on one-third share for the cultivator
<i>šamma</i>	white cotton cloth
<i>šammāni</i>	weaver
<i>šäkla säri</i>	potter (female)
<i>šatto</i>	perfume
<i>šəmagalle</i>	elderly man, respectable person
<i>ʔübül</i>	holy water
<i>ʔibbot</i>	lamb
<i>ʔiğğ</i>	home-made alcoholic mead or honey-wine
<i>ʔilla</i>	home-made (local) beer
<i>ʔinqway</i>	witchcraft, sorcerer, magician
<i>tüskar</i>	a second funeral ceremony for the commemoration of the death of a person of married status with prayer and feasts in the parish churchyard
<i>ʔüyəyb</i>	artisan
<i>tədar mäyaz</i>	establish one's own house and lead a married life
<i>təgg</i>	support, protection
<i>təğğa</i>	calf
<i>təla</i>	a person who has had a sexual intercourse within the preceding 24 hours (lit. ‘shadow’)
<i>təmmad</i>	hiring someone's land for a specified amount of payment usually in grain
<i>təq ʔüqo</i>	farm field compaction
<i>təʔ məfətäl</i>	spinning cotton, female's task
<i>ʔwuari qäbari</i>	taking care of one's parents upto their funeral ceremony
<i>wäfçö</i>	stone mill used for grinding grain
<i>wänd</i>	man, male, brave
<i>wändawänd</i>	masculine qualities such as being strong, powerful, aggressive, etc.
<i>wändəm</i>	brother
<i>wänd læğ</i>	son
<i>wändəm gaššä</i>	a term used by a younger sister or brother to address to an elder brother, ‘my shield’
<i>wänfäl</i>	a mutual labor agreement whereby two or more individuals work together on each others' plots for an equal amount of time
<i>wanna mize</i>	the first (main) best man of a groom
<i>wärüda (woreda)</i>	the local level government administrative unit higher than <i>qäbäle</i> and PA
<i>wäʔ</i>	hot and spicy stew
<i>wäyyna däga</i>	mid-highland ecological zone
<i>wäyzärit</i>	Miss, an unmarried woman

<i>wäyzäro</i>	Mrs, a married woman
<i>yü-abbat (ənnat) ləğ</i>	half-brother, half-sister
<i>yü-abbat əna ənnat ləğ</i>	full-brother, full-sister
<i>yüçən güräd gabəčča</i>	a type of marriage arrangement for a woman or a girl as both a servant and wife (see types of marriage arrangements in Chapter 7)
<i>yüəgziabəher quçtu</i>	God's anger
<i>yüəgziabəher çügga</i>	God's grace
<i>yü-əhət (wündəm) ləğ</i>	nephew
<i>yüəngəde ləğ</i>	placenta
<i>yüfasika təm</i>	Easter-fasting season
<i>yüfərd šəngo</i>	a local judicial or justice committee
<i>yügalämota särg</i>	second or more marriages with no elaborate wedding ceremony
<i>yüggə təbāb</i>	handicraftship, artisanship
<i>yägür šəmagalločč</i>	local councils of elders
<i>yaggot (akəst) ləğ</i>	cousin
<i>yäkrəstənnə abbat</i>	god-father
<i>yäkrəstənnə ənnat</i>	god-mother
<i>yäkrəstənnə ləğ</i>	god-child
<i>yäkrəstənnə səm</i>	baptismal name
<i>yäləğ bal</i>	daughter's husband (son-in-law)
<i>yäləğ ləğ</i>	grand-child
<i>yäləğ məšt</i>	son's wife (daughter-in-law)
<i>yäləğənnüt gabəčča</i>	marriage between female and male children, females between the ages of 10 and 14, and males between the ages of 15 and 17
<i>yäləğənnüt zämün</i>	a period of childhood (boyhood, girlhood)
<i>yäləmad (bahəlawi) gabəčča</i>	traditional or customary marriage
<i>yäləmd awwaləğ</i>	traditional female birth attendant
<i>yämädüggo gabəčča</i>	marriage of a girl-child between the ages of five and nine
<i>yäməçid širo</i>	roasted and ground peas stew cooked on a traditional oven
<i>yänäfs abbat</i>	confessor-father
<i>yanqäləbba gabəčča</i>	marriage of a female child who is still on the back of her mother and is fed her mother's breast, or marriage of a girl-child between the ages of one and four
<i>yäqal kidan gabəčča</i>	promissory marriage
<i>yäqal məsäriya</i>	to assert a promise or concluding the bridal-promise
<i>yäqä çio läqso</i>	a funeral ceremony for the deceased by a special arrangement
<i>yäqorqoro bet</i>	a house made of wood and mud with tin-corrugated roof
<i>yäqurban gabəčča</i>	church-sanctioned indissoluble marriage
<i>yarba qün ədal</i>	predestination, fate
<i>yäsəmanya gabəčča</i>	a traditional marriage contract with equal contribution of cattle and/or other properties
<i>yäsəmanya wəl</i>	"eighty-bond"
<i>yäsar bet</i>	a house made of wood and mud with grassed-thatched roof
<i>yäsärg bet</i>	house in which the wedding feast is held, nuptial house
<i>yäsärg wazema</i>	the eve of a wedding ceremony
<i>yäset ləğ</i>	unmannerly child or "son of a woman"
<i>yäset muya</i>	woman's skills
<i>yäset tənəš yälləwum</i>	a "girl is never a child" or there is 'no childhood' for a girl (female)
<i>yätämarä</i>	literate, educated person
<i>yäçut abbat</i>	foster father (lit. "breast-father")
<i>yäçut ənnat</i>	foster mother (lit. "breast-mother")
<i>yäçut ləğ</i>	foster child (lit. "breast-child")
<i>yüzär harüg</i>	lineage or family line
<i>yüzär harüg läməbəzat</i>	to extend one's family lineage
<i>zar</i>	spirit possession cult
<i>zär</i>	descent, lineage
<i>zämüd (zəmdənnə)</i>	relative, affiliation, relation
<i>zənnə</i>	fame

APPENDIX 5: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAE	Action Aid Ethiopia
AAFH	Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital
AAU	Addis Ababa University
ADA	Amhara Development Association
AEDC	Austrian Embassy Development Co-operation
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AGEI	African Girls' Education Initiative
AGI	Alan Guttmacher Institute
ANPPCAN	African Network for the Prevention against Child Abuse and Neglect
ANRS	Amhara National Regional State
ANRSWAO	Amhara National Regional State Women's Affairs Office
ATRCW	African Training and Research Center for Women
BPA	Bachema Peasant Association
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
BPS	Bachema Primary School
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CCE	Civil Code of Ethiopia
CCMMAMRM	Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERTWID	Center for Research, Training and Information on Women in Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Association
CRL	Center for Reproductive Lives
CRR	Center for Reproductive Rights
CSA	Central Statistical Authority
CSAE	Centre for the Study of African Economies
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
DAs	Development Associations
DCS	Discovery Consultancy Services
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DIIS	Danish Institute for International Studies
EAFLP	East Africa Fourth Literacies Program
EAMWA	East African Media Women Association
EARO	Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization
E.C	Ethiopian Calendar
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
EDHS	Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
EMWA	Ethiopian Media Women Association
EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EPDM	Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
ERHS	Ethiopian Rural Household Survey
ESDP	Educational Sector Development Program
ESHE	Essential Services for Health in Ethiopia
ESOG	Ethiopian Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
ETP	Education and Training Policy
EU	European Union
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association

EWDF	Ethiopian Women Development Fund
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGAE	Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FHI	Family Health International
FLE	Family Life Education
FMRWG	Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls
FSS	Forum for Social Studies
GaD	Gender and Development
GAW	Group for the Advancement of Women
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GG	Gender Gap
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GTZ	German Technical Co-operation
HAPCO	HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HTPs	Harmful Traditional Practices
IAC	Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children
IAI	International African Institute
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDR	Institute of Development Research
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IFOG	International Federation of Obstetrics and Gynecology
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IER	Institute of Educational Research
IES	Institute of Ethiopian Studies
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IRC	International Research Center
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
ISTR	International Society for Third-sector Research
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practices
KCTE	Kotebe College of Teachers Education
kg	Kilo gram
km	Kilo meter
LRC	Land Reform Charter
MCC	Media and Communication Center
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoCB	Ministry of Capacity Building
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoYSC	Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture
MPS	Merawi Primary School
MRG	Minority Rights Group
MSS	Merawi Secondary School
MWIO	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> Information Office
NCTPE	National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia
NES	New Education System
NFFS	National Family and Fertility Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLC	National Literacy Campaign
NOP	National Office of Population

NPEW	National Policy on Ethiopian Women
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPHCC	Office of Population and Housing Census Commission
OSCIWI	Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues
OSSREA	Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa
PA	Peasant Association
PC	Population Council
PEFG	Panos Ethiopia's Forum on Gender
PFA	Platform for Action from the UN Fourth World Conference on Women
PHRD	Human Resource Development Project Office
PMAC	Provincial Military Administration Council
PRB	Population Reference Bureau
REWA	Revolutionary Ethiopian Women Association
RPA	Rim Peasant Association
RPS	Rim Primary School
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SC	Service Cooperative
SC/UK	Save the Children United Kingdom
SIDA	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
SMAMs	Singulate Mean Age At Marriage
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
SPADE	Society for Participatory Development in Ethiopia
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UN CHR	United Nations Centre for Human Rights
UN CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UN/DAW	UN Division for the Advancement of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UN ECA	United Nations African Economic Commission
UNESC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCGEs	Volunteer Community Gender Educators
VVF	Vesico-Vaginal Fistulas
WAD	Women's Affairs Department
WaD	Women and Development
WAO	Women's Affairs Office
WAT	Women's Association of Tigray
WHO	World Health Organization
WIBS	<i>Woreda</i> Integrated Basic Services
WIC	Walta Information Center
WiD	Women in Development
W/ro	<i>Wäyzäro</i>
W/t	<i>Wäyzärit</i>
WVI	World Vision International
YPS	Yechalie Primary School
YRH	Youth Reproductive Health

APPENDIX 6: FIELDWORK QUESTIONNAIRES

Appendix 6A: Parents' Questionnaire
(Prepared in Amharic Language)

በሜጫ ወረዳ የሚገኙ ሴት ልጆችን የጋብቻ ሁኔታና የትምህርት ተሳትፎ ለማጥናት የተዘጋጀ የፅሁፍ መጠይቅ

II. ለወላጆች የቀረበ መጠይቅ

አጠቃላይ መግለጫ:

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና አላማ በሜጫ ወረዳ ያለ ዕድሜ ጋብቻ በሴት ልጆች ትምህርት ላይ የሚያስከትለውን ተጽዕኖ ለማጥናት አጠቃላይ መረጃ መሰብሰብ ነው። በመሆኑም የወላጆች መረጃ ጠቃሚ በመሆኑ ትክክለኛ መረጃ እንድትሰጡ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ። ከዚህም ጋር ተያይዞ መረጃ በመስጠት ጊዜያችሁን መሰዋዕት በማድረግ ለምታደርጉልኝ ትብብር አስቀድሜ በጣም አመሰግናችኋለሁ። መጠይቁን የምታስሞሉት ሰዎችም ለዚህ ጊዜያችሁን መሰዋዕት ስለምታደርጉ አስቀድሜ በጣም አመሰግናለሁ።

የቦታዉ መለያ: ገበሬ ማህበር _____ ጎጥ _____ መንደር _____

ሀ. የባልና የሚስት የግል መረጃ

1. ሙሉ ስም: የባል _____ የሚስት _____
2. ዕድሜ: የባል _____ የሚስት _____
3. ሀይማኖት (ኦርቶዶክስ ክርስቲያን, እስላም, ፕሮቴስታንት/ጳንጤ, ሌላ-ይጠቀስ):
የባል _____ የሚስት _____
4. ብሄረሰብ (አማራ, ትግሬ, ኦሮሞ, ሌላ-ይጠቀስ):
የባል _____ የሚስት _____
5. የአፍ መፍቻ ቋንቋ (አማርኛ/ትግርኛ/ኦሮሞኛ/ሌላ-ይጠቀስ):
የባል _____ የሚስት _____
6. ቤተሰብ የሚግባባበት ወይም የሚጠቀምበት ቋንቋ (አማርኛ/ትግርኛ/ኦሮሞኛ/ሌላ-ይጠቀስ): _____
7. የትውልድ ቦታ (ጎጥ/መንደር/ገበሬ ማህበር/ወረዳ):
የባል _____ የሚስት _____
8. የጋብቻ ሁኔታ (የመጀመሪያ ባል/ሚስት, ሁለተኛ ባል/ሚስት, ሌላ-ይጠቀስ):
ባል _____ ሚስት _____
9. የመጀመሪያ ጋብቻ ዕድሜ: የባል _____ የሚስት _____
10. የመጀመሪያ ልጅ የወለዱበት ዕድሜ: የሚስት _____
11. የትምህርት ደረጃ (ማንበብና መጻፍ የማይችል/ትችል, መሠረተ-ትምህርት የተከታተለ/ለች, ሌላ-ይጠቀስ): የባል _____ የሚስት _____
12. የመተዳደሪያ ሥራ: የባል _____
የሚስት _____
13. ተጨማሪ ሥራ: የባል _____
የሚስት _____

ለ. የልጆችና አጠቃላይ የቤተሰብ አባላት መረጃ

14. የልጆች ብዛት: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____
15. የመጀመሪያ ልጅ ዕድሜ (የባልና የሚስት የጋራ ወይም የግል ልጅ):
የባልና የሚስት የጋራ ልጅ _____ የባል የግል ልጅ _____ የሚስት የግል ልጅ _____

16. ያገቡ/የተዳሩ ልጆች ብዛት: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____
17. ሁለተኛ ወይም ከሁለት ጊዜ በላይ ያገቡ ልጆች ብዛት: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____
18. የተፋቱ ልጆች ብዛት: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____
19. የመጀመሪያ ደረጃ ትምህርት (ከ1ኛ-8ኛ ክፍል) የሚማሩ ልጆች ብዛት: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____
20. የሁለተኛ ደረጃ ትምህርት (ከ9ኛ-12ኛ ክፍል) የሚማሩ ልጆች ብዛት: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____
21. 12ኛ ክፍል የጨረሱ ልጆች ብዛት: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____
22. ከፍተኛ ትምህርት (ኮሌጅ ወይም ዩኒቨርሲቲ) የሚማሩ ልጆች ብዛት: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____
23. የመንግሥት ወይም መንግሥታዊ ያልሆነ መሥሪያ ቤት ሠራተኛ ልጆች ብዛት: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____
24. መደበኛ ትምህርታቸውን ያቋረጡ ልጆች ብዛት: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____
25. በአንድ ግቢ ወስጥ የሚኖሩ የቤተሰብ አባላት:
 - ሀ) ባል _____ ሚስት _____ ልጅ _____
 - ለ) የልጅ ልጅ _____ የባል እናት/አባት _____ የሚስት እናት/አባት _____
 - ሐ) የዘመድ ልጅ _____ ሎሌ _____ ሌላ ይጠቀስ _____

ሐ. የቤተሰብ የግል ይዘታና መተዳደሪያ መረጃ

26. የቤት ዓይነት: የሣር _____ የቆርቆሮ _____
27. የመሬት መጠን (በቃዳ) _____
28. የቤት እንስሳት ዓይነትና ብዛት:
 - ሀ) በሬ _____ ወይራን _____ ላም _____ ጊደር _____ ጥጃ _____
 - ለ) አህያ _____ በቅሎ _____ ፈረስ _____
 - ሐ) በግ _____ ፍየል _____ ዶሮ _____ ሌላ-ይጠቀስ _____
29. የቤተሰብ ዋና መተዳደሪ: _____
30. የቤተሰብ ተጨማሪ መተዳደሪያ: _____

መ. ተጨማሪ መረጃ

31. ከዘመድ ወይም ከጎረቤት መደበኛ ትምህርት የሚማሩ ሴት ልጆች አሉ? አዎ አሉ _____ የሉም _____, መልሱ አዎ አሉ ከሆነ ብዛታቸው ይጠቀስ _____
32. ከዘመድ ወይም ከጎረቤት መደበኛ ትምህርታቸውን ያቋረጡ ሴት ልጆች አሉ? አዎ አሉ _____ የሉም _____, መልሱ አዎ አሉ ከሆነ ብዛታቸው ይጠቀስ _____
33. ከዘመድ ወይም ከጎረቤት ዕድሜያቸው ለትምህርት የደረሰ ነገር ግን መደበኛ ትምህርት የማይማሩ ሴት ልጆች አሉ? አዎ አሉ _____ የሉም _____, መልሱ አዎ አሉ ከሆነ ብዛታቸው ይጠቀስ _____
34. ከዘመድ ወይም ከጎረቤት በልጅነታቸው (ከ15 አመት በታች) የተዳሩ/ያገቡ ሴት ልጆች አሉ? አዎ አሉ _____ የሉም _____, መልሱ አዎ ከሆነ ብዛታቸው ይጠቀስ _____
35. በአካባቢያችሁ ሴት ልጆች በሊጋ ዕድሜያቸው ለምን ይዳራሉ? _____
36. በአካባቢያችሁ ሴት ልጆች ለምን ወደ ትምህርት ቤት አይላኩም? _____

መረጃውን የሰበሰበው ሰው ሙሉ ስም _____ ፊርማ _____

መረጃው የተሰበሰበበት ቀንና ቦታ: ቀን _____ ቦታ _____

**Appendix 6B: Pupils' Questionnaire
(Prepared in Amharic Language)**

በሜሌ ወረዳ የሚገኙ ሴት ልጆችን የጋብቻ ሁኔታና የትምህርት ተሳትፎ ለማጥናት የተዘጋጀ የፅሁፍ መጠይቅ

I. ለአንደኛ ደረጃ ተማሪዎች የቀረበ መጠይቅ

አጠቃላይ መግለጫ:

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና አላማ በሜሌ ወረዳ ያለ ዕድሜ ጋብቻ በሴት ልጆች ትምህርት ላይ የሚያስከትለውን ተጽዕኖ ለማጥናት አጠቃላይ መረጃ መሰብሰብ ነው። በመሆኑም የአንደኛ ደረጃ ተማሪዎች መረጃ ጠቃሚ በመሆኑ ትክክለኛ መረጃ እንድትሰጡ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ። ከዚህም ጋር ተያይዞ መረጃ በመስጠት ጊዜያችሁን መሰዋዕት በማድረግ ለምታደርጉልኝ ትብብር አስቀድሜ በጣም አመሰግናችኋለሁ። መጠይቁን የምታስሞሉት ሰዎችም ለዚህ ጊዜያችሁን መሰዋዕት ስለምታደርጉ አስቀድሜ በጣም አመሰግናለሁ።

የቦታዉ መለያ: ገበሬ ማህበር _____ ጎጥ _____ መንደር _____
የትምህርት ቤቱ ስም: _____

ሀ. የግል መረጃ

3. ሙሉ ስም: _____ ጾታ _____ ዕድሜ _____
4. የአፍ መፍቻ ቋንቋ (አማርኛ/ትግርኛ/ኦሮምኛ/ሌላ-ይጠቀስ): _____
5. ቤት ወስጥ የሚነገር ቋንቋ (አማርኛ/ትግርኛ/ኦሮምኛ/ሌላ-ይጠቀስ): _____
6. የትውልድ ቦታ (ጎጥ/መንደር/ገበሬማህበር/ወረዳ): _____
7. የጋብቻ ሁኔታ (ያገባ/ች, ያላገባ/ች, የተፋታ/ች, ሌላ-ይጠቀስ): _____
8. አሁን የምትኖረው/ሪዉ ከማን ጋር ነዉ? (ከእናትና አባት ጋር, ከአባት ጋር, ከእናት ጋር, ከአማቶች ጋር, ከሌላ ጋር ከሆነ-ይጠቀስ): _____
9. መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤት የገባህበት/ሸበት ዓ/ም: _____
8. የክፍል ደረጃና ሴክሽን: _____ የክፍል ተራ ቁጥር _____

ለ. የወላጆች መረጃ

9. የወላጅ ሙሉ ስም: የአባት _____
የእናት _____
10. የወላጅ የጋብቻ ሁኔታ (አብረው የሚኖሩ, በተለያዩ ቦታ የሚኖሩ, የተፋቱ, ሌላ-ይጠቀስ): አባት/እናት _____
አባት _____ እናት _____
11. የወላጅ መደበኛ ስራ: የአባት _____
የእናት _____
12. የወላጅ ተጨማሪ ስራ: የአባት _____
የእናት _____
13. የወላጅ የትምህርት ደረጃ (ማንበብና መጻፍ የማይችል/ትችል, ማንበብና መጻፍ የሚችል/ምትችል, ሌላ-ይጠቀስ):
የአባት _____ የእናት _____

ሐ. የእህቶች/ወንድሞችና አጠቃላይ የቤተሰብ አባላት መረጃ

14. የእህቶች/ወንድሞች ብዛት: ወንድም _____ እህት _____
15. ያገቡ/የተዳሩ እህቶች/ወንድሞች ብዛት: ወንድም _____ እህት _____
16. ሁለተኛ ወይም ከሁለት ጊዜ በላይ ያገቡ እህቶች/ወንድሞች ብዛት:
ወንድም _____ እህት _____

17. የተፋቱ እህቶች/ወንድሞች ብዛት: ወንድም _____ እህት _____
18. የመጀመሪያ ደረጃ ትምህርት (ከ1ኛ-8ኛ ክፍል) የሚማሩ እህቶች/ወንድሞች ብዛት: ወንድም _____ እህት _____
19. የሁለተኛ ደረጃ ትምህርት (ከ9ኛ-12ኛ ክፍል) የሚማሩ እህቶች/ወንድሞች ብዛት: ወንድም _____ እህት _____
20. 12ኛ ክፍል የጨረሱ እህቶች/ወንድሞች ብዛት: ወንድም _____ እህት _____
21. ከፍተኛ ትምህርት (ኮሌጅ ወይም ዩኒቨርሲቲ) የሚማሩ እህቶች/ወንድሞች ብዛት: ወንድም _____ እህት _____
22. የመንግሥት ወይም መንግሥታዊ ያልሆነ መሥሪያ ቤት ሠራተኛ እህቶች/ወንድሞች ብዛት: ወንድም _____ እህት _____
23. ትምህርታቸውን ያቋረጡ እህቶች/ወንድሞች ብዛት: ወንድም _____ እህት _____
24. በአንድ ግቢ ዉስጥ የሚኖሩ የቤተሰብ አባላት:
 - ሀ) አባት _____ እናት _____ ወንድም _____ እህት _____
 - ለ) የአባት እናት/አባት _____ የእናት አባት/እናት _____
 - ሐ) የወንድም/የእህት ልጅ _____ የዘመድ ልጅ _____
 - መ) ሎሌ _____ ሌላ-ይጠቀስ _____

መ. የቤተሰብ የግል ይዘታና መተዳደሪያ መረጃ

25. የቤት ዓይነት: የሣር _____ የቆርቆሮ _____
26. የመሬት መጠን (በቃዳ) _____
27. የቤት እንስሳት ዓይነትና ብዛት:
 - ሀ) በሬ _____ ወይፊን _____ ላም _____ ጊደር _____ ጥጃ _____
 - ለ) አህያ _____ በቅሎ _____ ፈረስ _____
 - ሐ) በግ _____ ፍየል _____ ዶሮ _____ ሌላ-ይጠቀስ _____
28. የቤተሰቡ ዋና መተዳደሪ: _____
29. የቤተሰቡ ተጨማሪ መተዳደሪያ: _____

ሠ. ተጨማሪ መረጃ

30. ከዘመድ ወይም ከጎረቤት መደበኛ ትምህርት የሚማሩ ሴት ልጆች አሉ? አዎ አሉ _____ የሉም _____, መልሱ አዎ አሉ ከሆነ ብዛታቸው ይጠቀስ _____
31. ከዘመድ ወይም ከጎረቤት መደበኛ ትምህርታቸውን ያቋረጡ ሴት ልጆች አሉ? አዎ አሉ _____ የሉም _____, መልሱ አዎ አሉ ከሆነ ብዛታቸው ይጠቀስ _____
32. ከዘመድ ወይም ከጎረቤት ዕድሜያቸው ለትምህርት የደረሰ ነገር ግን መደበኛ ትምህርት የማይማሩ ሴት ልጆች አሉ? አዎ አሉ _____ የሉም _____ መልሱ አዎ አሉ ከሆነ ብዛታቸው ይጠቀስ _____
33. ከዘመድ ወይም ከጎረቤት በልጅነታቸው (ከ15 አመት በታች) የተዳሩ/ያገቡ ሴት ልጆች አሉ? አዎ አሉ _____ የሉም _____, መልሱ አዎ አሉ ከሆነ ብዛታቸው ይጠቀስ _____
34. በአካባቢያችሁ ሴት ልጆች በለጋ ዕድሜያቸው ለምን ይዳራሉ? _____
35. በአካባቢያችሁ ሴት ልጆች ለምን ወደ ትምህርት ቤት አይላኩም? _____

መረጃውን የሰበሰበው ሰው ሙሉ ስም _____ ፊርማ _____

መረጃው የተሰበሰበበት ቀንና ቦታ: ቀን _____ ቦታ _____

Appendix 7: Profiles of Surveyed Households (350)¹

(Bachema and Rim Peasant Associations of Mecha Woreda, 5th May 2003-5th June 2003)

HH No. ²	SA ³		#M ⁴		SAD ⁵	SAFM ⁶		WAFCB ⁷	AEC ⁸	#CS ⁹		#MCS ¹⁰		#SACS ¹¹		Spouses' Educational Status		Property-Owned		
	H ₁₂	W ₁₃	H	W		H	W			F ₁₄	M ₁₅	F	M	F	M	H	W	L/q ¹⁶	Ca. ¹⁷	C/T ¹⁸
1	40	30	1 st	1 st	10	18	8	16	14	5	2	2	1	1	0	RW ¹⁹	Illit ²⁰	3k	2	T
2	60	40	2 nd	2 nd	20	15	10	15	25	8	2	4	0	2	0	RW	Illit	4k	12	C
3	50	40	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	15	25	0	4	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	12	T
4	41	33	1 st	1 st	8	22	14	22	11	2	2	1	1	1	2	RW	Illit	5k	9	C
5	40	30	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	7	16	14	3	3	2	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	6k	9	C
6	50	40	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	10	20	20	5	3	3	2	Dot ²¹	1	Illit	Illit	4k	1	T

1 The surveyed households (350) were selected from the total households of Bachema and Rim Peasant Associations (PAs) of Mecha Woreda, the study Area. According to Mecha Woreda Information Office (MWIO 2003/04), the total number of Bachema PA's households was 1597 (1460 male-headed households and 137 female headed households) and the total number of Rim PA's households was 1877 (1802 male-headed-households and 75 female-headed households). In short, the surveyed households (350) were 10.75% of the total households (3474) of Bachema and Rim PAs. Statistically, for a household survey to be "representative" it must be at least 10% of the total household. Accordingly, the sample (350) of the surveyed household (10.75%) is "representative" since it is more than 10% of the total households (3474). Furthermore, among the total households (3474), only 212 households (6.10%) were headed by women, mostly widowed. Among the surveyed households (350), only 10 households (2.86%) were headed by women (8 widows and 2 divorcees). In other words, among the total female-headed households (212), the number of female-headed household included in the survey was 10 (4.72%). Here, it should be noted that the percentage (6.10%) of female-headed households among the total households of Rim and Bachema PAs is very small compared to the proportion of female-headed households in other rural communities of Northwestern Ethiopia. For example, Yigremew Adal, in his article entitled "Land Redistribution and Female-headed Households: A Study in Two Rural Communities in Northwest Ethiopia" (2001) found a relatively higher proportion of women who were divorced (39%) and widowed (26%) among the two rural communities of West Gojjam in Northwestern Ethiopia.

2 **HH No.:** Household number given by the researcher.

3 **SA:** Spouses' age during the household survey (5th May 2003 - 5th June 2003). Here it should be noted that most people from rural communities of Ethiopia, including the study area, do not know their exact current age. Taking this problem in to account, the parents' questionnaire was designed to address this issue by including open-questions about spouses' age at first marriage, wife's age at first child-bearing and that of the age of her first child (cf. Appendix 6A: List of Parents' Questionnaire). Accordingly, almost all spouses' remembered their age at first marriage. Furthermore, almost all wives remembered their age at first child-bearing and that of the age of their first child. So, in this study, the wife's age during the household survey was checked by adding her age at first child-bearing and the age of her first child. Accordingly, her husband's age was checked by adding the age difference between the husband and the wife to that of the wife's age.

4 **#M:** Number of marriages, such as first, second, third and fourth marriage. Here it should be noted that first marriages are common for females and males. There are also serial marriages (re-marriages): second, third and fourth. Among serial marriages, the number of second marriages for both husbands and wives are more prevalent than third and fourth marriage, especially for wives. More specifically, wives who got married for the first time beyond the age of 14 (locally late age for first marriage) were second wives for a divorced or widowed man.

5 **SAD:** Spouses' age difference

6 **SAFM:** Spouses' age at first marriage

7 **WAFCB:** Wife's age at first childbearing

8 **AEC:** Age of the eldest child

9 **#CS:** Number of surviving children by sex

10 **#MCS:** Number of married children by sex

11 **#SACS:** Number of school attending/attended children by sex

12 **H:** Husband

13 **W:** Wife

14 **F:** Female children

15 **M:** Male children

16 **L/q:** Landholding or size per *qada* (one *qada* is approximately equivalent to 0.25 hectare)

17 **Ca:** Cattle. Other types of livestock such as horses, mules, donkeys, sheep, goats and hens were not included since these animals are not important for arranging early marriage. According to the results of the parents' and school-attending children's questionnaires, only few households had mules and/or horses. However, some households have donkeys, sheep and goats and most households had hens.

18 **C/T:** Corrugated/thatched roof

19 **RW:** Read and write (either through illiteracy campaign or traditional education, e.g. church school for men)

20 **Illit:** Illiterate (cannot read and write)

21 Two daughters dropped-out from primary school due to early-arranged marriage

7	43	35	1 st	1 st	8	18	10	25	10	0	1	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	6	T
8	33	22	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	13	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	4	T
9	70	63	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	25	38	5	4	3	2	2 ²²	3 ²³	Illit	Illit	4k	8	T
10	42	33	2 nd	2 nd	9	20	11	13	21	3	6	1	4	1	1	Illit	Illit	5k	2	C
11	42	31	2 nd	2 nd	11	20	9	15	16	2	5	1	1	1	0	Illit	Illit	16 ²⁴	5	C
12	52	40	2 nd	2 nd	12	22	10	15	25	4	5	3	4	1	2	Illit	Illit	6k	8	C
13	45	36	1 st	1 st	9	20	11	22	14	2	4	0	0	2 ²⁵	1	Illit	Illit	5k	7	T
14	42	35	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	17	18	3	1	1	0	2	1	Illit	Illit	5k	5	T
15	47	40	2 nd	2 nd	7	18	11	20	20	3	2	3	0	1 ²⁶	1	Illit	Illit	5k	2	T
16	40	30	1 st	1 st	10	19	9	20	10	1	3	0	0	0	1	Illit	Illit	4k	12	T ²⁷
17	60	50	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	10	20	30	4	4	2	2	1	1	Illit	Illit	5k	2	T
18	48	40	1 st	1 st	8	19	11	16	24	1	6	1	4	0	3 ²⁸	Illit	Illit	6k	12	C
19	54	45	2 nd	2 nd	9	22	12	18	27	5	4	4	1	1	2	RW	Illit	4k	12	C
20	36	26	2 nd	2 nd	10	22	12	16	10	3	1	0	0	1	1	RW	Illit	6k	8	C
21	56	48	1 st	1 st	8	15	7	23	25	4	6	3	2	1	3	Illit	Illit	8k	7	C ²⁹
22	57	46	2 nd	2 nd	11	16	10	12	34	3	4	3	3	2	2	Illit	Illit	9k	6	T
23	61	50	1 st	1 st	11	20	9	15	35	3	5	3	3	0	1	priest	Illit	6k	9	T ³⁰
24	53	45	2 nd	2 nd	8	20	12	20	25	2	3	0	3	1	0	RW	Illit	6k	5	C
25	55	50	1 st	1 st	5	15	10	15	35	4	4	2	3	3	1	Illit	Illit	5k	10	C ³¹
26	40	30	1 st	1 st	10	18	8	15	15	3	3	0	0	2	1	priest	Illit	5k	7	C
27	50	44	1 st	1 st	6	15	9	13	32	3	3	2	2	0	0	Illit	Illit	7k	12	C
28	40	30	1 st	1 st	10	17	7	15	15	3	2	1	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	9k	12	C
29	51	45	1 st	1 st	6	16	10	15	30	5	2	1	1	2	1	Illit	Illit	6k	13	C
30	31	25	1 st	1 st	6	18	12	13	12	4	1	0	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	5k	6	T
31	60	50	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	20	30	4	5	4	3	0	1	Illit	Illit	6k	2	T
32	55	45	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	15	20	25	4	1	1	0	3	1	Illit	Illit	5k	10	C
33	55	45	2 nd	2 nd	10	21	11	20	25	2	3	2	2	0	1	Illit	Illit	5k	14	C
34	45	37	2 nd	2 nd	8	22	14	20	17	1	3	0	0	0	2	Illit	Illit	7k	10	C
35	61	53	2 nd	2 nd	8	20	12	18	35	4	7	4	7	1 Dot	1Ps	RW	Dout	12k	18	C
36	50	40	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	16	24	5	3	4	2	1	2	Illit	Illit	6k	6	C
37	42	35	1 st	1 st	7	15	8	16	19	4	3	4	0	2	2	Illit	Illit	6k	11	C
38	40	32	1 st	1 st	8	18	10	16	16	4	2	2	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	6k	4	C
39	60	50	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	14	36	4	3	4	3	1	1	Illit	Illit	8k	31 ³²	C
40	42	35	1 st	1 st	7	15	8	15	20	8	3	3	3	2	1	Illit	Illit	5k	14	C
41	41	35	1 st	1 st	6	20	14	17	18	2	2	2	0	1	0	RW	Illit	5k	7	T

- 22 One early married and divorced daughter (24) attended primary and secondary schools in Merawi (Mecha *Woreda*'s Capital town) and graduated in a Diploma. Her younger early-married sister (18) was also attending secondary school in Merawi after divorce. The eldest daughter (38) got married early, established her own *goḡḡo* around her husband's village, gave birth to seven children, and has become a grand-mother of two children.
- 23 One unmarried son (33) attended his primary and secondary schooling in Merawi and graduated from a Police College in Diploma. The married son (16) was attending primary school but his young wife (9) didn't attend school since her parents were not willing to send her to school. The youngest unmarried son (13) was attending primary school with his immediate elder brother. The eldest son (36) was married, established his own *goḡḡo* around his parents' homestead and has two sons.
- 24 A household with the largest size of land (16q = 4 hectare). "Land rich" households usually do not send their sons to school since they prefer arranging marriage for them provided that here are extra lands to allot to each of them. This household is a case in point.
- 25 In this household, all daughters (two) were attending school without getting married early.
- 26 Among the three married daughters, only one female child attends primary school after early marriage.
- 27 This household neither arranged early marriage nor sent the only daughter to school. Among the three unmarried sons, only one son was attending formal school.
- 28 Among the three school-attended/attending sons, one completed 12th grade and the other two were attending primary school, where as the only daughter got married twice at her early age and never attended formal school.
- 29 The spouses were converted Protestants from Orthodox Christianity, the predominant religion among all the peasant communities of the study area. This religious mix was found in Bachema PA, which is located across the road from Bahir Dar (capital town of Amhara Region) to Merawi (capital town of Mecha *Woreda*). This is the only peasant association with two first cycle primary schools among the peasant communities of the *Woreda*.
- 30 In this household, all daughters (three) got married early, but none of them attended formal school. Among five sons, only one was attending school.
- 31 A household with the lowest spouse' age difference (5 years) among the surveyed households. Such a small age difference is possible only in the case of early and first marriages.
- 32 The household with the largest number of cattle (31 cattle) with average land size (8 *qada* =2 hectare). In this household, all children (4 daughters and 3 sons) got married and among them only one daughter and one son were attending school after getting married.

42	53	45	1 st	1 st	8	15	7	15	30	2	6	0	3	0	1	Illit	Illit	12k	4	C
43	45	30	1 st	1 st	15	21	6	17	13	3	4	3	4	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	4	C
44	75	65	1 st	1 st	10	22	12	25	40	1	7	1	5	0	2	Illit	Illit	4k	2	C
45	55	45	3 rd	3 rd	10	25	15	30	15	1	1	0	0	Dot	Dot	Illit	Illit	0	0	C
46	35	30	2 nd	2 nd	5	18	13	14	16	2	4	1	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	4	C
47	31	23	1 st	1 st	8	16	8	14	13	2	2	0	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	3k	2	T
48	40	34	1 st	1 st	6	27	13	19	15	3	3	3	1	1	0	RW	Illit	4k	10	C
49	40	30	2 nd	2 nd	10	25	15	20	10	2	3	2	0	0	2	Illit	Illit	5k	7	C
50	60	35	1 st	1 st	15	25	10	15	20	4	1	3	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	5k	5	C
51	45	35	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	15	20	2	4	2	0	0	2	RW	Illit	6k	6	C
52	35	29	1 st	1 st	6	15	9	14	15	3	2	1	1	1	1	BEd	Illit	6k	13	C
53	49	42	1 st	1 st	7	22	15	16	26	3	4	1	0	0	3	RW	Illit	6k	11	C
54	42	35	2 nd	2 nd	7	20	13	15	20	3	4	0	1	2	2	Illit	Illit	5k	10	C
55	39	32	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	18	14	2	4	0	0	2	1	Illit	Illit	5k	7	T
56	42	35	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	15	20	3	3	0	0	3	0	Illit	Illit	4k	7	T
57	45	33	1 st	1 st	12	20	8	20	13	2	4	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	2	T
58	45	39	1 st	1 st	6	20	14	20	19	1	3	1	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	6k	2	T
59	45	35	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	20	15	3	1	3	1	0	0	Illit	Illit	6k	13	T
60	50	41	2 nd	2 nd	9	18	9	16	25	4	3	3	0	1	2	Illit	Illit	5k	2	T
61	42	35	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	18	17	1	3	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	5	C
62	44	37	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	18	19	2	3	1	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	6k	8	T
63	39	30	1 st	1 st	9	17	8	15	15	7	2	1	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	9k	8	T
64	36	30	1 st	1 st	6	20	14	18	12	2	2	2	1	0	0	RW	Illit	6k	13	C
65	49	40	1 st	1 st	9	20	11	17	23	2	3	2	2	1	1	Illit	Illit	4k	6	C
66	53	40	1 st	1 st	13	22	9	12	28	4	1	1	3	1	1	Illit	Illit	5k	9	C
67	55	45	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	10	17	28	1	4	1	3	0	2	RW	Illit	6k	3	C
68	44	34	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	14	20	4	3	0	0	1	1	RW	Illit	6k	8	C
69	39	26	1 st	1 st	13	25	12	13	13	4	1	1	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	3k	0	T
70	42	32	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	14	18	2	5	1	2	1	1	Illit	Illit	6k	8	T
71	35	29	2 nd	2 nd	6	15	9	15	14	4	5	2	0	2	1	RW	Illit	6k	6	T
72	40	30	1 st	1 st	10	15	5	14	16	2	1	2	0	2	0	RW	Illit	6k	8	C
73	45	32	2 nd	2 nd	7	15	8	15	17	4	3	3	3	1	0	Illit	Illit	6k	6	C
74	45	35	1 st	1 st	10	21	9	15	20	2	5	2	3	1	2	Illit	Illit	6k	10	C
75	60	50	2 nd	1 st	10	20	10	15	35	1	9	1	9	0	2	Illit	Illit	4k	4	C
76	45	34	2 nd	2 nd	11	23	12	15	19	4	3	4	2	0	1	Illit	Illit	3k	0	T
77	44	35	1 st	1 st	9	21	12	17	18	3	2	1	1	2	0	Illit	Illit	4k	5	T
78	66	58	1 st	1 st	8	18	10	15	43	7	3	7	3	0	0	Illit	Illit	7k	6	C
79	48	38	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	18	20	4	3	0	0	3	1	Illit	Illit	5k	8	C
80	64	54	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	15	39	4	5	2	1	2	3	Illit	Illit	4k	8	T
81	42	35	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	17	18	3	1	1	0	1	1	priest	Illit	5k	5	T
82	40	35	2 nd	2 nd	5	26	14	20	15	3	5	1	3	0	2	Illit	Illit	6k	2	C
83	37	26	2 nd	2 nd	11	26	15	16	10	2	0	1	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	1k	0	T
84	46	40	1 st	1 st	6	16	10	20	20	5	3	4	2	2	1	Illit	Illit	6k	9	C
85	52	45	1 st	1 st	7	17	10	18	27	3	3	2	2	1	1	Illit	Illit	6k	6	T
86	50	41	1 st	1 st	9	20	11	21	20	2	3	1	2	0	1	RW	Illit	6k	2	T
87	45	38	2 nd	2 nd	7	17	10	18	20	1	3	1	2	1	2	Illit	Illit	12k	2L	T
88	45	38	2 nd	2 nd	7	20	13	16	22	3	5	1	1	1	2	8Dot	Illit	3k	5	C
89	43	36	1 st	1 st	7	21	14	18	18	3	2	2	0	2	2	BED	Illit	4k	5	C
90	48	40	1 st	1 st	8	18	10	20	20	3	5	2	4	1	0	Illit	Illit	5k	9	C
91	44	34	3 rd	2 nd	10	22	12	15	19	3	3	1	1	2	1	BEd	Illit	4k	9	T
92	44	37	1 st	1 st	7	21	14	17	20	4	2	0	2	2	0	Illit	Illit	3k	6	T
93	53	44	2 nd	2 nd	9	19	10	20	24	1	5	1	2	0	1	Illit	Illit	6k	5	T
94	65	40	2 nd	2 nd	25	25	14	25	15	3	3	1	3	1 Dot	0	Illit	Illit	5k	6	T ³³
95	49	36	1 st	1 st	13	22	9	15	21	3	2	3	0	2	0	priest	Illit	4k	6	C
96	50	39	3 rd	3 rd	11	19	14	17	22	2	3	2	1	1	1	RW	Illit	5k	4	C
97	44	33	2 nd	1 st	11	15	9	15	18	2	3	2	0	1Dot	1	RW	Illit	2k	3	T
98	48	42	2 nd	2 nd	6	18	12	30	12	2	2	1	1	1	0	Illit	Illit	4k	1	T
99	50	41	1 st	1 st	9	19	8	21	20	2	2	1	1	0	1	RW	Illit	8k	7	T
100	52	42	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	17	25	3	4	2	1	1	2	Illit	Illit	5k	6	T
101	40	50	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	20	10	3	1	0	0	0	2	RW	Illit	8k	5	C
102	59	50	2 nd	2 nd	9	21	12	20	30	7	1	6	1	1	0	Illit	Illit	6k	9	T

33 The only household with the highest spouses' age difference (25 years) in a second marriage.

103	42	37	1 st	1 st	5	17	12	20	17	0	4	0	0	0	2	RW	Illit	8k	5	C
104	44	37	1 st	1 st	7	21	14	18	19	2	3	0	0	1	2	RW	Illit	5k	5	C
105	40	35	1 st	1 st	5	18	13	15	20	1	8	1	1	1	1	Illit	Illit	8k	12	C
106	40	33	1 st	1 st	7	17	10	21	12	3	0	1	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	4k	11	C
107	62	55	1 st	1 st	7	17	10	30	25	4	5	2	2	1	3	priest	Illit	5k	7	C
108	45	30	2 nd	2 nd	15	25	10	15	15	3	2	0	2	2	1	Illit	Illit	8k	11	C
109	52	44	1 st	1 st	8	18	10	20	24	3	4	3	4	1	0	RW	Illit	5k	4	T
110	48	35	1 st	1 st	7	16	9	17	18	2	4	0	0	2	1	RW	Illit	6k	7	T
111	45	33	1 st	1 st	8	21	13	15	18	3	3	0	0	0	2	Illit	Illit	5k	5	C
112	36	29	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	19	10	0	1	0	0	0	0	RW	Illit	4k	2	T
113	45	38	1 st	1 st	7	18	11	16	22	2	4	2	0	2	2	Illit	Illit	10k	12	C
114	46	38	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	20	18	3	4	0	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	6k	4	T
115	39	32	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	16	16	2	0	1	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	5k	3	T
116	55	45	1 st	1 st	10	18	8	17	28	3	4	2	2	3	3	Illit	Illit	8k	12	C
117	50	40	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	15	25	4	4	3	3	1	3	Illit	Illit	5k	10	T
118	32	24	1 st	1 st	8	20	12	16	8	2	2	0	0	1	0	RW	Illit	6k	4	T
119	42	34	1 st	1 st	8	20	12	22	12	2	3	0	0	1	0	RW	Illit	8k	7	C
120	40	37	2 nd	2 nd	7	20	13	14	23	2	4	2	3	0	1	Illit	Illit	5k	23	C
121	38	31	1 st	1 st	7	17	10	16	15	2	0	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	6k	17	C
122	38	31	1 st	1 st	7	21	14	20	11	2	2	1	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	4k	9	T
123	42	34	2 nd	2 nd	8	13	5	17	17	2	2	2	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	4k	1	C
124	46	40	2 nd	2 nd	6	13	7	13	27	1	3	1	2	0	0	Illit	Illit	2k	0	T
125	36	28	2 nd	2 nd	8	15	7	14	14	4	3	3	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	2	T
126	50	42	2 nd	2 nd	8	22	14	20	22	3	4	1	0	2	2	Illit	Illit	5k	11	C
127	60	52	1 st	1 st	8	15	7	15	37	3	6	3	5	2	3	Illit	Illit	8k	9	C
128	46	35	1 st	1 st	11	20	9	15	20	2	4	1	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	7k	9	T
129	40	30	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	15	15	3	4	1	0	1	1	RW	RW	3k	4	T
130	41	35	1 st	1 st	6	21	14	17	18	1	4	1	0	0	1	Illit	Illit	5k	18	C
131	54	44	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	10	17	27	3	4	1	1	2	3	RW	Illit	6k	8	C
132	70	62	2 nd	1 st	8	20	12	17	45	7	6	4	3	4	1	RW	Illit	4k	16	C
133	40	35	1 st	1 st	5	20	15	20	15	2	2	0	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	4k	0	T
134	50	40	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	20	20	3	1	1	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	4k	6	T
135	44	36	1 st	1 st	8	22	14	18	18	4	3	2	0	2	0	Illit	Illit	6k	7	T
136	35	29	1 st	1 st	6	16	10	15	14	1	4	0	0	0	2	RW	Illit	5k	8	T
137	44	34	2 nd	1 st	10	23	13	17	17	1	2	0	0	0	1	RW	Illit	4k	8	C
138	40	30	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	10	21	9	2	2	0	0	1 Dot	0	RW	Illit	5k	9	C
139	52	45	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	29	16	0	1	0	1	0	1	Illit	Illit	5k	7	T
140	35	28	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	15	13	2	2	0	0	1	1	RW	Illit	8k	9	C
141	36	30	1 st	1 st	6	16	10	17	13	4	1	1	1	1Dot	1	Illit	Illit	2k	7	T
142	48	40	1 st	1 st	8	24	16	18	22	3	3	0	1	2	0	Illit	Illit	4k	6	T
143	47	39	1 st	1 st	8	19	11	17	22	3	3	1	0	2	2	Illit	Illit	5k	12	C
144	20	15	1 st	1 st	5	15	10	12	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	2k	4	T
145	35	28	1 st	1 st	7	22	15	18	10	2	1	0	0	1	1	RW	RW	5k	8	C
146	37	27	1 st	1 st	10	18	10	18	9	2	2	2	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	4k	11	T
147	39	30	1 st	1 st	9	18	9	13	17	1	5	1	1	1	1	RW	RW	6k	11	C
148	44	37	1 st	1 st	7	18	11	17	20	2	3	0	3	1	1	RW	Illit	8k	9	C
149	40	30	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	10	18	12	4	3	1	0	2	1	RW	Illit	6k	10	T
150	35	30	1 st	1 st	5	15	10	15	15	3	3	1	1	0	1	RW	Illit	6k	6	C
151	53	42	2 nd	2 nd	11	25	14	24	18	0	2	0	0	0	2	RW	Illit	3k	2	T
152	50	40	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	15	25	2	5	1	5	1	0	priest	Illit	3k	2	C
153	45	38	1 st	1 st	7	18	11	20	18	3	1	2	0	2	0	RW	Illit	5k	8	T
154	45	34	2 nd	2 nd	11	20	9	15	19	8	6	6	5	1	1	BE	Illit	4k	8	C ³⁴
155	45	35	1 st	1 st	10	17	7	17	18	4	3	2	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	8k	2	T
156	67	57	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	17	40	4	4	3	4	1	0	RW	Illit	2k	1	T
157	51	45	1 st	1 st	6	18	12	16	29	3	3	1	1	1	1	RW	Illit	4k	11	C
158	40	30	1 st	1 st	10	23	13	16	14	4	3	1	2	2	0	Illit	Illit	6k	0	T
159	42	35	2 nd	2 nd	7	20	13	18	17	5	2	1	1	3	1	RW	Illit	6k	11	C
160	40	31	1 st	1 st	9	20	11	20	11	0	4	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	2k	5	T
161	35	26	2 nd	2 nd	9	21	12	20	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	2	C
162	38	28	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	20	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	RW	Illit	3k	1	T

34 The household with the largest number of children (8 daughters and 6 sons). Six of the eight daughters and five of the six sons got married. Only one unmarried daughter and one unmarried son were attending formal school. The father has basic education (4th grade drop-out), where as the mother is illiterate.

163	35	25	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	10	18	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	RW	Illit	4k	4	T
164	43	35	1 st	1 st	8	20	12	20	15	1	2	1	1	0	0	Illit	Illit	6k	5	T
165	21	15	1 st	1 st	6	17	11	14	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	3	T
166	45	35	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	12	23	4	3	2	2	Dot	0	Illit	Illit	8k	13	T
167	31	23	1 st	1 st	8	15	7	18	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	5	T
168	45	37	1 st	1 st	8	20	12	20	17	4	3	1	0	0	2	Illit	Illit	5k	10	C
169	35	28	1 st	1 st	7	19	12	22	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	3	T
170	36	28	1 st	1 st	8	18	10	15	13	3	2	0	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	7k	7	T
171	34	25	1 st	1 st	9	20	11	14	11	3	2	0	0	2	0	Illit	Illit	7k	12	C
172	40	35	1 st	1 st	5	18	13	20	15	3	3	0	0	2	1	priest	Illit	5k	8	C
173	43	36	3 rd	2 nd	7	20	13	18	18	2	4	1	0	1	2	RW	Illit	4k	5	C
174	40	30	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	15	15	3	3	0	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	7k	2	T
175	68	59	1 st	1 st	9	18	9	17	42	1	5	0	5	1	3	Illit	Illit	8k	3	T
176	36	26	2 nd	2 nd	10	17	7	15	11	2	2	0	0	2	0	Illit	Dout	4k	7	T
177	64	54	1 st	1 st	10	18	8	15	39	1	4	1	3	Dot	1	Illit	Illit	5k	5	T
178	66	42	3 rd	2 nd	14	23	19	15	27	5	2	0	1	1	0	Illit	Illit	2k	0	T
179	40	34	1 st	1 st	6	19	13	18	16	3	3	2	2	2	0	Illit	Illit	5k	2	T
180	63	53	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	14	39	3	4	2	3	1	1	priest	Illit	3k	5	C
181	55	44	1 st	1 st	11	21	10	16	28	4	2	2	3	2	0	RW	Illit	5k	5	C
182	35	28	2 nd	1 st	7	20	13	15	13	3	1	0	0	2	1	RW	Illit	2k	2	T
183	48	40	1 st	1 st	8	20	12	15	25	1	3	1	2	1	0	Illit	Illit	3k	8	T
184	43	32	1 st	1 st	11	20	9	16	16	4	2	1	0	1	0	RW	Illit	3k	8	C
185	50	40	1 st	1 st	10	22	12	20	20	3	1	1	0	1	Dot	Illit	Illit	10k	9	T
186	60	47	3 rd	2 nd	13	26	13	24	23	6	3	6	3	3	0	Illit	Illit	6k	1	T
187	46	30	2 nd	2 nd	16	30	14	15	15	2	4	0	0	1	1	RW	Illit	4k	11	C
188	52	42	1 st	1 st	10	22	12	15	27	4	2	2	0	2	0	Illit	Illit	4k	3	T
189	54	36	2 nd	2 nd	18	28	10	18	18	2	5	2	1	1	0	Illit	Illit	8k	11	T
190	60	46	2 nd	2 nd	14	28	14	21	25	2	2	2	2	Dot	1	Illit	Illit	6k	4	C
191	40	32	2 nd	2 nd	8	20	12	13	19	2	4	0	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	8k	4	T
192	48	42	1 st	1 st	6	21	15	17	15	1	3	1	2	0	1	RW	Illit	4k	10	C
193	45	40	1 st	1 st	5	16	11	12	28	4	1	3	1	1	0	Illit	Illit	8k	2	C
194	41	36	1 st	1 st	5	15	11	13	23	2	5	2	2	1	1	Illit	Illit	6k	4	T
195	36	30	1 st	1 st	6	19	13	14	16	2	3	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	8k	2	T
196	30	25	1 st	1 st	5	17	12	13	12	2	2	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	4	T
197	36	31	1 st	1 st	5	18	13	17	14	2	3	0	0	1	1	RW	RW	4k	11	C
198	42	30	1 st	1 st	8	22	14	16	14	3	1	0	1	1	0	Illit	Illit	10k	13	C
199	28	22	1 st	1 st	6	15	9	13	9	2	1	0	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	5k	5	T
200	41	30	1 st	1 st	11	20	9	16	14	4	6	4	4	1	2	Illit	Illit	6k	16	C
201	35	30	1 st	1 st	5	15	10	15	15	3	2	0	0	1	2	RW	RW	8k	9	C
202	44	36	1 st	1 st	8	19	11	16	20	3	4	3	0	1	2	RW	Illit	9k	10	CT
203	36	30	1 st	1 st	6	18	12	18	12	1	1	0	0	1	0	RW	Illit	2k	1	T
204	50	42	1 st	1 st	8	19	11	19	23	4	1	2	1	2	0	RW	Illit	5k	7	T
205	40	30	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	15	15	3	3	1	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	4k	2	T
206	45	35	1 st	1 st	10	17	7	25	10	0	3	0	0	0	0	RW	Illit	5k	5	C
207	40	30	2 nd	2 nd	10	22	12	20	10	0	4	0	1	0	0	RW	Illit	4k	6	T
208	47	35	1 st	1 st	12	19	7	13	22	2	2	0	1	2	1	Illit	Illit	5k	8	C
209	50	43	1 st	1 st	7	16	9	14	29	6	2	5	1	Dot	1	Illit	Illit	4k	9	C
210	47	42	1 st	1 st	5	15	10	21	21	2	4	2	2	Dot	3	RW	Illit	4k	7	T
211	37	29	1 st	1 st	8	20	12	17	12	4	3	2	2	1	0	RW	Illit	3k	5	TC
212	50	43	1 st	1 st	8	13	5	15	28	3	4	1	2	2	3	Illit	Illit	4k	11	C
213	43	35	1 st	1 st	8	17	9	20	15	3	3	1	2	0	2	RW	Illit	9k	19	C
214	49	43	1 st	1 st	6	15	9	17	26	3	4	2	2	0	2	Illit	Illit	8k	15	C
215	43	31	2 nd	2 nd	12	22	10	18	13	4	3	1	1	0	0	Illit	Illit	2.5k	0	T
216	66	60	1 st	1 st	6	20	14	16	44	5	5	5	5	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	7	TC
217	49	40	1 st	1 st	9	20	11	15	25	6	2	3	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	3k	0	T
218	59	48	1 st	1 st	11	22	11	17	31	5	5	3	3	0	0	RW	Illit	3k	1	T
219	37	30	1 st	1 st	7	18	11	19	11	3	1	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	3k	2	T
220	40	33	1 st	1 st	7	19	12	15	18	1	2	1	1	0	1	RW	Illit	2k	2	T
221	40	29	2 nd	2 nd	11	24	13	19	10	2	2	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	6	T
222	46	40	2 nd	2 nd	6	20	14	18	22	2	2	1	2	1	1	Illit	Illit	6k	3	T
223	32	26	2 nd	2 nd	6	19	13	14	12	1	3	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	0	T
224	30	24	2 nd	2 nd	6	16	10	18	6	1	2	0	0	0	0	RW	Illit	3k	0	C
225	43	35	1 st	1 st	8	15	7	17	18	7	0	6	0	3	0	RW	Illit	9k	11	T
226	49	40	3 rd	2 nd	9	19	10	14	36	4	3	3	1	2	1	Illit	Illit	8k	10	T

227	32	26	2 nd	2 nd	6	20	14	16	10	2	2	0	0	Dot	0	Illit	Illit	6k	4	T
228	34	28	1 st	1 st	6	20	14	22	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	4	T
229	34	28	2 nd	2 nd	6	20	14	16	12	5	0	0	0	Dot	0	Illit	Illit	10	8	T
230	35	28	1 st	1 st	7	18	11	17	11	1	1	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	3	T
231	46	34	1 st	1 st	12	22	10	16	18	2	5	1	0	1	2	Illit	Illit	5k	4	TC
232	50	45	1 st	1 st	5	17	12	20	25	2	5	2	3	Dot	4	Illit	Illit	7k	9	TC
233	50	45	2 nd	1 st	5	18	13	20	25	2	6	0	2	0	1	RW	Illit	6k	12	TC
234	42	37	1 st	1 st	5	18	13	19	18	5	4	3	0	0	2	RW	Illit	8k	10	TC
235	36	29	1 st	1 st	7	16	9	15	14	2	3	1	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	1	T
236	35	30	1 st	1 st	5	19	14	17	13	1	4	1	0	0	0	priest	Illit	5k	9	TC
237	42	32	1 st	1 st	10	19	9	18	14	1	5	1	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	2	T
238	40	28	3 rd	2 nd	12	21	9	16	12	4	1	2	0	Dot	0	Illit	Illit	5k	2	T
239	45	33	1 st	1 st	12	24	12	18	15	2	3	0	0	0	1	priest	Illit	6k	10	C
240	50	36	2 nd	2 nd	14	15	12	17	19	1	4	0	2	0	0	Illit	Illit	4k	8	TC
241	50	45	1 st	1 st	5	17	12	17	28	3	4	3	3	0	1	RW	Illit	4k	6	T
242	35	26	2 nd	2 nd	9	17	11	15	11	2	2	0	0	0	1	RW	Illit	6k	6	C
243	43	34	2 nd	2 nd	9	15	10	20	14	1	3	0	0	0	1	RW	Illit	5k	8	T
244	56	45	1 st	1 st	11	21	10	19	26	3	5	2	1	0	1	Illit	Illit	5k	9	C
245	46	36	2 nd	2 nd	10	16	12	18	18	0	2	0	1	0	1	Illit	Illit	6k	3	T
246	44	38	1 st	1 st	6	18	12	21	17	2	6	0	4	0	1	Illit	Illit	3k	6	TC
247	42	35	2 nd	2 nd	7	14	12	15	20	3	3	1	1	0	1	RW	Illit	9k	7	TC
248	55	48	2 nd	2 nd	7	17	13	20	28	4	5	4	2	0	2	Illit	Illit	9k	10	C
249	45	35	1 st	1 st	10	19	9	15	20	2	3	1	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	5	T
250	48	35	1 st	1 st	13	23	10	16	19	3	3	0	0	0	0	Illit	Illit	3k	1	T
251	47	38	1 st	1 st	9	18	9	19	19	4	5	4	2	0	0	RW	Illit	5k	8	C
252	59	49	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	19	30	5	4	4	2	0	1	RW	Illit	12k	11	C
253	45	34	1 st	1 st	9	16	7	16	18	2	4	1	2	0	0	RW	Illit	5k	5	C
254	56	48	2 nd	2 nd	8	22	14	16	32	1	5	1	3	0	1	Illit	Illit	6k	6	C
255	40	30	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	9	18	12	4	1	4	0	Dot	1	RW	Illit	8k	1	T
256	45	35	1 st	1 st	10	19	9	16	19	2	3	0	0	0	1	Illit	Illit	6k	4	C
257	46	36	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	16	20	3	5	3	2	0	Dot	RW	Illit	4k	9	T
258	42	37	2 nd	2 nd	5	22	11	18	19	3	4	1	0	0	1	RW	Illit	6k	10	CT
259	48	42	2 nd	2 nd	6	20	10	20	22	3	3	1	1	0	1	RW	Illit	4k	8	CT
260	50	45	2 nd	2 nd	5	16	10	20	25	1	3	1	1	0	1	RW	Illit	5k	7	C
261	40	34	2 nd	2 nd	6	16	13	15	19	2	4	2	0	0	1	RW	Illit	8k	4	C
262	52	46	2 nd	2 nd	6	15	11	20	26	4	4	4	4	0	0	Illit	Illit	6k	8	C
263	50	45	1 st	1 st	5	20	15	18	27	3	2	3	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	6k	5	T
264	38	29	1 st	1 st	9	21	12	15	14	4	1	1	0	0	1	RW	Illit	6k	6	C
265	49	43	1 st	1 st	6	19	13	17	26	4	3	3	2	0	1	RW	Illit	4k	19	C
266	49	44	1 st	1 st	5	16	11	20	24	2	3	1	1	0	1	Illit	Illit	4k	10	T
267	55	50	1 st	1 st	5	20	15	20	30	2	2	1	0	Dot	1	Illit	Illit	8k	13	C
268	55	50	1 st	1 st	5	20	15	26	24	3	3	1	0	0	2	RW	Illit	4k	11	C
269	47	39	1 st	1 st	8	23	15	19	20	5	5	4	0	0	2	RW	Illit	6k	22	C
270	49	41	1 st	1 st	8	23	15	18	23	3	3	1	1	0	1	Illit	Illit	5k	8	C
271	43	35	1 st	1 st	8	20	12	15	20	6	2	4	0	0	2	Illit	Illit	8k	4	C
272	43	36	1 st	1 st	7	19	12	18	18	2	3	2	0	0	1	Illit	Illit	6k	8	C
273	48	39	1 st	1 st	9	19	10	17	22	5	2	4	0	1	1	RW	RW	4k	2	T
274	48	40	2 nd	1 st	8	22	14	27	13	2	2	0	0	0	1	Illit	Illit	6k	5	T
275	46	41	1 st	1 st	5	21	16	19	22	3	4	1	2	1	2	Illit	Illit	3.5k	7	C
276	55	45	1 st	1 st	10	18	8	14	31	5	4	4	3	4	2	RW	Illit	12	12	CT
277	68	58	2 nd	2 nd	10	23	13	16	42	6	5	6	5	3	1	RW	Illit	8k	6	CT
278	42	36	1 st	1 st	6	17	11	22	14	2	3	1	1	1	2	Illit	Illit	7k	9	C
279	38	30	2 nd	2 nd	8	20	8	16	14	2	3	2	1	0	1	Illit	Illit	7k	10	CT
280	45	36	1 st	1 st	9	18	9	14	22	3	1	1	1	1	1	RW	Illit	12k	10	CT
281	49	43	1 st	1 st	6	15	9	18	25	3	5	3	1	0	2	RW	Illit	8k	8	C
282	51	40	2 nd	2 nd	11	21	10	24	16	3	2	3	2	3	2	BEd	RW	4k	14	CT
283	45	38	2 nd	2 nd	7	18	12	15	23	2	4	1	2	0	2	RW	Illit	10k	9	CT
284	44	26	2 nd	2 nd	18	16	10	20	6	3	4	2	2	1	2	RW	Illit	8k	12	C
285	46	40	1 st	1 st	6	20	14	17	23	3	3	2	2	1	2	RW	Illit	4k	9	CT
286	56	48	1 st	1 st	8	21	13	23	25	3	3	2	2	0	3	Illit	Illit	10k	14	T
287	40	30	1 st	1 st	10	18	10	16	14	2	3	1	2	1	1	RW	Illit	4k	8	CT
288	60	53	1 st	1 st	7	18	11	18	35	3	2	3	2	0	1	RW	Illit	10k	10	CT
289	49	43	1 st	1 st	6	17	11	20	23	3	3	1	2	0	2	RW	Illit	9k	19	C
290	48	41	2 nd	2 nd	7	18	11	19	22	3	2	1	1	2	1	RW	Illit	7k	7	C

291	72	67	2 nd	1 st	5	27	15	25	42	4	5	4	5	0	1	Illit	Illit	8k	3	T
292	50	40	1 st	1 st	10	25	15	20	20	2	5	2	1	1	0	RW	Illit	4k	13	T
293	44	35	1 st	1 st	9	19	10	19	16	2	3	0	1	0	3	Illit	Illit	6k	9	T
294	45	38	1 st	1 st	7	17	10	18	20	3	2	2	0	0	1	RW	Illit	7k	5	C
295	45	40	1 st	1 st	5	20	15	17	23	4	4	3	2	1	1	Illit	Illit	10k	4	T
296	53	43	1 st	1 st	10	21	11	20	23	2	3	0	1	1Dot	1	Illit	Illit	8k	5	T
297	53	46	2 nd	2 nd	7	18	11	16	30	3	5	3	2	1Dot	1	RW	Illit	8k	4	T
298	37	32	2 nd	1 st	5	25	16	18	14	2	2	0	0	0	2	RW	9Dot	0	0	C
299	46	36	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	16	20	3	3	1	0	0	Dot	priest	Illit	8k	8	C
300	48	40	1 st	1 st	8	20	12	18	22	2	5	1	2	0	2	RW	Illit	12k	7	T
301	40	34	2 nd	2 nd	6	19	13	17	17	4	2	1	1	2	0	BEd	Illit	5k	2	T
302	43	36	2 nd	2 nd	7	20	13	16	20	3	2	1	1	1Dot	1	RW	Illit	4k	5	T
303	60	40	2 nd	2 nd	20	20	10	15	25	4	6	4	6	0	0	Illit	Illit	5k	8	C
304	69	54	2 nd	2 nd	15	20	10	21	33	2	4	2	2	0	1	RW	Illit	12k	9	T
305	45	30	2 nd	2 nd	15	18	10	17	13	4	2	2	0	2	0	RW	Illit	5k	9	CT
306	50	39	1 st	1 st	11	21	10	19	20	6	2	2	1	4	1	Illit	Illit	5k	12	T
307	52	40	1 st	1 st	12	23	12	13	27	4	2	1	0	2	1	RW	Illit	8k	16	CT
308	56	45	2 nd	2 nd	12	28	15	18	27	2	4	1	1	0	1	RW	Illit	4k	2	T
309	63	52	1 st	1 st	11	20	9	22	30	5	2	4	1	2	0	Illit	Illit	12k	9	T
310	47	40	1 st	1 st	7	21	14	18	22	4	4	1	2	1	1	RW	Illit	4k	8	T
311	58	53	2 nd	2 nd	5	20	15	29	24	3	2	2	2	0	1	Illit	Illit	12k	23	C
312	68	60	1 st	1 st	8	18	10	18	42	3	5	3	5	0	1	Illit	Illit	5k	6	T
313	40	30	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	10	21	9	2	1	1	0	2	0	Illit	Illit	5k	11	CT
314	60	50	2 nd	2 nd	15	18	12	15	35	5	5	3	3	0	3	Illit	Illit	9k	6	T
315	40	32	4 th	3 rd	8	18	10	15	17	1	2	1	0	1	1	Bed	Illit	9k	6	CT ³⁵
316	40	32	1 st	1 st	8	16	8	17	15	3	2	2	0	2	Dot	Illit	Illit	6k	7	CT
317	37	28	1 st	1 st	9	18	9	16	12	2	4	1	0	1	0	RW	RW	7k	12	C
318	50	42	2 nd	2 nd	8	18	10	18	24	4	4	4	2	1	1	RW	Illit	6k	12	T
319	53	41	1 st	1 st	12	18	6	18	23	2	2	2	1	1	1	RW	Illit	5k	4	T
320	52	39	2 nd	2 nd	13	16	7	14	25	2	8	2	2	0	5	RW	Illit	4k	10	T
321	55	49	1 st	1 st	6	16	10	19	30	5	2	3	1	1	1	RW	Illit	4k	7	C
322	44	34	2 nd	1 st	10	20	10	19	15	1	4	0	0	0	2	Dout	Dout	4k	11	C
323	45	38	2 nd	1 st	7	20	13	18	20	2	3	2	2	1	2	RW	Illit	6k	10	C
324	55	38	3 rd	2 nd	17	20	12	18	20	0	6	0	2	0	2	Illit	Illit	4k	8	C
325	44	36	1 st	1 st	8	16	8	16	20	3	5	3	0	1	1	RW	Illit	6k	11	C
326	50	37	1 st	1 st	13	23	10	16	21	1	4	0	2	0	2	RW	Illit	4k	5	C
327	45	35	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	15	20	3	3	2	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	6k	6	C
328	50	36	2 nd	2 nd	14	17	10	16	20	1	3	1	3	1	2	Illit	Illit	12k	2	T
329	42	32	1 st	1 st	12	18	8	17	15	4	1	1	0	2	1	RW	Illit	6k	12	CT
330	52	47	1 st	1 st	5	16	11	17	30	2	2	2	1	1	0	Illit	Illit	3k	2	T
331	45	34	1 st	1 st	11	21	10	18	16	1	4	1	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	6k	5	T
332	38	28	2 nd	2 nd	10	20	10	18	10	3	1	2	0	2	0	Illit	Illit	10k	14	CT
333	45	35	2 nd	2 nd	10	23	13	20	15	4	2	4	2	1	0	Illit	Illit	5k	8	T
334	62	53	1 st	1 st	9	16	7	13	40	1	7	1	7	1	3	Illit	Illit	6k	12	T
335	52	40	1 st	1 st	12	23	11	15	25	3	5	1	1	1	2	Illit	Illit	6k	9	T
336	46	40	2 nd	2 nd	6	16	10	22	18	2	4	1	1	0	1	Illit	Illit	6k	11	CT
337	46	40	2 nd	2 nd	6	16	10	18	22	6	7	4	5	2	0	RW	Illit	4k	12	CT
338	39	25	2 nd	1 st	14	18	12	15	10	2	2	1	0	1	0	RW	Illit	5k	8	T
339	55	48	2 nd	1 st	7	20	15	18	30	6	4	4	2	1	1	Illit	Illit	4k	10	CT
340	43	31	2 nd	1 st	12	20	10	15	16	3	3	2	1	0	1	Illit	Illit	12k	16	CT
341	35	28	1 st	1 st	7	20	13	17	11	3	2	1	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	4k	7	T
342	34	27	2 nd	2 nd	7	15	10	16	11	7	1	1	0	1	1	Illit	Illit	4k	6	C
343	35	26	1 st	1 st	9	20	11	16	20	3	4	3	1	1	1	Illit	Illit	4k	5	T
344	38	31	2 nd	2 nd	7	15	8	17	14	4	2	1	0	2	0	Illit	Illit	4k	6	C
345	38	28	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	13	15	6	1	1	1	2	1	Illit	Illit	7k	8	C
346	55	46	1 st	1 st	9	18	9	16	30	3	6	3	3	1	2	Illit	Illit	6k	8	C
347	52	44	1 st	1 st	8	18	10	17	27	4	4	4	2	1	1	Illit	Illit	4k	2	T
348	42	32	1 st	1 st	10	20	10	14	18	6	2	3	0	2	0	RW	Illit	6k	6	CT
349	36	28	2 nd	2 nd	8	20	12	18	10	3	1	1	0	1	0	Illit	Illit	3k	3	T
350	61	44	2 nd	2 nd	17	15	6	14	30	4	4	4	3	1	0	RW	Illit	4k	6	T

35 The only household with the highest number of serial marriages (4th marriage for the husband and 3rd for the wife)

APPENDIX 8: PROFILES OF EARLY MARRIED FEMALE PUPILS

Appendix 8A: Profiles of Early-Married Female Pupils, Bachema¹ “First Cycle Primary School”² (May 2003 - July 2004)

BMFP ³ No.	Age ⁴	Conditions of Early-Arranged Marriage			Conditions of Formal Education					
		Age at Marriage	Dissolved/ Not-Dissolved	Husband's Position ⁵	Grade ⁶	Rank ⁷			Repeated Grade/s	Drop- out ⁸
						1 st	2 nd	Aver g.		
1.	8 ⁹	7-year-old	Not Dissolved	Farmer	1 st	-	-	-	-	1 st 10
2.	10 ¹¹	5-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	1 st	-	-	-	-	1 st 12
3.	10 ¹³	7-year-old	Not Dissolved	Farmer	1 st	-	-	-	-	1 st 14
4.	9 ¹⁵	5-year-old	Not Dissolved	3 rd grade ¹⁶	1 st	56	57	56 ¹⁷	1 st 18	-
5.	10 ¹⁹	4-year-old	Not-Dissolved	6 th grade ²⁰	1 st	37	35	36 ²¹	-	-
6.	10 ²²	5-year-old	Not-Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	33	60	46 ²³	-	-
7.	8 ²⁴	7-year-old	Not-Dissolved	5 th grade ²⁵	2 nd	39	48	43 ²⁶	-	-
8.	12 ²⁷	10-year-old	Dissolved ²⁸	Farmer	2 nd	20	42	31 ²⁹	-	-
9.	11 ³⁰	2-year-old	Dissolved ³¹	Farmer	2 nd	20	23	21 ³²	-	-
10.	14 ³³	5-year-old	Dissolved ³⁴	Farmer	2 nd	12	37	24 ³⁵	-	-

¹ “Bachema” is one of the two research sites among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda*.

² “First Cycle Primary School” refers to a primary school with grades 1-4 only.

³ BMFP: Bachema married female pupils. Bachema First Cycle Primary School married female pupils, who were promoted to the second cycle primary school at Merawi, the *Woreda*'s capital town, are also included under this list.

⁴ “Age” refers to the age of early-married female pupils during the 1996 E.C (September 2003 - July 2004) academic year.

⁵ “Husband's position” denotes the husband being farmer/priest/church-school educated/modern school attending/trader /government employee (a rare occasion in these profiles).

⁶ “Grade” refers to the grade level of early-married female pupils during the 1996 E.C. academic year.

⁷ “Rank” refers to the academic status of early-married female pupils compared to the total number of their class based on the 1996 E.C first and second semesters' results and the average rank of the two semesters.

⁸ “Drop-out” denotes the terminated grade level of early-married female pupils.

⁹ She was married to non-school attending boy at the age of 7 and started to attend school being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school due to her marriage.

¹⁰ She dropped-out from 1st grade since her husband is a farmer and both parents want to continue the marriage alliance.

¹¹ She got married to a non-school attending boy at the age of 5. She started to attend school at the age of 10 after divorce, being motivated by her school-attending aunts (her father's sister). During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school due to malaria epidemic.

¹² She dropped-out from 1st grade due to health problems.

¹³ She was married to a farmer at the age of 7 and started to attend school at the age of 10 being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village. During the first phase of the research, she did not attend school regularly since her marriage was not dissolved and her husband is a farmer. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school due to her marriage.

¹⁴ She dropped-out from 1st grade since her husband is a farmer and the two families want to continue the marriage alliance.

¹⁵ She was married to a modern school attending boy. She started schooling since her husband attends formal school.

¹⁶ Her husband dropped-out from 3rd grade since his father required him to tend cattle.

¹⁷ She stood 56th out of 86 pupils.

¹⁸ She repeated 1st grade due to irregular school attendance.

¹⁹ She is the eldest child in the family. She got married at the age of four with her three years younger sister. She started to attend school at the age of 10 since her husband is a formal school student and her parents want to continue the marriage alliance.

²⁰ Her husband attends 6th grade at Merawi Primary School (MPS).

²¹ She stood 36th out of 87 pupils.

²² She was married to a non-school attending boy at the age of five. She wants to get divorced since her husband did not attend school. She started to attend school being influenced by her school-attending uncles (her father's brothers) in her parents' village.

²³ She stood 46th out of 70 pupils.

²⁴ She was married to a modern school attending boy at the age of seven and started to attend school since her husband attends formal school.

²⁵ Her husband attends school at Yechali Primary School (the second school in the same PA).

²⁶ She stood 43rd out of 70 pupils.

²⁷ She was married to a farmer at the age of 10. She started to attend school being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village.

²⁸ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and her parents do not want to continue the marriage alliance.

²⁹ She stood 31st out of 70 pupils.

³⁰ She was married to a non-formal school attending boy at the age of two. She started to attend school being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village.

³¹ The marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend formal school.

³² She stood 21st out of 70 pupils.

11.	13 ³⁶	7-year-old	Not Dissolved	6 th grade	2 nd	-	-	-	1 st & 2 nd 37	2 nd 38
12.	13 ³⁹	3-year-old	Not Dissolved	6 th grade	2 nd	-	-	-	-	2 nd 40
13.	10 ⁴¹	2-year-old	Dissolved ⁴²	Farmer	3 rd	73	35	54 ⁴³	-	-
14.	12 ⁴⁴	6-year-old	Dissolved ⁴⁵	Farmer	3 rd	26	14	20 ⁴⁶	-	-
15.	11 ⁴⁷	7-year-old	Not-Dissolved ⁴⁸	Farmer	3 rd	55	35	45 ⁴⁹	1 st & 3 rd 50	-
16.	12 ⁵¹	7-year-old	Not-Dissolved	2 nd grade	3 rd	-	-	-	1 st 52	3 rd 53
17.	10 ⁵⁴	2-year-old	Not-Dissolved	6 th grade	3 rd	-	-	-	1 st & 3 rd 55	3 rd 56
18.	12 ⁵⁷	5-year-old	Dissolved ⁵⁸	Farmer	4 th	41	62	51 ⁵⁹	-	-
19.	11 ⁶⁰	5-year-old	Not-Dissolved ⁶¹	6 th grade	4 th	34	54	44 ⁶²	-	-
20.	13 ⁶³	5-year-old	Not-Dissolved ⁶⁴	7 th grade	4 th	3 ⁶⁵	8	5 ⁶⁶	2 nd 67	-

- ³³ She was married to a non-formal school attending boy at the age of 5 and started to attend school at the age of 13 being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village
- ³⁴ The marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend formal school and she wants to concentrate on her education.
- ³⁵ She stood 24th out of 70 pupils.
- ³⁶ She is the youngest (last) female child in the family. She was married with her 3 years older brother (6th grader at MPS) at the age of seven. All her four elder sisters got married early, established their own *goggo* and gave birth, but none of them had ever been in school. She started to attend school at the age of 8 being influenced by her elder brother (6th grader).
- ³⁷ She repeated 1st and 2nd grades due to irregular attendance because of her marriage as well as her domestic burden at her parents' home, whereas her elder brother who was married with her is a rank student and he is now attending 6th grade.
- ³⁸ She dropped-out from 2nd grade at the age of 13 after repeating both 1st and 2nd grades since she is expected to establish her *goggo* next to in-law's homestead, but her husband is attending 6th grade with her elder brother.
- ³⁹ She got married at the age of three. She started to attend school at the age of 12 since her husband attends formal school. During the first phase of the research, she was attending school while living with her husband's village, Yidonga. During the 2nd phase of my research, she was absent from school due to early pregnancy.
- ⁴⁰ She dropped-out from 2nd grade due to early pregnancy and childbirth, while her husband attends 6th grade at MPS.
- ⁴¹ She was married to a non-formal school attending boy at the age of 2 and started to attend school at the age of 8 being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village
- ⁴² The marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend school and her parents don't want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ⁴³ She stood 54th out of 95 pupils.
- ⁴⁴ She was married to a non-formal school attending boy at the age of 6 and started to attend school at the age of 10 being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village
- ⁴⁵ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and she wants to concentrate on her education.
- ⁴⁶ She stood 20th out of 95 pupils.
- ⁴⁷ She was married to a non-school attending boy when she was in grade 1 and repeated that grade due to her marriage. Her mother gave birth to a child when she was 3rd grade and repeated the same grade since she was absent from school for 15 days, during the exam times.
- ⁴⁸ The husband is a farmer but the marriage was not dissolved since the two families want to continue the marriage alliance. However, she wants the marriage to be dissolved and then to concentrate of her education.
- ⁴⁹ She stood 45th out of 95 pupils.
- ⁵⁰ She repeated 1st and 3rd grades due to her marriage, irregular attendance, and lack of concentration since her husband is a farmer and her parents do not want to dissolve the marriage.
- ⁵¹ She got married at the age of seven to a non-school attending boy while she was 1st grade and repeated the same grade. Then her husband started to attend 1st grade, a year after their marriage since she insisted on continuing her education. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school since she got pregnant at the age of 12.
- ⁵² She repeated 1st grade due to her marriage.
- ⁵³ She dropped-out from 3rd grade due to early pregnancy; where as her husband attends 2nd grade at BPS.
- ⁵⁴ She got married at the age of two. Then she started to attend school at the age of 7 since her husband is attending school (6th grader at MPS). During the 2nd phase of my research, she was absent from school due to her marriage.
- ⁵⁵ She repeated 1st and 3rd grades due to her marriage.
- ⁵⁶ After repeating 1st and 3rd grades, she dropped-out from 3rd grade since her parents decided her not to continue her education being disappointed by her poor academic performance. However, she had a strong motive to get educated and her husband is still attending school (6th grader at MPS).
- ⁵⁷ She got married to a non-school attending boy at the age of five, before starting school. She started to attend school at the age of 9 being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village.
- ⁵⁸ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and she wants to concentrate on her education.
- ⁵⁹ She stood 51st out of 66 pupils.
- ⁶⁰ She is the second child in the family. She got married at the age of five with her three years younger sister, who died a year ago being infected with malaria. Her father also died with her younger sister for the same reason. Her three years older sister got married to a farmer before her and her younger sister. Her elder sister makes baskets for her *goggo* while living with her widowed mother, but she had never been in school. Her widowed mother is illiterate and her deceased father was also illiterate. She attends school since her husband attends modern school. She started to attend school at the age of 10 since her husband is a formal school student and her parents want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ⁶¹ The marriage was not dissolved since the two families want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ⁶² She stood 44th out of 66 pupils.
- ⁶³ She got married at the age of five. She started to attend school at the age of seven since her husband is a student.
- ⁶⁴ The marriage was not dissolved since her husband attends school and both parents want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ⁶⁵ She is the only rank (1st- 3rd) pupil among 41 early-married female pupils at Bachema Primary School.
- ⁶⁶ She stood 5th out of 66 pupils in her class at Bachema Primary School. When she was attending school at Merawi with her husband, she was infected with malaria and then dropped-out from 2nd grade. When she recovered from her illness she started 1st

21.	11 ⁶⁸	3-year-old	Not-Dissolved ⁶⁹	5 th grade ⁷⁰	4 th	27	49	38 ⁷¹	2 nd ⁷²	-
22.	11 ⁷³	5-year-old	Not-Dissolved ⁷⁴	Farmer	4 th	61	31	46 ⁷⁵	-	-
23.	12 ⁷⁶	8-year-old	Dissolved ⁷⁷	Farmer	4 th	20	10	15 ⁷⁸	2 nd ⁷⁹	-
24.	11 ⁸⁰	3-year-old	Dissolved ⁸¹	Farmer	4 th	49	45	47 ⁸²	-	-
25.	10 ⁸³	2-year-old	Not-Dissolved	Farmer	4 th	-	-	-	-	4 th ⁸⁴
26.	11 ⁸⁵	4-year-old	Dissolved ⁸⁶	Farmer	4 th	28	23	25 ⁸⁷	-	-
27.	16 ⁸⁸	4-year-old	Dissolved ⁸⁹	Farmer	4 th ⁹⁰	33	30	33 ⁹¹	-	-
28.	13 ⁹²	7-year-old	Dissolved ⁹³	Farmer	5 th ⁹⁴	26	23	24 ⁹⁵		
29.	13 ⁹⁶	7-year-old	Not-Dissolved	5 th grade	5 th ⁹⁷	22	21	21 ⁹⁸		

grade at the local school in her parents' village and then she got double promotion and become 3rd grader within a year. She is a rank pupil (1st -5th) since her parents, her husband and in-laws encourage her to study hard.

⁶⁷ She dropped-out from 2nd grade due to malaria infection.

⁶⁸ She is the eldest daughter for her parents. She was married to a non-school attending boy at the age of 3. During her marriage her parents gave her 1calf as dowry. Until she reached the age of five, she lived with her parents. When her in-laws invited her parents, she was expected to go with them and stayed there from two weeks to one month starting from age 5. Being influenced by her school attending elder and younger brothers (7th and 5th graders) and other school attending girls in her parents' village, Kotekotema, she started schooling at the age of 7.

⁶⁹ The marriage was not dissolved since her husband attends modern school and both parents want to continue the marriage alliance.

⁷⁰ The marriage was not dissolved since her husband attends school. Her husband, 5th grader at MPS, started schooling after her since his parents want to continue the marriage alliance

⁷¹ She stood 38th out of 66 pupils.

⁷² She repeated 2nd grade due to irregular attendance because of her marriage as well as domestic burden at home since she is the eldest female child in the family. Being the eldest daughter for her parents, she is required to assist her mother in domestic activities before/after school times and during weekends and holidays. She was also expected to move between the two families.

⁷³ She is the eldest daughter in the family. She was married to a non-school attending boy at the age of five. She started to attend school at the age of eight being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village, Kotekotema. Her mother, 2nd grade dropout, is in favor of her daughter's education since she is regretting about her being unable to continue her education due to early marriage.

⁷⁴ The marriage was not dissolved since her in-laws want to continue the marriage. However, her father has decided to divorce her since her husband is a farmer.

⁷⁵ She stood 46th out of 66 pupils.

⁷⁶ She is the eldest daughter in the family. She got married at the age of eight with her three years older brother (5th grader after divorce). Her husband, a farmer, did not attend school. She was married to a farmer when she was 2nd grade and repeated that grade due to early marriage.

⁷⁷ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer. Even after divorce, her academic performance is not good due to her full involvement in domestic activities being the eldest daughter in the family, whereas her divorced elder brother is a rank pupil since he has enough time to do school related activities.

⁷⁸ She stood 15th out of 66 pupils.

⁷⁹ She repeated grade 2 due to her marriage.

⁸⁰ She was married to a non-formal school-attending boy at the age of 3 and started to attend school at the age of 8 being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village.

⁸¹ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and she wants to concentrate on her education.

⁸² She stood 47th out of 66 pupils.

⁸³ She got married to a non-school attending boy at the age of 2. She started to attend school at the age of 7 being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village.

⁸⁴ She dropped-out from 4th grade since her husband is a farmer and both families wanted to the marriage alliance.

⁸⁵ She was married to a non-school attending boy at the age of 4. She started to attend primary school at the age of 8 being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village, Yidonga.

⁸⁶ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and her parents do not want to continue the marriage alliance. She also wanted to get divorced in order to concentrate of her education. Now, she is attending 4th grade at Merawi Primary School, 5km away from her parents' village, for better schooling, like most pupils in her parents' village, Yidonga.

⁸⁷ She stood 25th out of 90 pupils.

⁸⁸ She got married at the age of 4 with her six years older brother. She was married to a non-school attending boy. After her marriage, she got sick and then the marriage was dissolved. Her husband was married to another woman. After recovered from her illness, she started to attend school at the age of 14, motivated by her elder brother, a Diploma from Bahir Dar University.

⁸⁹ Her marriage was dissolved while she was still a child, before 10 years, due to health problem.

⁹⁰ She was promoted to 4th grade within two years since she has got a double promotion while she was in 2nd grade.

⁹¹ She stood 33rd out of 70 pupils. While she was attending 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades, living with her parents, she was a rank pupil (1-3rd). Her academic performance is declining since she is attending 4th grade while living with a relative at Merawi town due to lack of family support for her education.

⁹² She was married to a farmer at the age of seven. She started to attend formal school at the age of nine, influenced by school attending children in her parents' village.

⁹³ The marriage was dissolved since her husband, a farmer, was migrated to town due to his parents' impoverishment in terms of both land and cattle.

⁹⁴ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (1-4th grades), she was promoted to Merawi Primary School (MPS). In 1996 E.C, she was attending 5th grade at MPS, 5km away from her parents' village.

⁹⁵ She stood 24th out of 90 pupils.

30.	13 ⁹⁹	4-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁰⁰	Farmer	5 ^{th101}	18	17	17 ¹⁰²		
31.	14 ¹⁰³	9-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁰⁴	Farmer	5 ^{th105}	46	51	48 ¹⁰⁶		
32.	15 ¹⁰⁷	8-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁰⁸	Farmer	5 ^{th109}	15	5	10 ¹¹⁰		
33.	12 ¹¹¹	3-year-old	Dissolved ¹¹²	Farmer	5 ^{th113}	82	88	85 ¹¹⁴		
34.	11 ¹¹⁵	4-year-old	Dissolved ¹¹⁶	Farmer	5 ^{th117}	53	42	47 ¹¹⁸		
35.	14 ¹¹⁹	8-year-old	Dissolved ¹²⁰	Farmer	5 ^{th121}	34	80	57 ¹²²		

- ⁹⁶ She got married to a non-school attending boy at the age of seven. She started to attend school at the age of 9 being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village. Then her husband started to attend school since her in-laws want to continue the marriage alliance. In 1996 E.C, she was attending 5th grade at MPS, 5km away from her parents' village.
- ⁹⁷ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi Primary School (MPS). In 1996 E.C, she was attending 5th grade at MPS, 5km away from her parents' village.
- ⁹⁸ She stood 21st out of 90 pupils.
- ⁹⁹ She is the first daughter for her parents. She got married at the age of 3 and got divorced at the age of 9 in 1991 E.C. (1999), when Bachema Primary School was established nearby her parents' village, being influenced by her school-attending younger sister and brother. Her parents are positive to her education, but her in-laws were not in favor of her education since her husband did not attend school due to family work. As a result, her father divorced her and then she continued her education freely. After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi Primary School (MPS). In 1996 E.C, she was attending 5th grade at MPS, 5km away from her parents' village.
- ¹⁰⁰ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and her in-laws were not in favor of her education.
- ¹⁰¹ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi Primary School (MPS). In 1996 E.C, she was attending 5th grade at MPS, 5km away from her parents' village.
- ¹⁰² She stood 17th out of 90 pupils. While she was attending her first cycle primary education (grades 1-4) at Bachema Primary School, she was academically performing well and her academic rank was between 2nd and 11th among her classmates. For example, while she was attending 1st grade she stood 5th and 11th out of 100 pupils in the 1st and 2nd semesters, respectively. While she was in the 2nd grade, she stood 11th out of 93 pupils in both semesters. She would perform better than this had she been not burdened with domestic activities at home. In other words, being the elder daughter in the family, she is required to assist her mother in domestic activities before/after school times and during weekends and holidays. When she got promoted to the second cycle primary school at Merawi town, 5km away from her parents' village, her academic rank is getting lower and lower due to the distance between her parents village and the school as well as domestic burden at home.
- ¹⁰³ She was married at the age of nine to a farmer. She started schooling at the age of 10, influenced by school attending children in her parents' village, Yidonga.
- ¹⁰⁴ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and she wanted to concentrate of her education.
- ¹⁰⁵ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi full cycle primary school (grades 1-4). In 1996 E.C, she was attending 5th grade at MPS, 5km away from her parents' village.
- ¹⁰⁶ She stood 48th out of 90 pupils.
- ¹⁰⁷ She got married at the age of 8. She started schooling at the age of 11, influenced by school attending girls in her parents' village, Kotekotema.
- ¹⁰⁸ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and her parents do not want to maintain the marriage alliance.
- ¹⁰⁹ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi Primary School (MPS). In 1996, she was attending 5th grade at MPS, 5 km away her parents' village.
- ¹¹⁰ She stood 10th out of 90 pupils. She is academically performing better than her peer-groups married to a young farmer.
- ¹¹¹ She is the third daughter for her parents. She got married with her two elder sisters at the age of three. She was married to a non-school attending boy (13 years old) ten years older than her. During her marriage, her parents gave her two calves as dowry. She started attending formal school in 1992 E.C. at the age of 7, influenced by girls attending school in her parents' village, Kotekotema. Her father was positive to her formal schooling, but her parents-in-law were not in favor of her education since her husband is a farmer. She got divorced at the age of eight, before starting to sleep with her husband. Since the marriage was arranged economically on equal basis, her father took her equal share of cattle. She was happy with her father's decision to get her divorced early since she has a strong interest in attending school, like her peer-groups in her parents' village.
- ¹¹² The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and her father did not want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ¹¹³ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi full cycle primary school (grades 1-8). Now, she is attending 5th grade at Merawi Primary School while living with her parents. Every school day, she walks two and half hours from home to school and the way back to home with her peer-groups.
- ¹¹⁴ She stood 85th out of 90 pupils. When she was attending her first cycle primary school nearby her parents' village, she was academically performing well but now her rank is declining due to the distance between home and the second cycle primary school as well as household chores. For instance, when she was in the 1st grade, she stood 8th and 7th during the 1st and the 2nd semesters, respectively. When she was in the 2nd grade, she stood 15th and 9th out of 93 pupils during the 1st and 2nd semesters respectively. Her academic rank is decreasing with her greater involvement in domestic activities. In other words, she, like other female pupils in the village, is involved in household chores (such as fetching water, cooking, taking care of younger siblings) before/after school times and during weekends and holidays. As a result, she has not enough time to do school activities. Furthermore, the way from home to school and the way back to home take much of her time and make her exhausted, like other pupils in the village
- ¹¹⁵ She was married at the age of four to a non-school attending boy (12 years old). She started to attend formal school at the age of seven influenced by school attending children in her parents' village.
- ¹¹⁶ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and her father did not want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ¹¹⁷ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi full cycle primary school (grades 1-8). Now, she is attending 5th grade at Merawi primary school, 5 km away her parents' village.
- ¹¹⁸ She stood 47th out of 90 pupils.
- ¹¹⁹ She was married at the age of eight to a young farmer (16 years old). She started to attend formal school at the age of 10, before establishing her own *goggo*, influenced by school attending children in her parents' village.

36.	12 ¹²³	5-year-old	Dissolved ¹²⁴	Farmer	5 th 125	78	72	75 ¹²⁶		
37.	14 ¹²⁷	7-year-old	Dissolved ¹²⁸	Farmer	5 th 129	24	10	17 ¹³⁰		
38.	12 ¹³¹	5-year-old	Not-Dissolved ¹³²	7 th grade	5 th 133	50	30	40 ¹³⁴	3 rd 135	
39.	14 ¹³⁶	4-year-old	Not-Dissolved ¹³⁷	10 th grade	6 th 138	24	15	19 ¹³⁹		

- ¹²⁰ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and her father did not want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ¹²¹ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi Primary School (MPS). In 1996 E.C, she was attending 5th grade at Merawi primary school, 5 km away from her parents' village.
- ¹²² She stood 57th out of 90 pupils.
- ¹²³ She got married at the age of five together with her 3 years older sister. She got married to a young farmer (12 years old), 7 years older than her. She started to attend formal school at the age of eight, before starting to sleep with her husband, influenced by her school attending elder brother, a college graduate. Her father, 4th grade dropout, encourages his children to be attentive and successful in their education since he regrets about his being unable to finish his education and becoming a farmer. He managed to educate his elder son by employing a farmer from land "poor" families in her parents' village.
- ¹²⁴ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and her father wanted his daughter to get educated, like his elder son, a college graduate.
- ¹²⁵ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (1-4th grades), she was promoted to Merawi Primary School (MPS). In 1996 E.C, she was attending 5th grade at Merawi primary school, 5km away from her parents' village.
- ¹²⁶ She stood 75th out of 90 pupils. When she was attending her first cycle primary school nearby her parents' village, she was academically performing well. For instance, she stood 17th (1st semester) and 12th (2nd semester) out of 93 pupils in grade 2. Her academic rank is declining due to the distance between home and the second cycle primary school as well as household chores.
- ¹²⁷ She got married at the age of seven together with her 3 years older sister. Her husband (14 years old) was a young farmer. During her marriage, her parents gave her two calves as dowry. Since her father was not happy with her in-laws' behavior, he divorced her at the age of nine. After getting divorced, her father had an idea of arranging another marriage for her. But her elder brother (17 years old), 11th grader at Merawi Secondary School, was against the idea of arranging another marriage for her, his younger sister. Then he tried to convince his father not to do so and then let her attend school. Being convinced by her elder brother's idea, he allowed her to attend school. Accordingly, she started to attend formal school at the age of 10, a year after divorce. However, her elder sister who got married with her established her *goggo* around her husband's village and gave birth to a child. Now, she is the elder daughter in the family who is responsible for assisting her mother in domestic activities and some times replacing her mother's role in her absence, and when she gives birth to a child. Being the elder daughter in the family, she is required to assist her mother in domestic activities before/after school times and during weekends and holidays. Despite her involvement in domestic activities, she is a high academic achiever in her class due to her elder brother's (now a college student) encouragement.
- ¹²⁸ The marriage was dissolved since her father did not want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ¹²⁹ After successfully finishing the first cycle primary education in Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi Primary School (MPS). In 1996 E.C, she was attending 5th grade at MPS, 5km away from her parents' village.
- ¹³⁰ She stood 17th out of 90 pupils. When she was attending first cycle primary school nearby her parents' village, her academic rank was between 1st and 2nd among her classmates. For instance, she stood 1st and 2nd out of 100 pupils in 1st grade (1st and 2nd semesters, respectively). However, when she started to attend second cycle primary school 5km far from her parents' village, her academic rank is getting lower and lower due to the distance between home and school. However, still she is performing well compared to her peer-groups due to her elder brother's (a college student) support and encouragement. And she would like to be a female teacher after finishing her education.
- ¹³¹ She was married at the age of five together with her three years older sister. During her marriage, her parents gave her two calves as dowry. She got married to a school attending boy (7th grader at Meshenti Primary School) in another peasant community. She started schooling at the age of seven since her husband attends school. Like other female pupils in her village, she is expected to assist her mother in domestic activities before and after school times and during weekends and holidays. With regard to her academic performance, she is an average pupil in her class. For instance, during the 1993, 1st and 2nd semesters, she stood 38th and 21st out of 93 pupils in grade 2. She is improving her academic performance since both her parents and in-laws encourage her to concentrate on her education. When she completes 12th grade, she likes to be a female teacher since she has seen female teachers at Meshenti Primary School where her husband is attending 3rd grade.
- ¹³² The marriage was not dissolved since both parents want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ¹³³ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (1-4th grades), she was promoted to Merawi Primary School (MPS). In 1996 E.C, she was attending 5th grade at MPS, 5km away from her parents' village.
- ¹³⁴ She stood 40th out of 90 pupils. When she was attending 1st and 2nd grades, she was an average pupil in her class. For instance, she stood 38th and 21st out of 93 pupils in grade 2. Her academic rank is declining due to the distance between home and school as well as her involvement in domestic activities at home.
- ¹³⁵ She repeated 3rd grade due to malaria infection.
- ¹³⁶ She is the third daughter for her parents. She got married at the age of four with her eldest sister (23). She has three sisters and two brothers. Her eldest sister gave birth to two children, but she had never been in school. Her immediate elder unmarried sister (17) attends 8th grade at MPS. Her younger sister (9) tends cattle. The two elder married sons did not attend school due an arranged marriage and farm labor. Her father died before 5 years and she lives with her widowed woman (44) at Kotekotema. She and her elder sister are attending school due to their uncle's (their mother's brother, a teacher) pressure.
- ¹³⁷ The marriage was not dissolved since her husband (10th grader) attends school and both parents want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ¹³⁸ After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi Primary School (MPS). In 1996 E.C, she was attending 6th grade at Merawi primary school, 5km away from her parents' village.
- ¹³⁹ She stood 19th out of 86 pupils. When she was attending first cycle primary school nearby her parents' village, her academic rank was relatively better among her classmates. For instance, she stood 6th and 2nd out of 100 pupils in 1st grade (1st and 2nd semesters, respectively); she stood 9th and 10th in grade 2, and 19th and 16th out of 53 pupils in grade 3. Of course, her academic performance started declining due to her intensive involvement both in household chores and field related activities after her

40.	16 ¹⁴⁰	80days-old	Dissolved ¹⁴¹	Farmer	6 ^{th142}	42	45	43 ¹⁴³		
41.	17 ¹⁴⁴	8-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁴⁵	Farmer	6 ^{th146}	26	14	20 ¹⁴⁷		

father's death in 1999. Now, when she started to attend second cycle primary school 5km far from her widowed mother's village, her academic rank is getting lower and lower due to the distance between home and school though she is performing well compared to her peer-groups due to her elder sister's (8th grader at the same school) support and encouragement. Her husband, who attends 10th grade while living with his parents, also encourages her to study hard.

¹⁴⁰ She is the eldest daughter for her parents. She was promised to a marriage before her birth and got married during her baptism (80 days of birth).

¹⁴¹ The marriage was dissolved when she was 10 years old . After divorce, she started schooling (see Case study in Chapter 7).

¹⁴² After finishing the first cycle primary education at Bachema Primary School (grades 1-4), she was promoted to Merawi full cycle primary school (grades 1-8). Now, she is attending 6th grade at Merawi primary school, 5 km away her parents' village.

¹⁴³ She stood 43rd out of 86 pupils. Starting from her first cycle primary school nearby her parents' village, her academic rank is below average due to domestic burden at home, being the eldest daughter in the family. For instance, while she was attending 3rd grade nearby her parents' village, she stood 33rd out of 53 pupils. In addition, when she started her second cycle primary education 5km away her parents' village, her academic performance is still below average due to her intensive involvement in domestic activities as well as the distance between home and school.

¹⁴⁴ Her parents are illiterate and they gave birth to three daughters and five sons. She is the eldest child for her parents. Her mother (34) is only 14 years older than her. She got married at the age of 8. During her marriage, her parents gave her 2 calves as dowry. At the age of 11, she insisted on attending school after getting divorced, being influenced by her educated aunts and uncles (her father's younger sisters and brothers). Her father was convinced to send her to school but her in-laws were not in favor of her formal schooling since her husband (18) was a farmer. The marriage was dissolved during the end of the 1990 E.C. After divorce, she got registered in 1st grade at MPS, where her aunts and uncles were taught, at the age of 12. Her educated aunts are good role models for her as well as for her father. Though her father has a strong commitment in educating all his school-age children, he could not manage to do so due to shortage of working hands in the field. As a result, the two school-age sons are assisting their father in the field. However, all school-age daughters are attending school while assisting their mother after and before school times.

¹⁴⁵ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and she insisted on attending modern education like her educated aunts and uncles in their homestead at Yidonga.

¹⁴⁶ Starting from 1st grade until now, she has been attending primary school at Merawi, 5km away from her parents' village for better schooling. In 1996 E.C, she was attending 6th grade at MPS at the age of 17. Her younger sister (11) was also attending 4th grade at the same school. Her unmarried younger brother, the eldest son (15) did not attend school since he was required to assist his father in the field. His father and mother had the intention to arrange marriage for him but he insisted on attending school being motivated by many school-attending children in her parents' village. In 1996, he was attending 2nd grade at the age of 15, his younger brother (13) was attending 6th grade at the same school. The third son (9) did not attend school since he is required to assist his father in the field. The last two sons (7 and 5 years old) tend cattle and calves, respectively. The last child, a daughter (3) was feeding her mother's breast.

¹⁴⁷ She stood 20th out of 86 pupils. She has a strong motivation and interest in education though her academic rank is declining due to her full involvement in domestic activities, being the eldest daughter in the family. While she was attending her first cycle primary education at the same school, her academic performance was relatively better. For instance, when she was in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders, she stood 4th, 4th, and 8th, respectively. When her involvement in domestic activities becomes intense, her academic performance began to decline.

Appendix 8B: Profiles of Early-Married Female Pupils, Rim¹
“Full Cycle Primary School”² (May 2003 - July 2004)

RMFP ³ No.	Age ⁴	Conditions of Early-Arranged Marriage			Conditions of Formal Education					
		Age at Marriage	Dissolved/ Not-Dissolved	Husband's Position ⁵	Grade ⁶	Rank ⁷			Repeated Grade/s	Drop- out ⁸
						1 st	2 nd	Averg.		
1.	8	7-year-old	Dissolved ⁹	4 th grade ¹⁰	1 st	31	29	30 ¹¹	1 st 12	-
2.	8 ¹³	7-year-old	Not Dissolved	Farmer	1 st	77	51	64 ¹⁴	1 st 15	-
3.	9 ¹⁶	8-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁷	Farmer	1 st	-	-	-	-	1 st 18
4.	10 ¹⁹	4-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	1 st	27	37	33 ²⁰	1 st 21	-
5.	10 ²²	6-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	1 st	-	-	-	-	1 st 23
6.	11 ²⁴	2-year-old	Not Dissolved	3 rd grade	1 st	-	-	-	-	1 st 25
7.	12 ²⁶	8-year-old	Not Dissolved	Farmer	1 st	-	-	-	-	1 st 27
8.	12 ²⁸	7-year-old	Not Dissolved	Farmer	1 st	-	-	-	-	1 st 29
9.	13 ³⁰	7-year-old	Not Dissolved	Farmer	1 st	-	-	-	-	1 st 31
10.	8	2-year-old	Not Dissolved ³²	10 th grade ³³	2 nd	51	32	41 ³⁴	1 st 35	-

¹ “Rim” is one of the two ethnographic research sites among the peasant communities of Mecha *Woreda*.

² “Full Cycle Primary School” refers to a primary school with grades 1-8 only

³ RMFP: Rim married female pupils. Rim Primary School married female pupils, who were promoted to the secondary school (grades 9 - 12) at Merawi, the *Woreda*'s capital town, are also included under this list.

⁴ “Age” refers to the age of early-married female pupils during the 1996 E.C (September 2003 - July 2004) academic year.

⁵ “Husband’s position” denotes the husband being a farmer/priest/church-school educated/modern school attending/ trader/government employee (a rare occasion in these profiles).

⁶ “Grade” refers to the grade level of early-married female pupils during the 1996 E.C academic year.

⁷ “Rank” refers to the academic status of early-married female pupils compared to the total number of students in their class based on the 1996 E.C. first and second semesters’ results and the average rank of the two semesters.

⁸ “Drop-out” denotes the terminated grade level of early-married female pupils.

⁹ The marriage was dissolved because her in-laws did not allow her to attend formal schooling, while allowing her husband. Her elder brother, 7th grader at RPS, convinced her father to dissolve the marriage and then to continue her education.

¹⁰ The husband attends 4th grade at another rural primary school in the same district while living with his parents.

¹¹ She stood 30th out of 110 pupils.

¹² She repeated 1st grade due to malaria infection, which is the major cause for illness in that locality.

¹³ She was married to a farmer at the age of 7 and got registered at RPS at the age of 8, being influenced by school attending girls in her parents’ village. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

¹⁴ She stood 64th out of 110 pupils.

¹⁵ She repeated 1st grade since she dropped-out from 1st grade during her marriage, which was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and she insisted on continuing her education.

¹⁶ She got married to a farmer while she was 1st grade and the marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend modern schooling.

¹⁷ The marriage was dissolved after the second phase of the ethnographic fieldwork since she insisted on continuing her education, but her husband is a farmer.

¹⁸ She dropped-out from 1st grade since her husband is a farmer and her parents wanted to continue the marriage alliance.

¹⁹ She was married to a farmer and the marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend modern schooling. She started schooling after divorce due to her elder brother’s (5th grader)’s pressure. School attending girls in the village also influenced her.

²⁰ She stood 33rd out of 110 pupils.

²¹ She repeated 1st grade due to malaria epidemic.

²² She got married to a farmer and the marriage was dissolved since she wanted to attend school being influenced by school attending girls in her village. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school since she was sick.

²³ She dropped-out from 1st grade due to illness or sickness.

²⁴ Her parents’ village is one-hour walk from the local school. There was one female pupil from her village. She got register at RPS at the age of 10 since her husband was attending first cycle primary school while living with his parents at a different Peasant Association in the same *Woreda*. But she did not know his grade level. The marriage was not dissolved and she used to visit her parents-in-laws during the school vacation and stayed there for one month and more. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

²⁵ She dropped-out from school since she was expected to live with her in-laws’ village.

²⁶ She was married to a farmer at the age of 8. She started school at the age of 12 due to peer influence. After school, she used to visit her in-laws during the school vacation and when invited. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school

²⁷ She dropped-out from 1st grade since her husband is a farmer and she was expected to establish her *goğğö* around her husband’s village at the age of 13.

²⁸ She was married to a farmer at the age of 7. She started school at the age of 12 due to peer influence. After school, she used to visit her in-laws during the school vacation and when invited. During the 2nd phase of my research, she was absent from school

²⁹ She dropped-out from 1st grade since her husband is a farmer and she was expected to establish her *goğğö* around her husband’s village at the age of 13, like other married girls in her locality.

³⁰ She was married to a farmer and started schooling after her marriage (at the age of 13), being influenced by school attending girls in her parents’ village. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

³¹ She dropped-out from 1st grade at the age of 13 because her husband is a farmer and she was expected to establish her own *goğğö* around her husband’s village.

³² The marriage was not dissolved because both parents want to continue the marriage bond.

11.	9	4-year-old	Not Dissolved	4 th grade ³⁶	2 nd	53	47	50 ³⁷	-	-
12.	9 ³⁸	3-year-old	Not Dissolved	5 th grade	2 nd	14	14	14 ³⁹	-	-
13.	12 ⁴⁰	6-year-old	Not Dissolved ⁴¹	4 th grade	2 nd	23	20	21 ⁴²	-	-
14.	10	8-year-old	Not Dissolved ⁴³	<i>Märiyéta</i>	2 nd	10	14	12 ⁴⁴	-	-
15.	10 ⁴⁵	8-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	2	2	2 ⁴⁶	-	-
16.	11	6-year-old	Dissolved ⁴⁷	Farmer	2 nd	30	33	31 ⁴⁸	2 nd 49	-
17.	11 ⁵⁰	8-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	34	25	29 ⁵¹	-	-
18.	11 ⁵²	3-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	69	52	60 ⁵³	-	-
19.	11	4-year-old	Not Dissolved ⁵⁴	3 rd grade ⁵⁵	2 nd	46	33	39 ⁵⁶	-	-
20.	11 ⁵⁷	5-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	52	65	56 ⁵⁸	-	-
21.	11	9-year-old	Dissolved ⁵⁹	Farmer	2 nd	53	38	45 ⁶⁰	-	-

³³ The husband attends 10th grade at Merawi Secondary School (MSS), the only secondary school in Mecha *Woreda*, the study area.

³⁴ She stood 41st out of 87 pupils.

³⁵ She repeated 1st grade since she did not have regular school attendance.

³⁶ Before five years, the husband (14 years old) was employed cattle tender in his in-laws' house. He was well-disciplined and hard-working boy from land and cattle "poor" family. Since his employer liked his behavior and industriousness, he married him to his 4-year-old daughter, 2nd grader at the age of 9. Then his father-in-law allowed him to attend school while living and working with his in -laws' house.

³⁷ She stood 50th out of 87 pupils.

³⁸ She got married at the age of 3 with her two elder sisters who were 10 and 7 years old during their marriage. The eldest married daughter did not attend school due to her marriage. Her elder married sister is attending 3rd grade since her husband is also attending school (5th grade). She is attending school (2nd grade) since her husband is attending school (5th grade). She has got a rank (1st - 3rd) when she was promoted to 2nd grade since her elder married sister (3rd grade) assisted her in doing school related activities. Her younger brothers (6 and 3) neither get married nor attend school (pre-school ages). Her father is a priest, whereas her mother is illiterate.

³⁹ She stood 14th out of 87 pupils.

⁴⁰ She got married at the age of six with her non-school attending eldest sister. She has got the chance to attend school due to her elder unmarried brother's (8th grader) pressure. Her unmarried younger brother and sister are also attending (3rd and 1st grade, respectively) school. Her school attending elder brothers (8th and 4th graders, respectively) and her father, 4th grade dropout, are encouraging her to study hard in her education. Her in-laws as well as her husband are in favor of her education. She has never repeated grades. She is an average student among her classmates.

⁴¹ Her marriage was not dissolved since her husband (4th grader) is also attending school.

⁴² She stood 21st out of 87 pupils.

⁴³ The marriage was not dissolved because she, the eldest daughter in the family, was married to a *Märiyéta* (church educated person) from the same village. Her younger unmarried sister was also attending 2nd grade with her. Her elder brother was attending 5th grade. Her elder brother, 5th grader, and her father, 3rd grade dropout, encourage her to study hard in her education. Her in-laws as well as her husband are in favor of her education. She has never repeated grades.

⁴⁴ She stood 12th out of 87 pupils.

⁴⁵ She was married to a farmer and divorced since her husband did not attend modern schooling. She started to attend school influenced by her younger unmarried sister (2nd grader) and other school attending girls in her parents' village. However, her elder sister, got married with her, did not attend school.

⁴⁶ She stood 2nd out of 87 pupils. She is the only rank (1st - 3rd) student in the two semesters of the 1996 E.C academic year among 111 early-married female pupils at Rim Primary School (see also No.76, 81, 95 of this profile).

⁴⁷ The marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend modern schooling.

⁴⁸ She stood 31st out of 87 pupils.

⁴⁹ She repeated 2nd grade due to malaria infection.

⁵⁰ She was married to a farmer and then started schooling influenced by her school attending unmarried younger sister (3rd grader) and other school attending girls in her parents' village. However, her in-laws were not in favor of her schooling since her husband is a farmer. Then her father dissolved the marriage and she continues her education.

⁵¹ She stood 29th out of 87 pupils.

⁵² She was married to a farmer and divorced because her husband did not attend modern schooling. However, after the marriage was dissolved, her husband started to attend formal school in his parents' village (Sabben). Her two eldest sisters got married together before her and her elder sister. She got married with her immediate elder sister. She is the last and the only child attending school in the family.

⁵³ She stood 60th out of 87 pupils.

⁵⁴ The marriage was not dissolved since the husband attends modern school and their parents wanted to continue the marriage alliance. Both her husband and her in-laws are in favor of her education. Her two elder sisters got married, established their *goğğo* and gave birth to children, but none of them has ever been in school. Her eldest three brothers were also got married and become farmers. Her immediate elder and younger brothers were attending 4th and 2nd grades respectively. Her youngest brother was a pre-school age. Among, nine children (3 daughters and 6 sons), only she and her two brothers were attending school. She is the only female child who has got the chance to attend school after getting married.

⁵⁵ The husband, 3rd grader at RPS, is a rank student.

⁵⁶ She stood 39th out of 87 pupils.

⁵⁷ She was married to a farmer and divorced since her husband did not attend modern schooling. She started to attend school being motivated by her father's brother's unmarried daughter (3rd grader), who is younger than her. Her younger brother also attends school. However, the eldest child, her elder brother, got married before her and her three elder sisters. Her two eldest sisters got married together. Her immediate elder sister and she got married together. Her parents prepared three wedding ceremonies.

⁵⁸ She stood 56th out of 87 pupils.

22.	11 ⁶¹	7-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	41	20	38 ⁶²	-	-
23.	13	5-year-old	Not Dissolved	Priest	2 nd	10	14	12 ⁶³		
24.	13 ⁶⁴	4-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	57	58	57 ⁶⁵	-	-
25.	13 ⁶⁶	5-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	19	19	19 ⁶⁷	-	-
26.	14 ⁶⁸	8-year-old	Not dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	-	-	-	-	2 nd 69
27.	14 ⁷⁰	8-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	35	-	-	1 st 71	2 nd 72
28.	14 ⁷³	7-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	13	12	12 ⁷⁴	-	-
29.	15 ⁷⁵	8-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	-	-	-	-	2 nd 76
30.	13 ⁷⁷	8-year-old	Not dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	-	-	-	-	2 nd 78
31.	12 ⁷⁹	9-year-old	Not dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	-	-	-	-	2 nd 80

⁵⁹ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer. Her elder brother (8th grader) convinced her father to get her divorced and allow her to attend school. She got divorced with her dowry cattle, one calf, and then she joined the local primary school. Her eldest three sisters, who married to farmers, established their *goğgo* and gave birth to children, did not get the chance to attend school. Her younger sister attends 1st grade after her marriage since her husband attends school. Since all her eldest sisters live in their husbands' village, she is the only elder daughter in the family who is responsible for assisting her mother in domestic activities. As a result, her academic performance is not good.

⁶⁰ She stood 45th out of 87 pupils.

⁶¹ She got divorced since her husband, a farmer, did not attend modern schooling. She started to attend school being influenced by her elder sister (7th grader) who was married to a farmer and attends school after divorce since her husband was a farmer.

⁶² She stood 38th out of 87 pupils.

⁶³ She stood 12th out of 87 pupils.

⁶⁴ She is the eldest child in the family. She was married alone to a farmer and divorced since her husband did not attend modern school. She started attending school being influenced by her father's brother's unmarried school attending daughter (2nd grader), who is younger than her. Her younger brother (11) also attends 1st grade.

⁶⁵ She stood 57th out of 87 pupils. Being the eldest child in the family, she is responsible for domestic activities at home, she has no enough time to do school related activities, and then her academic rank is lower.

⁶⁶ She was married to a farmer and the marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend modern school. During divorce, her father received her dowry cattle, one calf. She started to attend school due to her unmarried elder brother's (8th grader) pressure. Her elder three sisters, got married, established their own *goğgo*, and gave birth to children, but not all of them got education. Her younger married sister (1st grader) attends school since her husband attends school. She is the elder female child in the family since her three elder sisters live in their husbands' village. She is busy with domestic activities and has no enough time to do school related tasks. As a result, she is not a rank student.

⁶⁷ She stood 19th out of 87 pupils.

⁶⁸ She got married to a farmer at the age of 8 and started schooling at the age of 14 due to peer group influence. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

⁶⁹ She dropped-out from 2nd grade at the age of 14 because her husband is a farmer and she was expected to establish her own *goğgo* around her husband's village.

⁷⁰ She was married to a farmer twice. She escaped from the first marriage and joined school with her younger married sister, being influence by school attending children in her parents' village. Her younger sister (3rd grader)'s marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer. Her younger sister was not forced to get married again due to her younger age, but her father arranged another marriage for her since he assumed that her age is too old to attend school. She was not happy with both her first and second marriages because she has a strong motivation to attend school like her peer groups in the village. She escaped from her second husband and continued schooling after missing one academic year due to her second forced marriage. Then her elder brother, a *mārigēta*, who attended formal school upto 4th grade, convinced his father to dissolve her second marriage and then to allow her to continue her schooling. In 1996, she attends 2nd grade at her late age (14) due to her first and second forced marriages. She would like to continue her education upto the higher level and become a teacher in order to teach parents about the need for educating girls. Her elder brother, who attended modern education upto 4th grade and became a *Mārigēta*, encourages her and her younger sister to study hard.

⁷¹ She repeated 1st grade due to the second forced marriage.

⁷² During the 2nd phase of the research, she was attending 2nd grade. But after the second phase of the research, she dropped-out from 2nd grade.

⁷³ She is the eldest female child in the family and got married alone to a farmer. During that time, her elder brother and younger sister were attending school. She insisted on to get divorced and attend school like her unmarried elder brother (8th grader) and her younger unmarried sister (5th grader). Her elder brother (8th grader) convinced his father to dissolve the marriage and then to allow her to attend school. She, her elder brother and her immediate younger sister attend school but her second younger sister (9 years old) tends cattle since there is no a son of her age who covers her job. She is the eldest daughter in the family who is responsible for domestic activities at home. As a result, she has no enough time to do school related activities.

⁷⁴ She stood 12th out of 87 pupils.

⁷⁵ She was married to a farmer at 8 and started school at 14 after divorce since her parents did not want to continue the marriage alliance. She got married to the second husband, a trader at Bahir Dar, at the age of 15, while she was 2nd grade.

⁷⁶ She dropped-out from 2nd grade at 15 due to her second marriage to a trader at who lives in Bahir Dar, the region's capital town.

⁷⁷ She was married to a farmer at the age of 8, started schooling at the age of 12 due to peer group influence. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

⁷⁸ She dropped-out from 2nd grade at the age of 13 because her husband is a farmer and she was expected to establish her own *goğgo* around her husband's village.

⁷⁹ She was married to a farmer at the age of 9, started schooling at the age of 11 due to peer group influence. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

⁸⁰ She dropped-out from 2nd grade at the age of 12 because her husband is a farmer and she was expected to establish her own *goğgo* around her husband's village.

32.	13 ⁸¹	7-year-old	Not dissolved	Farmer	2 nd	-	-	-	-	2 ⁿ 82
33.	10	7-year-old	Not Dissolved ⁸³	CS, 4 th grade	3 rd	27	25	26 ⁸⁴	-	-
34.	13 ⁸⁵	7-year-old	Not Dissolved ⁸⁶	5 th grade	3 rd	6	27	16 ⁸⁷	-	-
35.	10 ⁸⁸	7-year-old	Not Dissolved ⁸⁹	8 th grade	3 rd	-	-	-	-	3 rd 90
36.	10 ⁹¹	7-year-old	Not Dissolved ⁹²	2 nd grade	3 rd	31	29	30 ⁹³	-	-
37.	10 ⁹⁴	7-year-old	Not Dissolved ⁹⁵	7 th grade	3 rd	12	13	12 ⁹⁶	-	-
38.	13 ⁹⁷	9-year-old	Not Dissolved ⁹⁸	7 th grade	3 rd	25	28	27 ⁹⁹	-	-
39.	13 ¹⁰⁰	7-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁰¹	11 th grade	3 rd	40	59	49 ¹⁰²	-	-
40.	10 ¹⁰³	7-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	3 rd	47	70	58 ¹⁰⁴	-	-
41.	10	8-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	3 rd	19	15	17 ¹⁰⁵	-	-
42.	11 ¹⁰⁶	4-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁰⁷	Farmer	3 rd	34	42	38 ¹⁰⁸	-	-

- ⁸¹ She was married to a farmer at the age of 7, started schooling at the age of 12 due to peer group influence. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.
- ⁸² She dropped-out from 2nd grade at the age of 14 because her husband is a farmer and she was expected to establish her own *goğğo* around her husband's village.
- ⁸³ The husband was attending church school before his wife started to attend modern school. When his wife started formal schooling, he left the church school and enrolled at the same school and promoted to 4th grade with in two years.
- ⁸⁴ She stood 26th out of 76 pupils.
- ⁸⁵ She got married at the age of 7 with her younger and elder sisters who were 3 and 10 years old during their marriage. The eldest married daughter did not attend school due to her marriage. Her younger married sister is attending 2nd grade since her husband is also attending school (5th grade). She did not repeat grade and she is an average student. Her younger sister (2nd grader) is a rank-student since she assists her both in school related activities and housework. Her younger brothers (6 and 3) neither get married nor attend school (pre-school ages). Her father is a priest, whereas her mother is illiterate.
- ⁸⁶ Her marriage was not dissolved since her husband is attending school (5th grade).
- ⁸⁷ She stood 16th out of 76 pupils.
- ⁸⁸ She got married at 7 with her 4 years older sister (5th grader, 14 years old). Both of them were married to a modern school-attending husband. She attends school since her husband (8th grader) attends school. Her elder sister (5th grader) is also attending school after getting married since her husband (9th grader at MSS) is attending school.
- ⁸⁹ Her marriage was not dissolved since her husband is attending school (8th grade) at RPS.
- ⁹⁰ After the second phase of the research, she dropped-out from 3rd grade, RPS.
- ⁹¹ She was married to a modern school attending boy.
- ⁹² Her husband dropped-out from 2nd grade since his father was dead. He has become a farmer and she wants to get divorced and then to continue her education with full concentration.
- ⁹³ She stood 30th out of 76 pupils.
- ⁹⁴ She got married at the age of 7 with her eldest brother, a farmer. She started formal schooling after her marriage since her husband (7th grader) is attending school. Her two elder brothers are also attending (9th and 4th grades at MSS and RPS, respectively) school. Her elder brothers (9th and 4th graders) and her father (8th grade dropout) are encouraging her to study hard in her education. Her in-laws as well as her husband are in favor of her education.
- ⁹⁵ Her marriage was not dissolved since her husband is attending school (7th grade) at RPS.
- ⁹⁶ She stood 12th out of 76 pupils.
- ⁹⁷ She is the only child who attends school in the family. Her elder sister, married to a farmer, established her *goğğo* and gave birth to a child. She got married to a modern school attending boy (7th grader at RPS). She is attending school since her husband is a student and influenced by school attending female pupils in her parents' village.
- ⁹⁸ Her marriage was not dissolved since her husband is attending school (7th grade) at RPS.
- ⁹⁹ She stood 27th out of 76 pupils.
- ¹⁰⁰ She is the eldest child in the family. She was married to a modern school attending husband (11th grader at MSS). She started formal schooling since her husband is a student.
- ¹⁰¹ The marriage was dissolved because her husband wanted to concentrate on his education and his parents did not want to continue the marriage alliance.
- ¹⁰² She stood 49th out of 76 pupils.
- ¹⁰³ She was married to a farmer. Her marriage was dissolved when she was 2nd grade (after the first phase of the research) since her husband did not attend modern schooling. She is the last female child and the only child attending school in the family, influenced by school-attending children in the village in the family. Her two younger brothers are pre-school-ages. Her two elder sisters got married at their early age. Her eldest sister established her own *goğğo* and gave birth to a child; and her immediate elder sister is preparing household items such as making baskets for her *new goğğo*.
- ¹⁰⁴ She stood 58th out of 76 pupils.
- ¹⁰⁵ She stood 17th out of 76 pupils.
- ¹⁰⁶ She is the only female child in the family. She was married to a farmer and the marriage was dissolved since her husband was a farmer and she wanted to concentrate on her education. She got divorced when she was 2nd grade, after the first phase of the research, under her elder brother's (10th grade) pressure. Her younger brother also attends 3rd grade. Her elder brother (10th grader) assists her in her school activities during Saturdays and Sundays. The easiest subject for her is English, unlike most pupils in this rural school.
- ¹⁰⁷ She was married to a farmer with her three years older sister. Her marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend modern school. She and her elder sister (2nd grader) insisted on getting divorced and attending school, influenced by school-attending children in their parents' village. Their first marriages were dissolved and their father allowed them to attend school. Her elder sister got married for the second time to a farmer while she was 1st grade and then repeated that grade. (cf. No.27 in this profile).
- ¹⁰⁸ She stood 38th out of 76 pupils.

43.	12	7-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁰⁹	Farmer	3 rd	21	17	19 ¹¹⁰	-	-
44.	12	7-year-old	Dissolved ¹¹¹	Farmer	3 rd	-	-	-	-	3 rd 112
45.	13 ¹¹³	8-year-old	Not-dissolved	Farmer	3 rd	-	-	-	-	3 rd 114
46.	11 ¹¹⁵	7-year-old	Not-dissolved	Farmer	3 rd	-	-	-	-	3 ^r 116
47.	12 ¹¹⁷	9-year-old	Not-dissolved	Farmer	3 rd	-	-	-	-	3 ^r 118
48.	13 ¹¹⁹	4-year-old	Dissolved ¹²⁰	3 rd grade	4 th	21	22	21 ¹²¹	2 nd 122	-
49.	11 ¹²³	6-year-old	Not Dissolved ¹²⁴	Teacher	4 th	66	64	65 ¹²⁵	3 rd 126	-
50.	11 ¹²⁷	6-year-old	Dissolved ¹²⁸	1 st grade	4 th	24	65	44 ¹²⁹	3 rd 130	-
51.	13 ¹³¹	3-year-old	Not Dissolved ¹³²	9 th grade	4 th	31	41	36 ¹³³	-	-
52.	11 ¹³⁴	8-year-old	Dissolved ¹³⁵	Farmer	4 th	28	28	28 ¹³⁶	-	-

¹⁰⁹ Her marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend school and she wanted to concentrate on her schooling. She is the elder female child in the family. She got married at the age of 7 with her four years younger sister. Her elder married brother (22-year-old) is a farmer. Her younger unmarried brother (10-year-old) attends 4th grade at RPS. She is attending school influenced by her younger brother (4th grader) and other school-attending girls in her parents' village, Rim Medahinalem. Her father was a priest but he lost his priesthood status when his first marriage was dissolved due to the death of his first wife, her mother, who was illiterate.

¹¹⁰ She stood 19th out of 76 pupils.

¹¹¹ She was married to a farmer and the marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend modern schooling. Her married elder brother is a farmer and her married elder sister established her *goggo* and gave birth to a child. She is the only child attending school in the family influenced by school-attending relatives in her parents' village (her brother's daughter, 5th grader). She would like to be a medical doctor to eradicate malaria, which is the main cause for illness in her parents' village. She was also infected with malaria and has lost her previous academic rank (1-10).

¹¹² She dropped-out from 3rd grade after the second phase of the research.

¹¹³ She was married to a farmer at the age of 8, started schooling at the age of 11 due to peer group influence. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

¹¹⁴ She dropped-out from 3rd grade at the age of 13 because her husband is a farmer and she was expected to establish her own *goggo* around her husband's village.

¹¹⁵ She was married to a farmer at the age of 7 and started schooling at the age of 9 due to peer group influence. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

¹¹⁶ She dropped-out from 3rd grade due to her mother's death.

¹¹⁷ She was married to a farmer at the age of 9 and started schooling at the age of 10 due to peer group influence. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

¹¹⁸ She dropped-out from 3rd grade at the age of 12 because her husband is a farmer and she was expected to establish her own *goggo* around her husband's village.

¹¹⁹ She was married to a non-school attending husband. Her eldest unmarried sister attends 9th grade at MSS. She started to attend formal school influenced by her elder sister and other school attending children in her parents' village (7th and 5th graders). Her elder brother (5th grade dropout), got married and established his *goggo*. Her younger sister (4th grader) got married with her elder brother. Her father is a 6th grade dropout, but her mother is illiterate. She was absent from school for one year (when she was grade 2) due to sickness and she would like to be a medical doctor to treat patients.

¹²⁰ Her marriage was dissolved since she wanted to concentrate on her education. Her parents also do not like to continue the marriage alliance. Her husband attends modern schooling after divorce.

¹²¹ She stood 21st out of 85 pupils.

¹²² She repeated 2nd grade since she was absent from school due to sickness. Now, she is an average student among her classmates (e.g. she stood 22nd and 11th during the 1st and 2nd semesters, respectively, in 3rd grade).

¹²³ She was married to a modern school attending boy. Her husband completed his primary and secondary education and became a teacher in a rural primary school. She started to attend formal school since her husband attended modern school.

¹²⁴ The marriage was not dissolved since her husband (a primary school teacher) and his parents wanted to continue the marriage alliance. Starting from the coming year (at the age of 12), she is expected to live with her husband.

¹²⁵ She stood 65th out of 85 pupils.

¹²⁶ She repeated 3rd grade due to domestic burden at home.

¹²⁷ She was married to a non-school attending husband. She got divorced since her parents did not like the marriage alliance. After divorce, she started attending school influenced by her brother (8th grader) and other school-attending children in her parents' village. Her brother assists her in school activities. Her two married elder sisters established their *goggo* and gave birth to children, but both of them had never been in school.

¹²⁸ The marriage was dissolved since her parents did not like to continue the marriage alliance. After the marriage was dissolved, the husband (1st grader at RPS) started to attend school.

¹²⁹ She stood 44th out of 85 pupils.

¹³⁰ She repeated 3rd grade due to malaria infection.

¹³¹ She is the eldest child in the family. She got married to a modern school attending boy (9th grader at MSS). She started to attend school since her husband is a student. Her father-in-law bought her pens and exercise books and she got registered at RPS. Her younger brother also attends school with her. Her father, 4th grade dropout, also encourages her to study hard.

¹³² Her marriage was not dissolved since her husband attends school and both parents wanted to continue the marriage alliance.

¹³³ She stood 36th out of 85 pupils.

¹³⁴ She is the only female child in the family. She got married to a farmer. She started to attend school being influenced by school-attending children in her parents' village, Medahinalem. Her younger brother is also attending 4th grade at RPS with her. Her father is a 7th grade dropout, whereas her mother is illiterate.

¹³⁵ Her marriage was dissolved after the first phase of the research, since she wanted to concentrate on her education.

¹³⁶ She stood 28th out of 85 pupils.

53.	11 ¹³⁷	4-year-old ¹³⁸	Dissolved ¹³⁹	Farmer	4 th	32	41	36 ¹⁴⁰	-	-
54.	10	5-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁴¹	Farmer	4 th	-	-	-	-	4 th 142
55.	12	6-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁴³	Farmer	4 th	-	-	-	-	4 th 144
56.	10 ¹⁴⁵	7-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	4 th	38	78	58 ¹⁴⁶	-	-
57.	13	4-year-old ¹⁴⁷	Dissolved ¹⁴⁸	Farmer	4 th	21	22	21 ¹⁴⁹	4 th 150	-
58.	10	4-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁵¹	Farmer	4 th	59	64	61 ¹⁵²	-	-
59.	11 ¹⁵³	5-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	4 th	71	69	70 ¹⁵⁴	-	-
60.	12 ¹⁵⁵	4-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	4 th	44	50	47 ¹⁵⁶	3 rd 157	
61.	10 ¹⁵⁸	5-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	4 th	53	44	48 ¹⁵⁹	4 th 160	
62.	11 ¹⁶¹	7-year-old	Not-Dissolved	Farmer	4 th	-	-	-	-	4 th 162
63.	12 ¹⁶³	8-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	4 th	-	-	-	-	4 th 164

¹³⁷ She is the eldest female child in the family. She attends school due to her school attending relatives' influence. Her younger unmarried sister and brother also attend school. Her father is a 7th grade dropout, whereas her mother is illiterate.

¹³⁸ She got married to a non-school attending boy while she was feeding her mother's breast.

¹³⁹ Her marriage was dissolved before she joined primary school, just 2 years after her early childhood marriage, since her father did not like to continue the marriage alliance and her husband was a farmer.

¹⁴⁰ She stood 36th out of 85 pupils.

¹⁴¹ The marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend school.

¹⁴² After the second phase of the research, she dropped-out from 4th grade.

¹⁴³ Her marriage was dissolved before she joined primary school, before one year, since her husband did not attend modern education and she wanted to attend school like her elder married sister (5th grader). Her elder sister's marriage is not dissolved because her husband, a *mārigéta*, is also attending 10th grade at MSS. Her parents are illiterate, but there are school attending children in her parents' village, Medahinalem.

¹⁴⁴ After the second phase of the research, she dropped-out from 4th grade.

¹⁴⁵ She was married to a farmer and her marriage was dissolved since she wanted to attend school influenced by school attending relatives in her parents' village (her father's brother's sons and daughter). She started school after divorce. Her brother also attends 4th grade with her. Her other siblings did not attend school and her parents are illiterate.

¹⁴⁶ She stood 58th out of 85 pupils.

¹⁴⁷ She got married while she was feeding her mother's breast.

¹⁴⁸ Her husband did not attend modern schooling, but after the marriage was dissolved he started formal school in his parents' village. Her elder unmarried sister is attending 9th grade at MSC. There are also many school attending children in her parents' village, Kirkagna. Her elder brother, 5th grade dropout, got married, established his *goḡḡo* and became a farmer. Her younger sister (2nd grader) got married with her elder brother and is attending school after divorce. Her father is 6th grade dropout, but her mother is illiterate.

¹⁴⁹ She stood 21st out of 85 pupils.

¹⁵⁰ She repeated 4th grade due to health problems and she wants to be a medical doctor to treat patients.

¹⁵¹ Her husband did not attend modern schooling. Her marriage was dissolved because she was home-sick since her in-laws' village was far from her parents' village. When she reached age 7, she asked her father to attend school like her elder brother, 6th grader. Her elder sister was married early, is making baskets for her *goḡḡo*, but she did not attend school.

¹⁵² She stood 61st out of 85 pupils.

¹⁵³ She is the eldest child in the family. She got married to a farmer. "I did not go to my husband's village after my marriage since I was not able to get acquainted with my in-laws' house since I was very young. When I reach the age of 7 I asked my father to send me to school being influenced by school attending relatives in the village (my uncle's daughter, 9th grader at MSS and her husband also attends secondary education and their the marriage is not dissolved). "My father is 4th grade dropout, whereas my mother is illiterate."

¹⁵⁴ She stood 70th out of 85 pupils.

¹⁵⁵ She was married to a farmer and divorced since her husband did not attend modern schooling. She started attending school being influenced by her elder brothers (5th graders at RPS). Her elder two sisters got married twice, live in their second husbands' village, and gave birth to children. Her elder brother got married, established his *goḡḡo* and farms with his father on *aratañña* (one-four of the harvest or farm product is given to him). The last child (10) tends cattle. Only she and her two elder brothers (5th graders) attend school among 7 children (4 sons and 3 daughters). Her father can read and write through the illiteracy-campaign, whereas her mother is illiterate.

¹⁵⁶ She stood 47th out of 85 pupils.

¹⁵⁷ She repeated 3rd grade infected with malaria.

¹⁵⁸ She was married to a farmer and divorced since her husband did not attend modern school. She started to attend school after getting divorced being influenced by her elder unmarried sister (9th grader at MSC). There are also many school attending children in their parents' village, Kirkagna. Her elder brother, 5th grade dropout, got married, established his *goḡḡo*, and became a farmer. Her elder sister (4th grader at RPS) got married with her and their elder brother (3 children got married at the same time). Her elder married sister is also attending school after divorce since her husband is a farmer. Her father is a 6th grade dropout, but her mother is illiterate.

¹⁵⁹ She stood 48th out of 85 pupils.

¹⁶⁰ She repeated 4th grade due to health problems.

¹⁶¹ She was married to a farmer at the age of 7 and started schooling after her marriage due to peer group influence. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

¹⁶² She dropped-out from 4th grade at the age of 11 because her husband is a farmer and she was expected to live in her husband's village.

¹⁶³ She was married to a farmer at 8 and started school after her marriage. Her first marriage was dissolved since her parents do not want to continue the marriage alliance. Then she got married to a second husband, a trader, while she was 4th grade.

64.	10 ¹⁶⁵	4-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	5 th	66	46	56 ¹⁶⁶	-	-
65.	13 ¹⁶⁷	7-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	5 th	71	56	68 ¹⁶⁸	-	-
66.	14	6-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁶⁹	Farmer	5 th	28	22	25 ¹⁷⁰	-	-
67.	14	5-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁷¹	Farmer	5 th	14	10	12 ¹⁷²	-	-
68.	13	7-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁷³	Farmer	5 th	16	17	16 ¹⁷⁴	-	-
69.	12	7-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁷⁵	Farmer	5 th	58	51	54 ¹⁷⁶	-	-
70.	10	6-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁷⁷	Farmer	5 th	81	81	81 ¹⁷⁸	-	-
71.	12	6-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁷⁹	Farmer	5 th	61	64	62 ¹⁸⁰	-	-
72.	11	6-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁸¹	Farmer	5 th	43	51	42 ¹⁸²	-	-
73.	11	5-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁸³	Farmer	5 th	77	73	75 ¹⁸⁴	-	-
74.	11	6-year-old	Dissolved ¹⁸⁵	Farmer	5 th	-	-	-	-	5 ^{th186}
75.	12 ¹⁸⁷	9-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	5 th	-	-	-	-	5 ^{th188}
76.	13 ¹⁸⁹	9-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	5 th	10	3¹⁹⁰	6 ¹⁹¹	-	-
77.	12 ¹⁹²	4-year-old	Not Dissolved	CS/3 rd grade	5 th	14	19	16 ¹⁹³	-	-

- ¹⁶⁴ She dropped-out from 4th grade at 12 due to her second marriage to a trader at Rim *Kātāma*, the local PA's town.
- ¹⁶⁵ She was married to a farmer and divorced since her husband did not attend modern school. She got married with her elder sister (13, 5th grade, see below). "Our parents gave us 1 calf for each as our dowry. I insisted on attending school when my elder sister started schooling after divorce since her husband is a farmer. Then my father divorced me and allowed me to attend school. My younger brother attends 4th grade. Our parents are illiterate. We, my elder sister, I and my younger brother attend school being influenced by school attending children in our village, Kurkurit. The way from our village to the school is more than one hour walk." She would like to be a teacher after finishing her education.
- ¹⁶⁶ She stood 56th out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁶⁷ She was married to a farmer and divorced since her husband did not attend modern school. She got married with her younger sister (10, 5th grader, see above). "I insisted on attending school being influenced by my elder brother who attended school up to 4th grade and dropout from 4th grade, RPS, since there was a rumor that the government was recruiting (*yemimar gubile yigafifalu sibale abatie semito*) an army member among school attending children during the Ethio-Eritrean War (1998, 'Yeshabia Torinet'). Then our father married him off and became a farmer. My father divorced me and allowed me to attend school due to my elder brother's influence. Then my younger sister got divorced and joined school. My younger sister (10) attends 5th grade after divorce. My younger brother (the last child) attends 4th grade. Our parents are illiterate and gave birth to 4 daughters and 2 sons. My elder two sisters did not attend school. My eldest sister was married and gave birth to children. My elder sister was unmarried and never attended school due to health problem, she stayed at home and makes embroidery. I, my younger sister and brother attend school being influenced by school attending children in our village, Kurkurit. The way from our village to the school is more than one hour walk."
- ¹⁶⁸ She stood 68th out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁶⁹ She got divorced since her husband is a farmer and her brother, 4th grade dropout, wanted her to get educated.
- ¹⁷⁰ She stood 25th out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁷¹ She got divorced when she was 1st grade since her husband did not attend modern school. She wanted to attend school being influenced by school attending girls in her parents' village.
- ¹⁷² She stood 12th out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁷³ She got divorced since her husband did not attend modern schooling. She started schooling after divorce due to her elder brother's, Degree graduate from Addis Ababa University, pressure or influence.
- ¹⁷⁴ She stood 16th out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁷⁵ She got divorced since her husband did not attend modern school. She started to attend school after divorce.
- ¹⁷⁶ She stood 54th out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁷⁷ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and she wants to concentrate on her education. Her elder school attending brothers also convinced her father to dissolve the marriage so that she can whole-heartedly attend her schooling.
- ¹⁷⁸ She stood 81st out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁷⁹ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer and she wants to attend school. She started schooling after divorce.
- ¹⁸⁰ She stood 62nd out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁸¹ She got divorced since her husband did not attend modern school.
- ¹⁸² She stood 42nd out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁸³ She got divorced since her husband did not attend modern school. She started schooling after divorce influenced by school attending children in her parents' village.
- ¹⁸⁴ She stood 75th out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁸⁵ She got divorced since her husband did not attend modern school.
- ¹⁸⁶ She dropped-out from 5th grade after the second phase of the research.
- ¹⁸⁷ She was married to a farmer when she was 3rd grade and repeated that grade due to her marriage. Being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village, she insisted on continuing her education. Her father divorced her and she continued her education.
- ¹⁸⁸ She dropped-out from 5th grade after the 2nd phase of the research.
- ¹⁸⁹ She was married to a farmer while she was attending school. The marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend modern schooling.
- ¹⁹⁰ She is a relatively high achiever, especially in the second semester of the academic year under study, among 111 early-married female pupils at Rim Primary School (See also Serial No. 15, 81, and 96 of this profile).
- ¹⁹¹ She stood 6th out of 105 pupils.
- ¹⁹² She was married to a church school attending boy. When she started formal schooling, her husband left the church school and enrolled at the same school and promoted to 3rd grade within one year. She wants to get divorced and concentrate on her education.

78.	12 ¹⁹⁴	3-year-old	Not Dissolved	8 th grade	5 th	17	27	22 ¹⁹⁵	-	-
79.	14 ¹⁹⁶	7-year-old	Not Dissolved	10 th grade	5 th	4	-	-	-	5 th 197
80.	12 ¹⁹⁸	6-year-old	Not Dissolved	8 th grade	5 th	17	15	16 ¹⁹⁹	-	-
81.	10 ²⁰⁰	4-year-old	Dissolved ²⁰¹	7 th grade	5 th	11	4	7 ²⁰²	-	-
82.	11 ²⁰³	6-years-old	Not Dissolved	9 th grade	5 th	57	53	55 ²⁰⁴	-	-
83.	16 ²⁰⁵	6-years-old	Not Dissolved	Trader	5 th	-	-	-	-	5 th 206
84.	13 ²⁰⁷	7-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	5 th	-	-	-	-	5 th 208
85.	14 ²⁰⁹	9-year-old	Not dissolved	Farmer	5 th	-	-	-	-	5 th 210
86.	11 ²¹¹	5-year-old	Not Dissolved	10 th grade	6 th	39	51	45 ²¹²	-	-
87.	12 ²¹³	6-year-old	Not Dissolved	8 th grade	6 th	27	16	21 ²¹⁴	-	-
88.	14 ²¹⁵	5-year-old	Not Dissolved	7 th grade	6 th	33	29	36 ²¹⁶	-	-
89.	12 ²¹⁷	5-year-old	Dissolved ²¹⁸	5 th grade	6 th	63	57	60 ²¹⁹	-	-
90.	14 ²²⁰	9-year-old	Not Dissolved	9 th grade	6 th	65	68	66 ²²¹	5 th 222	-
91.	12 ²²³	5-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	6 th	-	-	-	6 th 224	6 th 225

¹⁹³ She stood 16th out of 105 pupils.

¹⁹⁴ Her husband (8th grader at RPS) attends school. She is attending school since her husband is a student and the two parents want to continue the marriage alliance.

¹⁹⁵ She stood 22nd out of 105 pupils.

¹⁹⁶ She was married to a modern school attending boy. Joined school since her husband (10th grader at MSS) is attending school. Her younger sister (4th grader at RPS) got married to a farmer and her marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend school.

¹⁹⁷ During the second phase of the research, she was attending 5th grade and her 1st semester result was relatively better than her peer-groups. During that time, her marriage was not dissolved and her husband was attending 10th grade at Merawi Secondary School. However, she dropped-out from 5th grade after the 2nd phase of the research.

¹⁹⁸ She got married to a modern school attending boy (8th grader at Gerchech Primary School). "Our marriage will be dissolved since her parents do not like the marriage alliance." Her two dowry calves were dead and her parents are saying that you should get divorced since it is not a good marriage alliance. She also wants the marriage to get dissolved to concentrate on her education.

¹⁹⁹ She stood 16th out of 105 pupils.

²⁰⁰ She is the eldest child in the family. She got married to a modern school attending boy (7th grader at GPS).

²⁰¹ The marriage was dissolved since she wanted to concentrate on her education being influenced by her elder brothers (8th and 7th grades) and other school-attending children in her parents' village.

²⁰² She stood 7th out of 105 pupils.

²⁰³ She was married to a modern school attending boy. The marriage was not dissolved since her husband (9th grader at MSS) attends modern school.

²⁰⁴ She stood 55th out of 105 pupils.

²⁰⁵ She was married at 6 and divorced at 11. She joined school at 12 and got married to a trader for the second time at 14 when she was 3rd grade. She got pregnant while she was attending 4th grade. Her husband (a trader) is a 6th grade dropout due to financial problem.

²⁰⁶ She dropped-out from 5th grade due to early pregnancy and childbirth in her second marriage.

²⁰⁷ She was married to a farmer at 7 and started school at 8 after divorce. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

²⁰⁸ She dropped-out from 5th grade at 13 due to her second marriage to a trader at Rim *Kātāma*, the PA's town.

²⁰⁹ She was married to a farmer at the age of 9 and started schooling at the age of 10 due to peer group influence. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

²¹⁰ She dropped-out from 5th grade at the age of 14 because her husband is a farmer and she was expected to establish her own *goğğō* at her husband's village.

²¹¹ She was married to a modern school attending husband (10th grader at MSS). She is attending school since her husband is a student and her parents want to continue the marriage alliance. Her two elder sisters got married before her, established their *goğğō*, and gave birth to children. Her three brothers attend school, but one brother tends cattle.

²¹² She stood 45th out of 87 pupils.

²¹³ She was married to a modern school attending boy (8th grader at RPS). She is attending school since her husband is a student and her parents want to continue the marriage alliance. Her father is 3rd grade dropped-out, whereas her mother is illiterate. She was a rank student while she was in 1st grade but afterwards she lost her rank due to domestic burdens at home.

²¹⁴ She stood 21st out of 87 pupils.

²¹⁵ Her husband (7th grader at RPS) attends school. Both parents want to maintain the marriage alliance. She is attending school since her husband is a student. Her two dowry cattle multiplied and became 10 within 9 years. Her elder brother attends 7th grade at RPS.

²¹⁶ She stood 36th out of 87 pupils.

²¹⁷ She was married to a modern school attending boy (5th grade dropout). Her parents can read and write through the literacy-campaign. Her four sisters also attend school. She was a rank (1-10) student when she was in 1st grade, but she lost her rank starting from 2nd grade due to her involvement in domestic activities.

²¹⁸ The marriage was dissolved since her husband dropped-out from 5th grade and became a farmer.

²¹⁹ She stood 60th out of 87 pupils.

²²⁰ She got married to a modern school attending boy (9th grade at MSS). She is attending school since her husband is a student. "There was an agreement between the two parents to educate both my husband and I."

²²¹ She stood 66th out of 87 pupils.

²²² She repeated 5th grade due to malaria infection.

92.	15 ²²⁶	5-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	6 th	37	43	40 ²²⁷	-	-
93.	13	7-year-old	Dissolved ²²⁸	Farmer	6 th	67	67	67 ²²⁹	1 st 230	-
94.	13 ²³¹	5-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	6 th	65	59	62 ²³²	5 th 233	-
95.	15	9-year-old	Dissolved ²³⁴	Farmer	6 th	8 ²³⁵	13	10 ²³⁶	-	-
96.	14	9-year-old	Not Dissolved	<i>Mārigéta</i>	6 th	37	32	34 ²³⁷	4 th 238	-
97.	16 ²³⁹	5-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	6 th	-	-	-	-	6 th 240
98.	13	5-year-old	Dissolved ²⁴¹	Farmer	7 th	24	45	34 ²⁴²	6 th 243	-
99.	13 ²⁴⁴	9-year-old	Not Dissolved	Priest	7 th	59	23	46 ²⁴⁵	-	-
100.	14 ²⁴⁶	9-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	7 th	65	74	69 ²⁴⁷	4 th 248	-
101.	14 ²⁴⁹	9-year-old	Dissolved	Farmer	7 th	48	26	37 ²⁵⁰	-	-
102.	15 ²⁵¹	9-year-old	Not Dissolved	Priest	7 th	-	-	-	-	7 th 252
103.	15 ²⁵³	8-year-old	Not dissolved	Priest	7 th	-	-	-	-	7 th 254

- ²²³ She was married to a farmer. The marriage was dissolved and she has got the chance to attend school due to her elder brother (9th grader)'s pressure. Her younger sister, 5th grader, was also divorced and started schooling due to her elder brother's pressure.
- ²²⁴ She repeated 6th grade due to malaria infection.
- ²²⁵ She dropped-out from 6th grade after the second phase of the research.
- ²²⁶ She got married to a farmer with her two elder sisters (three daughters got married at the same time). She got divorced since her husband did not attend modern schooling. Her younger married sister, 1st grader, got divorced since her husband dropped-out from 1st grade and became a farmer. Her eldest sister gave birth to 4 children, but not educated. Her elder sister dropped-out from 2nd grade due to her marriage and gave birth to a child; her husband also dropped out from 6th grade and became a trader.
- ²²⁷ She stood 40th out of 87 pupils.
- ²²⁸ She got divorced since her husband did not attend modern school. Her in-laws were not in favor of her education so her father divorced her and continued her 1st grade. Her younger unmarried sister is also attending 4th grade at the same school.
- ²²⁹ She stood 67th out of 87 pupils.
- ²³⁰ She was married to a farmer when she was attending 1st grade and repeated the same grade due to her marriage.
- ²³¹ She is the eldest child in the family. She got married to a farmer and divorced since her husband did not attend modern school. "My uncle (my mother's brother in at Bahir Dar, who works in an oil factory) convinced my mother and father to get me divorced and attend formal school. I got enrolled in 1st grade at RPS a year after my marriage. My father and mother can read and write through the literacy-campaign. My younger unmarried brother is also attending 3rd grade at the same school. The youngest child (a daughter) is 3 years old."
- ²³² She stood 62nd out of 87 pupils.
- ²³³ She repeated 5th grade due to malarial infection.
- ²³⁴ She got divorced since her husband did not attend modern school. Her elder sister got married to a farmer and gave birth to two children, but not educated. Her younger sister (7th grader) got married to a priest and her marriage is indissoluble, but she wants to get divorced and continue her education. Her father is a priest.
- ²³⁵ She is a relatively high achiever, especially in the second semester of the academic year among 111 early-married female pupils in Rim Primary School (See also Serial No. 15, 76, and 81 of this profile).
- ²³⁶ She stood 10th out of 87 pupils.
- ²³⁷ She stood 34th out of 87 pupils.
- ²³⁸ She was married to a *mārigéta* while she was attending 4th grade and repeated the same grade due to early-arranged marriage.
- ²³⁹ She got married to a farmer at 5 and started school at 11 after divorce since her parents did not want to continue the first marriage alliance. She got married to a second husband, a trader, while she was attending 6th grade.
- ²⁴⁰ She dropped-out from 6th grade at the age of 16 due to her second marriage to a trader at Rim *Kātāma*, the PA's town.
- ²⁴¹ The marriage was dissolved since her husband is a farmer. During divorce, her father received her dowry, 3 calves. She has got the chance to attend school after divorce due to her elder brother's (a degree graduate) pressure.
- ²⁴² She stood 34th out of 103 pupils. She has got a rank (1st -5th) while she was in 1st grade, but after that grade her academic rank started to decline due to her full involvement in domestic activities at home.
- ²⁴³ She repeated 6th grade due to malaria infection.
- ²⁴⁴ She was married to a *mārigéta* when she was 2nd grade. She wants the marriage to be dissolved and then to concentrate on her education. However, her husband and his parents were unwilling to dissolve the marriage because the husband would not like to lose his priesthood status.
- ²⁴⁵ She stood 46th out of 103 pupils. From 1st-4th grade she was a rank student (1st-10th), but starting from 5th grade she lost her rank due to her indissoluble marriage.
- ²⁴⁶ She was married to a farmer and divorced since her husband did not attend school. She started to attend school being influenced by school attending children in her parents' village. Her married younger sister (2nd grader) also attends school after divorce since her husband is a farmer. She and her younger sister managed to escape the arranged marriage and attend school. However, her elder sister got married to a farmer, established her *goḡḡo*, and gave birth to children, had never been in school.
- ²⁴⁷ She stood 69th out of 103 pupils.
- ²⁴⁸ She repeated 5th grade due to malaria infection.
- ²⁴⁹ She was married to a farmer when she was 2nd grade. The marriage was dissolved since her husband did not attend modern school. Both her parents and in-laws did not want to dissolve the marriage alliance, but she insisted on continuing her education after getting divorced. She would like to be a teacher when she finished her education.
- ²⁵⁰ She stood 37th out of 103 pupils. Before she got married she was a rank student (1st - 3rd), but after her marriage she has lost her rank being disturbed by her parents and in-laws desire to terminate her education
- ²⁵¹ She got married to a priest at the age of 9. During the first phase of the research, she was attending 7th grade, but she was absent from school during the 2nd phase of the research.
- ²⁵² She dropped-out from 7th grade at the age of 15 and started to live with her husband' village since her husband is a priest.

104.	15 ²⁵⁵	12-year-old	Dissolved ²⁵⁶	5 th grade	8 th ²⁵⁷	60	62	61 ²⁵⁸	4 th , 5 th , 6 th	-
105.	15 ²⁵⁹	2-year-old	Not Dissolved	3 rd grade	8 th	60	47	53 ²⁶⁰		-
106.	16	8-year-old	Dissolved	Priest ²⁶¹	8 th	81	81	81 ²⁶²	6 th ²⁶³	-
107.	16 ²⁶⁴	8-year-old	Not Dissolved	Priest	8 th	-	-	-	-	8 th ²⁶⁵
108.	16 ²⁶⁶	9-year-old	Not Dissolved	Priest	8 th	-	-	-	-	8 th ²⁶⁷
109.	17 ²⁶⁸	8-year-old	Not Dissolved	D/10 th ²⁶⁹	9 th	-	-	MSS ²⁷⁰	-	-
110.	16	4-year-old	Dissolved ²⁷¹	College	9 th	-	-	MSS ²⁷²	-	-
111.	16	4-year-old	Dissolved ²⁷³	10 th grade	9 th	-	-	MSS ²⁷⁴	-	-

²⁵³ She was married to a priest at the age of 8. During the first phase of the research, she was attending 7th grade, but she was absent from school during the 2nd phase of the research.

²⁵⁴ She dropped-out from 7th grade at the age of 15 and started to live with her husband's village since her husband is a priest.

²⁵⁵ She was married to a modern school attending boy (5th grade dropout) when she was 4th grade. Her elder brother (a teacher) convinced his father to get her divorced and allow her to continue her education. Then, she got divorced and continued her education. Her father has a grinding mill, her mother sells *mesheta*, *tälla* (local beer). Her parents are illiterate.

²⁵⁶ The marriage was dissolved because the husband dropped-out from 5th grade and became a farmer.

²⁵⁷ She repeated 4th, 5th, and 6th grades due to her early-arranged marriage and involvement in domestic activities.

²⁵⁸ She stood 61st out of 87 pupils.

²⁵⁹ She was married to a modern school attending boy (3rd grade dropout) while she was on the back of her mother. Her elder brother (6th grade dropout trader) convinced his father to allow her to continue her education, but her marriage was not dissolved during the 2nd phase of the research. Her elder sister was married, before her, and gave birth to a child. Her younger sister (7th grader) was not married due to their elder brother's pressure.

²⁶⁰ She stood 53rd out of 87 pupils.

²⁶¹ The marriage was dissolved and the husband, a priest, has lost his priesthood status. In principle, the marriage was indissoluble but it was dissolved by her father's strong desire to get his daughter educated, which was and still is supported by the government, even at the local level. Among 12 female pupils married to a church school attending/priest/*mārigēta* husbands, this is the only dissolved marriage.

²⁶² She stood 81st out of 87 pupils.

²⁶³ She repeated 6th grade due to health problems.

²⁶⁴ She was married to a priest. Her husband, a priest, was not willing to allow her to continue her education beyond the primary level. Her parents also supported her husband's idea since they wanted to continue the marriage alliance. However, her desire was to get divorced and continue her education.

²⁶⁵ She dropped-out from 8th grade in January 2004 due to early-pregnancy and childbirth. After dropout, she gave birth to a baby girl at the age of 16 and become a housewife (see Case Study 9.3).

²⁶⁶ She was married to a priest and started to attend school at the age of 16 influenced by peer groups. During the 2nd phase of the research, she was absent from school.

²⁶⁷ She dropped-out from 8th grade since her husband is a priest. She lives in her parents-in-laws' village since her age is too late to attend school, 1st grader at that age of 16. She was a later entry to formal school due to her early-arranged marriage.

²⁶⁸ She was married to a deacon at the age of 8 while she was 1st grade. Then her husband, a deacon, started to attend formal school and through double promotion, he is one grade ahead of her (see Case Study 9.4).

²⁶⁹ The husband, a deacon, attends 10th grade at Merawi Secondary School.

²⁷⁰ She was promoted to Merawi Secondary School during the second phase of the research.

²⁷¹ The marriage was dissolved because the husband, a college student at Bahir Dar University, wanted to concentrate on his education. The wife (9th grader at MSS) also wanted to get the marriage dissolved otherwise she would get pregnant and discontinue her education.

²⁷² She was promoted to Merawi Secondary School during the second phase of the research.

²⁷³ The marriage was dissolved when both the wife and the husband were very young, before 12 years, since both parents did not want to continue the marriage alliance. She did not remember her wedding day as well as the day when her marriage was dissolved since she was very young, 4 years old. Now, she is happy for her marriage being dissolved early otherwise she would not be able to continue her education.

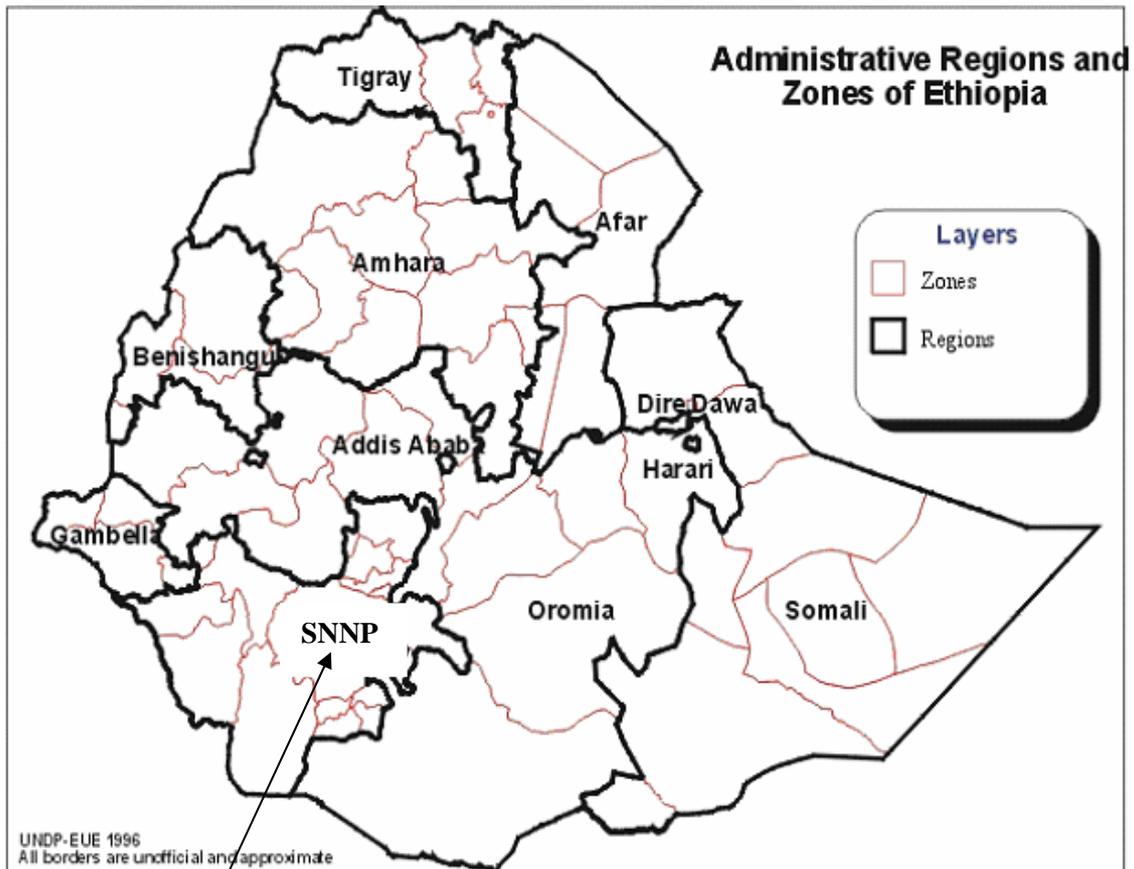
²⁷⁴ She was promoted to Merawi Secondary School during the second phase of the research.

**Appendix 9: Profiles of Participants of the Exploratory Workshop on
“Early Marriage and Girls’ Education in Mecha Woreda”
(18th - 19th September 2004, held at Merawi, the Woreda’s capital)**

S. No	Category of Participants by Profession/ Position	Number of Participants	Remark
1	Religious leaders	12*	* 10 from rural communities of the <i>Woreda</i> * 2 from the <i>Woreda’s</i> capital town, Merawi
2	Councils of elders and community leaders	12*	* 10 from rural communities of the <i>Woreda</i> * 2 from the <i>Woreda’s</i> capital town, Merawi
3	Parents arranged early marriage for their daughters	20*	* 10 from Bachema Peasant Association (Bachema PA) * 10 from Rim Peasant Association (Rim PA)
4	Victims of early marriage and their parents and formal school-attending elder brothers	8*	* 2 health and psychological victims from Rim PA * 6 parents (one divorced mother, three fathers and two elder brothers) from Rim PA
5	Married pupils in Bachema and Rim Primary Schools	12*	* 6 female pupils * 6 male pupils
6	Teachers with long teaching experiences in Bachema and Rim Primary Schools	12*	* 6 female teachers * 6 male teachers
7	Teachers in Merawi Primary and Secondary Schools	4*	* 2 female teachers * 2 male teachers
8	Resource persons who were born and brought up in Mecha <i>Woreda</i>	10*	* 5 Men * 5 Women
9	Local Government Officials	12*	* 10 PA leaders from Bachema, Rim and other rural communities of the <i>Woreda</i> * 2 Urban <i>Kebele</i> leaders from Merawi
10	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> Administrative Officials	1*	* 1 Vice-Administrator of the <i>Woreda</i>
11	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> Local Peoples’ Organization and Participation Affairs Officials in Merawi	8*	* 2 Women’s Affairs Desk Officials * 3 Culture, Youth and Sport Officials * 3 Information, Communication and Program Officers
12	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> Capacity Building Officials	3*	* 3 Capacity Building Officials from Merawi
13	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> Education Officials in Merawi	4*	* 2 Formal and Informal Education Officials * 2 Primary Education and Curriculum Officials
14	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> Health Officials	2*	* 2 Health Officials from Merawi
15	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> Rural Development Officials	2*	* 2 Rural Development Officials from Merawi
16	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> Women’s Association Officials	2*	* 2 Women’s Association Officials from Merawi
17	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> Police Officials	2*	* 2 Police Officials from Merawi
18	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> Justice Officials	4*	* 4 Justice Officials from Merawi
19	Mecha <i>Woreda</i> “Virgin Girls’ Association”	5*	* 5 Active members of the Association from Merawi
20	West Gojjam Zone Women’ Association Official	1*	* 1 Zone Woman Official from Bahir Dar
21	Amhara Region and West Gojjam Zone Justice Officials	4*	* 2 Region Justice Officials from Bahir Dar * 2 Zone Justice Officials from Bahir Dar
22	Amhara Region and West Gojjam Zone Education Officials	2*	* 1 Region Education Official from Bahir Dar * 1 Zone Education Official from Bahir Dar
23	Amhara Region and West Gojjam Zone Health Officials	2*	* 1 Region Health Official from Bahir Dar * 1 Zone Health Official from Bahir Dar
24	Amhara Region and West Gojjam Zone Culture, Youth and Sports Officials	2*	* 1 Region Culture and Youth Official from Bahir Dar * 1 Zone Culture and Youth Official from Bahir Dar
25	Amhara Region and West Gojjam Zone Information and Media Officials	2*	* 1 Region Information and Media Official, Bahir Dar * 1 Zone Information and Media Official, Bahir Dar
26	Ethiopian Women Lawyers’ Association (EWLA) Officials	1*	* 1 female lawyer, EWLA - Amhara Region Project Co-ordinator, Bahir Dar
27	Feleghiwot Hospital (FHH) Fistula Center Officials	1*	* 1 trained nurse, FHH Fistula Center Co-ordinator, Bahir Dar
28	Feleghiwot Hospital Social Workers	1*	* 1 male sociologist, FHH social worker, Bahir Dar
29	Bahir Dar University Educators	3*	* 1 female educationalist, the workshop program facilitator, Bahir Dar University * 2 male educationalists, Bahir Dar University
Total		154*	* 135 (87.66%) participants from the study area * 19 (12.34%) participants from Bahir Dar

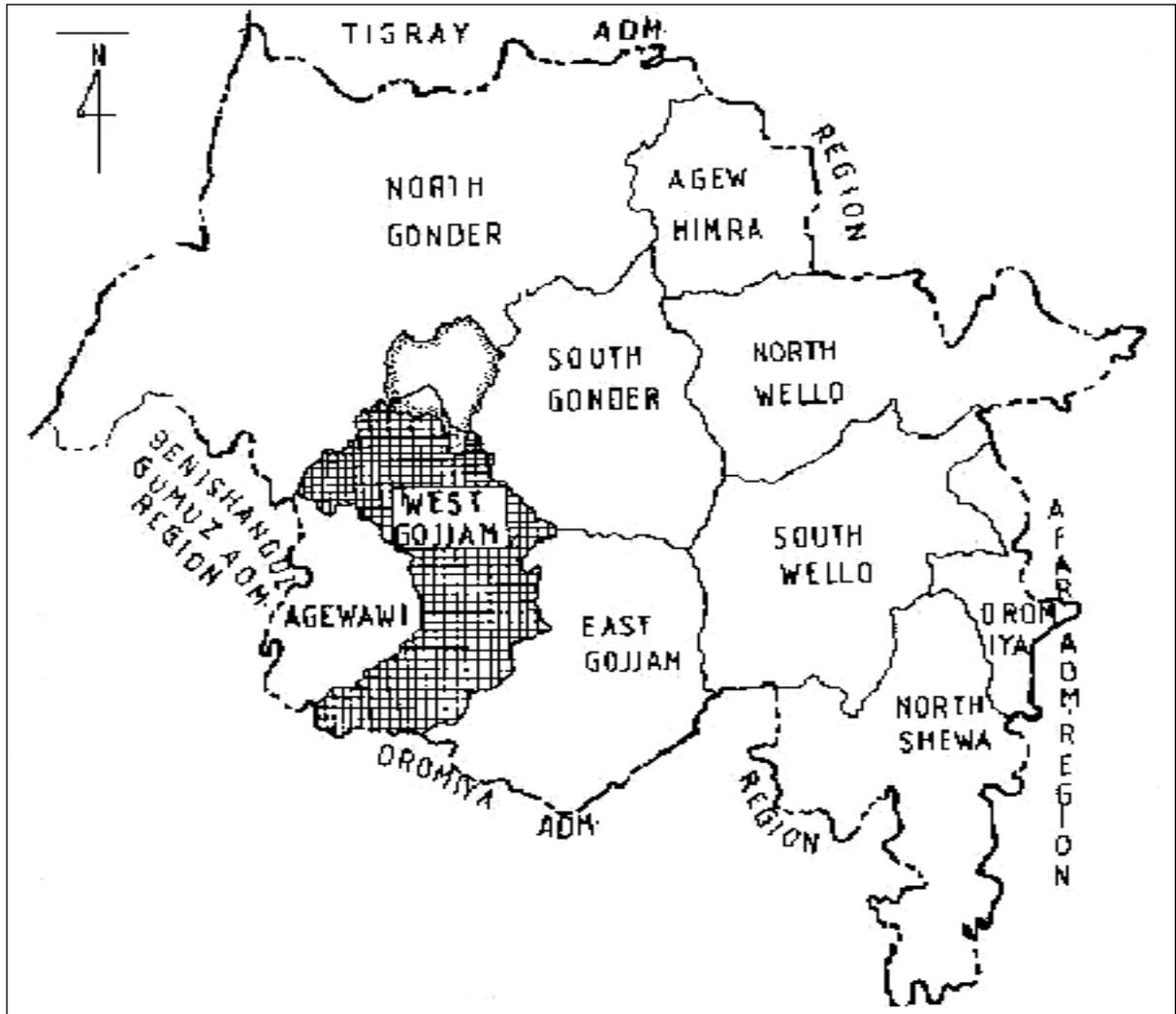
APPENDIX 10: LIST OF MAPS

Map 1: Administrative Regions and Zones of Ethiopia (UNDP-EUE, 1996)

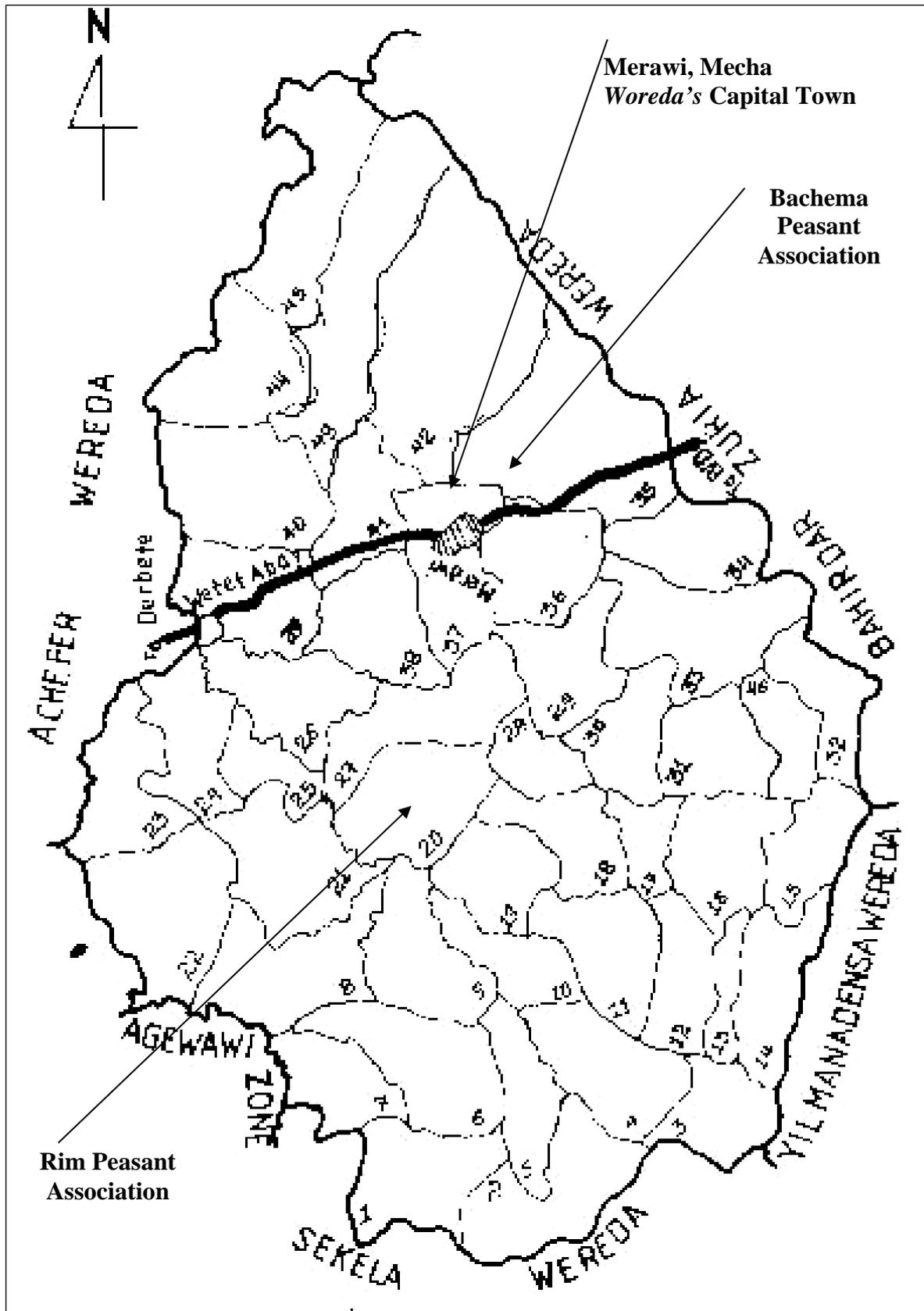


Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples

Map 2: Administrative Zones of Amhara Region (CSA 1994)



Map 4: Administrative Council of Mecha Woreda (Mecha Woreda, 1994)



APPENDIX 11: PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATIONS

Appendix 11.A: Photographic Documentation of Ethnographic Research Sites



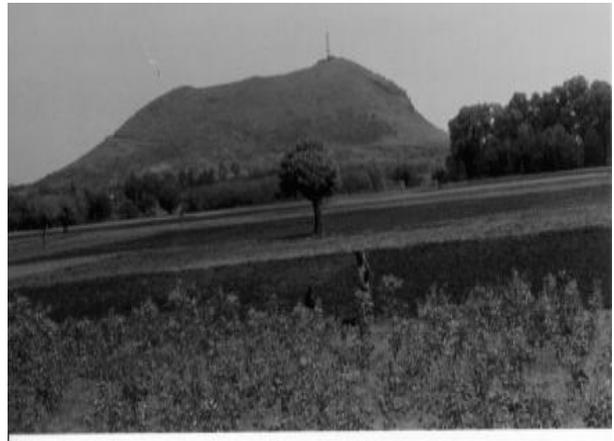
The researcher traveling in Rim PA research site



The researcher video-recording in Bachema PA research site



A farm field in Yidonga village, Bachema PA



The research site in Bachema PA

Appendix 11.B: Photographic Documentation of Activities



A man ploughing with a pair of oxen, BPA



A wife and husband compacting the ploughed field, BPA



Women harrowing (*gulgualo*) the ploughed field, BPA



Boys harrowing (*gulgualo*) the ploughed field, BPA



A man sowing a grain (*dagusa*), Yidonga village, BPA



Piled or reaped *teff* sheaves, Kotekotema village, BPA



A girl and boys weeding the grain (*mäšlla*) field, Yidonga village, BPA



Men repairing the grassed-roof thatch house, Kotekotema village, BPA



Male children playing in river valley, Yidonga village, BPA



Women fetching water, Kotekotema village, BPA



A young girl carrying a water pot (*madaga*), BPA



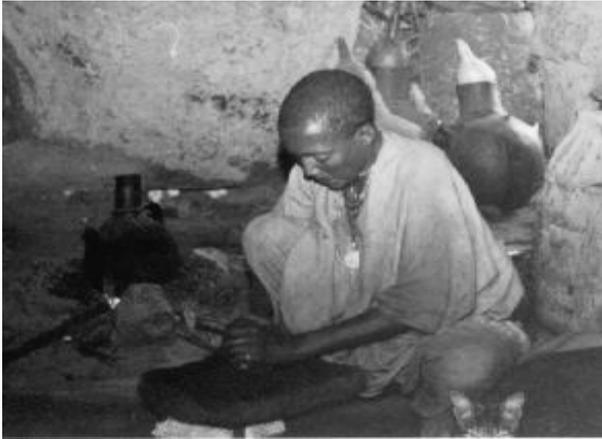
Young girls carrying their younger sibling, RPA



A female child tending cattle, Yidonga village, BPA



Male and female children tending cattle, BPA



A widowed woman grinding coffee, Kotekotema village, BPA



A young girl pounding grain, Yidonga village, BPA



A boy tending cattle and a young girl taking care of her younger sister, Dima village, RPA, May 2003



A female child assisting her mother in distilling local liquor (*arāqi*), Merawi town, January 2004



Rim women traveling to Merawi market, Saturdays market, May 2003



Rim Saturdays market, RPA, January 2004

Appendix 11.C: Photographic Documentation of Religious and Social Gatherings



The researcher attending monthly religious and social gathering (*Selassie Mahbär*), around Kotekotema Michael Church, BPA



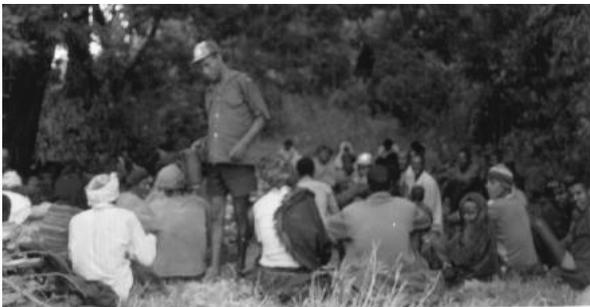
Sunday after mass gathering, Rim Maryam Church, RPA



Şage mahbär male members sharing oxen meat, *Hidar* 6, 1996 (December 15, 2004), around Yidonga Maryam Church, BPA



Şage mahbär female members cutting onions for cooking oxen meat, *Hidar* 6, 1996 (December 15, 2004), around Yidonga Maryam Church, BPA



A young male *şagge mahbär* member serving local beer (*tella*) for the members and children, *Hidar* 6, 1996 (December 15, 2004), around Yidonga Maryam Church, BPA



şagge mahbär female members cooking oxen meat, *Hidar* 6, 1996 (December 15, 2004), around Yidonga Maryam Church, BPA



Women and children attending *şagge mahbär* gathering, around Yidonga Maryam Church, BPA



şagge and monthly *Mahbär* (*Selassie Mahbär*) leaders, around Yidonga Maryam Church, BPA

Appendix 11.D: Photographic Documentation of Bachema and Rim Primary Schools



Bachema first cycle Primary School (grades 1-4) male teachers and the school-guard, October 2003



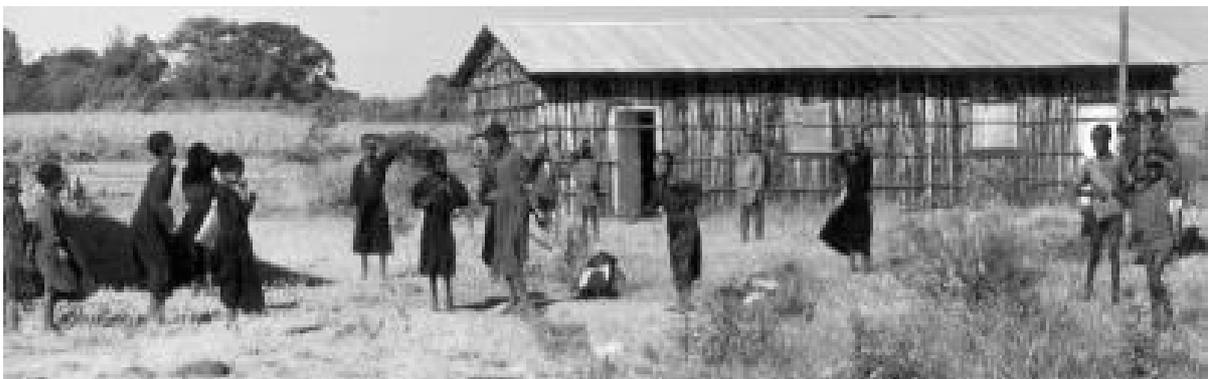
Bachema first cycle Primary School (grades 1-4), Male Director, January 2004



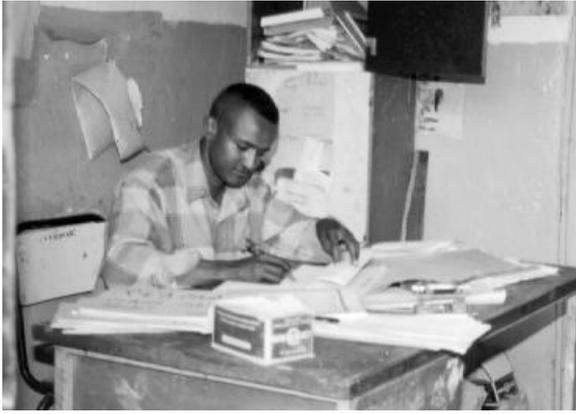
Bachema first cycle Primary School (grades 1-4) pupils and the female teacher, May 2003



Bachema first cycle Primary School (grades 1-4) pupils and the male teacher, May 2003



Bachema first cycle Primary School (grades 1-4) pupils during the school-break, October 2004



Rim Primary School Male Director, May 2003



Rim Primary School Male Director, January 2004



Rim Primary School Male and Female Teachers, May 2003



The Researcher and Rim Primary School Female Teachers, January 2004



Rim Primary School Male and Female Teachers, January 2004



Rim Primary School, classroom conditions, May 2003



One of the three temporary classrooms (*das*) constructed to alleviate shortage of classrooms in Rim Primary School, January 2004



Mecha *Woreda* Anti-HIV-AIDS Club showing drama to Rim Primary School Pupils and Teachers, Januray 2004

Appendix 11.E: Photographic Documentation of Bachema and Rim Primary Schools Early Married Female Pupils (cf. Appendix 8A and B)



First grade married female pupils, Bachema Primary School, May 2003



Second grade married female pupils, Bachema Primary School, May 2003



Third grade married female pupils, Bachema Primary School, May 2003



Fourth grade married female pupils, Bachema Primary School, May 2003



Bachema Primary School married female pupils promoted to Merawi second cycle Primary School (grade 5), October 2004



Eight years old female pupils, married at the age of 2, 1st grader, Rim Primary School, May 2003



Eight years old 1st grade female pupil and her husband (8th grader), Rim Primary School, May 2003



Nine years old 1st grade female pupil and her husband (3rd grader), Rim Primary School, May 2003



First grade (A) married female pupils, Rim Primary School, May 2003



First grade (B) married female pupils, Rim Primary School, May 2003



Second grade married female pupils, Rim Primary School, May 2003



Third grade married female pupils, Rim Primary School, May 2003



Fourth grade married female pupils, Rim Primary School, May 2003



Fifth grade married female pupils, Rim Primary School, May 2003



Sixth grade married female pupils, Rim Primary School, May 2003



Seventh grade married female pupils, Rim Primary School, May 2003



Eighth grade married female pupils, Rim Primary School, May 2003

Appendix 11.F: Photographic Documentation of Wedding Preparations and Ceremonies Among the Peasant Communities of Mecha Woreda

(28th April – 28th May 2003)



Food preparations for wedding ceremony, Enamiret PA, Mecha *Woreda*, May 2003



Women preparing and serving coffee, Enashenifalen PA, May 2003



Men cutting cattle meat for the wedding ceremony food preparation, Enashenifalen PA, May 2003



Food being served to children and elderly women after participating in the wedding ceremony preparation, Enashenefalen PA, May 2003



The researcher participating in the wedding feast, Enashenefalen PA, May 2003



A groom slaughtering chicken on the wedding day before entering into the bridal house (*çagula bet*), Bachema PA, May 2003



A second-marriage wedding (*yāgalāmota sārg*), both for the wife and her husband, Rim PA, January 2004



A child-bride (first marriage) on the horse supported by the groom's best-man, Yidonga village, Bachema PA, May 2003



An illiterate mother and a priest father with their 3rd grade dropout married daughter, 10 days after her wedding day (*māls*), Enashenefalen PA, May 2003



A 3rd grade dropout married girl with her husband and his best-men, Enashenefalen PA, May 2003



Newly-weds with the husband's best-men, Enamiret PA, May 2003

**Appendix 11.G: Photographic Documentation of Health Consequences of
Early Pregnancy and Multiple Births**



A victim of early pregnancy complications, Feleghiwoot Hospital recovery room, Bahir Dar, 11th July 2003
(cf. Chapter 8, Case Study 8.1)



A victim of early pregnancy complications, Feleghiwoot Hospital intensive care unit, Bahir Dar, 18th July 2003 (cf. Chapter 8, Case Study 8.1)



A victim of early and multiple births, Feleghiwoot Hospital intensive care unit, Bahir Dar, 18th July 2003



A victim of early and multiple births, Feleghiwoot Hospital intensive care unit, Bahir Dar, 18th July 2003

Appendix 11.H: Photographic Documentation of Focus Families



An illiterate widowed woman, Yidonga village, BPA, July 2003



An illiterate young mother, Yidonga village, BPA, July 2003



Illiterate parents who sent only one daughter to formal school after divorce, Kotekotema village, BPA, July 2003



Illiterate parents who arranged early marriage for their formal school-attending daughter, Kotekotema village, BPA, May 2003



First grade dropout, married 7 years old girl, Kotekotema village, BPA, May 2003



A widowed woman with her school attending married daughter and grand children, Kotekotema village, BPA, July 2003



An illiterate young mother, Kotekotema village, BPA, July 2003



Illiterate young spouses, Kotekotema village, BPA, July 2003



Children, grand-children and relatives of an extended family, Dima village, R PA, May 2003



Spouses with their children and a domestic servant (*gārād*), Dima village, R PA, January 2004



An illiterate 36 years old mother, married at 11 and at her 10th pregnancy, Dima village, R PA, January 2004



The eldest illiterate daughter of the above extended family, married at 9 and divorced at 20 after giving birth to a son, Dima village, R PA, January 2004



The second daughter of the above extended family, married at 6, divorced at 11, remarried at 14, and 5th grade dropout, Dima village, R PA, May 2003



The youngest school-attending daughter of the above extended family, married at 2 to a formal school attending boy, Dima village, R PA, May 2003

Appendix 11.I: Photographic Documentation of Case Studies



Sixth grader, married at her baptism and divorced at 10, Bachema PA (cf. Chapter 7, Case Study)



Eighth grade dropout due to early pregnancy and childbirth, Rim PA (cf. Chapter 9, Case Study 9.3)



Eighth grade married pupil whose academic performance is declining due to early marriage and childbearing, Rim PA (cf. Chapter 9, Case Study 9.4)



Fifth grade dropout young mother with her daughter and her second husband, Rim PA (cf. Chapter 9, Case Study 9.2)



First grade dropout young girl with her husband, Rim PA (cf. Chapter 9, Case Study 9.1)



A widowed woman with her youngest daughters, Bachema PA (cf. Chapter 8, Case Study 8.2)



A fistula patient with her divorced mother, Rim PA (cf. Chapter 8, Case Study 8.1)

Appendix 11.J: Photographic Documentation of the Participants of the Exploratory Workshop



Workshop participants and program facilitator (Bahir Dar University female educator), 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi (see Appendix 9)



Workshop participants' group-discussion (G1), 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



Workshop participants' group-discussion (G2), 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



Workshop participants' group-discussion (G3), 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



Workshop participants' group-discussion (G4), 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



Workshop participants' group-discussion (G5), 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



Workshop participants' group-discussion (G6), 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



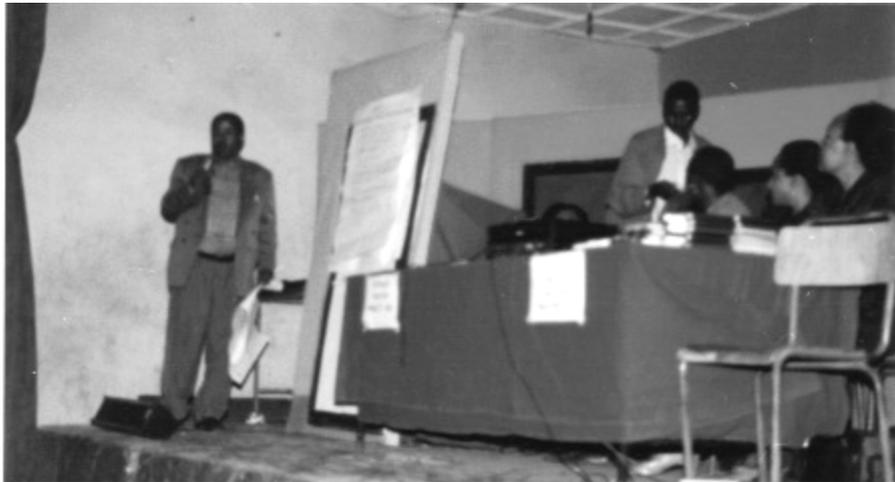
Group-discussion presenters' and program facilitator, 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



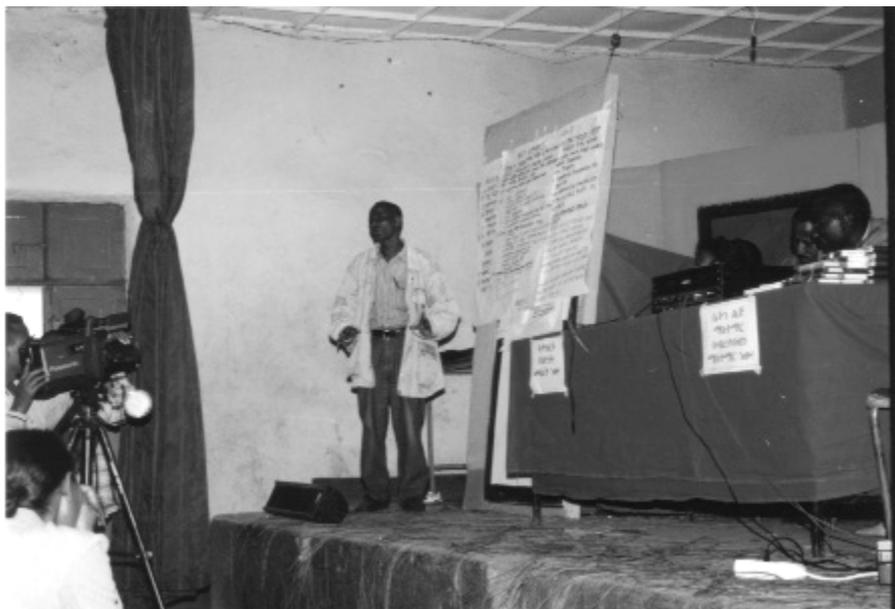
The group-discussion presenter, Merawi Secondary School female teacher, 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



The group-discussion presenter, Merawi Secondary School female teacher, 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



The group-discussion presenter, Bahir Dar University male educator, 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



The group-discussion presenter, Bachema Primary School male teacher, 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



The group-discussion presenter, Mecha *Woreda* Culture Desk-Head, 18th - 19th September 2004, Merawi



The workshop participants and the researcher, 19th September 2004, Merawi