



The Roles and Status of Women in the Holistic Services of
the Ethiopian Evangelical
Church Mekane Yesus in Three Weredas of Western
Wollega Zone.

By:
Melkamu Dunfa Borchia

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ART IN
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Dedication

I dedicate this paper to women living around Teschallia, and who usually engage themselves in challenging labors to support the education of their children.

Acknowledgements

“O Lord for the sake of your servant and according to you will, you have done this great thing...” 1Chronicles 17:19a. On top of all I would like to thank my Lord and savior Jesus Christ for his guidance and help throughout my life. The Lord is great to me and thus my heartfelt thanks go to him for his abundant blessings on me.

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Abstract of the Study

This dissertation is a survey of roles and status of women in the Holistic Services of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) in three weredas of Western Wollega Zone (WWZ). In line with her motto of serving the whole person through the holistic approach the EECMY is rendering both spiritual and development related services in the research site: Western Wollega Zone, Aira, Gulliso and Bodji Dirmadji weredas. The research assesses the current roles that women are playing and the status they have in the holistic services of the above mentioned localities.

From the three weredas, six congregations and two social service institutions (a Hospital and a Secondary School) were taken as target population. The data used in this research are both qualitative and quantitative. The methods employed to collect the data are conducting focus group discussions, interviews, structured questionnaire, and document review. The qualitative data were analyzed in a descriptive approach and the quantitative data were analyzed statistically and given in percentage.

The research findings show that in the Holistic Services which the EECMY is rendering in the three weredas of WWZ, through her units: Birbir Dilla & Western Synods, women are playing significant roles. The finding also indicates that women are gradually breaking into the priesthood ministries and leadership positions of the Church. This is because the issue of women's roles in the ordained ministry services was initiated in the Western Synod in 1980 and after about twenty years of debates the matter was finally resolved in 1997. Consequently, the Church ordained the first woman on May 16, 2000. However, women are still underrepresented in the managerial positions in some of the selected congregations against the policy of the Church that advocates for 25 %- 50 % women's participation in all decision making bodies of the Church.

In this research, the targeted women are playing significant roles in the health services of Lalo Aira Hospital. They cover 49.63 % of the health professionals of the Hospital. However, 100% of the women targeted claim that they face challenges due to double control (100%), under qualification (100%), double burden (91.67%) and lack of ways to defend for their rights (91.67%). In addition they are less represented (27.27%) in the top decision making body (Board) of the Hospital.

Women's role as professionals in Horist Spingies Secondary School is very insignificant (5%). In the grassroots managerial function (Administrative committee of the School) women's role is invisible. In the school Parent Committee and the School Board, women are also under represented (14.29%). On the contrary, they are taking part in community meetings (30% - 40 %) of the School. They are also covering 40 % of the community economic contribution to the School. Though women of the EECMY in the three weredas are active participants in the Holistic Services of the Church, they are represented in the lower statuses.

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List of Abbreviations

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BAC	Burka Aira Congregation
BC	Bila Congregation
BDS	Birbir Dilla Synod
BDC	Bodji Dirmaji Congregation
BDSER	Birbir Dilla Synod Evangelism Department
BDSWM	Birbir Dilla Synod Women's Ministry
DASSC	Development and Social Service Commission
DRS	Development Related Services
ED	Evangelism Department
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
ELC	Evangelical Lutheran Church
FGM	Female Genital Mutilations
GHM	German Hermasburg Mission
GJS	Gimbi Jorgo Synod
HSSS	Horist Spingies Secondary School
LAC	Lalo Aira Congregation
LAH	Lalo Aira Hopspital
LELC	Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church

MYTS	Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary
NGC	Nawir Gallaowo Congregations
No.	Number
OPD	Out patient Department
Rev.	Reverend
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
TSEC	Tschallia Eka Congregation
WLF	World Lutheran Federation
WMO	Women's Ministry Office
WS	Western Synod
WSWM	Western Synod Women's Ministry
WWZ	Western Wollega Zone

Definitions of terms

To help the readers of this dissertation better understand its contents in the context in which it was written, definitions of some of the key terms used in the paper are given below. These definitions are given to make the context of the EECMY, in which the research was written, clear. The concept and ideas were taken from The Complete Christian Dictionary for Home, School and Office (2002).

1. Communicant member: is a person who takes a religious education and is a member of a congregation and who also shares the Holy Communion with other members of the congregation.

2. Congregation: is a group of people gathered together in the Church for a worship services or instructions. It also refers to members of a particular place of worship. For example Nawir Gallawo congregation is a place where people around the area called Nawir come together to worship God in the building meant for the purpose.

3. Disciples: are the followers of Jesus Christ or any person who believes in Jesus and determined to serve him. Or it could be some one sent out representing others (Church) to accomplish a task of evangelism or teaching the word of God to those who heard it and those who did not hear it.

4. Early Christianity: Is history of Christianity from the birth of Jesus Christ to the time when the book of revelation was written.

5. Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus: Is the name of one of the Evangelical Lutheran Church existing in Ethiopia and which was nationally established in 1959 and currently running her holistic ministry in all parts of Ethiopia.

7. Holistic Services: are the services meant to address both the physical and spiritual needs of a person. The EECMY considers it as her motto or the guiding principle of serving the whole person: the unity of the physical and spiritual being. Holistic service in the EECMY context has two dimensions. The first dimension is the services directly related to spiritual activities/ services to satisfy the spirit: Spirit and soul needs of a person who is usually the member of the Church. The second dimension of Holistic Service is the service that the Church renders to promote the physical well-being of individual person and the community at large.

7. Holy Communion: Is a religious service in a congregation (Christian Churches) in which bread and wine are shared in a solemn ceremony as a commemoration of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ in order to save the sinners.

8. Ordained ministries: Are the services of the (Lutheran) Churches performed only by ordained pastors. Some of these services include baptism, holy communion services, blessing of a wedding and burial ceremonies and leading liturgy.

9. Parish: is an administrative body of the EECMY: a given number of congregations unite and form it. It is usually lead by a pastor or a person elected by the representatives of the member congregations. Its structure may contain administration, youth section, women's section, evangelism and development section.

10. Synod: is a body that administers several numbers of parishes that unite together. Its structure may have administration, development sections, evangelism, youth, women's ministry, finance section, training center and outreach section.

11. Women's roles and status in holistic services: refer to the roles women are playing currently in both the spiritual, development and related activities of the EECMY and their statuses in the various Church structures they are taking part in.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

In the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), it was recognized that there was a low participation of women in the Holistic Services of the Church in 1970s. Starting from 1973 the Church made different policies and structural changes to promote women's participations and status in her Holistic Services. Women were part of the agent for the changes made by EECMY towards gender equality. Thus, women are playing various roles in the whole functions of the Church with relatively low statuses when compared with their counterpart. The hierarchy of the Church allows women to assume leadership positions. Women have also started rendering ordained ministry services that was previously monopolized by men for about 100 years in history of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) especially. Thus, this dissertation will try to reveal the survey results of the roles and the statuses of women in the Holistic Services of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), Birbir Dilla Synod (BDS) and Western Synod (WS) especially in three weredas of the Western Wollega Zone (WWZ).

This dissertation paper has five chapters. The first chapter of the paper gives brief introduction (overview) to the issue under investigation. It also describes the background of the study, objectives of the study, the methodology of the study and the methods employed in the research. The second chapter gives conceptual framework of the study which was based on the views and findings of related literature. It mainly emphasizes especially on the roles and the statuses of women in Church (religion) spiritual and development activities. The third and the main part of this dissertation is the analysis and interpretation of both primary and secondary data collected from the target populations of the study. It includes background of the respondents, women's roles and status in spiritual services, development activities and decision making system of the EECMY in three weredas of WWZ. The fourth chapter deals with the summaries of the findings of the research, while the last part gives conclusion and implications basing on the findings under preceding chapters.

1.1. Background of the Study

The EECMY is one of the categories of Christian/ protestant religions in Ethiopia, which has got national recognition by the government in 1959. The EECMY had the memberships of 20,200 people in those days.¹ The gospel ministries of the western wollega Zone was going, hand in hand with social service works like health service and education which were started long before the reorganization of the Church. This Church had the 1st communicant member who confirmed her/his membership after extensive religious education and she was a woman called Welete Giorggis.²

Even though the majority of the populations in most religions are composed of women, women and their affairs are viewed with less attention by different religious groups. However, regardless of their lower positions, women play significant roles in religious activities. Launhardt (2004) describes, women as the backbone of the EECMY, when it comes to the spiritual life of the congregations and the material support they render to the needy. Launhardt further states that, women do not come together only on Sundays to take part in worship service but they usually meet during the week to study the bible, pray , make handcrafts, share experiences and also visit the old and sick people to render them necessary spiritual or material support.

In the experience of Mekane Yesus Church, women are active participant in the gospel ministries as well as development oriented activities. As Are'n (1978) argues, the prominent Oromo woman, Aster Ganno contributed a lot to the translation of the Holy Bible into Afan Oromo (Oromo language). Aster and her co- worker Onesimos Nasib are the first two figurative personalities in the life of the Oromo people. They were also the first to open a girls' school at Nakemte which made them able to read and write, learn handcrafts and learn home economics, and also become acquainted with the gospel so that spiritual work of the area would be strengthened.³

¹ Melkamu, 1985

² Are'n,1978

³ Ababech, 2001

As indicated in her constitution book (2005, P-73), the EECMY has already acknowledged the need for women's services and thus established women's sections in her structures with the following purpose and objectives for the women's work in the Church.

a. Purpose: to proclaim Christ through words and deeds in order to make salvation known to all humankind.

b. Objectives:

- 1. To nurture spiritual growth and strengthen the faith so that the Christian women can be a living witnesses at home and in their communities.*
- 2. To encourage women to take active parts in congregational work on voluntary basis and thus promote responsible stewardship including evangelization, Christian education and social service.*
- 3. To create awareness among women regarding their rights and obligations and guide them towards participation in decision making processes with respect to the needs, values, goals and expectations of the Church and a society.*
- 4. To promote stewardship of time, talent and material resources*
- 5. To work towards financial self- support of the women's work in the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.*
- 6. To promote basic education including home economics that will help women to take better care of their home and family.*
- 7. To encourage Christian family life.*
- 8. To recruit and train women leaders for the women's work of the Church.*
- 9. To educate toward respect for different cultures and promote understanding of the national and global community, there by encouraging active peace building.⁴*

With these purpose and objectives, the Church has already started steps forward to empower women besides their immense role in evangelism, health services provision, educational services, child ministry, rural development, etc. As the result, the EECMY has started ordaining women as pastors in the history of the Church as of may 16, 2000.⁵

⁴ The Ethiopain Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, women's year magazine, 2001.p-120

⁵ Kejela Negari and Yonas Biratu,2000

The history of the evangelical Christianity in the WS, in the present day Boji Dirmaji district, is rooted in the service of Rev. Gebre Ewostateos, an Orthodox Church priest with an evangelical view, who introduced the reading of Oromo Bible in the Orthodox Church service every Sunday. He also initiated the habit of gathering people in his own home for a cup of coffee accompanied with singing and listening to the gospel reading in the Oromo language around 1900. To make the people be able to read and write, Fitawarari Debaba and Rev. Gebre Ewostateos opened a school. Daniel Dabale, who was trained at Mesawa Mission Center, was in charge of this school. The school which was started through the efforts of these people marks where and when the evangelical Church Mekane Yesus initiated the holistic approach to serve both the soul and the body of a person. Through the educational services rendered at the school, women like Welete Georggis had been educated to be able to read Oromo Bible and also became strong Christian.⁶

According to Lees (1991), when people are given freedom to serve the Church as God leads them, women also do what the male counterparts do according to their own special gifts, except in the high level of administrations. Yet women teach in theological seminaries and Bible colleges, work alongside new and old established Churches, and are involved in evangelical and lay training and curricular activities for adult groups and Sunday schools over wide access. They translate the Bible, help to publish and sell Christian literature and work in Hospitals and schools. As they seek God's will for their work, it is not the matter of role or sex, but it depends on their gifts and calling. They work along side with men and as a full human beings; they do what their male counterparts do.⁷

Moreover, Horper (1997), talks about trinity resembling the relation, whereby one sees unity and diversity. Within trinity we see both unity and diversity. Yet, there is diversity of roles or order and submissions of functions between women and men. They are equal in the image of God. The man plays the role of a head and the women the roles of a helper. This should not surprise us, as we realize that, men and women are made in the image of God.⁸

⁶ Melkamu, 1985

⁷ Lees ,1991

⁸ Horper,1997,

The view of Horper (1997) in the theory of trinity, unity and diversity, is a sense of equality of women and men is made clear in that they are created in the image of God. The distinctive functional roles of women and men, in that they play the roles of helper and head respectively is attributed to their diversity, not to their inequality because the Bible considers all Christians or followers of Christ Jesus as one being.

The main mission of Christianity puts Jesus Christ as its center, to the salvation of humankind. It forwards no discrimination based on one's gender. In this mission, especially after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, women were actively participating in the Church as apostles, missionaries and leaders of house-Churches.⁹

According to Launhardt (2004), before 1923 the protestant mission had been running only school for boys in Addis Ababa city. Later, the crown Princess Menen, wife of Ras Teferi, had asked the American united Presbyterian Mission to open a school for girls in Addis Ababa city. As a result, the American school for girls was opened in 1925 aiming at offering modern education for girls. Launhardt reports that this school contained starting from kindergarten to grade twelve (currently 10+2). It was famous school for girls that contributed much towards females' education in Addis Ababa.

Based on these backgrounds, the paper investigates the involvement of women in the Holistic Services of the Church Mekane Yesus, which is to serve the whole person. This research, therefore, attempts to assess the roles and status of women in holistic approach of the Church services in the western Wollege zone in both of her respective Synods: Birbir Dilla Synod and Western Synod.

⁹ Kraemer,R.S and M.R.D' Angelo, 1999

1.2. Objectives of the study

1.2.1. General Objectives

The first purpose of this research is to assess the roles and status of women in the holistic service (both the spiritual and developmental) of the EECMY in Western Wollega zone. And the one is to address the issue of ordination of women which encouraged the Ethiopian women to the position of priesthood, which was previously open only for men.

1.2.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the research that help to investigate the roles and status of women in the holistic services of the EECMY in the Western Wollega Zone are:

- *To investigate the roles of women in the Holistic Services of the EECMY in three Weredas of WWZ .*
- *To identify the status of women in the Holistic Services of EECMY in three Weredas of WWZ .*
- *To assess the degree of the participation of women in the Holistic Services of the EECMY in three Weredas of WWZ ..*
- *To study how Ethiopian women came to the position of priesthood and the challenges these women faced in the history of the EECMY in three Weredas of WWZ.*
- *To investigate if the gender equality related policies of the EECMY were practiced.*
- *To see the Holistic activities of EECMY in three Weredas of WWZ from feminists point of view.*

1.3. Statement of the problem.

Kraemer R.S and M.RD' Angelo (1999) argued that women were actively playing roles as apostles, missionaries and leaders of house-Churches in early Christianity or after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ However, religion was seen as an instrument of patriarchy that helps to control the mind of people, especially women. In the Ethiopian context, Solomon (2001), views that women are purposefully hindered from taking leadership positions in religious and political affairs, in order to keep their status at a lower level.

But, on the other hand, the movements of feminism have made significant influences on civil rights, languages, heterosexual relations and moral and religious educations. The movements

¹⁰ Kraemer,R.S and M.R.D' Angelo, 1999

of feminists have made changes on the roles of women. These are seen in the liberal branches of protestant Christians. Hence, the protestant Churches started ordaining women and in turn, women were gradually attaining positions of decision making power in religious organizations.¹¹

Thus, the research problems are: primarily women have unrecognized roles in the Church's spiritual and developmental activities in the Western Wollega zone. Secondly the increasing efforts of women to break into the decision making positions in the Church's holistic service.

1.4. Significance of the study.

The research was set in Wester Wollega Zone, Bodji Dirmaji, Aira and Gulliso districts, where the Church is rendering her services through her units BDS and WS. These three districts were selected purposely because the Church's experience in the districts marks a break through of the Ethiopian women into the position of priesthood. The Church is also running various social services and development related activities like health service, educational services and other activities in these districts.

This dissertation has significance for three reasons: Firstly it looks into unrecognized women's roles in evangelism and developmental (Holistic Services) services of the Church. Secondly, it addresses the struggles of women to challenge the religious dogmatism against the unchangeable nature of religion. And lastly, the research tried to document the experience of women in the services of EECMY in the three weredas of Wester Wollega Zone.

1.5. Design, Methodology, Methods and Procedures of the Study

1.5.1. Research Design

To design the research and to broaden the conceptual understanding of the roles and status of women in religion and social service, the researcher reviewed related literature and findings of studies conducted on related issues. This research relies on both qualitative methods (focus group discussion, interview and document review) and quantitative methods (questionnaire). Through these methods, primary and secondary data were collected and analyzed. The

¹¹ Robinson, Bruce A. July, 09, 2006:<http://www.religioustolerance.org/femclrgy.htm>

qualitative data were analyzed in a descriptive method, while the quantitative data were analyzed in percentage method. To be able to collect reliable data from the targeted population, the data sources and data collecting methods were triangulated as indicated in the next table.

Table-1: Triangulated data sources.

Types data	Units of analysis	Data sources	Method of data Collection
Qualitative	Roles and status Of women in Holistic services	60 peoples Serving at congregations	Focus group discussion
		9 Key personalities Working in both Spiritual development/Social services	Interview
		Relevant documents At congregation, LAH & HSSS	Document review
Quantitative		30 Health works of LAH	Questionnaire
		All (18) teaching Staff of HSSS.	

1.5.1.1. Sampling Techniques and data Collecting Procedures

From the three weredas, six congregations (10%) were selected and from each congregation ten people (20%) were picked out (out of which 80% were women). And a total of 60 people were selected randomly from elders and management body or other committee members of the respective congregations. To analyze women's roles and status in the Development activities of the Church in the three weredas, Lalo Aira Hospital (LAH) and Horst Spingies Secondary School (HSSS) of the Church were also selected. From the employees of the Church working at LAH 30 (22%) health professionals (80% women) and from HSSS all (18) of the teachers of the school were taken as source of primary data.

1.5.2. Qualitative Methodology

By the following methodologies: focus group discussion, interview, document review and case study, the researcher collected data from the 60 people from the six congregations, 9 of the key personalities in the two Synods, related document available at sample organizations and the first ordained Ethiopian women in the EECMY.

1.5.2.1. Focus group discussions

The sixty people from the six congregations were grouped into six where people from the same congregation were made together for the sake of convenience. The focus groups were given of open-ended questions on the roles and statuses of women in the Holistic Services of EECMY and left free to forward what they know. The researcher was observing the discussions through forwarding issues and questions for discussion, jotting down views of the participants and recording their arguments selectively

1.5.2.2. Interview

Interview was conducted with key personalities of the two Synods working on women's section, evangelism and development activities of the two Synods. This supplemented the information collected through the rest of methodologies applied.

1.5.2.3. Documents Review

Documents like minutes, workers' profile, etc existing at the six congregations (Bodji Dirmaji, Lalo Ayira, Bila, Burga Ayira ,Tsehalia Eka and Nawir Gallawo), LAH and HSSS were reviewed. To assess historical background of women's ordination minutes of the 15th General Assembly of the Church, papers presented on consultations and workshops on the issue of women's ordination that are accessible at EECMY Women's Ministry Office were reviewed

1.5.2.4. Case Study

The first woman pastor of the Church, Rev. Bekure Daba, has been under study. The detailed data of her life experiences that includes her educational background, her services as an employee of EECMY and her ordination processes are descriptively explained in this research. The researcher was forced to present only the experience of Rev. Bekure as a case study for two reasons. Primarily because she is one who had rich experience in the research site. Secondly, because of her being the first ordained women in the history of EECMY.

1.5.3. Quantitative Methodology

1.5.3.1. Primary data

To collect first hand information, questionnaires were prepared, structured and distributed to the educated employees of Bibir Dilla Synod: the sample from Lalo Aira Hospital (LAH) and the whole teachers of Horst Spinies Secondary School (HSSS). The questionnaire is of two types: both close-ended and open-ended questions. It has three parts, the first part of the questionnaire is about background of the respondents, the second part that has 14 items was prepared for health professionals of LAH. The third part of the questionnaire that also has 14 items was prepared for the teaching staff of HSSS. Data from the questionnaires were organized, tabulated and the analysis of the quantitative data was done using analytical tool percentage to sustain the reliability of the research findings.

1.5.4. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The EECMY is a Church that is dealing with both evangelism and Development/Social services in the majority of the community of Ethiopia.¹² According to the views of Launbardt (2004), women do play active roles in whole activities of the EECMY. However, this research encompasses the roles and statuses of women in the Holistic Services of EECMY. The study is confined within the three weredas of Western Wollega Zone where EECMY runs holistic activities through its units Birbir Dilla Synod and western Syond.

The main limitations of the study are time and financial shortages, limitations of similar researches and problems related to gender disaggregated data. Thus, the researcher had faced difficulties of accessing researches conducted on the images of women in religious functions in Ethiopian context due to shortage of materials written on the issue. The researcher had also faced difficulties in accessing gender disaggregated data because of the traditional failing system of the organizations visited throughout the data collecting activities for the research.

¹² Launbardt, 2004: p-293

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1. Christianity and Women

Christianity is the belief in super power or in a personal God entitled to obedience and worship. Christianity is one of the broad categories of religion defined as follows...*Christianity is the religion of Christians. It is the system of doctrines and Percepts taught by Christ.*¹³

The central theme of the teaching of Jesus Christ was the salvation of all human kind irrespective of sex, color, ethnicity, race, etc. Thus, basically there is no form of discrimination in religion: In the next paragraphs we will see an over view of gender equality form biblical point of view.

2.1.1. Aspects of gender equality from biblical point of view

In the book of Genesis, we read about the creation with regard to gender equality that:

God created Man in his own image....He created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful, increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over..... every living creature that moves on the ground.

¹⁴ (Genesis 1:27-28)

The analysis of Genesis Chapter 1:27-28 reveals that God gave both women and men collective blessings and responsibilities in which there were no superiority or inferiority in values assigned to them. The very existence of human beings was made with the intention of having relation with God and sharing the responsibility with God as the image bearers.

¹³ Panos Ethiopia, 2002, p-66

¹⁴ NIV Study Bible, 2002, Zandervan, USA P-7

When arguing about the gender equality of women and men, Munroe writes as follows:

Men and women are equal.....Regardless of what culture and society may say, the highest worth and dignity were given to the female by God in creation. She was created equal with the man and was given the task, along with the male, of having dominion over the earth and fulfilling God's purpose in both the physical and spiritual realms.¹⁵

Munroe views also that women and men are equal and at the same time different being. His argument about the equality and the difference of women and men are described according to the next paragraph:

We must continually keep in mind that God created man and woman equal- and He created them different... God made the woman from the man's rib or side and then presented her to the man. When Adam saw the woman, I believe that he struck the most powerful blow for equality when he said "This is the bone of my bones" (Genesis 2:23). In other words, he was saying, "This person is exactly like me in structure". Second he said "This is now.... flesh of my flesh" (V.23). She is exactly like me in all of her physical qualities and in all of her emotional and psychological ability." Yet Adam saw two differences" we are the same: we are equal," he said, "but there are differences."¹⁶

Further reading and critique of Munroe clarifies the basic difference of men and women. It attributes to the different function of biological roles they have in generating new life. In the different biological functions of women and men to generate new life, the body of the woman (egg) and the body of the man (sperm) absolutely unite together. This in turn may characterize the unity, in a sense proves equality of women and men. This indicates equality in front of God is for both, man and woman as children of GOD.

¹⁵ Munroe ,2006: p-67

¹⁶ Munroe , 2006: pp.71-72

2.1.1.1. Gender equality as children of God.

As described in John 1:12, all people (women and men) who believe in the name of Jesus Christ have equal opportunity to become children of God regardless of their color, race, nationality, sex, etc. The most famous passage of the New Testament that was written to all people: women and men, from all races, nationalities, etc have equal status as children of God are Galatians 3:28 that say:

.....Through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ, There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus.¹⁷(Galatians 3: 26-28)

Thus, Paul's letter to Galatians states that all human kinds who believe in Jesus Christ are equal. His second letter to the Corinthians (5:17) also views that everyone: women or men in Christ is a new creation. This newly created person, either a man or a woman, is given the right to enjoy equal opportunity of becoming a child of God. Therefore, are both called to serve for the Kingdom of God?

2.1.1.2. Does Gender equality matter in serving the Kingdom of God?

From the book of Isaiah we can see that a woman called Hannah and a man called Simeon were the persons who prophesied about the birth of the Son of God. The birth of the promised son was revealed to Anna and Simeon by the Holy Spirit. These two persons had been looking forward to see the promised child. When the time came, Mary gave birth to the child. Together with Joseph, she took the child to the temple to present him to the Lord.

Simeon, the righteous and devout man, was promised by the Holy Spirit not to die before he sees the Lord Christ. This man was moved by the Holy Spirit and went into the temple court. He took the child in his arms, praised God and spoke about the child to his mother Mary. When he finished, a very old (84 years) woman called Anna, who had been a widow for a long time, worshiping day and night, fasting and praying, came up to the temple court. She gave thanks to

¹⁷ NIV Study Bible, 2002, p-1824

God about the child and proclaimed about the child to all who were looking forward to redemption of Jerusalem through the Messiah.¹⁸

Reading the reactions of Simeon and Anna, it is clear that Anna was more ambitious about the child than Simeon, because she proclaimed and made the others in the temple to know more about the child, while Simeon simply spoke to the mother of the child. The actions of Anna, that outshines the actions of Simeon may even indicate that women are more active to practice faith in Christ than men. The bible clearly shows that all the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ were men. At the back of the ministries of disciples of Jesus Christ and Jesus himself, there were many women who had been co-operating with them. This reality could be understood well by the passage below:

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil Spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out, Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manger of Herod's household, Susanna and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.¹⁹(Luke8:1-3)

The passage above confirms that women were actively taking part in the mission of Christ Jesus and his disciples. They were at the position of understanding the needs of Jesus and the disciples, which they reflected through determining themselves to support them out of their own means. Even though the support of these women was not exclusively illustrated, it could be services through material and financial supports. The acclaim Jesus assigns to their support would be very great as Jesus and his disciples did not provide for themselves by miracles, but were supported by the service and means of grateful people like these women.

Furthermore, one can see the non-discriminative act of God on the day of the Pentecost. The day when the Holy Spirit filled all the disciples of Jesus Christ, Peter addressed the

¹⁸ NIV Study Bible, 2002, pp.1571-1572

¹⁹ NIV Study Bible, 2002, p.1585

mass/crowd by reciting the book of prophet Joel where God promised to pour out His Spirit on all people: son and daughters, men and women as follows.

-----I will pour out my Spirit on all people Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.²⁰(Joel 2:28)

From above Joel's message one can confidentially argue that God gives His Holy Spirit to human kind without any discrimination and those who received it have the right to serve God without any limitation.

In addition, in the book of Acts 18:26, the Bible talks how the married couple Priscilla and Aquila invited the man called Apollo's from Alexandria to their home and explained to him about God in a more adequate way. This couple was also fellow workers of Paul, who risked their lives for him (Rom 16:3). In Acts 21:8-9, a man from Caesarea called Phillip, who was one of the seven, had four daughters of who were all prophets, who might have been dedicated in the service of the Lord.

Acts 9:36 also speaks about a woman, called Tabitha, who was one of the disciples and known by doing good things and helping the poor. Even though Tabitha's good quality of doing good things was not exclusively specified, her act of helping the poor may categorise her among the category of humanitarian women in today's world. It is also clearly written in Romans 16:1-13 that Paul recognizes women as hard workers for the kingdom of God and he acknowledges Phoebe as a Minister of a Church. He mentions Mary, Trphena, Tryphosa and Persis as hard workers for the Lord and Rufus's mother as mother of his own. Paul also admires Andronicus (Man) and Junias (women) as his relatives who were the outstanding people among the apostles. This being the case let us see if women were equally able to take significant leadership roles.

²⁰ NIV Study Bible, 2002, P-1365

2.1.1.3. Gender equality in leadership roles.

The historical background of women in leadership could be referred back to the history of creation. As indicated in Genesis chapter one, God gave the dominating authorization over every creature, equally to both a woman and a man. In addition to the history of creation, the life style of the family of Sarai and Abram illustrates that Sarai's potential to make decision on the means of building their family marks the equality of women in decision making. To tackle the problem of her family, she generated the idea of building a family by convincing her husband to take her maid servant Hagar as his wife. In doing so she was able to solve the problem temporarily.²¹ Abram was passive in the decision Sarai made on how to build a family by the option of taking Hagar as his wife.

Old Testament women like Miriam and Deborah, had had played significant roles in leading the people of God. God addresses the Israelites through Micah as follows:-

I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the land of slavery.

I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam.²²(Micah 6:4)

Miriam did not come to power by election, or delegated from human beings but God himself wanted her to lead Israelites. As indicated in Exodus 15:20, besides her leadership authority, Miriam had been mobilizing the Israelites specially women as singers and as prophetesses. Thus, she was one of the pioneer women of her day.

It is also explicitly described in Judges Chapter four and five that Deborah was the leader of Israelites as a judge and prophetess especially during the absence of a male leader for Israelites. Concerning the leadership qualities of Deborah, the scholar Kuyper (1934): who intensively attempted to make women in both old and New Testament visible, writes about Deborah as follows:

The wife of Lapidoth had displayed the ability to inspire that courage (heroic).

She lived under the plank tree between Ramah and Bethel. Her name was

²¹ NIV Study Bible, 2002, p-30

²² NIV Study Bible, 2002, p-1401

*Deborah, and she was reckoned a “mother in Israel.” Her qualities were many and various. She not only possessed mental acumen and common sense but was also a woman to whom the Lord had given the gift of prophecy and Song. Because of these abilities, she had succeeded in calling the hill folk back to Jehovah. She reminded them of their significant history in Egypt and Sinai and prophesied justice and given frequent advice. Thus her reputation had become generally known. Israel again found common center in this remarkable woman. Her songs passed from mouth to mouth and resounded from every hill. Thus, she inspired heroic confidence and awakened the gold hope of free in every tribe. With Barak’s aid she even built up a small standing army among the people. By means of guerrilla-warfare she trained Barak in generalship and her army in military preparedness. Obviously, she was active and qualified for things ideal and practical alike.*²³

When we come to the New Testament, women had been arranging or allowing their home to be used for purpose of spiritual meetings. Thus, believers used to gather in the homes of Mary the mother of Mark (Acts 12:12), Lydia (Acts 16:40) and Nympha (Colossians 4:15). The roles of these women as leaders of the Christian meeting being held in their homes were not clearly defined. However, it is clear that these women had primarily solved the problem which the Christians faced due to lack of Church building where to meet for spiritual affairs. Secondly, they might have actively participated in each and every activity of the Christian meetings being held in their homes from simple technical activities to higher decision making responsibilities.

2.1.2 The roles of women during and after the early life of Jesus.

Wadajo (1998) argues that women were not among the disciples of Jesus Christ, because they were not called but we know that they were with Jesus up to the foot of his cross and were also the first to proclaim his resurrection. On the Contrary, from the men disciples who were called only few of them remained with him to the end that they heard the resurrection of Jesus Christ from Women.

²³ Kuyper, 1934: pp.72-73

Nevertheless, we may reason out as why Jesus did not call women as disciples to have its own good reasons, (Wadajo 1998). The reason why Jesus did not call women as disciples was spelled out as follows:-

*The twelve disciples who assisted Jesus in his mission were men, and the same may have been true of the seventy (-two) who went out in pairs. But here, whatever other considerations may have played a part; Jesus could well have been under the constraint of what was socially accepted and it would have defeated his own purpose if he had chosen helpers whose sex would have hindered his work in a male dominated society.*²⁴

The arguments of Harvard (1973) reveal that Jesus was imprisoned culturally to formally call women as disciples. It was being in the cultural prison that Jesus administered his mission to all without any discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, etc. Through his mission Jesus could capture many women as his followers.

The crowd who Jesus taught, fed and considered to be his disciples (generally) included women (Mathew 12:49-50). As also argued by R.s Kraomer and D'Angelo (1999) women were considered to be active participants in the early Church activities, especial after the death and resurrection of Jesus. They were actively participating in the Churches as apostles, missionaries and leaders of house-Churches. Thus, Jesus had a place for women to contribute to the kingdom of God. Due to the inclusive character of Jesus Cultural barriers were broken.

2.1.3. When did Jesus break cultural barriers?

From historical point of view, the times when Jesus came to this world to accomplish his ministry was the period when women were being seen as an incomplete (inferior) creature.²⁵ As indicated in the book of John chapter four, the Jews were not allowed to associate with the Samaritans, especially with the Samaritan women. On the contrary, on his way from Judea to

²⁴ Marshal, 1973, pp. 179-180

²⁵ Hurley, 1973, pp. 124-125

Galilee, Jesus was pushed (forced) to go through Samaria where he met the Samaritan woman and the history reads as:

When the Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her; will you give me a drink? (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food).The Samaritan Woman said to him, you are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me a drink (for Jews do not associate with Samaritans). Jesus answered her, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and the he would give you living water..... The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Jesus) is coming. When He comes, he will explain everything to us. Just when his disciples returned, and were surprised to find him talking with a woman.....Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony....²⁶(John 4:7-39)

The conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman marks that Jesus had broken cultural barriers to save the life of this Samaritan woman and many other Samaritans. That is why B. Hurly (1973) recognizes Jesus as a man who was not bound by cultures and traditions, though his contemporaries like Josephus, a Jewish historian were viewing women as inferior to men in every way. However, Jesus was always in line with the will of his father, the salvation of all human kind in spite of their sex, race, etc.

Thus, in all his ministries, Jesus has broken cultural barriers, met women and saved them. Not only saving them, he also gave values to their services which will be discussed in the next section.

2.1.4. Jesus gave values to women's services.

As discussed in the preceding sub- topic, Jesus broke cultural barriers to reach out to women with his services. We can read also that Jesus had evaluated the service which women rendered in the Church activities. Especially he appreciated the offering of a poor widow. Let us see it as follows.

²⁶ NIV Study Bible, 2002, pp.1633-1635

*Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put, and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth, but she out of her poverty, put in everything, all she had to live on.*²⁷(Mark 12:41-44)

As stated above, the richest had thrown a huge amount of money into the temple treasury, but Jesus was not impressed by their offerings. He gave due attention to the widow's offering and highly acknowledged it. This widow is invisible in this culture when women are naturally unrecognized in Jewish society. However we see Jesus giving value to her offering.

Furthermore, in Mark 14:1-9 Jesus was extremely amazed by a woman's act of pouring a very expensive perfume on his head and said, she has done a beautiful thing to me. He remarked also of Mary's act of sitting at his feet to listen to his teaching saying that she had chosen what is better and it would not be taken away from her.

Thus, in an absolutely negative culture of the time (Jewish culture) towards women, Jesus was healing, teaching, hearing, and appreciating women's deeds throughout his ministries. This shows that Jesus had valued the life and services of women going over the cultural barriers.

2.2. Historical background of women's ordination.

According to Bruce A Robison (July 09, 2006) women's ordination was started in the 17 th century. One of the women who initiated this was Margaret Fell (1614-1702). She was writing brochures and booklets that address the issue of inequalities among women and men in religious activities. In early 1800s, the Society of Friends (Quakers) allowed women to be ordained.

²⁷ NIV Study Bible, 2002, p-1552

Recent developments with regard to women's ordination are that, in the middle of 20th century, the world Lutheran Churches accepted the ordination of women. The issue of women's ordination is the result of the unity of democratic culture which advocates for men and women an equal opportunity and theological affirmations which made women powerful to break the shell of patriarchy that promotes men's superiority always,²⁸

For example, The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (LELCA) started ordaining women as pastor or assistant pastors in May 1974. Agnese Pone was the first ordained women in this Church. In 2006 the percentage of ordained women was about 42 % or 40 out of 95 pastors in LELCA. LELCA: Archbishop Elmars Ernsts Rozitis speaks that without women's services the functions of their Church would be partially paralyzed.²⁹

In Africa also there are few reported cases. In 1983 Anglican Churches of Uganda and Kenya started ordaining women as pastors. The Anglican Church of South Africa also started ordaining women in 1992.³⁰ In Tanzania the debates on women's ordination took about twenty years. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania ordained the first women on January 8, 2006. On the ordination day women in the locality showed their solidarity, appreciation and happiness in action and also presented new Suzuki motorbike for Rev. Alice and a Dell 2005 laptop computer for Rev. Faith who were the first ordained women.³¹

2.3. Women's Role and Status in the early stages of EECMY

2.3.1. Women's role and status in some of the early

Evangelical missions

In the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, quite a number of evangelical missions like Swedish Evangelical Mission, German Hermansburg Mission, American United Presbyterian Mission, etc, started their mission work in Ethiopia. In 1904 Karl Cederquist of the Swedish Evangelical Mission the 1st messenger started working in Addis Ababa. Following the death of Karl Cedrequist, two women, the wife of Dr. Soderstrom (Nurse Gusti) and his

²⁸ Lutheran World Federation, 1993, p-11.

²⁹ Lutheran World Federation, 2006, pp.125-126

³⁰ Robinson, Bruce A. July, 09, 2006; <http://www.religioustolerance.org/femclrgy.htm>

³¹ Lutheran World Federation, 2006, pp.119-121

sister Miss Karin: the first two women missionaries from Swedish Evangelical Mission arrived in Addis Ababa. The participation of these women with regard to evangelical work is not clearly defined but they were very active in health work, which is to be discussed later. During the emergence of evangelical mission in Ethiopia, the participation of women especially in evangelism work was not visible except the case of very few figurative personalities like Mrs. Grete Rathje. As to the arguments of Launhardt (2004) she was assisting her husband Rev. Rahtie in his spiritual efforts and she used to address people who were attending the Amharic worshipping program being held at German Hermansburg Mission compound on Sundays.

2.3.2. An over view of National women's participations in the early life of the EECMY .

According to Abresh Dinsa (2001), the participation of Ethiopian women in the Holistic activities of EECMY started with the inception of the Church. The Participation of Women in the EECMY activities as members, as evangelists, leaders and participants in development related activities of EECMY, will be discussed. With regard to the roles of women in the EECMY Launhardt (2004) argues that women in the EECMY were backbones of the Church. One best example that supports Launhardt's argument is the contribution of women in the translation of Bible into Afan Oromo (Oromo Language).

The Holy Bible translation into Afan Oromo (Oromo language) by Onesimos Nasib (1856-1931) was completed in 1997. Onesimos's first name was Hika which literally means of a "translator" in Afan Oromo. But because of his long separation from his mother tongue, Afan Oromo, the successfulness of Onesimos was very dependent on the support of Aster Ganno, who was an Oromo girl mentally gifted, educated and also endowed by a real feeling for the Oromo language.³² To make the translation of the Holy Bible into Afan Oromo, Onesimos utilized the potential of Aster in Afan Oromo through entrusting to her the task of composing a dictionary of pure Oromo words. Aren (1978) gives credit for translating linguistically well organized (structured) bible in Afan Oromo not to Onesimost Nasib but to Aster Gonno who was Onesimos's young female assistant in his best effort to translate the bible into Afan Oromo. Throughout the process of translating bible into Oromo language, Aster was there as an editor and also solving difficulties related to language usage (Afan Oromo usage). Thus, one

³² Are'n, 1978,p-383

can imagine that it would have not been possible to manage the translation of holy bible into Afan Oromo for Onesimos in the absence of Aster Ganno.

2.3.2.1. Pioneer Women in Evangelism work in the early of EECMY.

As it is discussed under the background of the study, EECMY was established as a national Church in 1959, but according to Aren (1978), the inception of evangelical work goes back to the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century when evangelical and educational work was initiated in wollega by Gbera-Ewastateos, Onesimos Nasib, with his co-workers Aster Ganno (1874-1964), Feben Hirpha Abaa Magaal (1860-1961) and Lidya Damo (1872-1941).

Onesimos and these three Oromo women were some of the enslaved Oromo people who were sold to foreign slave traders (Arab Merchants) at their young age at Wasawa. But they, especially the three women, were set free by the Italians' assistance and educated by Swedish Evangelical Mission in Asmara at Emkullu.

Following the completion of the translation of the Bible into Afan Oromo and the relative better conditions to enter into Oromo, land Onesimos (with his wife Lidiya and their three children), Aster, Feben, Habe- Mariam, Ayle Yemer a Matiyas Roro arrived at Nekmete on April 15, 1904. Then based on the invitation of Dejjazmach Kumsa Moroda (Gebre-Egizaber), the then governor of Wollega, Onesimos with his family and Aster settled at Najo where they built residence and a school while Feben and Ayale were sent to Bodji where they married to each other in May 1904 and shortly moved to Jimma where Feben was born. But they could not initiate evangelism work at Jimma due to the strong resistance they encountered by Abba Jfifar's Muslim policy which was against the proclamations of the Christian faith. Thus, they came back to Bodji and worked at a school at Bodji until 1911.

Aster And Onesimos faced persecutions at Najo and moved to Nekemte though their work at Najo was so fruitful and many youngsters of Najo got educational opportunity.³³ At Nekemte, they started evangelism and education work and the roles Aster played are narrated as follows:

*Aster became very active in reaching out to her people and in educating women and girls.....She also became one of the leading educators in Wollega. She was a genius. She wrote an Oromo dictionary and together with Onesimos produced the Oromo reader. Aster was an educator, a writer and a translator of books into Oromo language. She was also known as bible women.*³⁴

According to the above arguments, Aster was a woman with an allrounded personality: She was educator, an evangelist, linguist and also gender sensitive in that she gave due attentions to the educational need of women and girls.

Even though Aster, who was unmarried throughout her life, was outshining, the contributions of the three women, Aster, Feben and Lidiya in Wollega through evangelism and education are of very great value in that their work changed the lives of people living in wollega. Some of the students of these women like Ayantu Gome of Nekemte (Sorga) followed their path and her effort (work) was illustrated shortly as follows:

*Wezaro Ayantu is one of the first students of the Boarding school established by Aster....Going back to home ... Weizaro Ayantu begun teaching others and preaching the gospel in her home....In addition, by a donation she got from the missionaries, she constructed Church and school buildings on her own land and with the additional building materials she provided and she was a coordinator of the work. Before doing all this, she had been teaching under a shade of a tree.*³⁵

From the deeds of Ayantu Gome above, one can think of how the life and education of Aster, Feben and Lidiya influenced the mentality of women towards education and evangelism.

³³ Bulletech,2003,pp:48-60

³⁴ Bulletech, 2003, pp.52-53

³⁵ Abebech, 2001, p.87

Ayantü generated the idea of starting education under a shadow of a tree, made it instrumental and promoted the education under a tree to class room education.

According to Beure Daba (2001), Nasise Liban of Najjo who was expected to be a student of Onesimos and Aster at Nadjo was a strong evangelist and also a very wise woman. What she revealed in facilitating and extending proper external call to the first ordained pastor in the history of EECMY, which is spelled out as below.

She (Nasise) was a great patriotic hero and an outstanding woman evangelist of the time who proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ. Besides this it was she who facilitated a paper external call to the first ordained pastor, the late Rev. Daffa Jamo, on the eve of the departure the German Hermansburg missionaries, during the World War II. She was remarkably a wonderful and an outstanding Evangelist as she did much in Evangelical work.³⁶

Another woman who played significant roles in Addis Ababa with respect to evangelism was Weizaro Aster Wald Mariam and her qualities are described as:

Aster Wald Mariam turned out to be a well-accepted teacher among the pupils and their parents. But her positive influence reached further. She became a leading figure among the women of Evangelical congregations. Her biblical insight, her pray full care, and her spiritual leadership were outstanding. She was regarded as one of the “mother” of the Congregation.³⁷

2.4. Women’s roles and status in the development activities of early life of EECMY.

2.4.1. Women’s roles and status in educational services

Education was one aspect of the missionaries’ activities from the very conception of EECMY. Hence almost the entire different mission societies had attempted to open schools in all places where they begun their activities. In some of the missions’ educational activities, the role and status of women were addressed as underneath. According to Launhardt (2004), the Swedish

³⁶ Bekure,2001, pp. 77-78

³⁷ Launhardt, 2004:p-37

Evangelical Mission was running school for boys in Addis Ababa in the beginning of 1920s, which he states as follows:

In April 1921 another couple from Sweden arrived. They were Mr. Per stjarne and his wife valborg. The Stjranes were trained teachers and had been assigned to take over the school for boys, called the “English School.” They learned the Amharic Language and performed their works with all their hearts....In 1925 Miss Sigrid Berggren was added to the Swedish Evangelical Mission staff in Addis Ababa....She was sent to Addis Ababa and was asked to organize and lead the new Swedish Evangelical Mission school for girls there....During the following years the number of day-students increased and by 1930 the Swedish Evangelical Mission girls’ school had twenty boarders and twenty girls from the town. Female education had found acceptance in Addis Ababa.³⁸

The roles and status of women in the educational activities of Swedish Evangelical Mission were very significant as teachers who work heartfully and their status were the teaching position at School for boys and leading position at the school for girls. Miss Sigrid Berggren was very fruit full in organizing and leading school for girls’. Her effort might contribute also to others’ efforts that made girls’ education acceptable in Addis Ababa.

According to Luanhardt (2004), in 1921, another Mission society: the Swedish Mission Bible-True friends, sent two Missionaries (Anton Jonssen and Josef svensson), to Ethiopia. The two missionaries rented a grassroofed house and sooner started school for boys. This Mission Society also sent another Missionary Miss Anna-Lena Johnson who was professional Teacher, to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1922.The following year she opened the first school for girls in a rented hose at Abdina. The School for girls which had four classes continued until the Italian occupation. Here, the role of Miss Anna-lena Jonsson had been very great in organizing and leading the school for girls.

The SDA and Ethiopian Union Mission started training schools for girls in 1923, through a Scandinavian Mission missionary Called V.E Toppenberg who moved with his family from

³⁸ Launhardt, 2004:pp 39-40

Eritrea in 1921 to work at the school but the school started providing full services after Mr. and Mrs. Sorensen who were from United States arrived to also serve as teacher at the School in 1929. Another Couple: Mr. and Mrs. Cral Jersen also joined the staff of the girl's school in 1924 from Denmark.³⁹

When one sees at the gender proportion of the staff those who were working at SDA school at Kebena in the 1920s, women and men hold equal percentage and even though women comprise 50% of the staff, the case of the leading position of the school seems as if it was in the hands of the man who initiated and started the School. On the other hand, the women also might come to Ethiopia accompanying their husbands; this is because the entire teachers at the school were couples.

The Evangelical missions who started their mission activities in Ethiopia, especially Addis Ababa, concentrated on health services and educational services perhaps due to the Orthodox Church resistance against evangelism work.⁴⁰ And almost all of the missions who dealt with education opened school for girls and boys hand in hand or one after the other. The participation of women teachers especially in the girls' school was very high that ranges from 50% -66.67% while their statuses at the schools were as leaders and as teacher too.

2.4.2. Women's roles and status in health services

Health services were also one of the priority issues of evangelical missionaries who started their mission activities in Ethiopia in the 1920s. The first medical person was Swedish Evangelical Mission missionary Dr. Erik O. Soderstrom and his wife Nurse Gust arrived in Addis Ababa by train in 1920. Dealing with medical work, they stayed in Addis Ababa up to 1923. The medical work by Swedish Evangelical Mission, Addis Ababa, was initiated by Mr. Karl Cederquist and expanded, but discontinued as Dr. Erik and his family including his sister Miss Karin who arrived Ethiopia in 1921 moved to Nekemte to build a Hospital there per their original plan.⁴¹

³⁹ Launhardt, 2004

⁴⁰ Launhardt, 2004

⁴¹ Launhardt, 2004

When this medical work of SEM is seen from gender perspective, women constitute 66.67% of the staff but the status might be at a lower position due to their less educational standard when compared to their male counterparts.

Lanhardt (2004) also narrates the medical work experience of German Hermansburg Mission as follows:-

*In 1934 another significant development took place in connection with German Hermansburg Mission sister Eva Bartzsch, a German deaconess who was sent to Addis Ababa to start medical work. The main idea was not to run a clinic or dispensary on the Mission's premises, but to visit and treat sick people in their homes, German as well as Ethiopians....During the later years she was accompanied by Mrs.Geikler, a German woman and trained nurse who together with her husband, lived on the German Hermansburg Mission compound.*⁴²

The experience of GHM with respect to health service indicates that 100% of the work was covered by women. This is because the husbands' of the women medical workers had other responsibilities and some of the women were also unmarried.

2.4.3. Women's roles and status in environmental Protection

activities:

According to Ms Rachel Ramandhani (1999), the roles of women in environmental development are seen in relation to their efforts to obtain life giving basic needs. They use land for agricultural production which is to be used for their family consumption and for trading or for income generating purpose. Due to women's high dependence on environmental and strong relation between women and environment, people tend to attribute natural distraction to the activities of women, but Rachel (1999) was against the argument and associate the deprivation of environment which started in the 18th century to industrial revolution, rapid scientific and technical development and man's greed to build up huge financial gains from the natural resources and environments but she spells out women's roles in environment protection as:

⁴² Lanhardt, 2004, pp.62-63

*Women are now engaged in the programs of rehabilitating and maintaining the destroyed land and environment in projectsSuch as tree planting, proper use of land (which most of them do not own), appropriate techniques of sustainable Agricultures, water conservation, energy intervention, projects and others. Though women's role and participation in conservation, protection and exploitations the environment is evident.*⁴³

Analysis of the views of Randhani (1999) describes that women are the primary users and primary protectors of environment. The Eco-feminists Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993) argue that women were the first to protest against environmental destruction every where. Vandana Shiva also views that women have more knowledge of environment or earth system than men due to their productive and reproductive functions all over the world. Thus, women who have strong relation, in turn more knowledge of the environment are also the protectors of it. But according to Aster Tefera (2002), due to women's reproductive role and their relation with their family, their contribution to conservation of the environment is not as such visible.

2.5. Influence of Feminism on religion: Christianity

Feminism (women's movement) is a social movement that was believed to be initiated in the end of 18th Century when one of the first advocates of human right (women's right) like Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1794) wrote a book entitled *A Vindication of Women's rights (1792)* and John Stuart Mill wrote a book entitled *Subjection of women (1869)*. But historically the movement of feminism is expected to begin as a formal social movement towards the equality of women and men in the end of the 19th Century.⁴⁴ According to Nagypasl Szablc (2005), priority issues of the first wave (end of 19th century -1920) feminism movement were improving the positions of women in the society through the emancipation of women and their economic independence, whereas the second wave (1966-1980) feminism movement concentrated upon the replacement of the patriarchal order on the dichotomy of men and women and on various female guiding principles across different societies in this world. The main essence of feminism is promoting the social positions of women in the society, were

⁴³ Randhani, 1999, p-34

⁴⁴ Rankin, 2005

Churches or all religious denominations are running their religion related activities. Thus, any social movement directly or indirectly touches religious activities (Churches). Hand in hand with feminism movement, issues of feminism theology began to emerge in the life of Churches especially in the Western societies, and feminist theology is read as:

Feminist theology is a method of doing theology, entailing a creative re-visioning of what it is to be in the Church. It created networks of shared experience....There has been a significant shift from cooperation to social and economic justice and the liberation struggle. A full access and participation is needed in leadership, ordination, inclusive languages, the re-reading of Bible and Tradition and equal opportunities in the field of life (including Churches life).⁴⁵

The argument of Szabolcs (2005) above may justify that feminism as a social movement might have initiated similar social movements in religious organizations (Churches). But the question that could be raised is what kind of interrelationship is there between the secular world and the religious world when the idea of promoting the social positions of women or when the idea of human right issues was being seen by the United Nations. The arguments of some scholars on the issues of human rights are the basis of religious organizations because basically there is no religion which is against human right, in a sense, equality of human beings.⁴⁶

Thus one may argue that addressing the human right (equality right) was initiated in religions. Szables (2005) also argues that women's association in religion was started in 1894 when world young women Christian association which have been fertile training grounds for women leaders was formed. Another best indicator that reveals the consideration of human rights in religion is that the first director of the commission of the Church on international affairs, a Frederick Nolde, was the one who drafted the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human right (UDHR) in 1948. On the other hand, the President of the United Nation Commission on Status of women from 1962-1972 and the drafter of the declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women, Annie Jiagge, was a Christian who later became the world Council of Churches president.

⁴⁵ Szables,2005,p-113

⁴⁶ Panos Ethiopia, 2002:

Thus from the narrations of Szabolcs (2005) on human right as crosscutting issue in both secular world and Church life I can confidentially argue that feminism as a social movement has influenced or contributed positively to the nation of Church about the position of women in religious (Church) activities and in turn the better prevailing situation on the issues of human right in religions also might have influenced positively the movement of feminism which targets at promoting equality between women and men.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Data analysis and Interpretations

Data analysis and interpretation is the main part of this chapter. The chapter has four parts. The first part speaks about the background of the respondents. The second part speaks about the roles and status of women in the spiritual services of EECMY. The third and the fourth parts speak about the roles and status of women in development and decision making activities of the Church respectively. In the chapter, an attempt was made to analyze the data collected from the one hundred and sixteen respondents. Sixty respondents who participated in the focus group discussions were taken from six congregations. Forty-eight of the respondents were taken from the two social service institutions of the EECMY, Birbir Dilla Synod and Western Synod. Eight persons were from Evangelism, Development and Women's office of the two Synods. The data were also collected through reviewing different related documents. The writer used three different approaches to collect the relevant data from the respondents.

The participants of the focus group were given questions that were expected to pave the way for the discussion. The main questions were about: A) the background of the respondents, B) the roles of women in spiritual and development activities of the congregations, C) women's participations in the decision making process of the congregations and the statuses these women have.

Questionnaires were distributed to the respondents from the two social service institutions. Questionnaires are inquiries of: A) the background of the respondents B) Statuses of their services like monthly earnings, years of services and challenges C) women's participation and statuses in the decision making processes of the social services institutions. D) Women's contribution to the services of the school as part of the society benefiting from the institution (school)

For the interviewees, questions employed were about:

A) the interviewees' work or service experience, B) their view on the roles and statuses of women on the area they are working, C) their contributions to the issues of gender related activities of the EECMY, at Bibir Dilla Synod and Western Synod, D) their personal testimony.

The main documents reviewed are: A) papers on the issues of women ordination presented on workshops, B) resolutions related to Women's ordinations C) gender policies D) profile of the workers or servants in the Congregations, the Hospital and the School.

3.1. Background of the Respondents

The nature of the respondents' background in this dissertation has two forms. The first respondents are those who are serving at the level of congregations with the local community of EECMY. Majority of these people come to the services for a specified period of time: two – four years through election. These people are not salaried except for the few employed once that deal with development related activities undergoing in most of the congregations. The second category of the respondents is employed professionals who are serving the local communities of Aira and Gulliso weredas as health professionals or teachers. Based on the views of the respondents and the profiles of their respective institutions, some aspects of their backgrounds are described in tables 2, 3, and 4 below.

3.1.1. Background of respondents from the congregations:

Some aspects of the background of the 60 respondents who participated in the focus-group discussions held at the six distinct congregations are summarized in the table below.

Table-2: Background of respondents from the congregations.

Backgrounds		Cases in No.	Per. of total
Place of birth	Western Wollega zone	60	100
	Out side of Western Wollega zone	-	-
	Total	60	100
Sex	Male	12	20
	Female	48	80
	Total	60	100
Age	Below 20	-	-
	20-30	11	18.33
	31-40	36	60.00
	41-50	11	18.33
	51-60	2	3.33
	Total	60	100
Educational status	Below 10/12	33	55.00
	10/12 complete	16	26.67
	12 + Certificate	5	8.33
	Diploma and above	6	10.00
	Total	60	100
Basis of services	Employed by the congregation	5	8.33
	Elected by the Church community	55	91.67
	Total	60	100

Sources: Data from discussion with focuses groups.

According to the information in table-2 above, all of the respondents from the six congregations were born in Western Wollega zone. As it is discussed in the methodology chapter- I of this dissertation, majority (80%) of the respondents are women. The age of the respondents' range from 20 to 60. The majority (55%) of the respondents that are playing significant roles in serving or managing the six EECMY congregations have an educational standard below grade 10/12, whereas 26.67% of them have completed 12/10. The rest of the respondents (18.33%) are those who have different professional training with minimum educational standard of 10/12 grade and having certificate. When the basis of the service of the respondents at the six congregations is assessed, only 8.33%, are employed, while most (91.67%) of the servants are serving the congregations on voluntary basis.

3.1.2 Background of the respondents form the Social Services Institutions.

A. Backgrounds of respondents from Lalo Aira Hospital (LAH).

Summary of the background of the respondents from LAH is given in table below.

Table-3: Background of respondents from the LAH

Background		Cases in No.	Per. of total
Place of birth	Western Wollaga	29	96.67
	Outside of Western Wollaga	1	3.33
	Total	30	100
Sex	Male	6	20.00
	Female	24	80.00
	Total	30	100.00
Age	Below 20	-	
	20-30	5	16.67
	31-40	11	36.67
	41-50	8	26.67
	51-60	6	20.00
	Total	30	100
Martial Status	Married	23	76.67
	unmarried	7	23.33
	Widows	-	-
	Total	30	100
Educational status	Below 12	4	13.33
	10/12+certificate	14	46.67
	diploma	8	26.67
	B.SC	2	6.67
	Doctor and specialist	2	6.67
	Total	30	100
Monthly Salary	201.00-500.00	3	10
	50.001-1000.00	18	60
	1001.00-1500.00	5	16.67
	above 1500.00	4	13.33
	Total	30	100

Source: Questionnaire data

Based on the information in table-3 above, the backgrounds of respondents from LAH are explained as follows. Most (96.67) of respondents were born in WWZ. In line with the research methodology discussed in chapter- I of this dissertation the majority (80%) of the respondents are women. The age domain of the respondents is between 20 and 60; while the age group from 30-40 composes 36.67%, from 41-50, 26.67% and from 51-60 is 20% of the total. The majority (76.67%) of the respondents are married. Nearly half (46.67%) of the respondents have certificate, whereas the minority (26.67%) are diploma holders and 13.24% are degree holders and doctorate/ specialists. The above table also shows that the majority (60%) of the respondents earn a monthly salary of 501.00-1000.00 ETB, few percent (16.67%) and (13.33%) are getting a monthly salary of 1001.00-1500.00 and above 1500.00 ETB respectively.

B. Background of the respondents from Horst Spingies Secondary School (HSSS)

The background of the respondents from HSSS is described in the next table.

Table-4: Background of respondents from the HSSS

Background		Cases in No.	Per. of total
Place of birth	Western Wollaga Zone	17	94.44
	Out side of Western Wollaga Zone	1	5.56
	Total	18	100
Sex	Male	17	94.44
	Female	1	5.56
	Total	18	100
Age	Below 20	-	
	20-30	9	50.00
	31-40	3	16.67
	41-50	4	22.22
	51-60	2	11.11
	Total	18	100
Marital status	Married	13	72.22
	unmarried	5	27.78
	Widows	0	-
	Total	18	100
Educational status	TTI	2	11.11
	Diploma	12	66.67
	12+3	2	11.11
	12+4	1	5.56
	Others	1	5.56
	Total	18	100
Monthly Salary	below 500.00	1	5.56
	501.00-1000.00	7	38.89
	1001.00-1500.00	10	55.56
	above 1500.00	-	-
	Total	18	100

Source: Questionnaire data

According to the information in table-4 above, most (94.44%) of the teaching staff of the School were born in WWZ. It also shows that 94.44% of the teaching staff are males, which reveals that the higher percentage of teaching activities of the School are covered by male teachers. Half (50%) of the staff are at the most productive age (20-30) while the rest are at the age of productive age (30-60). Majority (66.67%) of the teaching staff of the School have diploma while very few of them (5.56%) have first degree. The rest 11.11% are TTI graduates and 11.11% of are at 12+3 educational levels. The Majority (55.56%) of the respondents earns a monthly salary of 1001.00-1500.00 ETB, while significant proportions, 38.89%, get a monthly salary of 501.00-1000.00 ETB.

3.2. Roles and Statuses of Women in the spiritual services of EECMY

3.2.1. Historical backgrounds of Women's Ordination in EECMY.

Women have been playing a significant role in the whole activities of the EECMY from its very inception, but for a long period of time they were excluded from getting theological education and in turn providing services as ordained ministers. With regard to their enrollment in theological education, two women, namely Bakure Daba and Tenagne Nigusse were enrolled into the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary in 1978 and graduated in 1980 with other 17 male trainees. Ten of these graduates (9 males and 1 female) were from WS. But while all of the nine men from the Synod were immediately ordained, Bakuree Daba, who received the same theological education as her male friends, was deprived the right to be ordained as an educated theologian. It is also known that she participated in the orientation courses arranged for her classmates at the WS Training Center.

The exclusion of Bakure Daba from being ordained forced the then Director of the Evangelism department of WS, Rev, Megersa Guta, to appeal to the decision making bodies of the Synod on matter of women's ordination. The Synod officials referred the issues of women's ordination to the EECMY higher (top) officials. The EECMY entrusted its Evangelism and Theology Commission to follow up the matter and thus it started deliberating on it in May 1981.⁴⁷ From May 1981 to 1997, a number of initiatives including Consultations and workshops that promote the issues of women ordination were conducted by the EECMY

⁴⁷ Megerssa Guta, May 16, 2006: Other steps forward to Grater maturity Address/sermon delivered on the occasion of the ordination of pastor Bakure Daba, p.5

Evangelism Department and the Theological Commission in coordination with the EECMY Women's Coordinating Office.

In 1986 Rev. Debela Birri conducted a research on the topic: "Women and Ministry in the New Testament letters: Ordain them or not?" at Watiburg Theological Seminary, Dubuoue, Lown as a partial fulfillment of Masters of Theology Degree. As to my view, the study conducted by this scholar remarks a turning point where the Ethiopian professionals in the religious field started giving due attention to the equality of women and men in religious practices.

The two most important consultations were conducted on the issue of women's ordination. The first consultation was conducted at Ambo congregation from July 31-August 04, 1989. In this consultation, 4 women and 31 men participated. The Second consultation was conducted at Mekena Yesus Theological Seminary from August 20-24, 1991. In this consultation 3 women and 38 men took part. In 1994 few papers related to the issue of women's ordination were also presented on the theological consultation on Episcopacy at Mekena Yesus Theological Seminary. The Main topics of the consultations that were made are shortly summarized in the next table.

Table-5. Papers presented on consultations/workshops on the issues of women’s ordination.

Place & date of consultation	Papers presented/Topics	presenters
Ambo congregation (July31-August 04/1989)	Argument on ordination of women	Rev. Debela Birri
	Women’s place in Church from Historical perspective	Rev. Yonas Deressa
	Ordination of women in the EECMY: why it is not appropriate	Mr. Wadajo W/Senbet
Mekane Theological Yesus Seminary (August 20-24/1991)	Ordained Ministry in the history of the Church with special reference to Lutheran Reformation	Dr. Hatwig Harms
	Exegetical study of relevant passages in Pauline epistles on women	Rev. Debela Birri
	Culture in the Bible what is it , and what is it not in to in regard to women’s Ministry?	Dr. James Keefer
	The status of women in the Gospels and its contemporary society	Rev, Yonas Deressa
	The priesthood of all believers (in Amharic)	Dr. Eshetu Abate
Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (July 1994)	Church leadership: Vocation and ministry in contemporary Lutheran understanding and practice	Dr. Eugene L. Brand
	The priesthood of all believers (in English)	Dr. Eshetu Abate

Source:-The EECMY theological papers on the role of women in the Church and the society: With special emphasis on the ordination of women.

After the above series of consultations and workshops, the issue of women’s ordination was raised as one of the most important topics of the 15th General Assembly of EECMY that was held from January 20-25, 1997. The Assembly made the following policy decisions with respect to women’s ordination on resolution number GA-15-62 -97 “8”; 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3, which was stated as:

8.1. At the level of growth that EECMY has arrived at, the necessity for steps to be taken so that women participate in all areas of service has been recognized, has been discussed in various decision making bodies, and has resulted in resolutions. On this basis it is resolved that women who have received a call from God and from

congregational members and who are qualified for the work be ordained and serve as pastors.

8.2. That general studies and training at every unit of the Church be continued and strengthened so that the members will develop further awareness of the matter of Women's ordination

*8.3. That the effort begun to increase women's participation in the life and service of the Church be continued and strengthened.*⁴⁸

Based on the resolution of the 15th General Assembly of the EECMY, the Church Women's Ministry Coordinating Office organized an intensive workshop /consultation from October 14-19/ 98. The participants of the workshop were important personalities from every corner /units of the Church, who were altogether 27 women, 29 men and a total of 56 individuals. The participants of the workshop forwarded the following recommendations:-

- More opportunities should be given to women to exercise their spiritual gifts in every congregation of the Churches.
- To create the awareness in the local communities of the Church through conducting similar workshops, consultations and seminars at every units of the Church.
- Encouraging the units of the Church to take measures to call and ordain women as pastors as per the 15th General Assembly of the EECMY policy resolution.
- Women (educated) should make psychological preparation to assume the responsibilities of priesthood and tolerate the difficulties arising when they come to public exposure.⁴⁹

To consolidate the issue of women's ordination, the Western Synod Women Ministry Coordinating Office arranged a workshop from April 26-30/1999 for 88 women, 112 men and a total of 200 people. These people were gathered from the local communities of the Church. The participants of this workshop tried to figure out the ways to break the deep rooted cultural

⁴⁸ Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus 15th General Assembly January 20-25, 1997 Minutes, p-21

⁴⁹ The EECMY workshop/consultation on the ordination of women, Oct 14-19/98 MYTS

barriers to the empowerment of women for Church's services especially by being ordained ministers.

The participants of the workshop went back to their respective congregations and work places and started to work on the matter of women's ordination.⁵⁰ Thus, through these people, effective mobilization of the members of congregations at the local level to call women for ordained ministry, the Bodji Dirmadji Congregation resolved to extend a formal call for Mrs. Bekure Daba to pastoral ministry by resolution No. 76/92 and in turn wrote a formal letter to the Bodji Parish on 02/12/99. The Parish accepted the call and forwarded it to the Bodji District and in turn the district passed the call to the WS.⁵¹

Finally the WS accepted the call that was extended for Mrs. Bekure Daba to an ordained ministry and resolved by resolution number 349/92 to ordain her to the ordained pastoral ministry. As a consequence of this decision, the first historical ordination ceremony of a woman to the priesthood position was celebrated at WS, BDC on Tuesday, May 16, 2002.⁵² The ordination of women as pastors was continued in the EECMY Synods like CS, GJS, BDS and Western Gambela Bethel Synod and thus the Church currently has 8 (0.5%) ordained women out of 1,674 ordained ministers of the Church.⁵³

The Findings discussed under the historical background of women's ordination in the EECMY context has strong tie with the experience of other African Churches like Tanzania Evangelical Lutheran Church. In both Tanzania Lutheran Church and in the EECMY, the debates on women's Ordination took about twenty years (See the literature review on page 21)

The EECMY concerns of accepting the ordained ministry of women is appreciable. On the other hand, the long time (about 20 years) required to finalize the debates on the issue of women's ordination shows that the Church decision making bodies were very patriarchal and thus resistant to efforts being made to increase women's participation in the Holistic Services of the Church.

⁵⁰Interview with WS women's ministry co-coordinator: Mrs. Jeritu Biranu.

⁵¹ From the Minutes of the Bodji Dermaji congregation elders meetings.

⁵² Kejela Negeri and Rev. Yonas Biratu, 2000:

⁵³ EECMY Theology Commission and Evangelism Department .

3.2.2. Testimony of Rev. Bekure Daba: The first ordained women minister of EECMY.



Rev. Bekure Daba was born to her mother Mrs. Yadasa Atayaa and her father Daba Bultum on March 10, 1961 in WW, Mena Sibu District and Idoro Agamsa locality. She comes from a family with low a income. Bekure is married to Rev. Tesso Djaleta, who was her classmate at the MYTS. They have three sons. Rev. Bekure began her education in 1967 at Kiltu Kara primary school of EECMY, WS. Since women were culturally expected to be at home, Rev. Bekure experienced terrible challenges during her early stages of education. She was chased away from home by her father. Thus she lived with her elder brother, who had a positive view towards girls' education, until she completed grade four. Rev. Bekure highly acknowledges the moral and economic support of her elder brother, without whom she would not have been successful in her primary education that laid a strong foundation for the whole educational ladder she has climbed up.

After completing grade six, Rev. Bekure joined Nejo Elementary and Junior Secondary School of EECMY and started pursuing there her junior secondary school from 1973 to 1974. Then in 1975 she joined Gimbi Comprehensive Secondary School. She stayed until 1976 and transferred from Gimbi to Addis Ababa, Shmalis Habte High School where she completed her secondary education in 1978. Rev. Bekure began her college education at MYTS prior to completing her secondary school. Hence for one year she carried out her college theological education parallel with her high school education (1977/8). Then she continued with her theological education and graduated in June 1980 with a Diploma after four years of intensive training.

In 1991, Rev. Bekure was given an International Scholarship by the EECMY funded by Lutheran World Federation for further educational opportunity and joined University of Birmingham, UK, where she gained an advanced diploma of Theological (religious) education in 1992. The same year she joined University of Chester and pursued her education further and graduated with a Masters degree in theological (religious) education in 1994. Hand in hand with her postgraduate training in theological education, she also joined the university's training program in women's study and gained a Certificate in the same year.

When we look at the work experience of Rev. Bekure, we can say that she has given herself to the community of WW who have been receiving both spiritual and Development / Social services from EECMY, WS.

Immediately after her graduation in June 1980, Rev. Bekure was assigned to serve as the EECMY, WSWM Secretary. She served in this position for about ten years, until the middle of 1990. During this time she was leading all the women related affairs of the WS. In addition to her services as the women's ministry secretary, she was given a responsibility of directing the WS Training Centre in 1985. It was in this same year that she started challenging men's attitude that they view themselves as the only capable and powerful people for leadership and decision-making positions. After receiving her masters' degree in theological education in 1994, Rev. Bekure was again assigned as the WSWM Coordinator. The Synod did not promote her position though the name of the position was changed from Secretary to Coordinator. As a Coordinator of the WSWM, she served the Synod until the middle of 2001. Rev. Bekure also served the Bodji Dirmadji Congregation as a Pastor from May 16, 2000 to March 2001. In addition to her services in different positions of the Church at WS, Rev. Bekure served as Chairwoman of National Women's Committee of EECMY from 2000 to 2006.

Rev. Bekure was transferred to the newly established Gimbi Jorgo Synod Evangelism Department, and led it from April 2001 to the end of the year. Rev. Bekure was elected as the Gimbi Jorgo Synod president in the summer of 2002. As the president of the Synod she served for four years (one turn) and left abroad for further education in the summer of 2006.

After making investigation on the issue of women's ordination for about twenty years, the 15th General Assembly of EECMY passed a policy decision of ordaining theologically trained women for the ministry. Following this policy decision, Rev. Bekure gained her right to be ordained for which she had been discriminated against for about twenty years. Hence, Rev. Bekure's struggle for twenty years indicates that being patient and determined to reach the goal for which God calls women, is one way of claiming back the right for what one struggled for. Rev. Bekure's experience marks *women's struggle for the break through into the position of priest-hood and leadership positions.*

3.2.3. Roles and Statuses of Women in Holistic Services of EECMY at Congregational Level

In the history of the EECMY Holistic Services that begun in the last decade of the nineteenth century, women have been playing significant roles in both spiritual and development related activities of the Church.⁵⁴ Thus, based on the general view that women's do play valuable roles in the whole services of the EECMY, the following sections of this dissertation attempt to address women's roles and statuses in the Church spiritual and development related activities in the randomly selected six congregations of BDS and WS.

For the six focus groups, discussions that were held at the respective congregations, open ended questions related to women's participations and statuses in the Holistic Services of the congregations were presented. The views and arguments of the focus group participants are discussed in the next sections.

3.2.3.1. Women as Members of the EECMY

According to the views of all of the leaders, preachers and members of different committees that participated in the focus group discussions, women cover the majority of the members of the congregations. Women of these congregations have flourished life in their faith. The actual percentage of women's participation comprises **56%** of the total population. And figuratively, **5,482**, females, **4,306** males and a total of **9,788** members are found. Thus, generally women outshine men as members of the congregations and are understood as the basic building blocks of the congregations.

3.2.3.2 Women's roles and statuses in the different spiritual Services of the EECMY at congregational level.

The EECMY as a body of Christ has different functions upon which its life relies.⁵⁵ Most of the focus group discussion participants of the six congregations share the above argument and also view that the Church would be functional when each and every part of her body or organs properly function. In the informants' view, the main spiritual services of the congregation function to complete the whole service system, like prayer services, preaching services, choir

⁵⁴ Interview with Jeritu Birhanu, Western Synod women's ministry coordinator

⁵⁵ A statement forwarded by Rev. Itefa Geleta EECMY, BDS Evangelism Department Head.

services, youth services, Sunday school services, sanitation services and diaconal services. In these main spiritual services of the congregations, the roles and statuses of women will be descriptively discussed in the next sections.

A. Women's role and statuses in prayer services

In the prayer services that at least take place for a minimum of two hours at a time, the general consent of the participants in the focus group discussions is that women are always at the leading positions both as participants in the prayer and as coordinators for some reasons. Primarily, prayer as instrument of communication with God needs spiritual maturity and commitment. This indicates that women who participate in prayer services are those who are at a better stage of spiritual maturity, and they are also devoted to deal with prayer services.

B. Women's roles in the preaching and other services of the congregations.

Preaching service is one of the very central activities of the EECMY spiritual services. The doctrinal basis of the Church is the theological knowledge of the Holy Bible. Thus, the community of the Church will be taught from the Bible on every Sunday through preaching.⁵⁶ According to the views of the majority of the focus groups discussion participants, preaching is a work of teaching the word of God from the Bible or from other spiritual materials. It takes place at each and every activity of the congregations like elders meetings, prayer meetings and Sunday worship meetings. The Sunday morning program preaching services is the main duty of theologically educated men and women. The preaching program on the Sunday morning devotion is set at the parish level. Thus, women rarely preach on the Sunday services of the six congregations as there are only few educated women in the field of Theology. For example, the participants of the focus group discussion held at Tsechallia Eka Congregation argue that women preach on the Sunday program one in six to eight weeks as there is only one (16.67%), Theologian woman out of the six pastors/evangelists of the parish of Tsachallia. These theologians are responsible to go around the eight congregations of the Parish and teach the Bible every Sunday. Sunday preaching services are usually followed by services like baptism and holly communion. Women had also started administering the baptism and holly communion services.

⁵⁶ Statement from the interview with Ms. Define Tasisa: An evangelist of BDS serving in the Tschallia Parish.

When we analyze meetings other than that of the Sunday morning devotion the focus groups participants believe that women's participation in the preaching services varies from one congregation to the other. Thus, on the Sunday afternoon youth programs of each congregation, 1 to 3 women take part in the preaching services of the congregations out of 9 to 15 preachers. Most of these preachers are not theologically educated. Women's participation in the preaching services of Sunday afternoon devotions ranges from 11.11% to 20%. Thus, one can confidently argue that women's role as preachers on Sunday morning and afternoon devotion is very low or below 20%. On the contrary, in small meetings like prayer meetings and other subcommittee meetings, most of the informants view that women preach in a similar manner with their male counterparts. This is because women and men in the committees are elected depending upon the same criteria.

C. Women's roles and status in choir services.

All of the focus groups discussion participants of the congregations view that song has the power to revive, motivate and restore peoples' spiritual life. Hence, Choir is a service that could be the other main service of the Church. Youth and women of the congregations have Choir groups with a minimum of 15 and maximum of 30 members. The choir groups have coordinating committees of 3-5 members. For example, in a small choir group of Nawir Gallawo Congregation that has 15 members out of which women cover 73.00%. In a bigger group like in Tsechallia Eka Congregation that has 30 members, women constitute 80%. With regard to the quality of women's services in Choir services, not only the women in the focus groups discussion but also the men assure that women are naturally exceptional with a better voice for songs. On the contrary, the leaders of every Choir group and their corresponding committee are all men. Out of the six congregations, mothers of the five congregations have their own choir groups where they deal with the issues of coordinating the groups by themselves.

D. Women's roles in the youth services/ministry of the congregations

Youth service of the congregations is directly meant to prepare young generations for the future leadership and functions of the congregations.⁵⁷ At every congregation, this service has

⁵⁷ A statement of Ms. Almaze Abedeta, one of the participants in the focus group discussion conducted at Lalo Aira Congregation.

also a body that can deal with the Church leaders. The coordinating body of the Youth Ministry of each congregation has Chairperson, Secretary, Cashier and other two members. Under the Youth Service, programs like drama, income generating, HIV/AIDS related activities and overseeing the choir groups members are included.

According to the arguments of the focus group discussions, in the youth ministries of the congregations, girls play significant roles by covering majority (more than 50%) of the members of the youth groups. They also take part in coordinating Committees of the ministry with a varying proportion from 20% to 42.86% in Lalo Aira and Bila Congregations respectively.

With regard to the youth ministry, there is one important development recently started at the Lalo Aira Congregation. It was initiated by the BDS Women's Ministry Coordinator, Mrs. Martha Abdisa and sister Taria Valkeapaa: assistant of the Synod Women's Ministry Office and Diaconal Work Coordinator. This new development is the establishment of "Gurmu Durbootaa" which is to mean the 'unity of unmarried girls'. The primary aim of "gurumu durbootaa" is to create awareness in the life of these young girls by teaching about their future life concerning their sexuality, economy, health and so on. To hit this target, unmarried girls of LAC are divided into two groups based on their age. The first group has 60 girls who are in the range of 7-14 years while the second group has 57 girls of 15 and above year of age.⁵⁸

According to the respondents from LAC, the two "gurmuu durbootaa" groups are regulated by Committees of their own that have five members each. The girls are being given training to support them become self resistant from traditional and other things which hurt women's lives like rape, abduction, FGM, early marriage, HIV/AIDS and women's health, family planning and so on. These girls are also being motivated on their education. Thus, the good initiative started at this congregation to make young girls have clear image of their future lives is a development by women to prepare best women of tomorrow.

⁵⁸ Statements from the views of Rev. Zewuditu Abdisa, one of the ordained women of EECMY, BDS, who is currently serving at Ayira Parish and also student of MYTS.

E. Women's role and status in Sunday school services

Participants of the discussion groups strongly argued that women (especially educated members of each of the congregations in the field of health services, teacher education, etc) are mainly dealing with the “**Sunday School services**” as teachers and co-coordinators. At all the congregations, women cover an average of 66.67% of the coordinating committee that is 60% (in the case of Burqa Aira Congregation) to 80% (case of Bila Congregation) of the Sunday school teachers.

Thus, one can deduce that women of the Congregations are playing a very significant role both as leaders and teachers of Sunday school services of the congregations. Women are giving more inputs to produce children who are well aware of the ethics of Christianity.

F. Women's role and Status in the sanitation services of the Congregation

In line with their deep concern for their spiritual purity, each of the congregations keep their chapel very clean. Most of the discussion group participants argue that young boys and girls group themselves and usually clean the chapel every Saturday (based on their turn). They also view that women cover majority of these groups.

From the conversations of the focus group participants of Nawir Gallawo Congregation, a good experience is that though more burdens are on the shoulders of the young women of the congregation, young men who participate in sanitation services equally take part in fetching water from the river and cleaning their chapel. In the six of the congregations, women outnumber the men in the sanitation services. From the perspective of the concern for the work and quality of the work, the whole group discussion participants agree that both women and men equally participate.

G. Women's roles and status in the diaconal services of the congregations

According to the views of Sister Taria Vikeapaa, the Diaconal Work Coordinator of BDS, the Diaconal Work of the Church is based on the word of God stated in Romans 12:6-8 which reads as:

“We have different gifts according to the grace given us .If man's gift is prophesying let him use it in proportion to his faith if it is contributing to the needs of others let him give generously, if it is leadership let him govern diligently if it is showing mercy, let him do it carefully.”

The aim of the Diaconal Services in the context of the EECMY, BDS and WS is to address the needs of helpless members of the Church and the Community.

The focus group participants from Lalo Aira Congregation argue that the criteria for selecting people to be supported through the diaconal services are factors like:

Age: Old people who are helpless

Disease: Victims of diseases HIV/AIDS, TB, etc but do not have support and economic means to make a living.

Orphan: Children that lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

Poverty: People who are victims of poverty combined with other problems like diseases.

Behavior: People who are unable to cop up with life and those who have behavioral problems due to becoming alcoholic, smokers, and other related behavioral problems.

To reach the needy part of the community of their respective congregations, all of the congregations under this study have a Committee of five members. This committee has a Leader, Secretary, Cashier and two members.

The diaconal services committee of each of the six congregations sponsor education of the orphan, support the medical expenses of the old and victims of diseases, counsel people with certain behavioral problems, support the poor especially during the rainy season with limited amount of money (20-50 ETB) to help them cultivate their land, construct houses of the old people when needed, conduct prayer programs at the houses of the old and the sick people once in a month, offer them holly communion if they are communicant members of their congregations. Through the above services meant to fulfill both the spiritual and physical needs

of the unprivileged parts of their community, the focus group participants argue that their respective congregation contributes to the fulfillment of the needs of 20 to 30 people annually.

Women's role in the Diaconal Services of the congregations covers 40% and 60% of the membership of four and two congregations respectively. In many of the committees of congregations, they serve as cashiers and as members of the Diaconal Service Group who directly take part in the different services mentioned above.

Though through the diaconal services, the needy parts of the community benefit a lot, according to the opinion of Taria, the actors of the issues experience challenges like

- Potential (economy) to exhaustively address all the needy parts of the community.
- Difficulties in helping these people.
- Majority of the congregations members' unwillingness to sacrifice their time, labor and money for the needy part of the community.
- Negative attitude towards the HIV/AIDS victims
- Problems of transparency to effectively deal with the activities.
- Cultural taboos of discussing affairs related to sexuality in public meetings.

3.2.3.3. Women's Role in the Economy of the congregations.

According to the discussions with respective focus group participants, the EECMY sees her members as a reliable economic source. With regard to the participation of women in the economy of the congregations, the focus group discussion participants view that women cover the majority (56%) of the members of the Congregations under this study and in turn cover the majority of the annual income of every Congregation. Beyond their Sunday offerings and one tenth of every income, women of the congregations contribute to the annual income of the congregations two different ways. The first way is that women of every congregation organize themselves in handcrafts groups. In the handcrafts groups, they meet one afternoon of a week and produce gabi, bed cloths, table clothes and many other types of equipment made of cotton. Then, they sell the materials on the Annual Women's Day and contribute the money from the sales to the spiritual work of their congregations.

In some congregations like TSEC, women in the handcrafts groups also conduct some agricultural activities like producing “goodarre”, “Zingibil” and other consumable agricultural products as an additional means of income generating for their congregation. For example, from the income of handcrafts activities, women of the Nawir Gallawo congregations contribute to the economy of their Church a minimum of 2,500.00 ETB annually.

The second way which has a twofold purpose is the one that the focus groups called “Iqqubii afuuraa”, which means spiritual association. The primary purpose of this association is to economically empower women through contributing a minimum of 2.00 ETB every Sunday. The women of the congregations divide themselves into groups of fifty (50) members each and collect 2.00 ETB every Sunday. A woman gets total of 100.00ETB through a process called “Carraaa”(lot). Thus, on Sundays 300.00 ETB (in case of NGC) and 500.00 ETB (in case of LAC) is collected and distributed among three or five women. The second purpose of the association is a woman who receives the money pays her tenth (10.00 ETB) each and as a result at least 30.00 ETB is secured every Sunday for the congregation. Thus, through the tenth of the association, women of the congregations make an annual contribution of 1,560.00 ETB to 2,600.00 ETB for their respective congregations.

3.3. Women’s roles and status in development activities of EECMY in the three Weredas.

The EECMY runs its development activities with the Motto of Serving the whole person: *the soul and the flesh of a person*. In line with her motto, the Church units BDS and WS run both Evangelism and Development activities in Western Wollega Zone (WWZ). In the three weradas (Aiyira, Bodji and Gulliso of WWZ) where the study was conducted, the Church deals with health, education and other development / social services since its inception.⁵⁹ Thus, this dissertation looks at the roles and statuses of women in the functions of Lalo Aira Hospital and Horst Spingies Secondary School in the next section.

3.3.1. Women’s roles and status in developmental activities undergoing at congregational level.

As it will be discussed in the next session of this dissertation, based on her guiding principle or motto of serving the whole person, EECMY deals with development activities like health,

⁵⁹ See page page-7 above

education, rural development, gender, etc. To legally deal with her development activities, the Church has registered at national level as a non-profit making organization. In line with the motto, some of the congregations under this study deal with some development activities like education, environmental protections, etc. Thus, the roles and status of women in these development activities will be addressed below.

A. Education.

From the six congregations, where the focus group discussions were conducted, four are dealing with pre-primary education and their *statistical information of both students and teachers is summarized in the next table.*

Table-6:

Congregations	2006/7 Enrollment						Teachers' Statistics					
	M		F		T		M		F		T	
	In.No.	In. %	In.No.	In. %	In.No.	In. %	In.No.	In. %	In.No.	In. %	In.No.	In. %
Bila	63	50	63	50	126	100	-	-	3	100	3	100
Bodji	41	56.94	31	43.06	72	100	-	-	1	100	1	100
Lalo Ayira	47	49.47	48	50.53	95	100	-	-	1	100	1	100
Tsahallia Eka	80	40	120	60	200	100	-	-	2	100	2	100
Total	231	46.86	262	53.14	493	100	-	-	7	100	7	100

Sources: Students' and teachers' profiles of the respective congregations' educational center.

As it is clearly described in table-6 above, the four congregations have paved the way for pre-primary education for 493 children out of which the majority (53.14%) is girls. All the teaching staff of the schools are women. The women teaching at the school also work as directors of the educational centers and exercise leadership. Thus, these women are playing a very great role in educating the kids and also in making the schools functional by managing them properly.

Another educational development is the establishment of a community library in 2005 by Lalo Aira Congregation. People come every day and read both spiritual and secular books at the library. The librarian, Ms. Almaz Abdeta, is a genuine girl who has a rich experience in teaching at kindergarten of the congregation. Thus, one can argue that educational activities of Lalo Ayira and the other three Churches are all (100%) done by women. The roles of the elders

of the congregations are only following up the overall activities of the educational processes and paying the salary of the teachers.

The finding of this dissertation that reveals women's positions with full responsibility on the teaching learning process and managerial functions of the pre-primary education program of most of the congregations targeted seems the duplication of history of Aster Ganno and Weizaro Ayantu who could initiate education around Nakamte town in the beginning of the 1900s (See the literature review on pages 25-27)

B. Women's Roles in Environmental Protections and Sanitations

Most of the focus group discussion participants of each congregation view that the activities of the congregations are limited except that they care for plants in the compounds of their respective congregations. But both men and women members of the congregations or the Church community participate in the cleaning and protection of water streams and other development activities also take part as members of the communities of the Kebele in which they are residing. In these activities, women of the Church also participate in similar ways as other women in the whole community participate.

C. Women's role in the Church building constructions.

From the six congregations under this study, currently Tsechallia Eka Congregation is constructing Church building and Nawir Gallawo Congregation is planning to reconstruct their Church for which they started contributing money. The focus group discussions participants at Tsechallia Eka Congregation argue that they have been constructing their new Church in the last three years and have finished nearly 95% of the construction. During these years, women of the congregation have been equally participating with their male counterparts. They were active in labor works like fetching water, in mixing sand and cement, transporting stone and sand from the place of storage to the building site. According to the Church President Mr. Terqa Abdi's view, women's financial contribution is estimated to be 60% which amounts to 147,600.00 ETB out of 246,000 ETB locally collected. The external fund donated by German Hermansburg Mission is only 55,000.00 ETB for the Church construction.

The focus group discussion at Nawir Gallawo Congregation also revealed that their congregation is planning to renovate their old Church building. To start the construction,

congregation members have so far contributed 39,000.00 ETB, out of which their record shows that women's contribution is nearly 40% or 15,600.00 ETB.

Women's economic contributions for the construction and renovation of their Church buildings show that they are active participants in the activities undergoing by their congregations.

Women's experience of constructing Church (See the literature review on page 24) in the past has positively influenced today's women of Teschallia and Nawir Gallawo congregations, who are actively participating in their respective Church constructions.

C. Women's roles in other development activities

According to the discussion made with the focal person at of Lalo Aira and Bila Congregations, the two congregations have started development (investment) activities. In line with these investment activities, the Lalo Aira Congregation installed a grinding mill in 2002. Their reasons for the investment are two folds. The reasons behind the grinding mill are to generate income for the Church, and to ease women's work load from the very hard cultural ways of grinding by human labor. In the process of constructing the grinding mill, the focus group of LAC confirm that they were women (entrepreneur) who generated the idea and also facilitated the purchasing and process of transporting the grinding mill from Addis Ababa city to the locality.

The purpose of planting the grinding mill in the case of BC is similar but men were more active in the process of planting the mill. In addition to the investment on the mill, the BC is also conducting different activities like computer training, photocopy service, stationery, and bakery. In all these activities of the congregation, women's participation is low when compared with that of men.

3.3.2. Women's role and status in health services of Lalo Aira Hospital (LAH).

LAH is located in the Western Wollega at 522 km from the center. The Hospital was established by German Hermansburg Mission in 1930. According to the current Administrator of the Hospital, Mr. Mengesha Regassa, the Hospital gives services for 180-200 patients daily and the Hospital also has 81 beds to help the critically sick people.

3.3.2.1. Over-all women's participation in the services of Lalo Aira Hospital (LAH).

The LAH is rendering its medical services by the health professionals of 67 women, 68 men adding up to the total of 135 professionals. Thus, the professionals' qualification of women and men in the health services of the Hospital will be shown in the next table:-

Table-7: Health professionals at LAH

Qualification level	Number of health professionals					
	M		F		T	
	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %
Certificate	46	47.92	50	52.08	96	100
Diploma	16	51.61	15	48.39	31	100
Degree (B.SC)	2	50	2	50	4	100
Doctorate	3	100	-	0	3	100
Specialist	1	100	-	0	1	100
Total	68	50.37	67	49.63	135	100

Source: LAH health professionals profile.

As indicated in table-7 above, the over-all participation of women in the health services of the Hospital is nearly proportional with that of the men. However, the women are more concentrated in the less qualified areas of medical services of the Hospital because the majority (52.08%) of the health professionals of the Hospital is women at a certificate level. The participation of women with medium (diploma and degree) level qualification is more or less equivalent to the men. On the contrary, at the higher professional level (doctorate and specialist) we find only men. Nevertheless, the role of women in the service of the Hospital is significant.

Health professional women's significant roles in the medical works of LAH, indicates that, they are repeating the trends of Swedish Evangelical Mission women who constituted 66.67 % of the staff of the medical work of the mission in the beginning of 1920s (See the literature review on page 28).

3.3.2.2. The Commitment of workers of Lalo Aira Hospital from gender perspective.

In the context of this dissertation, committed health professionals means professionals who have sacrificed their lives in the profession of health care particularly in the locality where the study was conducted. According to the document review made on the health professionals of the Hospital, 39 health professionals committed their lives for more than twenty years at the Hospital out of which women constitute 58.97%. Thus, one can confidently argue that the roles

of these women who have been serving the Hospital for more than twenty years are very great in saving the life of the community who has been getting medical services at the Hospital. According to the views of the respondents, the reasons as to why serving for more than twenty years are described in the next table.

Table-8: Why do employees (both men and women) of EECMY stay longer at LAH?

Reasons for staying longer at the Hospital	Respondents					
	M		F		T	
	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %
Concern for the Community health Services	6	20.00	24	80	30	100
Family related problems	3	10.00	16	53.33	19	63.33
Low level of education	2	6.67	14	46.67	16	53.33
Issues related to retirement	-	-	9	30.00	9	30.00
Regulation of the Church	-	-	3	10.00	-	10.00
Better salary of the organization	-	-	2	6.67	-	6.67
Others factors	1	3.33	4	13.33	5	16.67

Source: Questionnaire data

Analysis of the information in table-8 above indicates that health professionals who have been serving LAH for over twenty years attribute their longer stay at the Hospital to three main factors.

1st Concern for the community health services: All of the respondent claim that they stayed for over twenty years due to their concern for the well being of the community getting medical services from the Hospital.

2nd Family related problem: As previously discussed under the background of the respondents 63.33 % of them are married (See table-3) and thus are responsible for their family's well-being, education, etc. The respondents argue that problems related to their families have limited the mobility of the health professionals to find better jobs else where.

3rd Low level of education : 53.33% of the respondents are forced to serve the Hospital for more than twenty years due to the low level of education, which restricted them from searching for better work else where.

4th Retirement issue: Few of the respondents (30%) give their reasons for serving over twenty years at the same Hospital is related to the issue of retirement. Here, it could be argued that

these health professionals think of the pension fund they deposited at the organization and their life after retirement.

As previously explained, when the services of women and men are compared, they are women who are giving longer period of services at the Hospital. The reasons that are forcing women to stay longer period of time than men at the Hospital are illustrated in the table below.

Table-9: Respondents view on the reason why women serve longer than men at LAH.

Reasons for women's serving longer than men	Respondents					
	M		F		T	
	In.N	In.%	In.N	In.%	In.N	In.%
Family related responsibilities of women	5	16.00	24	80.00	29	96.67
Women's concern for health of the community	2	6.67	23	76.67	30	83.33
Women's lack of freedom to decide on their personal issues	-		23	76.00	23	76.67
Marriage partners nature of work	1	3.33	21	70.00	22	73.33
Women's low level of education	2	6.67	19	63.33	21	70.00
Lack of educational promotion	2	6.67	15	50.00	17	56.67
Better Salary of the organization	-	-	2	6.67	2	6.67
Regulation of the Church others	-	-	3	10.00	3	10.00
Others	-	-	2	6.67	2	6.67

Source: Questionnaire data

As clearly discussed above, women constitute 58.97% of the health professional who have been serving the LAH for more than twenty years. According to the data in the above table, reasons for women's longer services than men of the Hospital are:

1st Family related responsibilities: Most (96.67%) of the respondents argue that women are more responsible for their families like children and family including old peoples care, education of their children, etc than men. Thus, the respondents relate the reasons for women's longer services at the Hospital than men to their family related responsibilities.

2nd Women's better concern for the better health of the community: 83.33% of the respondents describe that one of the reasons of women's longer service is due to their concern for the better health condition of the community that are getting health services at the Hospital.

3rd Women's lack of freedom to decide on their personal issues: The respondents (76.67%) relate one of the reasons for women's longer service at the Hospital to the issue of decision making. This reveals that employed women working at the Hospital do not have the right to decide on where to work and the right of looking for another employment opportunities due to lack of freedom to decide on their own personal issues.

4th Marriage partners' nature of work: Another factor which is limiting women's chance of changing their work area or profession is their marriage partner's nature of work. This argument of the respondents (73.33 %) has relation with the nature of the organization. The LAH is a Hospital founded and being owned by a religious organization. Majority of the marriage partners of the married respondents are employees of the religious organization who serve on religious affairs and in turn this restricts them to the organization only. Thus, hand in hand with their husbands' nature of work, the mobility of their wives to look for another employment or job opportunities is limited.

5th Women's low level education: As it is described in table-3, 70% of the respondents who are serving at the Hospital are those whose educational level is certificate or below grade 12. Thus, their low level of education has negative influence on their chance to look for another employment.

6th Women's lack of educational promotion: 56.67 % of the respondents are claiming that they were not given chance of promoting themselves through education which in turn forced them to limit their lives at the Hospital.

3.3.2.3. Challenges of the health professionals at LAH

As discussed previously, LAH is a local Hospital located in one of the remote areas of WWZ, the newly established Ayira warda. The health professionals serving at the locality face different challenges in relation to their profession.

Table-10: The challenges both women and men workers face at LAH.

Lists of Challenges experienced by the professional	Respondents					
	M		F		T	
	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %
I. Challenges by both women and Men face						
Heavy work load	6	20	24	80	30	100
Low scale salary	6	20	24	80	30	100
Lack of further education	2	6.67	23	76.33	25	83.33
Lack of freedom to be heard	2	6.67	23	76.33	25	83.33
II. Challenges that women face						
Double burden	-	-	24	30	24	100
Under education and professional challenges	-	-	24	30	24	100
Double control	-	-	22	91.67	22	91.67
Lack of ways to defend for their right	-	-	22	91.67	22	91.67
Other	-	-	4	16.16	4	16.16

Source: Questionnaire data

The data in the above table show that health professionals, both women and men serving at LAH, are experiencing different challenges in their everyday activities. Thus the challenges they are facing are explained below.

A. Heavy work load: All of the respondents do claim that they are carrying heavy work load. With respect to the heavy workload of the Hospital, the respondents from the Hospital argue that especially during their turn for the night duty, there are times when they work from 6: pm to 8:00 am for 14 hours continually without any rest in between.

B. Low scale salaries: All of the respondents argue that due to low salary, they could not cop-up with the increasing living expenses of the Aira. But the salary scale of the Hospital was not renewed taking into account the living costs in the area.

C. Lack of further education: Further education or refreshment courses are important to expose people with new information/ knowledge. However, 83.33% of the respondents claim that one of the challenges which they face as health professionals of the Hospital is lack of further education.

D. Lack of freedom to be heard: According to the terms of reference of the Hospital Management Committee and the Board there is no member that represents the workers of the

Hospital either in the Management Committee or in the Hospital Board. With respect to this matter, 83.33% of the respondents complain that they lack freedom and forum to express their view in the Hospital decision making bodies. Thus, I feel that the Hospital management system is not practicing the principles of good governance. Therefore, the system is still very patriarchal.

3.3.2.4. Challenges which health professional women face at LAH.

It may be argued that challenge which women health professionals face at the Hospital are not new phenomena, but in reality these women are facing the following challenges.

A. Double control: All of the women respondents (See the above table) feel that they suffer from double control. The double control comes from their husbands, fathers or brothers at home and men who are at the decision making positions of the Hospital who are not equipped with the qualities of good governance.

B. Profession related challenges: All of the women respondents claim that they face a sort of difficulty in their day to day activities because of their under qualification. As it is indicated in table-2, from the 67 women health professionals of the Hospital, only 2.89% have BA degree, while the rest are diploma or certificate holders. Thus, it could be obvious that the women health professionals serving at the Hospital are facing difficulties related to their profession from day to day.

C. Double burden: 91.67% of the women respondents argue that they are facing challenges by the double burdens: caring for the well-being of their families and are expected to work eight hours per day as employees. Hence, I can understand that the double burdens, these women are carrying may have negative impact on their physical, psychological and spiritual well-being in one aspect and also have negative impact on the quality of medical services they are giving as they do come to their work place with a pre-occupied mind.

D. Lack of ways to defend their rights: From the women respondents 91.67% argue that they face difficulties due to lack of forums on which they can defend their rights. As it is discussed earlier in the decision making system of the Hospital, the role of women is very little especially at the top decision making bodies of the Hospital. In addition, the workers of the Hospital are not having representatives in the higher decision making bodies of the Hospital. Thus, convincingly, I can supplement to the view of the women respondents that lack of ways to

defend their rights is one of the basic challenges which women working in the Hospital are facing, which in turn negatively influence their roles in each and every activity of the Hospital

3.3.3. Women’s roles and status in the educational services of Horst Spingies Secondary School (HSSS).

HSSS is one of the two high schools of BDS educational institutions functioning in Western Wollega Zone, Aira and Gulliso Weredas.⁶⁰ According to the 2006/7 academic year statistics, the school is running its activities with 2 female, 7male and total of 9 supportive staff, Teaching staff of 1 female, 17 males, and total of 18 teachers Students’ population of 197 females, 418 males and total of 615 students.⁶¹

3.3.3.1. Students’ enrolment

To see the overall students’ enrollment at HSSS for the last five years, it is described in the table below.

Table-11: Student enrollment at HSSS for the last five academic years

Academic Year	Enrollment by Sex					
	Male		Female		Total	
	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %
2002/3	177	76.62	54	23.38	231	100
2003/4	352	65.43	186	34.57	538	100
2004/5	350	67.31	170	32.69	520	100
2005/6	349	67.37	169	32.63	518	100
2006/7	418	67.97	197	32.03	615	100
Total	1646	67.96	776	32.04	2422	100

Source: HSSS students’ record section

As it can be clearly understood form the above table girl students’ enrollment level for the last five academic years is only 32.04%.

⁶⁰ Girma , 2006

⁶¹ Horst Spingies Secondary School profiles of workers and students

3.3.3.2 Participation of professional teacher from gender perspective.

Participation of teachers at HSSS for the last five academic years is illustrated in the next table.

Table-12: HSSS teaching Staff for the last five academic years

Academic Year	HSSS teaching Staff by sex					
	Male		Female		Total	
	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %
2002/3	15	100	--	0	15	100
2003/4	15	93.75	1	6.25	16	100
2004/5	17	100	0	0	17	100
2005/6	18	94.74	1	5.26	19	100
2006/7	17	94.74	1	5.56	18	100
Total	82	96.47	3	3.53	85	100

Source: HSSS teaching staff profile

As indicated in the above table, women's participation in the teaching staff of HSSS is very insignificant (3.53%) in the last five academic years. Thus, the role of women as a teacher at the school is very low which in turn may have negative impact on the academic performance of girl students of the school due to lack of role models.

3.3.3.3: Community contributions to the functions of HSSS

HSSS is a community based school being partially supported by German Missions. The community also contributes to the running activities of the school: both economically and managerially.⁶² In these contributions the community from gender aspect will be discussed in the following sections.

Table-13: Community contributions to the functions of HSSS

Community contributions	Respondents					
	M		F		T	
	In. N	In.%	In. N	In.%	I. No.	I. %
Economic contributions	17	94.44	1	5.56	18	100
Participation in decision Making	17	94.44	1	5.56	18	100
Others Contributions	6	33.33	-	-	6	33.33

Source Questionnaire data

⁶² Girma, 2006.

According to the respondents (see table above), the Ayira Gulliso wereda community which is getting educational services from HSSS are playing roles in the running activities of the school through economic contributions and through taking part in the managerial functions of the school. According to the interview conducted with Yonas Guta, the current director of the school, women's contribution is 40% which is 30,400.00 ETB, out of the 76,000.00 contributed by the community from 2002/3 to 2006/7. Girma (2006) also reports that women (Committee) from the Tsachallia parish had donated 1,000.00 ETB for construction of library of the school in 2003.

Women's participation in contributing fund for HSSS library construction may reflect Ayantu's efforts of generating fund for school construction in the 1920s is still motivating today's women to take part in development activities. (See the literature review on page 24-25)

3.4. Women roles and status in decision-making of Holistic Services of EECMY in the three Weredas.

3.4.1. Women roles and status in decision-making of the EECMY at congregational level.

From the respective focus group discussions of the congregations, it can be argued that each and every activity of the congregations has its own decision making body. However, the general consensus in the discussion is that every subcommittee or specific activity coordinating committee decisions will be accepted after approved by the elders committee's of the congregations which is an autonomous decision maker and thus the elders committee over sees and regulates the whole activities (both spiritual and development) of the respective congregations.

To analyze the roles and status of women among the elders of each congregation, *the total members of elders committee is summarized in the next table.*

Table-14.

Name of the Congregation	Numbers of elders Committee					
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bila	6	54.55	5	45.45	11	100
Bodji Dirmaji	5	55.56	4	44.44	9	100
Burqaa Ayira	5	71.43	2	28.57	7	100
Lalo Ayira	6	66.67	3	33.33	9	100
Nawir Gallowo	8	88.89	1	11.11	9	100
Isachallia Eka	10	83.33	2	16.67	12	100
Total	40	70.18	17	29.82	57	100

Sources: Elders Profile of the respective Congregations.

According to table -14 above, the overall women's participation in the decision making body of the six congregations is 29.82%, which is nearly equivalent to the minimum requirement in the Church policy: 25% participation of women in decision making body of the EECMY. With respect to individual congregations, women's participation is very progressive in two of the congregations: Bila and Bodji Dirmaji Congregations, where their participation is 45.45% and 44.44% respectively. These two congregations are from WS. Bodji Dirmaji Congregation is the first and the oldest congregation of WS which was formed because of the initiation of Evangelical work in the locality around 1900. It is also the first congregation that called women to an ordained ministry (see page 42) in the year 2000. Bila Congregation is the congregation where women's participation is better than others as one of the fruits of Bodji Dirmaji Congregations. Thus, I can argue that the awareness of the community of these two congregations (Bila and Bodji) towards the equality of men and women is highly promoted to a better level. It is even approaching the highest level of proportion (50%) which was decided by the EECMY 15th General Assembly.

On the contrary, when one sees women's proportion in the decision making body of the congregations from Birbir Dilla Synod, two congregations (Burqa Aira and Lalo Aira Congregations) women's proportion is 28.57% and 33% respectively. These two congregations meet the obligation of the EECMY: women's participation in decision making to be 25%-50%. What is amazing and also frustrating is that two of the congregations (Nawir Gallowo and Tsechallia Eka Congregations) have 11.11% and 16.67 women participation in their decision

making organ respectively. Women's proportion in these congregations' decision making bodies is by far below the minimum requirement of the Mekane Yesus Church. On the other hand, there are no positions occupied by women as leaders or secretaries of the elders committee. Nevertheless, half of the congregations assign women to serve as cashiers due to their trustfulness abilities on financial management.⁶³

3.4.2. Women's roles and status in the decision making system Lalo Aira Hospital (LAH)

In the decision making system of LAH, both men and women participate and the ratio of their participation is described in the table below.

Table-15 : Women's participation in decision making system of LAH.

Decision making Position /organ	Members					
	Male		Female		Total	
	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %
In supportive activities (food, sanitation...etc.)	2	100	-	-	2	100
At departmental level (child section, OPD, ..etc)	3	50	3	50	6	100
At Management Committee level	4	66.67	2	33.33	6	100
As board Members	8	72.73	3	27.27	11	100
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: LAH administration department.

Data in table-15 above indicate that women do play roles in the decision making position of LAH and the issue of their status in the decision making position or bodies is what is to be questioned. Thus, when each decision making position /body is crosscut and seen, women's roles in supportive activities: main administration department and technical services as a decision maker is invisible. In the two top decisions making positions, the Hospital Management Committee and the Hospital Board, women's participation is 33.33% and 27.67% respectively. In theses top decision making bodies of the Hospital, women are not taking part as a key person like chairperson and Secretary but participate only as members of the decision

⁶³ Statements from Mr. Taraka Abdi: Chairperson of elders Committee of Tsachllia Eka congregation conversations in the focus group discussion held at the congregation.

making bodies.⁶⁴ Thus, women’s statuses in the decision making of the supportive activities of the Hospital and the Hospital’s top decision making bodies are so low as they have less say/voice in decision making or are simply acting as members of the decision making bodies. But in the contrary, roles and status of women at departmental level like women’s ward, men’s ward, OPD, Maternity Department, etc, they are playing equivalent roles and they are also having equivalent status with their male co-workers. From women’s equivalent roles and statuses with the men in the activities of the Hospital at departmental level, one can argue that women are equally important in the health profession of the Hospital with their men co-workers. As it is also previously discussed, women have been serving the Hospital for longer period of time than men. Hence, women’s roles in health services of the Hospital are of a greater value.

4.4.3. Women’s roles and status in decision making system of Horst Spingies Secondary School (HSSS)

According the respondents, women participate in the decision making of the school as members of the community/ beneficiaries of the school, as members of different committee who are taking part in the management of the school running activities. Thus, Committee that manage the school and women’s role in it are illustrated as bellows.

A. Women’s participation in the Community meetings of the School

As community based school, the school has quarterly meeting with beneficiaries of the school and women’s participation in the meetings are described in tbale-16 below.

Table-16: Women’s participation in Community meetings at HSSS

Percentages of women’s participation in Community meeting (2002/3-2006/7	<i>Respondents</i>					
	M		F		T	
	In. N	In.%	In. N	In.%	I. No.	In. %
Below 30%	6	33.33	-	-	6	33.33
30-40%	11	61.11	1	5.56	12	66.67
40-50%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above 50%	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Questionnaire data

⁶⁴ Information from Lalo Aira Hospital administration department.

According to the above table majority (66.67%) of the respondents argues that women constitute 30-40% of the community meetings which have been conducted by HSSS in the last five years. Thus, the roles of women in the decision of making of the school are significant in the community meeting and also meet the requirements of EECMY (25 %- 50 % women's participation).

B. Women's role and status in different committees of HSSS

Women's roles and status in decision making positions of the school are illustrated in the next table.

Table-17: Women's participation in decision making bodies of the HSSS

Decision making bodies of the School.	Respondents					
	Male		Female		Total	
	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %	I. No.	I. %
School administrative committee	5	100	-	-	5	100
Student family committee	6	85.71	1	14.29	7	100
School board	6	85.71	1	14.29	7	100
Others.	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Questionnaire data

According to the data in the above table the HSSS has three decision making bodies established in the form of committee. The first organ that deals with managing the grassroots activities of the school is administrative committee that consists of 5 people recruited from the school teaching and administrative staff.⁶⁵ In this committee women do not have any role as there is no woman in the committee.

The second organ (committee) that manages the activities of the school is the students' family committees. This committee deals with issues that are beyond the capacity of the school administrative committee and disciplinary problems referred to it by the school administrative committee.⁶⁶ In this committee women cover only 14.29% and their contributions/roles in this decision making body of the school is insignificant. The third and the most powerful decision making body of the school is the school board which has seven member recruited from the school administrative staff and from the community which is the beneficiary of the school.

⁶⁵ Terms of reference of Horst Spingies Secondary School administrative committee.

⁶⁶ Terms of reference of Horst Spingies Secondary School students' family committee.

This committee entertains the issues of hiring and firing, budgeting, planning, monitoring and evaluating and etc of the whole activities of the school.⁶⁷ In this decision making organ of the school, the roles of women are very low as they make up only 14.29% of the board the members.

According to the interview conducted with the director of the school Mr. Yonas Guta, women who are participating in the two of the decision making bodies of the school are not at leading position as a chairperson or secretary but are only participating as members of the committee.

With respect to the policy of the EECMY related to women's participation stating 25 % - %50 % in every decision making body or every committee, the participation of women in the school does not even meet the minimum requirement (25%).

⁶⁷ Terms of reverence of Horst Spingies Secondary School board.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Summary of Findings.

The study conducted on the roles and status of women in the Holistic Services of the EECMY in the three wererdas of WWZ reveals that women are playing significant roles in the activities the Church. However, they have very low statuses on decision making when compared to the male counterparts. Ethiopian researchers like Eshetu (2000) and Solomon (2001) argue that religions are instrument of patriarchy that is used by men to keep women at lower positions. The arguments of these researchers confirms the results of this research that reveals the act of the EECMY in ordaining women as pastors only as of 2000, which marks that the slow process in which women are coming to the leadership position in the Church. This slow process indicates how patriarchy is resisting the promotion of women to the leadership positions of the Church.

However, women in the selected target congregations of the EECMY are outshining in the services like choir, prayer, Sunday school services and diaconal services. Women are also at the leading positions in building the economy of the congregations as they are making more in puts to fund raise of the congregations through handcrafts, 'ikubii afuraa' and by producing vegetables in the compounds of the congregations. In youth ministry and sanitation services women and men of the congregations are playing similar roles equally. On the contrary, women's roles in preaching services are very low. They are also contributing in equivalent ways with men in the Church construction activities of some of the congregations.

In relation to the EECMY policy which states women's participation to be 25 %- 50 %, 33.33 % of the congregations under this study have reached the maximum (44.44% and above) representations of women in decision waking. However, women's participation in the decision making bodies of the same percentage (33.33%) of the congregations is by far below (16.67 % and below) the minimum requirement of the Church (25 %) **(See table- 14 on page 65).**

When one assesses health and education works of BDS & WS, women's roles are at the promising level in the health works. For example, in the LAH women make nearly half of the

health professionals though their involvement is concentrated at the lower standard qualification (certificate level) of health profession (**See table table-7 on page 56**)

Women serving in this Hospital are at similar statuses and almost at the same level of responsibilities in the different departments of the Hospital which are rendering health services. Nevertheless, the highest decision making bodies (the Hospital Management and Board) are men dominated. The Hospital management system also does not give a room for workers' representative and thus the workers of the Hospital (especially women) do not have means of reflecting their concerns and views in the management system (**See table-15 on 66**).

Double responsibilities and double control, low educational status, etc are the main challenges of the women at the Hospital, while low salary level and over burden are the complaints of the whole respondents (**See table-10 On page 60**)

In the educational activities undergoing in most of the congregations women are playing the most important roles both as professionals and managers of the institutions. As part of beneficiaries and stake holders, in the educational services being rendered by the HSSS, women have high economic inputs to the school. Women as representatives of the community also take part in the decision making bodies of the school but with a very low participation. Moreover, at the grassroots Managerial functions and the teaching-learning activities of the school women's participation is quite insignificant (**See table-14, 15, 16, & 17 on pages 65-68**). Though women are participating in Holistic Services of the EECMY, BDS and WS, their status is very low when compared to their counterparts.

4.1. Findings of the study from Feminist point of view.

When roles and statuses of women in the Holistic Services of EECMY are analyzed by the lens of the views of both radical and liberal feminists, one can argue that feminism movement had started influencing the system of EECMY. The pressures of feminism movement have made the Church to recognize gender issues or the contributions of women in its functions. The basic reason for my argument is that though many women were active participants in the Holistic activities of EECMY and the Church has been also addressing the needs of women since its inception, the issue of recognizing women's participations become the agenda of the Church

highest decision making in 1970s. The period when EECMY started considering women's issues (1970s) collides with the period when the western scholars were also looking how to put the issues of women in development paradigms. The major changes that have been made by the EECMY towards gender equality and the major international events related to the life of women through out the world are summarized in the next table.

Table-18.

Major Changes done to empower women from 1970 up to date			
Major Changes by EECMY	Date	Some of the Major Global Changes	Date
Organized Women's Section	1973	Mexico world conference on women	1975
Open theological Education door for women	1978	Women's decades	1975-85
Started working on the issues of women's ordination	1981	Copenhagen world conference on women	1980
Passed policy decision on the on women's participation in decision making bodies of the Church (25 % - 50 %)	1997	Nairobi world conference on women	1985
Finalized positively the debates and discussions on women's ordination	1997	Beijing world conference on women	1995
Ordained women for pastoral services	2000	Beijing + 10 world conference on women	2005

Sources: Related documents of EECMY and www.world conference on women.

When dissected from the respective of liberal and radical feminists, one can confidently argue that the women are taking part in the Holistic Services of EECMY from the liberals' point of views. This is because as to the understandings one can gain while dealing with this research, women are taking parts in all most all of the activities undergoing by EECMY cooperating with their male coworkers. On the other hand, though women are rarely participating in few of the activities the Church like formal educational activities, the Church had started considering gender issues as crosscutting issues in its Holistic Services. To conclude women are playing various roles in the Holistic Services of EECMY being part of the settings of the Church and

the Church looks reformist. Thus, the Church is highly influenced not by radical feminist but by the liberal feminist approach (reforming the existing social settings).

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion and implications.

As it is discussed in the introduction part of this dissertation, R.S Kraemer and M.RD' Angelo (1999) argue that women had been actively participating in the early Christianity. Latter on, they were gradually excluded from the religious structures (decision making) and made them passive members in religious services like preaching. However, currently the influences of their struggles have forced some religious organizations to change their constitutions and restructure them to give rooms for women's services. Hence the EECMY has already accepted women's services as ordained ministers in 1997 and also started ordaining women in 2000.

The findings of this study reveal that women's roles and statuses are gradually improving in the Holistic Services of the EECMY. To promote women's participation in its decision making systems the EECMY had already passed policy decision that states: 25%-50% representation of all decision making bodies of the Church to be given to women. The Church had also started removing the barriers that were preventing women from enjoying the right to be ordained as the bearer of the image God to whom He entrusted the responsibility to serve His kingdom.

Further the result of the study indicates that women are playing of valuable roles in the Development activities of the EECMY, especially in the medical services of the Church and educational activities undertaken by local the congregations. But on the contrary women are less active in the educational activities of the Secondary School education the Church. On the contrary, women are making more inputs in the economy of the Church as they are making more efforts through handcrafts, 'ikubi hafuura' and minor agricultural activities.

As discussed above, there is a good start of empowering women because the Church is encouraging women to have equal say in its decision making system to make them active participants in all decision making bodies. In line with this, some of the congregations of the EECMY have promoted women's participation. Thus, they are nearly having equal voice with men in some congregation elders meetings. But on the other hand, in some of the selected

congregations of the Church, women are underrepresented in the Church elders committee, which is against the policy of the Church.

In the end, it is also important to know that the better prevailing conditions towards gender equality in the Holistic Services of the EECMY was initiated by pioneer women's like Aster Gano and later reinitiated by women's like Elisabet Karorsa. The experiences of women in the EECMY is so encouraging and can also be taken as an example in the attempts replicating good practice of the EECMY in other Ethiopian religious organizations towards gender equality.

Having said this, I would like to relate the equal opportunity policy of the EECMY to the feminism movement in the western countries. Did the EECMY have feminist view in its movement towards gender equality policy? In many ways, the EECMY for gender equality had some background of feminist view in its context. The (early) leaders of the EECMY both men and women might have been exposed to the theory of feminism movement in Europe, while staying there (some for exile, and some on scholarship for studies). Therefore, when they came back they were fully knowledgeable about the benefits of women's involvement in decision making at the top level. Thus, one can argue the EECMY equal opportunity policy has an influence of ideas of feminism. To say more, those female missionaries might also have intensified the policy of the EECMY that promotes gender equality in decision making.

Thus, the Holistic Services of EECMY are influenced by feminist movements but the liberal feminist views are what the Church had convinced by because of the followings reasons.

1. The Church had mode first policy decision to make women active participants in its decision making systems of the Church.
2. The Church had started breaking the barriers to the participations of women in religious related activities. In line with this the Church had opened the door of theological educations for women and had started ordaining theologically educated women as pastors. Hence, some women of EECMY are enjoying their right of giving ordained ministers services like conducting baptism, blessing for wedding, and burial ceremonies.
3. The EECMY is creating conducive environments in her holistic activities considering gender as one of her priority (Cross cutting) issues'. Thus, consequently the Church has

Women's Ministry Coordinating Office and Gender and Development desks of the head office of the Church down to the parish level of the Church. To deal with its activities on the issues of Gender the Church women's ministry coordinating office has clearly set objectives (*see page 3*) to promote women's roles and status in the already existing settings of the society and the Church at large and thus at the six congregations under this study.

Generally, the findings of this research reveal that there are good developments towards gender equality in the Holistic Services of the EECMY. Thus, to encourage the sustainability and continuity of the good initiatives of the experiences of the EECMY Holistic Services, and to reflect some areas that need improvements in the Church, the writer of this research forwards the following points as implication of the results of this study.

1. The EECMY has to make more efforts to increase the number of ordained women ministers through providing Theological Education for more women. The EECMY should extend calls for theologically qualified women who are already serving the Church.
2. The EECMY has to invest on how to minimize the gap between its policies on the paper and actual women's participations in the Church to deal with reality in some of the working environments of the Church where women's participations are very low. Thus, the Church needs to conduct continuous awareness rising on her policies related to gender issues to increase the knowledge level of congregations where some of them practice decisions making system monopolized by men. In line with this the Church also needs to improve its Gender Policy and strategies that would regulate the Holistic Services of the Church towards gender equality.
3. The EECMY needs to look into the serious issue of women, especially to give more educational promotions to improve the standard of women rendering services in its Development and Social services and also employ more qualified women at her Social Service institutions like schools.
4. The handcraft activities of women in the EECMY congregations are very traditional. Thus, the Church has to develop the skills of women who are actively participating in the hand craft works of congregations.

5. The experiences being initiated to make young girls be aware of the power imbalance towards gender equality have to be promoted and the Church has to design means of including also young boys in the equal opportunity programs to change their attitudes for better gender equality.
6. Through its Development activities the EECMY is contributing a lot to the needs of the unprivileged parts of the community in Ethiopia by implementing various developments activities like health services, education, rural developments project...etc. Thus, it would be useful if the religious organizations and NGOs dealing with a limited spiritual and development activities would share the experience of the EECMY.
7. Ordained women of the EECMY and the non-ordained Christian women giving different services in the Church are required to share their experiences with women in other religious groups who are functioning in Ethiopia.
8. Lastly, I recommend ecumenical movements across women of different religious background to leave behind their doctrinal related differences and work for unity in diversity to become more powerful in their struggles towards gender equality against the systems where men are dominating the religious practices in Ethiopia.

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WWW. World conference on women.

Appendix A

Pictures that have relevance with the study

Pictures-1 and 2 show partial participants those participated in the focus group discussions at Tsechallia Eka Congregation and Bodji Dirmadji Congregation respectively.

Pictures-1 and 2



Picture-3. Top view of Lalo Aira Hospital and its surroundings



Source: LAH record office.

Picture-4: Majority of Horst Spinies Secondary School teaching and few administrative staff.



Source: HSSS Record Office.

Picture-5 - 10: The fascinating ceremony of the 1st women's ordination.

Picture-5



Picture-6



Picture-7



Picture-8



Pictures- 9: Bekure after ordination sitting among many male pastors



Picture-10. Picture shows when international guests congratulating Rev. Bekure on her ordination day.



Source: Western Synod Record Office.

Picture-11: Characterizes Rev. Bekure celebrating a wedding ceremony at Tsechallia Eka Congregation on February 15/2004



Source: Rev. Bekure's Personal album

Picture-12: shows when Rev. Zewuditu Abdisa and Rev. Yonas Biratu from BDS were rendering holy communion service in a congregation of EECMY.



Source; Rev. Zewuditu Abdisa's personal album

Picture-13: Women's choir group of Tsechallia Eka Congregation.



Source: Taken during the researcher field work

Picture- 14 and 15 show when women were dealing with handcrafts work in a congregation and selling what they prepared in a congregation of WS and BDS respectively.



Source: Western Synod Women’s Ministry office and taken during the researcher field work

Picture-16: Kids attending pre-education at Bila Congregations.



Source: Taken during the researcher’s field work

Picture-17: Building of Tsechallia Eka Congregation.



Source: Taken during the researcher field work

Picture-17 : Reveals when beneficiaries of the school collecting money for HSSS.



Source: HSSS Record Office

Picture-18. Horst Spinies Secondary School Library hall that has regular hexagonal shape.



Source: Taken during the researcher field work

Picture-19: Shows when the Tschallia parish women were leading guests to the library hall to inaugurate the finishing of its construction.



Source: HSSS record office

Picture-20 and 21. The celebration of the opening of HSSS new library in February 2005.



Picture- 22. Shows women who donated 1000.00 ETB for the construction of the library making speech on the occasion.



Source: HSSS Record Office.

APPENDIX B
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
INSTITUTE OF GENDER STUDIES

The Roles and Status of Women in the Holistic Service of
the Ethiopian Evangelical
Church Mekane Yesus In three Weradas of Western
Wollega Zone

Guide for Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Date _____

Time FGD Started _____

Time FGD Ended _____

Introduction: The purpose of this FGD is to generate information for the master thesis on the topic written above. The researcher introduced him self and his purposes to the FGD participants and then requested the participant to give relevant information on the topics under investigation feeling free.

The FGD started with introduction part mainly targeted at introducing the ethical considerations of the researcher to the participants. Consequently the questions that are expected to guide the discussion were presented. The questions are all related to the roles and status of women in the Holistic Services which the congregations are giving to the members and to the society the locality of the respective congregations.

The main leading questions presented for the FGD.

1. Total membership of the congregation
2. Women's roles and status in spiritual services of the Congregations.
3. Women's roles and status in development activities of the congregations
4. Women's roles and statuses in decision making at the congregation level

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

March 2007.

APPENDIX C
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
INSTITUTE OF GENDER STUDIES

The Roles and Status of Women in the Holistic Service of
the Ethiopian Evangelical
Church Mekane Yesus In three Weradas of Western
Wollega Zone

Guide for Interview

Date _____

Time the interview Started _____

Time the interview Ended _____

Introduction: The purpose of the interview is to generate information for the master thesis on the topic written above. The researcher introduced him self and his purposes to the interviewee and then requested the interviewee to give relevant information on the topics under investigation feeling free.

The interview started with introduction part the mainly targeted at introducing the ethical considerations of the researcher to the interviewee. Consequently the questions that are expected to guide the interview were presented one after the other to the interviewee. The questions are all related to the roles and status of women in the Holistic Services which the unites s/he is serving in is giving for the society

The main leading questions presented for the interviewees are:

1. Women's roles and status in spiritual services of the Congregations.
2. Women's roles and status in development activities of the congregations
3. Women's roles and statuses in decision making at the congregation level

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

March 2007.

APPENDIX D

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
INSTITUTE OF GENDER STUDIES

The Roles and Status of Women in the Holistic Service of
the Ethiopian Evangelical
Church Mekane Yesus In three Weradas of Western
Wollega Zone

Guide for case Study

Date_____

Time the interview Started_____

Time the interview Ended_____

Introduction: The purpose of the interview is to generate information for the master thesis on the topic written above. The researcher introduced him self and his purposes to the interviewee and then requested the interviewee to give relevant information on the topics under investigation feeling free.

The interview started with introduction part that the mainly targeted at introducing the ethical considerations of the researcher to the interviewee. Consequently the questions that are expected to guide the interview were presented one after the other to the interviewee. The questions are all related to the personal testimony of the interviewee in relation with the Holistic Services which the EECMY is rendering in WWZ
The leadings questions presented for Rev. Dekure include.

1. Date of birth
2. Place of birth
4. Family backgrounds;
5. Education:
 - a. Elementary school
 - b. Secondary schools
 - c. Colleges
6. Work experiences
7. Ordination history
8. Challenges

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

March 2007.

APPENDIX E
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
INSTITUTE OF GENDER STUDIES

The Roles and Status of Women in the Holistic Service of
the Ethiopian Evangelical
Church Mekane Yesus In three Weradas of Western
Wollega Zone

Questionnaire

Introduction: The purpose of the interview is to generate quantitative data for the master thesis on the topic written above. The researcher introduced him self and his purposes to the respondents in written form. In addition he also introduced him-self to the leaders of the social services institution. To make the respondents feel free to fill the questionnaire, the researcher mainly communicated with respondents through assistant data collectors.

Thus, I respectfully request you to respond to the following questions. Please underline your answers or write on the space given but do not write your name.

Part-I: To be answered by all respondents LAH & HSSS.

1. Age _____
2. Place of birth _____
3. Religion _____
4. Marriage status _____
5. Educational status:
 - a. Below grade 12 b. 12/10 and certificate
 - c. Diploma d. B.Sc. and above
 - e. If other specify _____
6. How much is your monthly salary?
 - a. Below 200.00 b. 201.00-500.00
 - c. 501.00-1000.00 d. 1001.00-1500
 - e. Above 1500.00

Part-II: To be answered only by Lalo Aira Hospital Workers.

7. Number of health professionals at the hospital according to their level of qualification.

Qualification level	No. of professionals		
	Male	Female	Total
Certificate			
Diploma			
Degree(B.Sc)			
Doctorate			
Specialist			

8. For how long did you serve at the hospital/EECMY as a health professional?

Options	Male	Female
a. Below 5 years		
b.5-10 years		
c.10-20 years		
d.Above 20 years.		

9.If your answer for question “No. 8” is “above 20 years” what are your reasons to stay that long in this field under EECMY?

10. When you compare the years of services of men and women, who work longer service years at the hospital?

- a. women b. men

11. Why do you think women or men stay longer at the longer at the hospital?

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____

12. Who participate in decision making system of the hospital?

- a. Men only b. Women only C. Both (men and women)

13. If your answer for question “NO.12” is “Both”, in what ways do they participate?

Decision making positions/Organs	Members		
	M	F	T
In supportive activities (Food, sanitation,...etc services)			
At department level(Child section, OPD.....etc)			
As management committee members			
As board members			
If other specify_____			

14. What are the challenges women and men face in relation to their work, in the hospital?

Challenges both women & men face:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

Challenges women face:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

Part-III: To be answered only by Horst Spingies Secondary School teaching staff.

15. Average annual enrollment of students from 1995-1999 E.C?

a. 1995: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

b. 1996: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

c. 1997: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

d. 1998: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

e. 1999: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

16. No of professional staff from 1995-1999 E.C?

a. 1995: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

b. 1996: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

c. 1997: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

d. 1998: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

e. 1999: Male _____ Female _____ Total _____

17. What are the contributions of the community in the school?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

18. How much is the proportion of women's contribution in the community contributions for the development processes? _____

19. In the past 1995-1999 E.C years how many percent was women's participation in the different meetings held by the community on the issues of the school?

a. below 30%

b. 30-40%

c. 40-50%

d. Above 50%

20. Who participate in decision making system of the hospital?

a. Men only b. Women only

C. Both (men and women)

21. If your answer for question “No. 20” is “Both”, fill the following chart.

Positions of the decision making body	Members		
	Male	female	Total
School administrative committee			
Student family committee			
The school Board			
If other specify_____			

22. If you have any other comments on the roles of women in the life of your school?

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

March 2007.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my ordinal work and all the sources of information used for the study have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Melkam Dunfa Borch

Signature: _____

Date: 16/07/07

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name: Chaltu Deressa Gasso (Ph.D)

Signature: _____

Date: 16/07/07