

# Review on the Historical Prospective of Siiqqee: The Ancient African Indigenous Institution for Empowering Women

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## Abstract

The major purpose of this review is to reconstruct a Historical Prospective of *Siiqqee*, the ancient Oromo Women Indigenous Institution. The implication of this review is to present the summary of existing scholarly works on the role of *Siiqqee* Institution to empower women. Additionally, this paper explores the potential role of women in *Siiqqee* institution and analyses the position of women in the traditional Oromo cultural practices. Despite all Oromo women had an influential position in the past; now it is being declining by following the degeneration in the people's indigenous cultural practices. So, the purpose of this paper is to carry out an in-depth investigation about the status of Oromo women in traditional *Siiqqee* institution. Even though various studies in the past assessed the situation of *Siiqqee* institution and status of Oromo women in some aspects, it is important to examine, update, and document the situation whenever or wherever recent data are available to identify changes and continuities. Information has been drawn from the works of several authors and oral traditions. The data in this study consisted of the primary and secondary sources. Secondary data sources were collected by assessing published and unpublished materials. The available oral traditions were used as sources of data. Finally, these data were described, expressed and articulated qualitatively. All the data were analyzed and interpreted carefully in accordance with the standardized rules of the social science disciplines.

**Keywords:** *Siiqqee*, Indigenous Institution, Oromo, *Gadaa*, Empowering Women, *Ateetee*

## Introduction

Indigenous knowledge is a traditional knowledge that the indigenous people have used for a prolonged period of time. It has enabled them to pass through the ups and downs of life in the attempt to lead their day to day life in their immediate environment. It is also called local knowledge; a village science; or rural people's knowledge. As many scholars argued, it has been seen as alternative way of promoting development in poor local communities [1]. However, a few scholars have considered the importance of indigenous knowledge in good governance, in enhancing public participation and constitute pluralistic society [2] [3]. Mostly, local knowledge is embedded in culture in various forms such as cultural practices, customs, traditions, religious ceremonies, folk stories, folk songs, and proverbs. It passed from generation to generations through words of mouth; not in written form [4] [5].

The Oromo is indigenous people who live in the Horn of Africa with indigenous socio-political institution called *Gadaa* System [6]. However, the emergence of modern world systems and the impact of globalization have much contributed in changing the long established cultural values of Oromo. Hence, the introductions of foreign cultures into the cultural of the indigenous peoples have contributed massive changes in indigenous people's philosophies [7].

## The Concept of Women Empowerment

Now a day, empowering women has been becoming a hot issue in all over the world since last few decades. Inequalities between men and women and discrimination against women have also been venerable issues. Women's empowerment means women gaining more power and control over their own lives. This involves the idea of women's continued disadvantage compared to men which is apparent in different economic, socio-cultural and political spheres. The process of correcting gender gap in a society leads us to improve the condition and status of women in all spheres. It is the degree of women's access to and control over materials and social resources within the family, in the community, and in the society at large [9].

Therefore, women's empowerment can also be seen as an important process in reaching gender equality, which is understood to mean that the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female [10]. Women are playing bigger role in economic fields: as workers, consumers, entrepreneurs, managers and investors [11]. According to the UN Population Fund, an empowered woman has a sense of self-worth. They can determine their own choices, and has access to opportunities and resources providing there with an array of options they can pursue. They have control over their own life, both within and outside the home and they have also the ability to influence the direction of social change and economic order, both nationally and internationally [12].

### The Origin of *Siiqqee* Institution among Oromo Women

Oromo people have different long established indigenous institutions for the well-being of the society. Among all these mechanisms there are an institutions under which the Oromo women could build up their unity, and practice their complaints against unfair action by men in their society. The material cultures are the products of human beings which are created by humans' mind with their knowledge and skills. *Siiqqee* (ritual stick) is one of the material cultures that Oromo women can play cultural, economic, political and religious roles in their society. *Siiqqee* is the special kind of stick that has been accustomed to work as an emblem of both peace and female empowerment. [13] [14].

According to Oromo tradition, mostly *Siiqqee* ritual stick is prepared from a tree known as '*Man'eera*', '*Haroressaa*', '*Ejersaa*', '*Waddeessaa*' and etc. It has various symbolic representations. For example, "as a symbol of married Oromo women, as a ritual stick used for praying, as a ritual stick used during cattle raid, and as an institution of conflict resolution." Oromo women used *Siiqqee* to bless or to curse when their rights are violated. [15].



Picture 1: Borena Oromo Women Holding *Siiqqee* Ritual Stick

Based on the information gathered from informants, in Oromo culture, *Siiqqee* cannot be made by anybody rather it is made by a one who is senior from a high-ranking clan. There are contradicting ideas for the origin of the *Siiqqee* institution within the Oromo society. Some Scholars have the idea that women made the institution by themselves because of *Gadaa* system the socio-political philosophy of Oromo which excludes them from political structures of Oromo [16]. Others argued that *Siiqqee* institution as power of Oromo women is speculated back to the evolution of *Gadaa* system. It was *Abba Gadaa* who had given a *Siiqqee*, ritual stick to his wife by the *Qalluu* (spiritual leader). Similarly, *Abbaa Gadaa* was also given a *Siiqqee* stick to his wife in order to use when she participates in different ritualistic performance. This idea tells us *Abbaa Gadaa* allows his wife only to use *Siiqqee* for ritual purpose as a recreational value rather than social, religious, political and economic aspects [17].

Generally, these arguments are weak as compared to others ideas. *Siiqqee* institution is the issue of social, religious, political and economic aspects of Oromo society, and it may not be limited to *Abbaa Gadaa*'s family. In contrary to this as Loo argued, "*Siiqqee* came into being in the Oromo culture with the *Gadaa* system to govern the life of Oromo women in the social, religious, political and economic aspects [18]. However, some other scholars again discussed that the stick is prepared by mother of a daughter and given at her wedding day. This is a symbol gift that mothers can pass her own *Siiqqee* to their daughter. The women, to whom the *Siiqqee* is given, used to make some arts and decorate the whole body of the stick finally she uses it. [19].

On the wedding day, she gives *Siiqqee* stick to her daughter after blessing her. As the mother blesses in her turn the daughter blesses her mother and at meantime both the mother and the daughter hold the *Siiqqee*. It symbolizes the tie between the mother and the daughter. *Siiqqee* symbolizes the respect and right of a married woman that has been provided by the *Gadaa* law. Women holding *Siiqqee* stick signify that she is legally married. [20] [21] [22].

*Siiqqee* institution is the weapon by which Oromo women fight for their rights and function side by side with *Gadaa* system. This is an exclusively women's solidarity institution that is legitimized by tradition and respected by society. It is a sort of union that provides women with channels to participate in village councils and a cultural vehicle to mobilize women against violence and abuse. It is an institution in which women organize themselves in group to stand up for their rights and control every movement in the society. The use of *Siiqqee* draws an enormous religious, ritual and moral authority, and in the pursuit of peace and social harmony. Oromo women gathered under *Siiqqee* institution and used it as a weapon to fight against the violation of *Seeraa Waqaa* and loss of *Safuu*" among Oromo women. For example if a husband violates the right of his wife, she is shouting *Siiqqee* scream (*iyya Siiqqee*) is occurred. *Iyya Siiqqee* is the mode of communication between Oromo women to mobilize support during problem in the society [23]. Bethrotal

The *Siiqqee* stick is important and related to the rules and regulation of marriage. There are forms of marriages which are based on *Siiqqee* institution, and there are not based on *Siiqqee* institution. In the *kadhaa* (formal engagement of marriage), *Siiqqee* is important. If there is marriage by force (*butii*) *Siiqqee* is not important. People say “*Siiqqeen gurguraan*” (She is married by *Siiqqee*). If a woman get married based on *Siiqqee*, she has full rights as formal marriage. If she get married without *Siiqqee*, she has no power or respect in her husband’s family since it is considered as informally married [24].

### ***Siiqqee* Symbols of Oromo Womens’ Authority**

Based on the oral traditions among Oromo if social problems such as drought, famine, lack of rain, infertility, disease, political instability and war occurred, Women march to a nearby riverbank and they pray to *Waaqa* (God) by raising up their *Siiqqee* which symbolizes women pray to *Waaqa*. When they get answers to their prayers from *Waaqa* (God), they give thanks to him by putting their *Siiqqee* on the ground. For instance, if a woman cannot give birth, the women gather and pray to *Waaqa* (God) through *ateetee* ritual by holding their *Siiqqee* to give her a child [25].



Picture 2: Arsi Oromo Women Holding their *Siiqqee*

Therefore, the women in the clan organize themselves under the *Siiqqee* sisterhood solidarity. “They form this *Siiqqee* solidarity by coming out from the clan holding their *Siiqqee*, inserting the tip of their *Siiqqee* in the blood of a slaughtered sheep, and touching one another forehead by the blood touched by their *Siiqqee*”. It is making a promise to help and support each other until they die [26].

According to Dirribii, *Siiqqee* stick has a special respect in Oromo traditional society, “no one can use the stick to keep cattle, riding horse, beating donkey, etc like ordinary stick” since it is a symbol of honor for married women. In Oromo traditional society, married women identified from unmarried women or girls by holding her *Siiqqee*. A married woman holds *Siiqqee* whenever there is a special event, or ceremony, and social or natural problems. The informants also narrated that in traditional Oromo society, married Oromo women without holding *Siiqqee* is sign of breaking *Safuu* (Oromo moral code) of the society and her husband is responsible for her breaking *Safuu* of Oromo. It is not allowed to use *Siiqqee* by girls and not yet married women. Several of the informants have stated that the young unmarried girl does not seem to possess similar power as she does not have the power hold *Siiqqee* to pray or to curse. It is believed that she is *wayyuu*. No one could cross women holding *Siiqqee* in any place during conflict resolution, during rituals such as *irreechaa*, *ateetee*, *muudaetc* all peoples including *Abbaa Gadaa*, *Abbaa Bokkuu*, *Abbaa Duulaa*, and other officials should have give them respect and receive blessing from folk of women[ 27 ].

Additionally, Hinnant asserts the respect of *Siiqqee* in the society as follows:

“For example if a man riding horse comes across a woman holding *Siiqqee*, he has come down from his horse for the honor of *Siiqqee*. And anyone who comes across a woman holding *Siiqqee* has to stop and give the way for the woman holding *Siiqqee*. Even one has to give the way first for

*a woman holding Siiqqee to cross a river before he crosses the river. If a woman is going a long journey like going to visit her mother and father from her clan, she holds her Siiqqee stick with her and no one will attempt to attack her even if she is going alone”[28].*

However, now day young generations are victims of globalization, the values of *Siiqqee* are on the way to extinct. They are forgot the respect and honor of *Siiqqee* institution. It is also due to the fact that the younger generation has been seriously influenced by the global media. Thus, many of its members now view such institutions as “primitive” and “old fashion”.

According to Oromo oral tradition, if there is a conflict or war between two groups in a clan and if the women come and stand between the parties by holding their *Siiqqee*, the fighting has to stop completely for the respect of *Siiqqee*. For example, as it discussed above if a husband violates the right of his wife she take her *Siiqqee* and runs out of the house to start *Siiqqee* scream (*iyya Siiqqee*) which is the mode of communication between Oromo women. As soon as *iyya Siiqqee* is heard, women in the village abandoning their houses and must move to the area by holding their *Siiqqee*. Then after, women gather in the compound of the misbehaving husband and they see the case of this misbehaving husband and his wife [29]. Under such circumstances if the situation is minor they solve the problem and if the case is beyond their capacity they postpone it for another day.

The conflict resolution usually ends by compensating the group and peacemaking their divinity. This is usually done by forcing the offender to sacrifice one of his cows or calves for the women to eat. If the offender does not admit his mistake, the women impose a more serious curse called *abaarsa Siiqqee* (the curse of *Siiqqee*). This is the stage when all of the women began to curse through praying to *Waaqa* for the offender to be abandoned [30]. Traditionally, the village women pronounced the offense committed against a single woman as violation committed against them as a group. Hence, no woman in the village excuses protesting. A woman who disregards the request for protest is considered as one who has weakened the group unity and break law of *Siiqqee*. Therefore, if someone assess the role of women in the *Siiqqee* institution in the past and the present due to Christianity and Islamic religions, impact of globalization and the modern education, the status of *Siiqqee* institution in Oromo society. However, even if, *Siiqqee* has now come under the protection of *Walda Siiqqee* (*Siiqqee* Association) the association did not contributed much to accelerate and restore this institution, to enhance the role of women in the communities and to take inspiration on women empowerment. [31].

#### ***Ateetee* Ritual under the Shadow of the *Siiqqee* Institution**

The word *Siiqqee* is thus often used to describe various mobilizations conducted by women yet the term *ateetee* is also applied. In some areas of Oromia, *ateetee* and *Siiqqee* seems interchangeably refers to both religious practices and political mobilizations conducted when women’s rights or women’s *wayyuu* (*Safuu*) has been violated. In Oromia, women’s prayer was used in the past as a powerful means of ending harsh ecological distractions, political, economic and social crises. It also indicates the system in which *Ayyaana*(spirituality), *uumaa* (nature) and *Safuu* (ethical and moral code) to explain the relation of human, spiritual and physical world. This is a part of the belief system that women are closer to nature in their nurturing and life sustaining activities [32].

The Oromo women perform traditional *ateetee* ceremonies in respect of *Maaram*. *Maaram* was created by *Waaqa* and it believed to be the divinity of women. Therefore, Oromo women perform *ateetee* ritual ceremonies in respect of *Maaram*. It is believed that *Maaram* will help barren women to produce a child, and help pregnant women to give birth to a child. When a woman gives birth to child women will gather say *ilili ilili ilili* as a symbol of thanks giving to *Waaqa*. On the other hand, *ateetee* is a spirit that comes upon women and worshiped as a traditional religion. Oromo women worship the *ateetee* spirit by making different rituals. They come together from the whole village to worship *Waaqa* through this ritual. The women host *ateetee* sprit is prepared a big feast for the *ateetee* ritual and make sacrifice for the spirit. The other women who came for the ritual pray sing and dance calling the *ateetee* spirit to upon the host mother saying “*illi-illi-illi*”. Then the spirit comes upon her and she began show different actions like scream and jump here and there. This is a symbol of sprit arrival on women. Then after, the neighboring women prayed to the spirit for their children, cattle and for the barren women. Lastly, they eat and drink, and go back to their home. The *ateetee* ritual goes to every woman turn by turn in the village [33].

There are two important theories in the *ateetee* ceremony. The first one is “its ritual functions as a prime source and protector of the female individuals’ morality”.The second one is “the mechanism that women can cause pressure on male domination when they struggle in group” [34] [35] [36]. In the *ateetee* worship, the leading committee is elected based on their age, better knowledge of the ritual and personal commitment in the society. The duty of this committee is to hear the compliant of the women. As it discussed above some of these problems can be mistreatment and offenses that men caused against women. Thus an offended wife calls *ateetee* outside her house by saying “*illi-illi-illi*” until neighboring women come and join her. Then the neighboring women come and have assembled in her compound. Then, the offended wife declares her grievance and the women either directly proceed to *ateete* or more usually take an appointment for another time. The offender is

made to be present on the occasion and asked if he has committed the offence. The husband who admits his mistake apologizes for his act and scarifies sheep for the folk of women. Then reconciled with his wife, he gets back to his home. So, *ateetee* is a public gathering of women and it has both religious and social function among the traditional Oromo cultures [37].



Picture: 3 Neighboring Women who Took Part in the *Ateetee* Ritual Practice

Due to various internal and external factors, the *ateetee* ritual and other beautiful Oromo cultural heritage are now seriously endangered to extinct. Among many factors, Islam and Christianity religious and other agents of globalizations are the most hindering factors. They have caused a breakdown to valuable Oromo indigenous philosophies. They view its use as a form of paganism. When compared to Christianity, Islam is more fanatical towards the Oromo traditional values. In its long history, the religion had never been as intolerant to indigenous creeds and communal practices as it is presently observed. As elsewhere in Islamic Africa, the influence of Islamic laws was very limited and always subordinate to and combined with the local customs [38]. Before the expansion of Islam and Christianity, the Oromo had their own traditional African religion called *Waaqeffannaa* the belief in *Waaqa* (God). Following the expansion of Islam and Christianity the socio-political movement and indigenous values in the area became decline. Later when the expansionist pressurized Oromo society “they adopted the religion as an ideology of resistance against the anticipated disintegration of their social structure and identity” [39] [40].

### The role of Women in *Gadaa* System

As it discussed above this paper has the product of several studies conducted on the *Gadaa* and the role of women in the *Gadaa* System. Among a dozen of scholars, geographer Enrico Cerulli, Anthropologist Asmarom Legesse, Hunting Ford, Martial De Slavic, Marco Bassi and P. T. W. Baxter and some others are contributed for the interpretation of the *Gadaa* System and their work was a ground breaking to the study of the indigenous Oromo socio-political philosophies.

Historically, Scholars are argued as Oromo women have no powers during the period of *Gadaa* rule. In *Gadaa* democracy women cannot be *Abbaa Gadaa* or *hayyuu* in the clan leadership structure. However, this scholar substantiates this view as the wife of elected *Abbaa Gadaa* is equally treated like the *Abbaa Gadaa* himself. The question for why women marginalized from *Gadaa* System is still controversial among scholars. For some scholars, the reasons are rooted in cultural, socio-economic and biological factors [41], [42]. Other scholar also argued as “Under Gada system, women do not belong to the *Gadaa* grade of the clan in which they were born and to which they are married. Unmarried women are viewed as *keessummaa* (stranger) and *Alagaa* (non-relative) in the clan to which they are married” [43]. Though, even if, the issue is still debatable it doesn’t mean that women didn’t have role in the *Gadaa* Democracy. Basically, *Gadaa* system is not the issue of being *Abbaa Gadaa* or not being *Abbaa Gadaa*. *Gadaa* Democracy is the issue of Oromo socio-political philosophies that required equal participation of both male and female.

Furthermore, others also argued as age-grading *Gadaa* system by itself is obstacle to women participation. This idea confirm that “naturally women need to give birth to children and to look after their home and children which affect them to pass through all *Gadaa* grades like the men”[44]. But as a mechanism of check and

balance and to counter the male domination they developed their own parallel institution known as *Siiqqee* institution [45] [46]. However, under *Gadaa* umbrella the role of women as part of Oromo community is fundamental and very crucial. Women are half part of Oromo society and equally considered with men under *Gadaa* system. It is believed that *Gadaa* system is not complete without role and participation of women. According to Debela, “women are pillar of the *Gadaa* system and in all cases without the women’s participation there is no *Gadaa* System.” He also argued as the role of women in *Gadaa* system to promote moral and ethical order of Oromo community is large. In the *Gadaa* system, “if *Abbaa Gadaa* dies by chance, it is his wife who takes the position and run *Gadaa* Leadership until the next *Gadaa* leader elected.” [47]. Thus, *Gadaa* system is a system in which the rights of women are respected. Therefore, that is why Oromo women formed a parallel institution of their own under the protection of *Gadaa* system and it stands for women’s ritual, political and social power in the society. For me *Gadaa* system and *Siiqqee* institution is a coin of opposite sides [48].



Picture 4: Both Gujii Oromo elder men and women marching to 74<sup>th</sup> *Gumii Bokkoo* (a ritual place where the Gujii people exercise their cultural events and hand over traditional *Gadaa* System)

During the *Gadaa* power transfer, it is the women with the *Siiqqee* that blesses and decorates the ceremonies for the person who gives and takes over the *Gadaa* offices. Again, Ragatu quotes as “The newly elected officials walk under the *Siiqqee* sticks raised up by women standing in two rows and touching the other tips of their *Siiqqee* together” [49]. Thus, both *Gadaa* and *Siiqqee* institutions helped to maintain *Safuu* (Oromo moral codes) of Oromo society. It functions hand in hand with *Gadaa* institution and it has given big opportunity for Oromo women to articulate their views and address issues of concerning to women [50]. Generally, in the *Gadaa* rule, women are actively engaged through *Siiqqee* institution and they deal with all aspects of their life [51] [52].



Picture 5: This is a special food that women prepared during *Gadaa* power transfer (*baalli*)

### The Role of Oromo Women in Indigenous Peace Building

As the researcher experience about the Oromia region, it is known that the majorities of the disputes in rural areas are settled through traditional procedures. Different scholars have been studied the role of indigenous conflict management. But they did not study the role of *Siiqqee* institution, which is one of the indigenous peace building mechanisms practiced by Oromo women. So, this study examines the roles of Oromo women in conflict management with special emphasis on practicing use of *Siiqqee*. Besides, many scholars existing in the country in general and the Oromia region in particular tend to neglect the role of women in the various social, cultural,

and economic interventions of their communities. Those who studied conflict resolution have not given due attention to women's role in conflict resolution of their respective society. In light of the existing views, this study looks at the role and place of women in Oromo traditional conflict resolution with specific reference to *Siiqqee* institution [53].

One of the duties of women holding *Siiqqee* is for pray to *waaqa* and settling conflict. They have a regular meeting to pray to *waaqa*. In many parts of Oromia this is called *ateete* worship. The women take their *Siiqqee* when they go out for prayer. For instance, Getu quotes " They pray for a barren woman so that she can have a child, they pray for the sick to be healed, they pray for the peace of the people and cattle, they pray for good weather, etc. "[54]. One of the main uses of *Siiqqee* is defending the right and respect of women. For example if a husband violates the right of his wife she grabs her *Siiqqee* and runs out of the house screaming *Siiqqee* (*iyya Siiqqee*) which is the mode of communication between Oromo women to mobilize support. As soon as *iyya Siiqqee* is heard, women must leave the house to join in the scream. Additionally, the elders of the community will be sent to the women group to assess the problems. Then she will tell her problem and finally they solve the case [55].

In the Oromo culture, for woman complains, "Additional witnesses are not required in order to punish the offender. Her words are trusted and taken at face value". So the person who violated the right of the woman will be punished accordingly. Woman defends their rights also by *Abaarsa Siiqqee* (*Siiqqee* curse). In this case, they raise their *Siiqqee* together and curse the person who violated their right. In Oromo tradition, a curse of women is believed to be very powerful. Additionally, "whenever accidents occurred, like over flooding properties by heavy rain, someone's house is caught on fire and destroys his property, the women in village will take their *Siiqqee* to mobilize the community to help the person or the group that affected by the accident" [56].

The authority women have is ending conflict or war between different clans or with other ethnic groups. Whenever there is conflict between parties if women carrying their *Siiqqee* and stand between them they quickly stop the fighting for the respect of *Siiqqee* [57]. In other hands, if a foreigner comes to fight one country or one region to take their resource, the women will raise their *Siiqqee* and pray to *waaqa* until they come back peacefully. So, in Oromo tradition, men will not go to war to fight enemy before they receive blessing and pray from women holding *Siiqqee* [58].

However, according to many scholars, there are a number of factors affect *Siiqqee* institution towards conflict resolution approaches. They do not end conflicts which are beyond the women power. As Bartels stated, "The Procedures of indigenous conflict resolution mechanism often contradicts with universal declaration of human rights". For example, the practice restricts the participation of children's and girls' below 18 ages [59]. But, children grow under the school of Oromo socialization called *safuu* (what is right and what is wrong) of the society. In addition to that, since the system is cultural "traditional institutions are open for abuse, politicization and corruption" [60]. Furthermore, in indigenous conflict resolution there is gender bias for example, in cases with no women elders, some women may believe that male elders are biased against women [61]. On the top of these, traditional conflict resolution mechanism has also its own strengths. "It quickly responds to time crisis, they contribute to the saving court case loads, they contribute to saving money, it also minimizes the problem in shortage of judges who work in the regular courts, and budget constraints". One important features of *Siiqqee* institution is their use of colorful ritual symbol and interpretation of myths to bring conflicts to an end. The rituals and interpretation of myths have psychological impacts on the parties in conflict [62].

## Conclusion

Historically, both *Siiqqee* and *Gadaa* institutions equally appeared in the Oromo culture to govern the social, religious, political and economic life of Oromo society. Many Scholars are argued as Oromo women have no role in the *Gadaa* justice system. The questions of these scholars are open to scholarly debate. However, in *Gadaa* system have big role and without the women's participation there is no complete structure of *Gadaa* System at all. Therefore, under the protection of *Gadaa* system, Oromo women formed *Siiqqee* institution as a mechanism of check and balance to counter the male domination in the society. *Siiqqee* ritual stick is a symbol gift that by mothers given to their daughter during her wedding day. In Oromo culture, *Siiqqee* is a symbol of married women, a ritual stick used for praying and an institution of conflict resolution. It is a cultural vehicle of Oromo women used to bless or to curse and to mobilize support when the rights of women are violated. In Oromo traditional society *Siiqqee* tick has a special respect. It is a symbol of married women. Married women distinguished from unmarried women by holding her *Siiqqee*. A married woman holds *Siiqqee* whenever there is some special ceremony, social, and natural problems. A married woman without holding *Siiqqee* is sign of breaking *Safuu* (Oromo moral code) of the society and her husband is responsible for the action.

One of the duties of women holding *Siiqqee* is pray to *waaqa* and settling conflict. In many parts of Oromia this is called *ateete* worship. Both, *ateete* and *Siiqqee* refers to religious practices and political mobilizations conduct. If social problems such as drought, famine, lack of rain, infertility, disease, political instability and war occurred women will march to a nearby riverbank and pray to *Waaqa*(God) by raising up their *Siiqqee* and when

they get answers they give thanks to him by putting their *Siiqqee* on the ground. The *Ateetee* practice by women is one part of a belief system that women are intermediary figures between *Waaqa* and the physical world. Whenever there is conflict between parties if women intervene and stand between them they quickly stop the fighting for the respect of *Siiqqee*. In other hands, if a foreigner invaded one country and men going to defend these enemies, the women raise their *Siiqqee* and pray to *waaqa* until they come back peacefully. So, in Oromo tradition men will not going to war to fight enemy before they receive blessing from women holding *Siiqqee*. Unlike modern court system, traditional institutions are very important to minimize the crisis of time, save court case loads, and contribute to save money.

In the past, both *Ateete* and *Siiqqee* institution plays a big role in social, religious, political and economic life of Oromo women. However, currently due to the impact of religion (Christianity and Islamic), globalization and the modern education system, the status of *Siiqqee* institution in Oromia has been endanger to extinct. Now a day since young generations are the victims of globalization, the values of *Siiqqee* are on the way to extinct. They forgot the respect of *Siiqqee* institution in the society. It is also due to the fact that the young generation has been seriously influenced by the global media and tempted to western style. Thus, many of them now view such institutions as primitive and old fashion.

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