

Running head: VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Female Return Migration from the Gulf States: Pre-return Expectations, Post-return Experiences  
and Prospects of Voluntary Returnees in Ejersa- Lafo Woreda, Central Ethiopia

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Social Work in the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Masters in Social Work

By: Assefa Bayisa

Advisor: Adamnesh Atnafu (PhD)

June, 2017

Addis Ababa University

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Assefa Bayisa, entitled: Female return migration from the Gulf States: pre-return expectations, post-return experiences and prospects of voluntary returnees in Ejersa- Lafo Woreda, and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the Examining Committee:

Examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Department or Graduate Program Coordinator

### **Acknowledgment**

First, I would like to thank almighty God, without whose help nothing could be ever done and completed. I would then like to thank my advisor Adamnesh Atnafu (PhD) without whose kindly professional advice, this paper could not have been completed. I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my friends and seniors whose critical comments have invaluable contribute to bring this paper to fruit. Last but not least, I would like to forward my deepest gratitude to all the study participants; this study is theirs.

**Table of Contents**

| <b>Contents</b>   | <b>Pages</b> |
|---|--------------|
| Acknowledgment .....  | i            |
| Table of Contents .....   | ii           |
| List of Tables .....  | v            |
| List of Figures .....   | v            |
| Acronyms and Abbreviations .....  | vi           |
| Abstract .....  | vii          |
| Chapter One: Introduction .....   | 1            |
| 1.1 Background of the Study .....   | 1            |
| 1.3 Objectives of the Study .....   | 8            |
| 1.3.1 General objective .....   | 8            |
| 1.3.2 Specific objectives .....   | 8            |
| 1.4 Research Questions .....  | 8            |
| 1.5 Scope of the Study .....  | 9            |
| 1.6 Significance of the Study .....   | 9            |
| 1.7 Definition of Terms .....   | 10           |
| 1.8 Organization of the Study .....   | 11           |
| Chapter Two: Review of Literatures .....  | 12           |
| 2.1 Overview of Migration Processes .....   | 12           |
| 2.2 Drivers of Migration .....  | 14           |
| 2.3 Return Migration .....  | 16           |
| 2.4 Theories of Return Migration .....  | 19           |
| 2.4.1 Neoclassical Economics and the New Economics of Labor Migration .....         | 19           |
| 2.4.2 The Structural Approach to Return Migration .....                             | 21           |
| 2.4.3 Transnationalism and Return Migration .....                                   | 22           |
| 2.4.4 Social Network Theory and Return Migration .....                              | 23           |
| 2.4.5 Re-Acculturation Theory of Migration: Sussman's Cultural Identity Model ..... | 24           |
| 2.5 Return Preparedness and its Degrees .....                                       | 26           |
| 2.5.1 Degrees of return preparedness .....  | 28           |
| 2.6 Understanding the Variety of Post Return Experiences .....                      | 29           |

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 2.7 Sustainable Return and Re-embeddedness of Returnees.....                                 | 31 |
| 2.8 Reintegration Strategies of Returnees .....  | 36 |
| 2.9 Benefits and risks of temporary labor migration to the Gulf States: Ethiopia's case..... | 37 |
| 2.10 Institutional Settings and Policies on Return Migration.....                            | 41 |
| 2.10.1 Institutional Settings .....  | 41 |
| 2.10.2 The Diaspora Policy.....  | 43 |
| Chapter Three: Methodology .....   | 45 |
| 3.1 Introduction .....   | 45 |
| 3.2 The Researcher's Philosophical Stance.....   | 45 |
| 3.3 Study Area and Population.....   | 46 |
| 3.4 The Research Approach .....  | 47 |
| 3.5 Research Design .....  | 49 |
| 3.6 Data Collection Methods and Procedures .....   | 50 |
| 3.6.1 In-Depth Interview.....  | 50 |
| 3.6.2 Observation .....  | 51 |
| 3.7 Inclusion Criteria.....  | 52 |
| 3.8 Sampling Techniques and Size.....  | 53 |
| 3.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures .....  | 54 |
| 3.10 Data Quality Assurance .....  | 56 |
| 3.11 Ethical Considerations.....   | 57 |
| Chapter Four .....   | 58 |
| 4. Data Presentations and Interpretations.....   | 58 |
| 4.1 Description of the Study Participants .....  | 58 |
| 4.2 Pre-Return Expectations of the Participants .....  | 66 |
| 4.2.1 Expectations Related to Economic Situations.....                                       | 66 |
| 4.2.2 Expectations Related to Social Situations in Home country.....                         | 67 |
| 4.2.3 Expectations Related to Family Situations .....  | 68 |
| 4.3 The Returnees Preparedness: Free will and Readiness to Return.....                       | 69 |
| 4.3.1 The Prepared Returnees .....   | 70 |
| 4.3.2 The Moderately Prepared.....   | 71 |
| 4.4 The Motives behind their Return.....   | 73 |
| 4.4.1 To Realize their Plans .....   | 73 |

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 4.4.2 Homesickness .....   | 75  |
| 4.4.3 The Health Condition of their Family .....   | 76  |
| 4.4.4 The Need to Take a Rest .....  | 76  |
| 4.5 The Participants Post-Return Experiences .....   | 77  |
| 4.5.1 Feeling of Happiness upon Arrival to Ethiopia.....                                       | 78  |
| 4.5.2 Being Engaged in Diverse Livelihood Strategies .....                                     | 79  |
| 4.5.3 A Feeling of Discomfort towards the Working Condition in Homeland .....                  | 80  |
| 4.5.3.1 Being Out of Job .....   | 80  |
| 4.5.3.2 The Inability to Yield Fair Profit out of Businesses.....                              | 80  |
| 4.5.3.3 Family Related Problem.....  | 83  |
| 4.5.3.4 Lack of Good Governance .....  | 84  |
| 4.5.4 Opportunities Available to the Participants .....  | 85  |
| 4.5.5 Challenges the Participants have Faced .....   | 85  |
| 4.5.6 Limited Reintegration Back Home .....  | 89  |
| 4.5.6.1 Economic Problem: Unsuccessfulness in Rebuilding Sustainable Livelihoods .....         | 89  |
| 4.5.6.2 Psychosocial Problems.....   | 89  |
| 4.5.6.3 The Weakening of Social Networks after Return.....                                     | 91  |
| 4.6 Prospects as it is Viewed by the Participants.....   | 92  |
| Chapter Five: Discussion .....   | 95  |
| 5.1 Over Expectation in Homeland .....   | 95  |
| 5.2 Return Preparedness .....  | 96  |
| 5.3 The Varsity of Return Motives .....  | 98  |
| 5.4 The Context of Ethiopia in which Return took place: ‘...Coming from fire to Fire...’ ..... | 99  |
| 5.5 Failure to Reintegration Back Home .....   | 100 |
| 5.6 The Eagerness for Re-migration.....  | 104 |
| Chapter Six: Conclusion and Implications.....  | 106 |
| 6.1 Conclusion.....  | 106 |
| 6.2 Implication for social work education, policy, practice and future researches.....         | 108 |
| References.....  | 114 |
| Appendices.....  | 123 |
| Appendix 1 :In-Depth Interview Guide for the Returnees.....                                    | 123 |
| Appendix 2: Observation Check List.....  | 126 |

### **List of Tables**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1 Attributes of the Research Participants.....               | 63 |
| Table 2 Emerged themes regarding pre-return expectations .....     | 65 |
| Table 3 Emerged themes regarding return motives .....              | 69 |
| Table 4 Emerged themes regarding return preparedness .....         | 72 |
| Table 5 Emerged themes regarding the post-return experiences ..... | 77 |
| Table 6 Emerged themes regarding prospects .....                   | 92 |

### **List of Figures**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1.A conceptual model of return preparedness ..... | 28 |
|--|----|

**Acronyms and Abbreviations**

**ETB-** Ethiopian Birr

**ILO-** International Labor Organization

**IOM-** International Organization for Migration

**KSA-** kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**MFA-** Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**MoLSA-** Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

**OECD-** Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

**SIHMA** -Scalabrini Institute for Human Mobility in Africa.

**UAE-** United Arab Emirates

**UNICEF-** United Nations International Children's and Education Fund

**UNHCR-**United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees

**FDRE-**Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

**Abstract**

*Return migration is a dynamic and complex phenomenon which involves diverse participants with different backgrounds and experiences. Espousing hermeneutic phenomenological research design, this study utilized interviews and observation to describe and interpret pre-return expectations, preparedness, and return motives including the post-return happenings and accomplishments of 10 female voluntary returnees from the Gulf States to Ejersa-Lafo Woreda. The participants were selected through snowball sampling technique. Collected data were analyzed thematically. The findings show that although the participants had positive expectations in their homeland, felt prepared for return and back home to realize their prior plans, they were hardly reintegrated in all economic, psychosocial and social-network aspects. Regardless of the type of return motives and degree of return preparedness, this study revealed that conditions in homeland alone would enormously influence the post-return experiences of returnees. Upon home return, the home market appeared to them difficult, their social status declined over time and families were not found trusted as they were appeared to them before. The inability to live up to their prior expectations and plans, made the participants not to feel at home that, in turn, triggered their re-migration intention. Thus, the participants are susceptible to the potential sufferings ahead of them since they are eager to reach again, even illegally, the destination countries they came from. Alongside raising awareness of the returnees about the potential consequences of illegal migration, social workers in collaboration with the local government should devise means to re-embed them in their community. Money management orientations before leaving home, and information about home situations before return should also be provided to the migrants in order to make their reintegration not challenging.*

Key terms: voluntary return, reintegration, social networks, return preparedness, Gulf States

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The dynamic and chronologically successive movement of people from one geographical area to another, either willingly or forcefully, is an integral trait of human beings upon which the history of civilization was built: After a while the notion “movement” which connotes action was developed into “migration” which implies place (Jamie, 2013). It can be said that migration is part and parcel of human kind.

Multiple factors, such as environmental, political, social, and economic, may necessitate migration. When it comes to labor market, migration is triggered by high unemployment rate and underemployment for the blue-collars, low wages for the white-collars, and unsatisfactory educational provisions and acquirement of skills in countries of origin (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2009). Thus, compared to other types of migrants, the driving factor behind labor migrants is largely economic.

Nowadays, international labor market comprises a significant number of women. More and more women are migrating independently of men (Pinnawala, 2009). Beside the increase in number, however, compared to their male counterparts, females are concentrated mainly in the hidden and secondary labor markets (Anthias, 2000). This is due to a gendered labor market that is sensitive to a gender-selective demand for labor where independent women migrants have become the major players. For instance, two thirds of all part-time and temporary workers are women (Pinnawala, 2009). This implies that women have mainly participated in low paying jobs, besides their significant occupation of international migrant work force. This is mainly manifested in Middle-East countries where the majority of migrant women work as domestic workers.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Covering more than 80%, women represent the lion's share of people working as domestic workers. Being a feminized sector of the economy, domestic work is characterized by a large number of women migrants working in the field (Schewenken & Haimeshof, 2011). The major destination countries of transnational women migrants are the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] where many African and Asian women work as domestic workers. Among them, growing number of migrant domestic workers in GCC are from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Egypt due to their cheap labor compared to the Asian women (Fernandez, 2010). Evidences suggest that domestic workers are treated differently in GCC based on their respective countries rank, mainly economic. Ethiopian women are part of this story.

Experiencing constant poverty that has been triggered by social, political, economic, and environmental factors, Ethiopia is a country from where people desperately migrate to more developed countries (if possible, they rather prefer to go to western countries, but if not, they go to anywhere accessible). Either illegally, through trafficking and smuggling or legal channels, citizens of the country continue to migrate in search of better living conditions, education and employment (Adamnesh & Adamek, 2016). It can be said that regardless of the place they go and the type of work awaiting them, Ethiopians eagerly migrate abroad through whatever means available.

With 2-3 million workers entering the job market annually, the country is unable to provide necessary livelihood opportunities, especially for the young, which is viewed as the main driving force behind migration. Most of Ethiopian legal migrants in the Middle East are women; mainly young and single (Carter & Rohwerder, 2016). The absence of employment prospects for young Ethiopians associated with a high division of gender roles in the labor force participation has produced a gendered consequence where women bear the shortfall of the employment deficit

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

by entering into the informal sector or migrating as contract domestic workers (Fernandez, 2011). This indicates the prevalence of gender based discrimination in Ethiopian labor market which favors males over females and in turn pushes females for migration.

Majority of Ethiopian women experience abuse in one or more migration cycles; some of them are trafficked to the Middle East through illegal routes, significant others are discriminated and abused in the destination countries, and still many others are deported (Regt & Medareshaw, 2016; Fernandez, 2010; Regt, 2007). Thus, despite their enthusiasm to migrate to the Middle East, usually, their expectations are unmet and things went the other side.

Following the persistent problems attached with migration to the Middle East, especially for female domestic workers, studies have been conducted on return migration stressing on the returnees' pre-return experiences and their reintegration back home (Kuschminder, 2013; Regt & Medareshaw, 2016). However, apart from the abuses and deportations of Ethiopians that gained relative attention, the case of labor migrants who had been working in the Gulf States and returned home voluntarily is not given due emphasis. Thus, there is a need to study women voluntary return.

To this end, this study intended to describe the pre-return expectations, post-return experiences and prospects of female migrants who voluntarily returned to Ethiopia from the Gulf- States.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The increasing importance and complexity of migration globally implies a global increase in return migration (Davies, Borland, Blake & West, 2011), which is part of a migration process and defined as the act of going back to once own place of origin (International Organization for

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Migration [IOM], 2004). Migrants return to home either voluntarily after reviewing all available information about the conditions in their country of origin or involuntarily through expulsion.

Associated to the voluntary/ involuntary return migration dichotomy, there are different outcomes resulted upon the returnees back home which put them in different social, cultural and economic situations and, therefore, affect their reintegration differently. Concerning this issue, Casarino suggested that there is a need to know “who returns when, and why; and why some returnees appear as actors of change, in specific social and institutional circumstances at home, whereas others do not” ( Casarino, 2004, p.254). Parallel to Cassarino’s suggestion, Van Houte and Davids (2008) also indicated that it is important to categorize returnees based on their return motives which has an important implication for their post-return experiences.

Both claims argued above by the mentioned authors have strong connotations that would divert the phenomenon of return migration from the mere conception of “going back home” to dynamic and complex process which is characterized by divers participants with complex backgrounds and experiences. For instance, as one aspect of return migration, recent studies on ‘prepared returnees’ demonstrate that they are more likely to contribute to development (Kuschminder, 2013; Cassarino, 2004; 2008). According to these empirical evidences, for returnees to contribute to their country’s development, their return should be prepared. In principle, prepared returnees have means for their reintegration. Here, it seems that return preparedness is to do with voluntariness; the more the migrants are prepared, the more likely they would voluntarily return home and reintegrated too.

Although it can be argued that “return can never be voluntary when there is no plausible (legal) alternative” as Noll cited in Davids and van Houte (2008, p.1413) stated, a migrant with no option to stay in destination country but to return homeland without being forcefully

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

repatriated is considered as a voluntary returnee by policy makers and NGOs (Van Houte & Davies, 2008). However, for Cassarino, voluntary return only comprises migrants who “chose on their own initiative to return, without any pressure or coercion” (Cassarino, 2008, p.113).

In Ethiopia, as far as labor migration, particularly of domestic workers concerned, most of the empirical studies stresses on trafficking to and deportation from the Gulf States. Issues related to the miseries Ethiopian maids had encountered upon their journeys to the Gulf States (Addis, 2014; Frouws, 2014a; Beydoun, 2006) and during their stay abroad (Adamnesh & Adamek, 2016; Jamie & Tsega, 2015; Kasahun & Mulugeta, 2015; Abebaw, 2012; Fernandez, 2010) accompanied with the related reintegration problems back home (Regt & Medareshaw, 2016; Kushminder, 2014) are at the heart of these studies.

Through their review of literature on fragility and migration in relation to Ethiopia, Carter and Rohwerder (2016) reported that the migration journey of Ethiopian’s to the Gulf States, illegally, through trafficking and smuggling is risky, and accompanied with many human rights abuses and deaths. Rape, unwanted pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections are risks that, usually, faced female migrants.

Kushminder (2014) citing Ethiopian female returnees from the GCC stated that different kinds of abuses such as beatings, indentured labor, not receiving food, not receiving payment, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and restricted movement including burnings, beatings resulting in hospitalization, and even death are done to the domestic workers while they were working in the Gulf States.

In their study of the return migration experiences of Ethiopian women trafficked to Bahrain, Adamnesh and Adamek (2016) found that migrants return mainly because of intolerable working conditions and continued abuse. Their findings show that the returnees faced

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

reintegration difficulties for they have not accumulated enough savings while they were working abroad, and faced misunderstandings and impractical expectations from their families and community upon return.

On their study of the experiences of Ethiopian deportees prior, during and after their forced return from KSA, Regt and Medareshew (2016) argued that besides inability of the Ethiopian government to re-embed them economically, the absence of preparedness due to sudden return impacted the economic, social network and psychosocial embeddedness of the returnees upon back home.

Available literature searches indicate that voluntary return migration experiences were hardly studied. As to my knowledge, there is no study conducted solely on voluntary returnees from the Gulf States to Ethiopia. Thus, there is a need to study women voluntary return.

In fact, most of the migration story of Ethiopians, specifically of the domestic workers, is full of tragedy (Kushminder, 2014) that necessitated for practicable empirical investigations to be conducted. Nonetheless, as a matter of fact, as far as Ethiopian female domestic workers in the Gulf States are concerned, return migration is not always a matter of deportation as there are those who took own initiatives to return home. Studying the post return experiences of voluntarily returned female domestic workers, apart from the deported, invaluable contributes to our current knowledge of female return migration from the Gulf States. Correspondingly, this study targets to understand the issue of migrants' voluntary return.

To a greater or a lesser degree, every issue has both opportunities and challenges, so does migration. There are challenges and opportunities migrants have encountered during all the migration process. Challenges and opportunities are there both at country of destination during their stay abroad, and at the country of origin during their back home. Divergent from the

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

aforementioned studies that mainly studied the problems and harms the deportees encountered both while they were in the Gulf States and after their return to Ethiopia, this research stressed the challenges faced by and opportunities available to voluntarily returned female domestic workers via explicating their post return experiences such as their reintegration (economic, social-networks and psychosocial) with diverse factors influencing it. Only when we reveal the post-return experiences of the voluntarily returned females and the meanings they attach to it, we become aware the essence of return migration from the Gulf States. Otherwise, a conclusion that we are going to arrive at about labor migration, specifically about domestic workers may become partial and incomplete. Understanding the current situations of the returnees is also important to know their future plan.

In addition, since pre-return expectations (Gmelch, 1980), return preparedness (Van Meeteren, Engbersen, Snel, & Faber, 2014; Cassarino, 2008) and return motives (Van Houte & Davids, 2008) have bearings on the post-return experiences of the migrants, this research intended to describe and interpret the returnees' expectations in their homeland, and their preparedness and motives for return while they were working in the Gulf States.

Lastly, studying the experiences of voluntarily returned female migrants has policy implication. Beside rehabilitation of the deportees, it urges policy makers to consider the case of voluntary returnees during policy initiation that will help them sustain their living. It also has implications for social work education and practice.

Generally, the persistent nature of labor return migration from the Gulf States, the dearth of researches on voluntary return migration including the existence of considerable research gaps on the area has indicated for the need to study female voluntary return migration experiences.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 General objective**

The overall aim of this research was to study the pre-return expectations, post-return experiences, and prospects of voluntarily returned females from the Gulf States to Ethiopia in Ejersa-Lafo Woreda of west Shewa zone, Oromiya regional state.

#### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

Following the general objective, the study intended to meet the specific objectives mentioned below.

1. To explore expectations of the voluntary returnees about home land prior to their return to Ejersa Lafo Woreda
2. To elucidate the preparedness of the voluntary returnees for their return to Ejersa Lafo Woreda
3. To describe the motives that have influenced them to return to Ejersa Lafo Woreda
4. To explicate experiences of the voluntary returnees after they get back to Ejersa Lafo Woreda
5. To reveal prospects of the voluntary returnees

### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study has an intention of addressing the following research questions:

1. What were the expectations of the voluntary returnees in their homeland?
2. What were the preparedness's of the voluntary returnees looks like for home coming?
3. Why do the returnees decided to come back?

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

4. What are the experiences of the returnees after their homecoming?
5. What are the prospects of the returnees?

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

Geographically, the area of study covered 'Ejersa-Lafo' Woreda. I was interested in this particular geographical area for two reasons: First, it has high prevalence of out- migration. I have an exposure to the area. I know that a significant number of women immigrate to the Gulf-States in order to be hired as domestic workers. Second, I was interested to conduct my study on the area for I have prior contacts with some returnees of the district so that my engagement to the field was easier (Neuman, 2014).

Methodologically, this study was delimited to qualitative approach. I inclined on a qualitative approach since my intention was not quantifying the experiences of the returnees rather to understand and describe their experiences and the meanings they attached to them (their experiences). The target populations of this study were only females who had worked as domestic workers in the Gulf States and back home voluntarily. This study did not include female domestic laborers who either forcefully deported or, in case, accept return through assisted voluntary return programs.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Studying return migration generally, and voluntary return migration specifically, particularly, from the views of domestic workers, has paramount significances for a country like Ethiopia where a significant proportion of its work force, especially females work abroad as domestic workers. This research, indeed, has the following significances:

First, beyond some studies on voluntary return migration from the West to Ethiopia, little is known about voluntary female return migration from the Gulf States. Hence, this research shed

light on voluntary female return migration by specifically stressing on domestic workers voluntarily returned from the Gulf States.

Second, the study has policy implication that helps concerned authorities (policy makers and implementers) to reconsider the way they view returnees.

Third, the result of this research, in long run, will help the returnees themselves. Once their concerns heard and understood by all the concerned bodies, the forthcoming actions will positively affect their life.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

**Cross-border social network:** In this study context, it does mean a contact on telephone or other social Medias the migrants made with their home society while they had worked abroad or after back home with the host society.

**Essence:** It is the general statement which summarizes the participants' experiences. Each of the five super themes in this study has accordingly summarized.

**Iddir:** A self-help voluntary association which serves as economic and social insurance at times of crises and joy.

**Ikub:** Informal economic associations consisting of few individuals who are willing to fund each other turn by turn within a specified period of time.

**Readiness to return:** It is the preparation of migrants (for home return) which is manifested through the amount of financial capital mobilized, the types of skill acquired and the extent of relationships attained while they had been working abroad.

**Reintegration:** In this study context, reintegration is defined as the process through which the returnees are participating again in the social, cultural and economic life of their community.

**Return preparedness:** In the context of this research, return preparedness denotes the extent to which the participants have felt that they were ready for return or willing for return or both.

**Social networks:** In this research context, it connotes the contacts or relationships between the returnees and their families, friends and neighborhood which helps them build intimacy and trust.

**Voluntary returnees:** In my research context, voluntary returnees are migrants who were neither deported by the authorities of destination countries nor assisted by any concerned bodies upon return. Rather, they are migrants who back home independently. Thus, the returnees were either ready for return or willing to return or both.

**Willingness for return:** The current research used this concept in understanding the participants' extent of volition for home coming.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This paper has six chapters. The first chapter is an introduction which discusses the context of the research concern, specifies what is to be studied, why the study is conducted and the significances of the study outcomes. The second chapter deals with the knowledge that exists on the subject under study. The third chapter explicates the methodology detailing how the study will be conducted. The fourth chapter presents and interprets findings of the study. While the fifth chapter discusses the findings with the literature available, chapter six concludes the study, presents its implications and forwards possible recommendations standing on the study findings.

## Chapter Two: Review of Literatures

### 2.1 Overview of Migration Processes

The migration process can be classified along a number of different continuums, each of which has significance for how it is experienced. These continuums relate to the distance travelled, borders crossed, motivation for, and duration of, migration and the degree of voluntarism or coercion involved (Kabeer, 2007). Thus, migration is a complex phenomenon with multifaceted traits (including spatial and temporal aspects) which need a multi-dimensional lens for understanding.

The extent to which people are migrating too far or too near is defined by the distance covered which has an implication for the different types of environments the migrants are exposed to. It has also a bearing on the international borders that may be crossed and the frequency with which they can return to the home community (Kabeer, 2007). Hence, it can be said that distance can invaluablely affects the migration experiences of migrants.

On the other hand, the duration of migration has implications for the strength of ties with the community of origin and processes of assimilation or marginalization in the receiving country. For instance, according to King, cited in Cassarino (2008), the duration of time and experiences of migrants at abroad should be optimal i.e. “neither too short nor too long”, so that migrants have the opportunity to invest their human and financial capital acquired abroad upon their return which shaped their patterns of reintegration. Although, there is debate as to how long one has to be abroad to be considered a migrant, and thus a return migrant (Kushminder, 2013), United Nations cited in Kushminder (2013) defines a return migrant as an individual who has been abroad for at least 12 months considering that it is enough for the migrant to adjust to the mainstream culture at the host country. This implies how the time dimension affects the

adjustment of migrants in the host countries, and their re-adaptation to the heritage culture in home country.

Border crossings, in turn, have their own set of implications for the different migration experiences including political implications (Kabeer, 2007). This may include the different cultures waiting for the migrants in the host country, the legal systems which may appear different for the migrants, and the political settings which may include or exclude the migrants.

Regarding motivations for migration, determining factors such as predisposing, proximate, precipitating and mediating factors and the relations in-between needs to be distinguished (Van Hear et al, 2012). People may migrate for work, family reunification, to marry, to escape abusive family situations or political repression at home or in response to environmental degradation, however, the distinctions between these elements are blurred (Kabeer, 2007). Hence, the motivations for migration, return migration and remigration are different for different group of migrants which in turn make their experiences diverse.

Similarly challenging is the task of disentangling “voluntary” from “involuntary” form of migration, a distinction, which partly overlaps with that between documented and undocumented migrants and associated issues of legality. The distinction between voluntary and involuntary migration revolves around the question of motivation: whether migrants are migrated by their own volition, deceived to migrate, or coerced into it (Hennink and Simkhada, 2003). Thus, the voluntary and involuntary aspects of migration can also create another continuum. While, the voluntary movements of documented migrants across national boundaries through legally recognized channels represent one end of this continuum, the other undocumented migrants that rely on middlemen of various types who exercise different degrees of control over the process, with increasing coercion represent the other end of the continuum (Kabeer, 2007). Hence, the

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

distinction between documented and undocumented migrants is not a mere distinction rather it can visibly affects their migration cycles differently. For instance, on their study of the relationship between migration, legal status and poverty: evidence from return to Ghana, Wheeler et al, (2007) stated that those who were able to travel with formal documents were more likely to have moved out of poverty by the time of their return. Those who migrate without formal documents are more likely to be poor, and to stay poor, although legal status interacts with a number of other factors to produce less good outcomes for undocumented migrants. In effect, a strong correlation between past and current poverty (i.e. the existence of a ‘poverty trap’) is exacerbated by legal restrictions on migration – thus poorer people face the dual burden of lingering poverty and a lower likelihood of obtaining the correct legal documents to support the kind of migration that might allow them to exit poverty.

This shows how different variables such as the legality/illegality, the voluntary/ forced, and different national and international policies on migration can put the migrants in to too different migration experiences.

## **2.2 Drivers of Migration**

There are determinant factors which get migration going and keep it going once begun. The inequality of access to and opportunities for different things between different environments is the main factor behind the recurrence of migration. Poverty, for instance, was at first considered as a key driver of migration. But later on, it has been recognized that the poorest often cannot migrate since resources are needed to do so, especially for international migration (Van Hear et al, 2012) although this argument is not parallel with the Ethiopian case where the poorest of poor are migrating ( Kushminder, 2014). Kushminder elaborate her statement arguing that:

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

*Women migrating for domestic work do not have to pay any significant up-front costs to a broker. A broker will pay the costs associated with their migration in exchange for their first three months of wages. The fact that women do not require any significant upfront costs to migrate means the poorest of the poor can migrate in Ethiopia (p.2).*

It seems that compared to migration to the western countries which needs more money and social networks, the temporary migration to middle east is relatively simple as it is less costly and possible to make it through brokers easily. The revitalization of the relationship between poverty and migration, in fact, widens the migration discourse added upon the current debate about the relationship between migration and development, specifically whether development hindered migration or facilitate it.

As far as the drivers of migration are concerned, the determining factors such as predisposing, proximate, precipitating and mediating factors are immediately mentioned that shapes the peoples' decision of whether to stay or move (Van Hear et al, 2012). While predisposing factors are related with macro- political economy that shapes structural disparities between the sending and receiving countries, and are considered as outcomes of broad processes such as globalization, environmental change, urbanization and demographic transformation, proximate factors are driven from the working out of the predisposing or structural features such as a downturn in the economic or business cycle in the country of origin, and as a result of economic upturn in the country of destination. Precipitating factors are those that actually trigger departure such as financial collapse, security problems and environmental disasters in the country of origin. This is the arena in which individual and household decisions to move or stay put are made. Mediating factors enable, facilitate, constrain, accelerate, diminish or consolidate

migration. While the presence and quality of transport, communications, information and the resources needed for the journey and transit period are considered as facilitating factors, the absence of such infrastructure and the lack of information and resources needed to move are considered as constraining factors.

Thus, the combination of these driving factors has a cumulative effect on the decision making power of the migrants in their choice to migrate or not.

### **2.3 Return Migration**

Return migration is part of the migration process and refers to the act of going back to a place of origin, whether within the territorial boundaries of a country, as in the case of returning internally displaced persons [IDPs]; or from a host country to an origin country, as in the case of refugees, asylum-seekers, and international migrant workers (IOM, 2004). Nonetheless, this definition of return migration is under criticism by scholars as it excludes many important aspects of return migration. For instance, despite the different categories of returnees ranging from migrant workers to rejected asylum seekers, particularly in Europe, the conception attached with return is all about expelling unauthorized migrants and rejected asylum seekers from the European territory leaving no space for the migrants' post-return condition. As Cassarino (2008) argue in this issue, citing European Council, defining return as "the process of going back to one's country of origin, transit or another third country" (p.98).

Thus, let alone the post- return experiences of the returnees, aiming at fighting against unauthorized migration, predominantly, if not exclusively, the European Union policies did not address the issue of voluntary return migration.

Generally speaking, return migration could be either voluntary or involuntary although it is argued by Noll cited in Davids and van Houte (2008) that "return can never be voluntary when

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

there is no plausible (legal) alternative” (p.1413). Within a broader voluntary return, there is a narrower term called assisted voluntary return. While voluntary return comprised of assisted or independent return to the country of return, transit or another third country based on the free will of the returnee either without any legal obligation to leave or under legal obligation (European Commission, 2005), assisted voluntary return/ assisted voluntary return and reintegration is part of IOM’s programs with a humane and dignified tool to support migrants who are unwilling or unable to stay in a host country and wish to return voluntarily to their country of origin or a third country where they have a permanent residence permit ( Hart et al, 2015). Stressing more on the issue, Kushminder (2013) even equates AVR to forced/involuntary return as long as it comprises the existence of unfavorable circumstances and factors which abruptly interrupt the migration cycle. Hence, “voluntary return migration” and “assisted voluntary return migration” connotes different meanings and cannot be used interchangeably.

On the other hand, involuntary return is a forced deportation or repatriation of labor migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, or whose temporary refuge status has been revoked and who did not have the intention to return to their country of origin (Van Houte & Davies, 2008). This implies that, inconsistent of Kushminder’s argument, forced return is a little bit different from AVR as the returnees did not have the intention to return to their country of origin which is not the case in AVR.

According to IOM (n.d), there are three categories of return that are exclusive to the migrants’ status in the host country. The first one occurs voluntarily without compulsion, when migrants decide at any time during their sojourn to return home at their own will and cost. The second one is also voluntary but under compulsion when migrants are not allowed to stay for

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

several reasons, and choose to return at their own free will. The third one is involuntary return as a result of the authorities of the host state ordering deportation.

Besides the well-known voluntary vs. forced return migration dichotomies, there are also other typologies:

Based on the extent of time expended in the origin country, the return migrants are categorized in to four: those returns with the intention of short term visit to home, returnees based on seasonal work activities, temporary returnees with an intention of staying for a significant period of time but may re-migrate, and permanent returns with an intention of resettling to home country for good (King, 2000).

Based on the relationship between the returnee's expectations, aspirations and needs prior to their return, and the social and economic realities at home, Cerase cited in Cassarino (2004) pointed out four categories of returnees in his attempt to study Italian returnees from the United States emphasizing the complex relationship between their expectations and the social and economic context at home. These typologies are return of failure, (occurs when the immigrants cannot adapt to the destination countries due to social or political factors), return of conservatism (pertains to the migrants with an initial return intention after saving some money during the migration period. they stick to the values of the home society; therefore, rather than changing the social structure, they reinforce it back at home), return of retirement( with almost no developmental impact back at home) and return of innovation (occurs when immigrants are fairly well integrated abroad, having acquired new skills and being involved more in the society of the host country). Cerase's typology of returnees clearly constitutes an attempt to show that 'situational or contextual factors in origin countries need to be taken into account as a

prerequisite to determining whether a return experience is a success or a failure' (Cassarino, 2004).

Generally, from the different typologies of return migration stated above, it is possible to understand the different spatial-temporal factors behind return (both at the country of origin and the host) that determine the failures and the successes of the returnees upon their return including the legal settings, the age, skill, and the subjective feelings of the returnees towards both countries.

## **2.4 Theories of Return Migration**

To date, there are theories with diverse views about the phenomenon of return migration. For the fact that return migration is a multifaceted and heterogeneous phenomenon (Cassarino, 2004), it necessitated theories with divergent ideas, if not always. Neoclassical economics, the new economics of labor migration, structural theory, transnational theory, social network theory and cultural identity model are selected to be discussed for they have believed to explain the problem understudy. The theories are discussed as follows:

### **2.4.1 Neoclassical Economics and the New Economics of Labor Migration**

Neoclassical economics and the new economics of labor migration posit contradictory conceptualizations on return migration. While the former assumes that people move abroad permanently to maximize lifetime earnings, the latter assumes they leave temporarily to overcome market deficiencies at home (Constant & Massey, 2002).

As per the assumption of the neoclassical economics theory, since, migrants are expecting to stay for long in the host countries needing permanent settlement, employment and family reunification, return migration is the outcome of a failed migration experience which did not yield the expected earnings, employment and duration (Cassarino, 2008). In addition, the expertise

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

or foreign qualifications attained in the place of destination can barely be used in the place of origin because it would be irrelevant locally (SIHMA, 2015).

The new economics of labor migration, on the other hand, questions some of the ideas and principles considered in the creation of the neoclassic theory, either by arguing against them, or by simply completing them (Porumbescu, 2015). To the contrary of neoclassical theory of migration which relates return with failures, NELM, views return migration as a phenomenon which is characterized by a calculated strategy by which the returnees are willing to go back home after accomplishing their prior expectations in the destination countries. This implies, the decision to return to the place of origin is a result of a successful experience abroad (SIHMA, 2015).

In addition, NELM stressed that the decision to return back is decided at the household level although they exaggerated the benefit of market at home while underplaying or even ignoring its evil sides such as unemployment and inflation as Gmelch (1980) stated. This is diverted from the neoclassical economics which gives the decision to return solely to the individuals (Cassarino, 2008). According to NELM, the decision to stay abroad is only until they meet their goals, and so temporary (Cassarino, 2004).

As the points depicted above shows, both the theories have contributed to the discourse of migration generally and return migration specifically, mainly, from the economic point of view tracing the successes and failures history of migrants separately which gives a complete picture when combined. Accordingly, these theories may describe the expectations of the returnees and their return motives that might be related with their willingness for return. However, my intention is not to test the theories but only to use them in describing the lived experiences of the returnees.

### **2.4.2 The Structural Approach to Return Migration**

The structural approach, similar to NELM, emphasizes the significance of the financial and economic resources brought back to the country of origin following the return decision and reintegration of the migrants (Kunuroglu et al, 2016). However, the structural approach to return migration depicts return as not solely attached to personal issue rather it should encompass the larger social context and the situational and structural factors that shape these contexts in the country of origin. It gives a due emphasis to the relationship between the returnee's expectations, aspirations and needs prior to their return and the social and economic realities at home. According to Gmelch (1980), although most migrants do not return home in hopes of getting rich, economic conditions are sometimes worse than anticipated. Jobs are harder to find, wages lower, and working conditions poor to abysmal.

Regarding the relationship between the returnee's expectations, aspirations and needs prior to their return and the social and economic realities at home, Cerase cited in Kshinder (2013) pointed out four categories of returnees: return of failure, return of conservatism, return of innovation and return of retirement.

The structural approach was quite influential, attempting to show that return can no longer be seen as a phenomenon detached from the contextual factors both in the sending and receiving countries. Accordingly, out of the objectives of this study, understanding the situations or contexts that have influenced the returnees' decision to return is the one. Thus, the structural theories may help in the attempt to explain the contexts and situations that influenced the returnees' decision to back home.

### 2.4.3 Transnationalism and Return Migration

Transnationalism constitutes an attempt to formulate a theoretical and conceptual framework aimed at a better understanding of the strong social and economic links between migrants' host and origin countries (Cassarino, 2004). Transmigrants are those migrants that developed and maintained multiple ties, such as familial, institutional, religious, economic, and political, both with their country of origin and settlement.

Contrary to the structural approach, return does not mean the end of the migration cycle. Rather, returnees prepare their re-integration through periodical and regular visits to their home country and retain links by sending remittances to their families and households; transnational activities are implemented by regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders (SIHMA, 2015).

Kunuroglu et al. (2016) stated migrants develop multi-layered identities not only through the social and economic links sustained within the heritage and host countries, but also through various ways the migrants are attached to one another by their ethnic origins, kinship, and in-group solidarity.

In a transnational approach, the motivation for a return is related to actions of the migrants which are viewed as a direct outcome of their 'belonging' to an ethnic community. In addition, migrants' self-identification as well as the perception of the 'homeland' is taken to influence their return decision (Cassarino, 2004). Cassarino added that returnees know how to take advantage of the "identity attributes" they acquired abroad, with a view to distinguishing themselves from the locals albeit the probability of marginalization by their own society is there while at the same time trying to negotiate their places in society without denying their own specificities.

The significance of transnational theory for the current study might be manifested in my attempt to understand the future prospects of the returnees. Whether the returnees have developed transnational networks or not, whether they want to re-migrate or not might be described from the transnational point of view.

#### **2.4.4 Social Network Theory and Return Migration**

Social network theory views the migrant as an actor gathering resources needed to secure and prepare to return to the home country. These resources are acquired through the attributes of commonality such as languages, ethnicity, friendship, family ties and other common interests that are available at socio-economic level (SIHMA, 2015).

Likewise the transnational approach to return migration, social network theory views returnees as being the bearers of tangible and intangible resources. Social network theory, however, evaluates the impact of those resources on migrants' initiative to return. Irrespective of the impact of resources on decision to return, returnees constantly maintain strong linkages with their former places of settlement in other countries (Cassarino, 2004).

Unlike transnationalism which views linkages as the result of direct outcome of migrants' elements of commonality in attributes, for social network theorists' linkages are rather a reflection of past experience acquired through migration, or stemmed from patterns of interpersonal relationships (SIHMA, 2015).

Whereas transnationalism views returnees as actors who gather the resources needed to secure and prepare their return to the homeland by mobilizing resources stemming from the commonality of attributes (e.g. religion and ethnicity), social network theory views them as actors who gather the resources needed to secure and prepare their return to the homeland by

mobilizing resources stemming from the commonality of interests and available at the level of social and economic cross border networks (Cassarino, 2004).

Thus, social networks enhance trust among migrants and also provide information perceived to be up date and relevant about socio-economic and political conditions of home country (Willems, 2005). Similar to the above stated theories, social network theory may also contribute to the description of the returnees' life experiences, especially, in understanding whether the participants have social networks prior to their return or not and whether they developed social networks, if any, have benefited them in their attempt to reintegrate.

#### **2.4.5 Re-Acculturation Theory of Migration: Sussman's Cultural Identity Model**

Re-acculturation, refers to readjustment to one's own culture (or heritage culture) after staying in outsiders' culture for a prolonged period of time (Kunuroglu et al, 2016) although migrants have constructed partly or entirely new identities in the migration period (Sussman, 2000), which makes their re-acculturation experience even more difficult than their original acculturation experience in the host country. A set of new hybrid cultural forms which do not necessarily fit in to the home society (transnational identity) may be constructed by returnees. In the ideal situation, the returnees will combine the best of both cultures and benefit from it; however, this situation may build a feeling of in-betweenness; of not belonging anywhere anymore (Davies & Van Houte, 2008).

Sussman's cultural identity model brings a psychological perspective to the understanding of the antecedents and consequences of returning home (Sussman, 2005). Identity shifts occur as a result of the behavioral and social adaptations to the host country become salient upon returning home. Four types of return migration strategies are categorized under cultural identity model

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

namely; affirmative, subtractive, additive, and global. Each is associated with different identity shifts and levels of stress during the remigration experience (Kunuroglu et al, 2016).

Having low adaptation to the host country, and low repatriation distress upon their return to home, while sojourners with an affirmative identity accentuates towards their heritage identity, the sojourners with a subtractive identity shift experienced high adaptation to the host country and high repatriation distress upon return to home as a result their low feeling towards the culture of their home country (Tambyah & Chng, 2006).

Likewise the subtractive identity, sojourners with an additive identity experience high adaptation to the destination country, and high repatriation distress upon return to the home culture although the later sojourners experience distress upon return as a result of “embracing too many aspects of the host culture such as their values, customs, beliefs and social rituals” (Tambyah & Chng, 2006). While subtractive identity shifters tend to search for opportunities to interact with the other return migrants after repatriation, additive identity shifters might search for opportunities to interact with the members of the previous host culture after return (Kunuroglu et al, 2016).

Finally, sojourners with global/intercultural identity shift experience high adaptation to the host country and moderate or low repatriation distress. They simultaneously have multiple international experiences and hence adhere to different cultures (Tambyah & Chng, 2006).

Needless to say, Sussman’s cultural identity model contributes to the knowledge of return migration, as it adds the psychological dimension in to the field which is important to discuss different reintegration strategies of the returnees.

## **2.5 Return Preparedness and its Degrees**

Added with the differences among return migrants in terms of migration experiences, length of stay abroad, patterns of resource mobilization, legal status, motivations and projects, three interrelated factors (the context of reintegration in the home country, duration and type of migration experience lived abroad, and pre and post return conditions) shape migrants' patterns of reintegration in their country of origin (Cassarino 2004).

Beyond the three interrelated factors stated above, however, there is a necessary condition that was forgotten but needs to be considered in migration management policies; return preparedness. Under a study entitled "conditions of modern return migrants", Cassarino (2008) stressed on return preparedness arguing as it is unnoticed agenda in current migration management policies, which intimately connects any person who returns home from abroad, regardless of the place of origin, social background, motivations, prospects, skills and occupational status. Continuing his argument, Cassarino suggested that return preparedness should be taken in to consideration in migration management policies beyond the plurality of return migrants' experiences (Cassarino, 2008). Hence, migrants have to be prepared to some extent in order to develop a positive post return experiences in their countries of origin during their attempt to reconstruct a livelihood.

According to Cassarino, return preparedness has comprised of two elements; free will and readiness. Free will is the subjective feeling that leads migrants on the decision to choose to go or not back home weather it is time, and weather it is right. On the other hand, Readiness to return does mean the extent to which migrants have the ability and opportunity to mobilize the adequate tangible (i.e. financial capital) and intangible (i.e. contacts, relationships, skills, acquaintances) resources needed to secure their return, whether it is temporary or permanent.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

According to Cassarino (2008):

*Free will and readiness to return reflect the ability of a person to decide how, when and why it is time to go back home. This ability is not a given, for the conditions of return may vary substantially, leading to various degrees of preparedness. In other words, not all migrants choose to return on their own initiative, nor do they have the readiness to do so (p.102).*

Hart et al (2015) citing Chobanyan stated that free will and readiness to return supports reintegration process. Readiness is often linked to savings and/or experiences earned abroad that facilitate reintegration in the country of origin. The longer the migration period and the fewer the personal links to the home country, the more difficult the reintegration process will be and more support will be needed for it to be successful.

In nutshell, return preparedness constitutes three variables. The first variable is time. Migrants with different amount of time stay in countries of destination will have different degrees of preparedness that, in turn, affect their reintegration differently. The second variable is resources. The level of the resources mobilized by migrants during their stay in destination countries will have an immense implication on their degree of preparedness and reintegration. The third variable is willingness. The returnees extent of willingness (whether their return decision is voluntary or involuntary) is, also, affect their return preparedness. Thus, the cumulative effects of these variables determine the returnees' preparedness and reintegration which is conceptualized by Cassarino (2004) as it can be seen from the following figure.

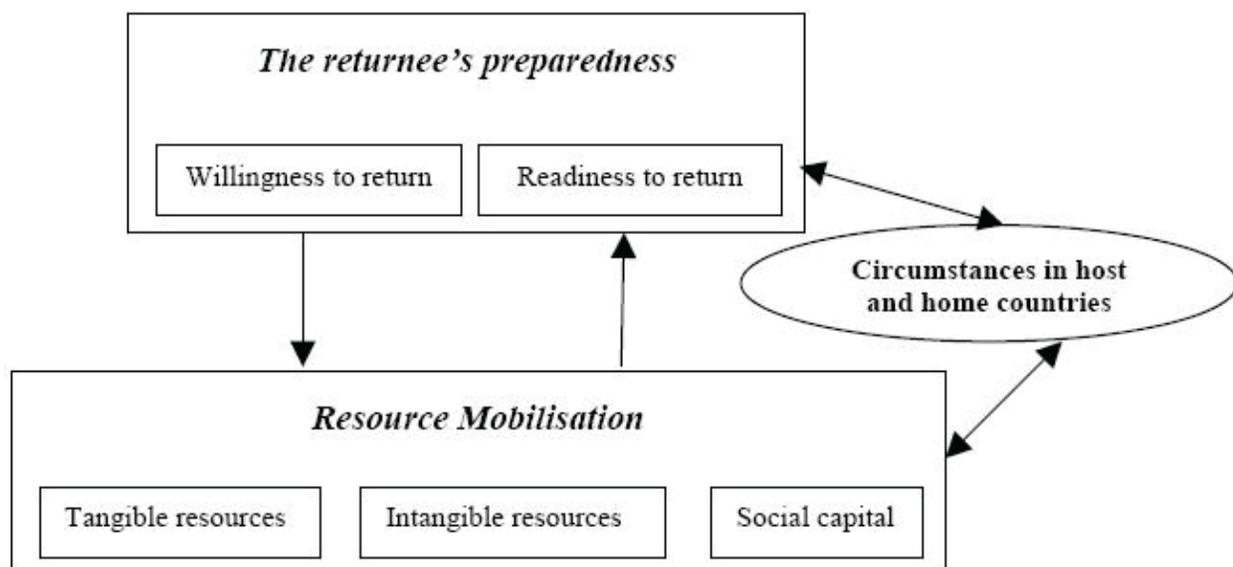


Figure 1.A conceptual model adapted from Cassarino (2004: 271)

The current study also used these concepts for they are invaluable in describing the preparedness of the study participants.

### 2.5.1 Degrees of return preparedness

Migrants have different degree of preparedness upon their return to their countries of origin. Standing on their extent of free choice and readiness, Cassarino (2008) categorized the migrant's preparedness in to three that, enormously, give a hint for why some returnees reintegrate well while significant others are not upon their return to back home.

The first degree is related with those returnees who have a strong degree of preparedness. They perceive as they have accumulated both tangible and intangible resources that can help them their return sustainable. They know all the political, institutional and economic situations in the home country. Some of them may maintain their residential status in their former areas of settlement with a view to securing their cross-border mobility. While the second degree is related with those returnees whose length of stay abroad was too short that hindered them from gathering enough tangible and intangible resources (Calculating that their stay at abroad is costly

than their return, they choose to return back home considering the advantage of local social capital staying for them), the third degree is related with those migrants who have forced to back home because of several reasons regardless of their free will and readiness.

This implies returnees with various degree of preparedness will have various degree of reintegration upon their back home.

## **2.6 Understanding the Variety of Post Return Experiences**

There are different types of post-return experiences ranging from returnees with positive perception towards their return to those who have negative perceptions about their return to their origin country (Van Metereen et al, 2014). It is true that returnees with positive return experiences will be able to sustain their lives which, in turn, contribute for their countries development.

According to Van Metereen et al (2014) assessment of different literatures, two perspectives are important in the attempt to understand the different post-return experiences. While the first perspective tries to understand post-return experiences based on the actual economic and social conditions of returned migrants, the second perspective focuses on the migrants' own subjective perceptions.

In addition to the pre-return experiences of the returnees (Van Houte & Davids (2008), situational and contextual factors both at host and origin countries, the migrants' return expectation, and the extent of voluntariness that the migrants are able exert in their decision of coming home (Bhatt and Roberts, 2012) have been found to affect post-return experiences. According to Cassarino (2004; 2008), the post return experiences of the returnees, also, differs based on the extent to which they mobilize resources through transnational links before return and social capital through family networks.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

In their (2014) qualitative study entitled “Understanding Different Post-Return Experiences of migrants returned to Morocco”, Van Metereen et al revealed three types of subjective post-return experiences. The first group consists of returnees that perceive their return is positive. It includes returnees who have achieved their migration goal, labor migrants who have returned for retirement, and those returnees who have specific business opportunities in the origin country. While the second group includes returned migrants who have mixed feelings about their return resulting from family cases and negative push factors in the host country the third group consists of migrants who attributes towards their post-return experiences negatively for they are returned involuntarily.

The findings of Van Metreen et al (2014) show returnees who perceive positively about their post-return experiences are those who were voluntarily returned with high degree of preparation. Thus, their reintegration is smooth with little or no complains. In the case of those migrants with mixed feelings about return, their preparedness found as moderate. While some are managed to overcome challenges overtime at home country, others got it difficult, and especially for those who didn't fulfill their family's expectations. Finally, migrants with negative post return experiences had made little or no return preparedness due to their low economic status. Thus, it is difficult for them to be reintegrated in their home country as people are not interested in them, and since they are empty handed economically.

The Van Metreen et al (2014) study has shown how important are the different degrees of return preparedness which is connected to the migrants motives of return to explain different post return experiences. Although, the participants of the study are only migrants who were returned from Europe which is not similar with the context of current study, the variables used are important to explain the post return experiences of labor migrants who were returned from GCC.

## 2.7 Sustainable Return and Re-embeddedness of Returnees

Albeit the absence of all-encompassing yardstick for measuring the sustainability of return migration, Black et al (2004) stated that the subjective perspective of the returnee, the objective conditions of the returnee, and the aggregate conditions of the home country are the three elements that needs to be considered in order to judge whether return is sustainable or not.

Regarding to this, the European commission understands sustainable return as “the absence of migration after return because the returnee is fully integrated socially and economically in the home community” (Hart et al, 2015) although, the absence of re-migrating is not equal to living a sustainable life in the country of origin (Habets, 2012). As reintegration is not merely adapting back in to one’s own old life (rather represents processes), it is a phenomenon that consumes time for some and even not become achievable for some others which may end up in a remigration (Kushminder, 2013).

Hence, return sustainability should not be paralleled with the absence of re-migration. Individuals may want to re-migrate but unable to make it for various reasons which is, thus, not similar with sustainability.

Currently, the notion re-embeddedness, which has roots in institutional economics and entrepreneurship, is translated in to remigration research (Davies and Van Houte, 2008). Relabeling the notion sustainable return as a process of mixed re-embeddedness in order not to be normative about the way a returnee should behave upon return, Davids and van Houte (2008) defined it as “a multidimensional concept that refers to an individual finding his or her own position in society and feeling a sense of belonging to and participating in that society” (p. 1414). This (re-embeddedness) is congruent with the IOM’s definition of reintegration which stated:

*Re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or process, for example, of a migrant into the society of his or her country of origin or habitual residence. Reintegration is thus a process that enables the returnee to participate again in the social, cultural, economic and political life of his or her country of origin (Hart et al 2015).*

According to Kushminder (2013), however, the current reintegration definitions are problematic for they equate reintegration with re-assimilation to the culture of the country of origin which is solely a “one sided adaptation process”. Arguing this way, Kushminder defines reintegration as: “The process in which return migrants are supported in maintaining their cultural and social identities by the host society and the whole population acquires equal civil, social, political, human and cultural rights” (Kushminder, 2013, p.33).

Stating that there is significant difference within literature on reintegration of voluntary and non- voluntary migrants similar to the return typologies, Kushminder (2013) summarizes three different types of reintegration.

The first one is called “reintegration of the refugees who are repatriated”. Return via repatriation is unpleasant both for returnees (as they don’t feel at home) and country of origin (as it puts pressure on the government and organizations seeking to provide assistance to returnees), which can further challenge the communities to which they return. Thus reintegration of repatriates has based mainly on fulfilling the basic needs, restoration of basic needs and equalizing their rights with that of the locals.

The second one is called “reintegration of the decided migrants”. According to Cassarino (2008), decided returnees are those who “chose on their own initiative to return, without any

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

pressure or coercion”. Reintegration in the aspect of decided return includes the participation of return migrants in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres of the country of origin.

The third one is called “reintegration of rejected asylum seekers”. Migrants forcefully removed from destination countries, and AVRers are part of this category. Reintegration process includes the provision of several assistances from country of migration upon their return back home. Like that of refugees, the reintegration process of rejected asylum seekers is challenging.

Kushminder (2013) further states as literatures on the reintegration of non-refugees are under emphasizing the concern for basic needs and equal rights insisting that non-refugee returns have no problems on these regards. But non-refugees like rejected asylum seekers, deportees and low skilled migrants (whose migration cycle interrupted and returned empty handed) are as vulnerable as the non-refugee returnees upon their return to home.

Generally, there are three dimensions of re-embeddedness that are interrelated and reinforce each other (Davies & Van Houte, 2008). The first one is economic re-embeddedness. Economic reintegration/re-embeddedness is the process through which the migrants are involved into the economic system of their country of origin, which enable them to earn their own living (IOM, 2011). It is about rebuilding a sustainable livelihood which comprises of access to resources and assets such as income (which needs to be sufficient, stable and independent for maintaining and enhancing the returnees capabilities and assets), housing and land (which needs to be affordable), and education and health care for avoiding or responding to stress and shocks, or recovery from them quickly (Davies & Van Houte, 2008). This implies that returns which cannot incorporate these variables are not sustainable and results in to mess both for government and the individual returnees.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

In the study of “return migration and reintegration issues of Armenians” Chobanyan (2013) stated that the main bottle neck for reintegration is lack of capital for getting involved in business. Parallel to Chobanyan’s study, a 2014 study of domestic workers return migration and reintegration to Kerala (Reshmi& Sayeed) showed that since the female migrants were involved in domestic work at the destination, majority of them were not in a favorable situation after return because they could not amass sufficient money for sustaining themselves and their families. Regarding the returnees intention of future migration, 62 percent of the respondents reported as they want to re-migrate if they get the chance to do so (Reshmi& Sayeed). Thus, the status of the returned females got affected for they did not ensure financial stability during their migration period that pushes them for remigration.

The second one is psychosocial embeddedness which is related to the extent to which the returnees are feeling at home upon their home return. It also includes the extent to which the returnees are being able to construct and express their identity while at the same time establish bond with home society. This is largely influenced by the extent to which a returnee has had a successful migration experience.

While the returnees with good migration experiences have a warm acceptance by home society regardless of their change in identity, the forced returnees without money are no longer appreciated and any changes in behavior has disregarded which hindered them to construct a feeling of belonging. This shows how different dimensions of embeddedness are interrelated and reinforce each other. Furthermore, their pre return experiences also affect the returnees’ psychosocial well-being. For example, restrictive and patronizing conditions in destination countries will make returnees to have low self -esteem and a feeling of dependency which rather makes the situation worse when economic problems are added upon return. However, regardless

of these hardships, the presence of family and friends, home ownership and personal identification with the country were indicated as the most important reasons for them to return back.

The third one is a social embeddedness which is a crucial element in helping returnees to acquire material and emotional support. Through meaningful social networks returnees try to build intimacy and trust with their family, friends and neighborhood. Both in terms of emotional and material support, the possibility of relying on social relations are crucial for returnees to become embedded. However building a successful livelihood is difficult for those returnees with less privileged families as returnees stretch the already limited budget of the household, they cause a major burden to them which has a negative impact on their re-embeddedness (Davies and Van Houte 2008). This is the reason why some of the migrants had faced some kind of tensions in the family because of their return (Reshmi& Sayeed, 2014). This in turn may push migrants for re-migration. For instance, the study conducted by Regt and Medareshaw (2016) on the deported Ethiopian migrants from KSA reveals that many of the young women preferred to migrate again for they had not been able to find jobs and found their chances to get married minimal as a result of their low social status. Even, there are women who got divorced and separated due to the long-term absence from the home land.

Generally, Davies and Van Houte (2008) argued that return always takes place within the context of the country. The economic, political social and cultural circumstances form the conditions that shape the possibilities to re-embed in the society of return. Class, age, ethnic and religious differences can also stimulate or hamper return. In addition, conditions under which one came to and left the host country and the living conditions abroad, had an essential impact on

psychosocial embeddedness, thereby strongly influencing social networks and economic embeddedness upon return.

## **2.8 Reintegration Strategies of Returnees**

The reintegration of return migrants can be assessed from two angles stretching from structure to agency (Kushminder, 2013). In terms of structure, reintegration includes government policies, the number of returnees, and local's perspectives towards returnees. In terms of agency (the returnees reintegration strategies), reintegration has four dimensions namely cultural maintenance, social networks, self-identification, and access to rights, institutions and the labor market in the country of return which has in turn four reintegration strategies. These reintegration strategies not either permanent or mutually exclusive rather they are conceptualized to provide the overall categorizations. Kushminder (2013) has categorized returnees' reintegration strategies in to four.

The first category is called the “reintegrated strategy”. Those returnees who have been abroad for more than five years, who have willingness and readiness to return, and who possess skills and wealth are called reintegrated returnees. They have maintained both the culture of the country of origin and country of destination. They have good social networks. They identify themselves as transnational belonging to the cultures of both countries.

The second one is called the “enclave strategy”. Returnees with enclave strategy are similar with the reintegrated returnees in terms of duration of time spent abroad, preparedness, and skills and wealth. But unlike the integrated returnees, returnees with enclave strategy do not adapt to the local culture. In terms of social network, they have weak ties with the local communities. They define themselves as transnational.

The third strategy is called the “traditionalist reintegration”. They have moderate preparedness upon return and moderate wealth. They want to identify themselves with local culture and hence gave up the culture of the country of destination. They are not trans-nationalists orienting towards the country of return. Unlike the rest of the strategies, traditionalists have full access to rights and institutions of the return country.

The fourth strategy is called the “vulnerable reintegration” strategy: it has comprised of returnees with short period stay abroad less than two years, little preparedness and with low skill and low social status. It includes those forcefully returned or the deportees. They identify themselves with unidirectional orientation towards country of origin. They have little access to rights and institutional services.

Generally, one can learn a lot from Kushminder’s (2013) typologies of reintegration strategies. The returnees’ degree of preparedness, the time they spent abroad, and their degree of adjustment to the host country, determine to which reintegration strategies they are fall in and to what extent their return is successful.

### **2.9 Benefits and risks of temporary labor migration to the Gulf States: Ethiopia’s case**

As a global phenomenon, labor migration provides mutual benefits to the economies of both sending and receiving countries. While it serves as a safety valve against the growing rate of domestic unemployment for countries of origin, destination countries are benefiting from it through filling the gap of labor deficiency in order to stimulate and sustain their economic growth (Kamrava & Babar, 2011).

The historically recent and unprecedented flow of labor migration is targeting the GCC countries following their increment of GDP resulting from the rise of oil price (Beydoun, 2006). Besides the predominantly men dominated construction work earlier, currently, domestic work is

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

the other dominant field attracting large number of women (ILO, 2004). The changing of family dynamics and gender roles and the increment of household income in the GCC countries make the women nationals not to consider domestic work as a proper work that, in turn, open the door for the recruitment of large number of women foreign nationals to be hired as domestic workers, of whom two-thirds were women (ILO, 2004).

Recently, rate of the influx of Ethiopian women into the GCC countries is even surpassing those Asian countries which are considered as the main source of domestic workers suppliers such as Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Indonesia (Jureidini, 2002). Both push and pull factors in the country of origin and destination respectively contributed for the increment. The vulnerable situations prior to migration in which the females had lived (like the death of a parent, wherein the household lost a key income generator), the poor education results (that hindered not to further their education) and the low salary (for those who had a job prior to migration) are considered the factors that push the women to the middle east (Kushminder, 2013). On the other hand, pull factors such as the increasing foreign laborers accommodation capacity of GCC's due to the increment of revenues gained from oil (Beydoun, 2006), the changing of family dynamics and gender roles in the GCC's (ILO, 2004), and the perception of having a domestic worker as a symbol of status in the GCC's (Kushminder, 2013) are resulted in high demand for domestic workers. Here it can be said that irrespective of different push factors in different sending countries, the pull factors in the GCC's seem the same for all. Nonetheless, compared to Sri Lanka, Philippines and Indonesia, the weak Ethiopia's legal frameworks about migration is unable to monitor migration flows (Jureidini, 2002) that contributed to the unprecedented female migration to the Gulf States.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Besides the increasing influx of Ethiopian women to the GCC countries, however, their migration story is full of abuse, discrimination and exploitation. The significant numbers of them are under sexual exploitation in addition to other physical abuses. They are treated in dehumanized ways where there is no human rights protection to them (Anbesse, 2009; Fernandez, 2010; Kushminder, 2014; Adamnesh & Adamek, 2016). Kushminder (2014) citing Ethiopian female returnees from the GCC stated that different kinds of abuses such as beatings, indentured labor, not receiving food, not receiving payment, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and restricted movement including burnings, beatings resulting in hospitalization, and even death are done to them.

The absence of diplomatic representation in the countries where the Ethiopian women are mostly migrating is of the factors stressed on by Adamnesh & Adamek (2016) that contributes behind the lack of protection for their rights. They suggest the need for contact persons in the consulates and embassies to advocate for them in the presence of any violations.

Being driven by high unemployment rate which is even very high for women compared to men, approximately 500,000 Ethiopian women are leaving home annually in order to be hired as domestic worker in the Middle East (Kushminder, 2013). In addition to the pervasive unemployment rate, harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, abduction, rape and sexual harassments, accompanied with the patriarchal nature of Ethiopian society are the reasons behind the desperate influx of Ethiopian women to the Middle East (Emebet, 2002).

According to Fernandez (2010) “the demand for domestic workers, particularly Ethiopian ones, is likely to continue in the long term, as they are ‘cheaper’ and perceived as more compliant than domestic workers from the Philippines and Indonesia” (p.258). Domestic workers are paid hierarchically according to their country of origin. While Filipinos are the first and the

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Indonesians are second in terms of payment that are tend to be employed by the upper class, Ethiopians are paid lower and , therefore, tend to be hired by middle-class households( Regt, 2008). According to Kushminder (2013), compared to the Filipinos and Indonesians that are hired by higher class households with the capacity of employing more than one domestic (where tasks are allocated), the fate of Ethiopians are to be hired by middle class households who can afford only one domestic which they rely on to complete all domestic duties.

This implies that the continuity of the exodus of Ethiopian females to Gulf States and their obedience will inevitably led for further abuses and discriminations unless appropriate bilateral policy measures are undertaken.

In addition to the physical abuses and labor exploitations female Ethiopian domestic workers are experiencing, they need to reinvent themselves culturally and religiously in order to easily assimilate into the host country employer's rather conservative expectations that will help them in to integrate better in the host countries but very challenging to reintegrate back home (Anbesse et al, 2009). Thus domestic workers face reintegration challenges upon their return.

Despite their susceptibility to different forms of discrimination and abuses in the Middle East, however, the migrants are contributing to their countries development either directly through participating in different investment sectors or indirectly through sending remittances to their families. Even though the growing trend of illegal migration towards the Middle East creates a complicated situation in the effort to protect their rights, it is indicative that there is a possibility to create a condition to reap better benefits from the migrants by solving the problems gradually (MFA, 2013).

## **2.10 Institutional Settings and Policies on Return Migration**

### **2.10.1 Institutional Settings**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Civil Service, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Immigration Department, Ministry of Justice and the Federal Police are governmental institutions having concerns on migration issue. On the other hand, International Labor Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations International Children's and Education Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) are the International Organizations that are active in the field of migration in Ethiopia. There are also Private Employment Agencies Association and the Private Employment Agencies Union working on the issue (Siegel & Kushminder, 2011).

According to Siegel & Kushminder (2011), out of the governmental institutions, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is involving in new labor migration, particularly with domestic workers to the Middle East. Out of the international organizations, while the ILO has taken a lead in trafficking issues, particularly of female domestic workers to the Middle East, the IOM provides services to return Migrants in addition to its broadest engagement in facilitation of migration in Ethiopia. On the other hand, the primary responsibility of UNICEF for migration in Ethiopia is to provide assistance to unaccompanied minors who are returned.

From non-governmental organizations working in Ethiopia to assist return migrants, Agar, Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), Association for Forced Migration and Stichting Dir Foundation are working together in a consortium to provide assistance to female returnees from the Middle East (Kushminder, 2013).

On the 2012 international dialogue on migration, the then state minister of the ministry of labor and social affairs of the FDRE, Doctor Zerihun Kebede, stated that as a need to reach the

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

stranded Ethiopian migrants in transit and destination countries, the government of Ethiopia in collaboration with IOM, host countries, international community and other key stakeholders has been implementing the program called “Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)” for Ethiopian irregular migrants (Zerihun, 2012). The minister added that; “We also find it necessary that policies, strategies and incentives are in place so that temporary migrants are attracted to return to the home country and become potent actors in development” (p.6).

Divergent from the above statement by the state minister, in her 2013 study of “female return migration and reintegration strategies in Ethiopia” Kushminder found that:

*The government of Ethiopia does not necessarily promote return from the Middle East, but does acknowledge the challenges of returnees and has begun to implement policies to support returnees, such as the social workers in the local Kebeles in Addis Ababa p (p.81).*

According to Kushminder (2013), the overall structural environment for Ethiopian female returnees from the Middle East is adverse where the government service is not yet strong enough to be labeled as favorable, where they face challenges in the private sector in finding employment and with reception and treatment from locals. Unlike the professional diaspora returnees that do receive special treatment at the Ethiopian Investment Agency and from the government, other returnees do not receive any form of special treatment from the government, or any special attention. Since the focus of the government is on growth and investment, it favors those returnees with a capacity to invest.

With an overall aim of enabling the Diaspora contribute to the economic development and democratization process of the country, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs (EEA) established as the General Directorate in charge of Ethiopian

Expatriate. By recognizing their roles to the country's development, the directorate supports the Diaspora in their re-integration and settlement upon return (Adamnesh, 2006). As per the 2013 diaspora policy of Ethiopia, the term diaspora is defined as "Ethiopians and foreign nationals of Ethiopian origins residing outside Ethiopia p.8" although this definition is not congruent with that of Kushminder (2013) that stated: "In Ethiopia the term 'diaspora' is used to describe all individuals with a foreign citizenship- including individuals born in Ethiopia who have acquired citizenship abroad and have returned and settled in Ethiopia" p.58.

From the two different definitions of Ethiopian diaspora stated above, while the former one includes all Ethiopians residing abroad with or without Ethiopian citizenship in the domain of diaspora, the latter one considered only those Ethiopians with foreign citizenship. This implies that except the Kushminder's conception of Ethiopian diaspora, the FDRE diaspora policy considered the temporary Ethiopian labor migrants in the Middle East as diaspora.

Generally it can be said that compared to the supports given to those diasporas with a potential to invest back in their home land, the stance of the government towards the temporary labor migrants returnees, particularly from the middle east is ambivalent.

### **2.10.2 The Diaspora Policy**

Ethiopia has launched the diaspora policy in 2013 with the general objective of

*Building a strong relationship between Diaspora and their country of origin and encouraging and facilitating conducive environment for participation of Diaspora on ongoing peace and democratization building process to benefit their country and to benefit from their engagement and to preserve their rights and interests abroad (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013; p.8).*

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

The Ethiopian diaspora policy recognizes the contribution of unskilled and semi-skilled labors that traveled to the Middle East. They are participating in different investment sectors and sending remittances to their families. Even though the growing trend of illegal migration towards the Middle East creates a complicated situation in the effort to protect their rights, it is indicative that there is a possibility to create a condition to reap better benefits from the Diaspora by solving the problems gradually (MFA, 2013).

The following are the goals presented in the Ethiopian diaspora policy:

1. Improving diaspora engagement in investment, trade and tourism
2. Enhancing knowledge and technology transfer
3. Encouraging foreign currency inflows and strengthening diaspora participation
4. Promoting cultural values and promoting image building
5. Advancing diaspora participation in good governance and democracy
6. Encouraging philanthropic and development associations
7. Broadening diaspora participation on image building

Although the policy has claimed the inclusion of the concerns of unskilled and semi-skilled migrants, as it can be seen from the aforementioned general goals of the policy, they are rarely represented. Recognizing the current status of Ethiopian low skilled and semi-skilled migrants in the Middle East, it is possible to say that there is a little ground for them to be part of the above stated goals upon their return. Thus the Ethiopian diaspora policy is not addressed the issues of temporary labor migrants well.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Research methodology is the grand principle which guides the overall research process to be followed in studying a particular topic (Dawson, 2007). It is a framework to be adopted to provide guidance about all facets of the study, from assessing the general philosophical ideas behind the inquiry to the detailed data collection and analysis procedures (Creswell, 2003; 2014).

This study followed a set of procedures that needs to be undertaken for its successful accomplishment. The research plan starts by mentioning the researcher's perspective and ends by putting important ethical issues considered.

#### **3.2 The Researcher's Philosophical Stance**

There are four alternative knowledge claims regarding what is knowledge, how we know it, what values go into it, how we write about it, and the processes for studying it. These are post-positivism, constructivism, pragmatism, and advocacy/ participatory knowledge claims. The researcher's initial stance towards the nature of knowledge will inevitably lead to a research approach which tends to be more quantitative, qualitative or mixed (Creswell 2003; 2014).

I espoused constructivism while doing this research. I do believe in the existence of multiple and socially constructed realities (Patton, 2003) in which multiple individuals in multiple contexts construct multiple realities depending on their own subjective understandings. Accordingly, this study explicated the participants return migration experiences through the interactions I made with them that let me reveal their views about the phenomenon of return migration.

As per the assumptions of constructivists, individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences (meanings directed toward certain objects or things) which are varied and

multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views. The goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2003). On the basis of their own interpretation of the situation, “humans are capable of forming new meanings and new lines of meaning” as Manis and Meltzer cited in Ritzer (2010: 373) stated. The intent of the researcher, then, is “to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world to generate a pattern of meaning” (Creswell, 2003; 9).

Babbie (2008) mentioning Garfinkel suggested that “people are continuously trying to make sense of the life they experience”. Husserl, cited in Bryman, (2008) advocated that in order to grasp the subjective experiences of individuals, researchers needs to understand the experiences in its pure and uncontaminated form. Similarly, Creswell (2014) stated that although a phenomenon can be experienced by different individuals differently, developing a composite description of the essence of the experience for all the individuals can be valuable for group such as policy makers.

Accordingly, I was fully committed in probing the return experiences of voluntarily returned females from the returnees’ perspective. The meanings the participants attached to their experiences only belong to them without my interferences. What I did was finding out essences from their experiences which, in turn helped me interpret the experiences in sober and participatory manner (Van Manen, 2007).

### **3.3 Study Area and Population**

The location of this research covered a single district called ‘Ejersa-Lafo’. As I grew up there, I have been witnessing significant number of females immigrating to the Gulf States. I know my close relatives and friends went abroad as domestic workers and returned home for several reasons. I was interested in the area since it has high prevalence of out-migration. According to

Mohammed (2007), migration has long been an essential element of livelihood strategies in the study area. Approximately 46% of rural households and 40% of urban households have at least one migrant member both national and international in type. Nonetheless, International destinations such as the Middle East, Europe and USA are more important than local and regional towns, especially for urban out-migrants.

In addition, I was interested to conduct my study on the area for I have prior contacts with some returnees of the district so that my engagement to the field was easier (Neuman, 2014). Thus, in my attempt to describe the experiences of voluntary returnees, since it is difficult to locate them, I preferred 'Ejersa-Lafo', the district I know well. Relatively, 'Ejersa-Lafo' appeared to me easier to locate the participants.

Although the experiences of the domestic workers who were deported are under successive investigations for a couple of years, to my knowledge, those who were voluntarily returned are not given due emphasis. The target population of this study was, therefore, females who worked as domestic workers in the Gulf States and voluntarily returned to Ejersa- Lafo district.

### **3.4 The Research Approach**

There are three approaches to research; quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approach (Creswell, 2003; Bryman, 2008). The sole research approach deployed for conducting this study was qualitative. Qualitative research gives due emphasis for individuals' own interpretations of their experiences and study in detail what they say and do (Kalof et al, 2008). There are rationales behind the selection of qualitative approach for this particular study.

First, as Creswell (2014) stated the issue being addressed is the determinant factor behind the selection of a research approach. Since, the goal of qualitative research is to understand and

describe human nature (Chilisa, 2011), and describing the lived experiences of the voluntarily returned female migrants was the intention of this study, qualitative research approach was the appropriate one.

Second, as Flick et al, (2004) and (Dawson, 2007) put, qualitative research explores attitudes, behavior and experiences from the point of view of the people who participate. This implies if researchers need to understand social realities, they should stick on, primarily, those social actors whose views and actions will enable them (the researchers) to interpret the meanings the actors construct about the phenomenon they are experiencing. Thus, qualitative approach was significant for this study since my intention was to understand the return migration phenomenon from the participants' point of view regarding to their experiences of return migration and their prospects.

Third, as Bryman (2008) stated, qualitative research approach permits social researchers to construct meanings and knowledge inductively via interpretation and examination of the participants' subjective understanding of the social world. Accordingly, for this study was intended to understand and describe the lived experiences of the voluntarily returned female migrants as it was described by the participants themselves and the meanings of their return are also developed through their subjective construction, it was qualitative.

Generally, in an attempt to understand the female returnees' pre-return expectations and preparedness, and their post-return experiences and prospects, qualitative research approach was preferred in this study for it let the research participants tell their stories freely. In addition, it helped me probe the issues in an in-depth way through posing open-ended questions in my attempt to understand their experiences from their perspective.

### 3.5 Research Design

For this particular study, I utilized a phenomenological research design in describing and interpreting the experiences of the participants. The researcher mediates between different meanings of the participants while undergoing the interpretation of the meaning of the lived experiences in order to get through essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

There are reasons behind the selection of phenomenological research design for this particular study: first, 'Phenomenology often seems to denote little more than a commitment to attending to actors' points of view and the meanings they attribute to their behavior' as Bryman (2008) stated. Accordingly, this research was intended to elicit the research participants to describe their experiences of return migration and the meanings they attribute to it from their subjective point of view. Hence, phenomenological research design was an appropriate method to use for this particular study.

Second, phenomenology focuses on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon to grasp the very nature of it (Creswell, 2007). Congruently, this study intended to develop a pattern from the participants' experiences of return migration and the meanings they attach to it. Hence, the study best fits phenomenological research design.

I espoused the hermeneutic phenomenological research design for it allowed me not only to describe the lived experiences of the participants but to interpret them (the participants return experiences) also. Thus, hermeneutic phenomenology was used as it contributed invaluablely in interpreting or understanding people's experiences (McManus, 2007). In addition, hermeneutic phenomenology considers "the context that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2003, p. 61).

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods and Procedures**

In-depth interview and observation are the data collection techniques this study has utilized.

#### **3.6.1 In-Depth Interview**

Often, data collection in phenomenological studies consists of in-depth interviews with participants (Creswell, 2007). Interviews serve to get insight into things that cannot be observed directly such as peoples experience, knowledge, feeling, attitude, perspectives, activities that happened in at some point of time, how people organize and define their activities or the world through questioning them (Patton, 2002). I utilized unstructured interview as an integral data collection instrument for my study. In this type of interview “the researcher attempts to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewees’ point of view or situation” (Dawson, 2002). Thus, in-depth interview was important in eliciting essence from the participant’s experiences. I prepared an interview guide for conducting unstructured or open-ended interview with the participants. The guiding questions were open-ended that helped me understand the participants’ experiences deeply. The guide was prepared, first, in English which later translated in to Afaan Oromoo (the study area’s official language) for the interview purpose. The interviews lasted from 53 minutes to 1 hour and 17 minutes.

I followed several procedures in carrying out the interviews. First, being engaged in the field, I located a returnee whom I have prior contact with her. Next, she referred me two returnees. While one returnee has fulfilled my inclusion criteria, the other has not. Subsequently, they referred me another three returnees that would later made snowballing effect enabling me locate all the study participants.

Prior to conducting the formal interviews, I built rapport with the returnees to the level of peer- to- peer. In addition to the returnees I know previously, the newly located returnees’

families and friends I acquainted helped me develop a trusted relationship with the participants. In the study area, having a contact with woman, especially if she was married, is culturally skeptical. In order to avoid this, I become acquainted to their husbands for those who have married and, to their families for those who haven't but fears. They helped me a lot in establishing a rapport.

I secured a verbal informed consent from the participants after reading it aloud to them. I let each participant chose the setting they felt comfortable and the time they sought suitable as to their preferences (Lin, 2013). I also provided orientations about the interview for each of them. Consequently, the formal interviews were undertaken.

The participants were regarded as experts from whom I learned about their return experiences (Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest & Namey, 2005). Thus, I took adequate time with them which let me look far beyond my prior assumption about return migration. I posed questions neutrally, in manner that they were not leading, listened to the responses attentively, and asked follow up questions and probes based on the responses. The interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants, and transcribed verbatim and translated to English following the sessions.

### **3.6.2 Observation**

Observation is another data collection tool for a phenomenological research. I utilized an observation checklist for directing my observation (Creswell, 2007). I conducted non-participant observations in attempting to grasp the female returnees' situations. Through observations, the female returnees' physical settings; the place where they lived, the assets they possessed and the activities they engaged in were understood. I also obtained insights from the participants' non-verbal expressions (facial expressions, body movements) during the interview period.

Subsequently, I documented the observation data (the data gathered by conducting an observation as an observer) through taking notes (Creswell, 2014, Corbetta, 2003).

### **3.7 Inclusion Criteria**

To set apart the participants of this study from other population, I incorporated the following eligibility or inclusion criteria.

1. Female returnees who are currently residing in Ejersa-Lafo Woreda. Thus, returnees that were accessible to me and relevant to the study upon the data collection period were included.
2. Out of the females who were returned from the Gulf States, the participants of this research were those who had worked as domestic workers and returned back home voluntarily (by their own efforts not either through deportation or by assisted voluntary return).
3. Returnees with two years and above stay at abroad and two years and above return experience. According to Kushminder, “there is debate as to how long one has to be abroad to be considered a migrant, and thus a return migrant” (Kushminder, 2013, p.10). United Nations cited in Kushminder (2013) defines a return migrant as an individual who has been abroad for at least 12 months considering that it is enough for the migrant to adjust to the mainstream culture at the host country. Nonetheless, for this study, I selected female returnees who, at least, have two and above years’ experience of migration, and return migration since the term of employment widely ranges from two to three years as Emebet (2002) indicated. In addition, in order for the migrants to reintegrate back home, they had to stay abroad for a significant amount of time to mobilize both tangible and

intangible resources. Thus, for this study, I recruited participants with 2 years and above stay of abroad and 2 years' and above return experiences in Ethiopia.

### **3.8 Sampling Techniques and Size**

This study utilized a non-probability sampling technique for collecting relevant data. For one thing, it was impossible to get the sample frame of the voluntarily returned females for they did not been documented upon their arrival to Ethiopia. For another thing, my intention was just not to assure the representativeness of this research for all voluntarily returned females but to draw on patterns that illuminate some common experiences of the research participants about the phenomenon of return migration. This implies that what matters in qualitative research is not to assure the representativeness of the selected sample for the larger population but the participants' relevance to the research topic as Krueger & Neuman (2006) argued.

I utilized snow ball sampling for locating the female returnees. In this method, participants or informants with whose contact have already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study. It is a popular sampling technique to access hard to reach individuals (Berg, 2007). Using snowball technique, the returnees who were initially identified helped me in locating other returnees using their social networks. More referrals were then pointed.

When sample size comes to concern, Gentles et al (2015) stated 10 to 30 participants are recommendable for conducting a phenomenological research depending on the degree to which the researchers intensively follow up the research participants. In addition, Polkinghorne cited in Creswell (2007) recommends 5 to 25 participants are needed for conducting an in-depth interview that have all experienced the phenomenon. Furthermore, from his review of many

qualitative studies, Creswell suggested the appropriate sample size for a phenomenological research ranging from 3 to 10 participants (Creswell, 2014).

For this particular research, however, the sample size was decided not prior to the interview process rather it came to known after all the available categories and themes were revealed and the information become saturated. This is congruent with Krueger & Neuman (2006) suggestion which stated qualitative researchers rarely determine the sample size in advance. Thus, every new participant was interviewed until saturation was achieved. Accordingly, I interviewed 10 returnees who were all experienced the phenomenon of return migration.

### **3.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures**

While analysis does mean what the data says interpretation is all about what does it mean (Biber, 2010). It is through a qualitative data analysis that the mass of words generated by interviews or observational data is summarized and the relationships between various themes are identified and described. Implications for policy or practice may also be derived from the data, or interpretation sought of puzzling findings from previous studies. Ultimately theory could be developed (Lacey & Luff, 2009).

Data analysis in phenomenological inquiry includes analysis of significant statements, generation of meaning units and the development of essence descriptions (Creswell, 2014). For this study, I utilized a qualitative approach of thematic data analysis method since it is a good fit for analyzing interviews (Jugder, 2016). Researchers utilize this method to identify, analyze and report patterns (themes) within the data. Through thematic analysis, essential features of the issue would be identified either inductively through data-driven codes or deductively from the prior theoretical frameworks (Braun and Clarke 2006). Thus, thematic data analysis procedures

were followed for this particular study in extracting and examining each unit of data related to my research objectives. The procedures were:

First, I transcribed the audio taped interviews, in Afaan Oromoo, verbatim. While writing out from the audios, I repeatedly listened to them in order to make the transcription precise (Jugder, 2016). Next, I translated the transcribed data in to English. Subsequently, I read and re-read the data and become familiarized (Biber, 2010).

Going through each line of the transcriptions, I highlighted significant phrases and statements related to the participants' experiences (Creswell & Clark, 2006) that enabled me understand their underlying meanings (Creswell, 2014) and make margin notes or codes. I manually coded the specific highlighted pieces of data depending on the research questions they feed (Babbie, 2008). Then, I created catalogues (file folders) and named them after the major objectives of the study. Next, I stored the data-driven codes in the catalogues I created according to their nature of relation to the study objectives (Babbie, 2008). Subsequently, I thoroughly went through the data stored in each catalogues, organize them according to their nature and captured their key ideas in relation to my research questions. It was through this inductive process that different themes which represent some level of patterned responses or meanings emerged (Thomas, 2003). Twenty four themes were emerged from the organized data and clustered to five super themes in line with the research objectives. Expectation in homeland, return preparation, return motive, experience in homeland and prospects are the five super themes on which the whole analysis was based.

Following the generation of themes inductively, I described the study findings under each theme, setting them (the themes) as topics, sub topics and sub of sub topics (Creswell & Clark, 2006). I conveyed the findings in narrative passage through which I discussed the themes in

detail including important quotations. Thus, the identified themes were shaped into a general description of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2014).

Lastly, I interpreted the study findings. Through interpretation, I explored the general statements (essences) about the participants' return experiences. I discussed the study findings, relating to the previous studies to verify whether they are diverging from or conforming to them. Moreover, from the interpretations, I grounded implications and the ways forward.

### **3.10 Data Quality Assurance**

To check over the credibility of this study, I took some important measures. The measures were: First, I established rapport with the participants prior to the interview sessions which enabled me become entrusted. By doing this, I minimized the possibility of creating social behaviors in the participants (during the interview periods) that would normally not have occurred (Creswell, 2014) which, in turn contributed to the data credibility.

After data collection, the participants were also provided with follow-up interviews. Since the participants are at the heart of this research, I had been providing them follow-up questions either physically whenever I was there (Ejersa-Lafo) or on telephone while I back Addis Ababa for the analysis. I benefited from the follow up interviews while I was describing their experiences, establishing themes and analyzing.

In addition, in order to make this study resonates with people other than me, I invited peers and they debriefed me after reviewing the whole process of the study. In addition to the colleagues, my advisor provided me critical comments. I incorporated their comments and, thus contributed to the credibility of my study. Lastly, I raised different questions for the participants, especially, in which same questions are asked in different ways just for acquiring thick descriptions about their experiences that, in turn, scale-up the data credibility.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

In conducting this study, the following ethical issues were accord due considerations: the ethical clearance was obtained from Addis Ababa University. Verbal informed consents were obtained from the returnees. They were asked permission for participation and also briefed about the issue under concern. After the purpose and importance of the study were explained to participants of the study and their agreement was confirmed, the data was gathered. Thus, the participation was gained only through the returnees' free will without any coercion. I informed them that whatever information they provide, their identity would not be disclosed. Thus, the privacy of participants was kept. In order to assure the anonymity of the study participants, fictitious names were replaced their real name. In order to assure the confidentiality of the study participants, the provided information were released without specifically linking the participants to the responses.

## Chapter Four

### 4. Data Presentations and Interpretations

This chapter presents and interprets findings of the study that are derived from the collected data among the research participants and observations.

Accordingly, the study participants' background profile is presented briefly.

Subsequently, with great care, the participants' pre-return expectations and preparedness, post-return experiences and prospects are presented and interpreted. Moreover, observation notes from direct observation of the study participants' physical setting and activities are part of the analysis.

#### 4.1 Description of the Study Participants

This section presents the participants' background profiles which comprise of age, marital status, number of children, educational level, destination country, period of stay at destination country, and the time spent after return. Since it has implications for their return experiences, each participant's background profile is briefly described. Subsequently, I make analysis in a form of short summary.

#### Chaltu

Chaltu, 35, is a divorcee. She has two children; son and daughter. She is illiterate. She had worked in Riyadh for 2 years as a domestic worker. Just after finishing her work contract, she returned to Ethiopia voluntarily. She spent two years after return. After back home, Chaltu bought a residential land and built a house but not finished due to financial constraint. Although the house was not finished, it doesn't hindered Chaltu and her children to abode. She is making a living through distilling Areke, brewing Tela and selling dry Enjera.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

**Damitu**

Damitu, 26, is a divorcee and has no child. Quitting her education at grade 7, she had worked as a domestic worker in Dubai for seven years. She voluntarily returned to Ethiopia before two years. She got married to a man, whom she does not know against her personal will a year before she went to UAE. The marriage was arranged through her parents. Two years later, he told her that he had started doing a business in Addis Ababa. Her parents told her the same thing. After her return, however, she learned that he had secretly started a relationship with another woman while he was in Addis. She mistakenly sent him money. According to Damitu's own account, with the money she earned working day and night without a break, he is enjoying life with his new bride. This obliged her to be divorced. While Damitu shared a residence with her parents, she built a house for a business purpose; she owned a mini café.

**Kidist**

Kidist, a mother of two sons, is only 34. She is illiterate. She had worked as a domestic worker in KSA for six years. She spent three years, here in Ethiopia, since she has returned voluntarily. After she returned home, Kidist bought a residential land and built a house. She got married to a man she has never known him before but acquainted through her former friends. Unfortunately, leaving her alone with the children, he returned to his former girlfriend about whom she has no information before. Subsequently, she got divorced. Kidist was highly depressed by the evil deeds of her husband. during data collection period, I become aware that Kidist was making a living by washing clothes and baking Enjera on hand through going from home to home in her neighborhood.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

**Tsehay**

Tsehay, 27, is a married woman. She is a high school graduate. She had worked as a domestic worker in KSA for three years. She voluntarily returned to Ethiopia before two years. Upon the period of data collection, I observed that she was pregnant. She resides in her husband's house. Tsehay's husband is an owner of a mill. This enabled her to sell a variety of cereals through which she makes a living.

**Kulani**

Kulani, 26, is a single woman. She is illiterate. She worked in KSA for seven years. She spent two years since voluntarily returned to Ethiopia. For Kulani, her being single is attributed to the age at which she left home. She went to KSA at 17. Since she has never attended school, her former acquaintances were only family and relatives. Thus, she had no boyfriend at the time of migration. According to kulani's own account, ever since she comes home, although many boys approached her, she has still a big fear to be engaged in relationship. Rather she always walks away. Kulani is a poultry woman. She shared residence with her parents. Upon data collection period, I observed that Kulani was constructing a residential house on the land she bought.

**Sifan**

Sifan, 26, is a single mother. She has a son. Quitting her education at grade 11, she went to KSA and worked as a domestic worker for 4 years. Now, she spent 2 years since she voluntarily returned to Ethiopia. For Sifan, the main reason behind her being single is that she had a boyfriend earlier before she went to KSA for whom she gave a birth. Unfortunately, when she returned he had been legally married to another women. Sifan resides in a rental house while she started building a house. Upon data collection, I became aware that she was out of work.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

**Mekdes**

Mekdes, 35, is a single woman. She learned up to grade six. She spent seven years in UAE working as a domestic worker. She voluntarily returned to Ethiopia before two years. She owned a house which serves both as a residence and business purpose. Mekdes is an owner of grocery from which she makes a living. Mekdes lost her boyfriend by a car accident on the eve of home return. Since then she remain single.

**Simbo**

Simbo, 27, is a single lady. She was a preparatory school graduate. She worked as a domestic worker in Oman for four years. She voluntarily returned to Ethiopia before two years. Simbo shared accommodation with her mother. Since her mother was sick, Simbo was the one who looks after her. In addition, she covers all works her mother has used to work. She bakes bread and brew Tela as a means to secure income.

**Hawi**

Hawi, 27, is a married woman. She spent three working years in Bahrain as a domestic worker. She spent three years since her home return too. She returned voluntarily. Hawi got married after she returned home. She resides in her husband's house. Upon data collection, I observed that she was pregnant. She returned home empty handed since her parents used up her money. But her husband enabled her to own a shop. Hawi generates income through selling horticultural inputs (variety of vegetable seeds and fertilizers including different pesticides and herbicides).

**Yeshi**

Yeshi, 30, is a divorcee. She was a high school graduate. She spent six years in Bahrain working as a domestic worker. She spent five years since her return to Ethiopia. She returned home voluntarily. Yeshi got divorced after she has returned to Ethiopia. According to her own

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGNRATION EXPERIENCES

accounts, Yeshe's case is so awful that it obliged her to terminate a marriage. She lost her only child because of a car accident that resulted from her husband's carelessness. Upon home return, she decided to take the initiative for a divorce first stating that "he is more than an enemy". On a way to claim a property from her ex-husband, Yeshe had visited a court for two years and six months which consumed a significant portion of her capital and time. Yeshe abode in a house she partitioned from her ex-husband. She was jobless.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

**Table 1 Attributes of the Research Participants**

| Name   | Age after migration | Current Marital status | Number of children | education  | Destination country | Duration at the destination country | Time spent after return | How did they come? | Current Employment status                 |
|--------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Chaltu | 35                  | Divorced               | 2                  | Illiterate | KSA                 | 2                                   | 2                       | voluntarily        | Local drink and dry Enjera seller         |
| Damitu | 26                  | Divorced               | -                  | 7          | UAE                 | 7                                   | 2                       | voluntarily        | Mini café owner                           |
| Kidist | 34                  | Divorced               | 2                  | Illiterate | KSA                 | 6                                   | 3                       | Voluntarily        | washing clothes & baking Enjera for money |
| Tsehay | 27                  | Married                | -                  | 10         | KSA                 | 3                                   | 2                       | Voluntarily        | Selling cereals                           |
| Kulani | 26                  | Single                 | -                  | Illiterate | KSA                 | 7                                   | 2                       | Voluntarily        | Poultry woman                             |
| Sifan  | 26                  | Single                 | 1                  | 10+1       | KSA                 | 4                                   | 2                       | Voluntarily        | thinking to go back                       |
| Mekdes | 35                  | Single                 | -                  | 6          | UAE                 | 7                                   | 2                       | voluntarily        | Grocery owner                             |
| Simbo  | 27                  | Single                 | -                  | 10+2       | Oman                | 4                                   | 2                       | Voluntarily        | Participating in her parents' business    |
| Hawi   | 27                  | Married                | -                  | 10         | Bahrain             | 3                                   | 3                       | Voluntarily        | Horticultural inputs seller               |
| Yeshi  | 30                  | Divorced               | -                  | 10         | Bahrain             | 6                                   | 5                       | Voluntarily        | Job seeker                                |

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

The research participants' age lies between 26 and 35. The African youth charter (2006, p. 11) defines youth as "every person between the ages of 15 and 35". Thus, all of the study participants are considered as youth or young. This may indicate the temporary nature of labor migration to the gulf-states mainly for the sake of engagement in short term contract based works which, in turn makes return migration recurrent.

Whereas their husbands' unfaithfulness, wastage of money, and recklessness in taking care of a child are reasons for their divorce, low attachment with opposite sex, unfaithfulness and death of boyfriend are reasons for those participants who are remaining single. The returnees' marital status has implications for their post- return experiences. It affected them either positively or negatively. For instance, while Tsehay and Hawi benefited from marriage that leads them to have a stable relationship with their respective husbands, their ex-husbands unfaithfulness cost Kidist and Damitu their possessions and their psychosocial well-being's (they were depressed and betrayed).

The returnees' period of stay at the destination countries seems to define their post-return living conditions. While the participants with minimum years of stay in foreign countries are participating in low gaining jobs like selling local drinks and Enjera, the owners of café, grocery and poultry are those returnees with the maximum staying period in foreign countries (seven years). Nonetheless, this does not always be the case as the situations in the home country also determine the post-return living conditions of the returnees. For example, while Yeshe and Kidist had stayed 6 years in Bahrain and KSA respectively, their living situation in Ethiopia is challenging. Kidist is struggling to feed her two children by washing clothes and baking Enjera while Yeshe spent a significant amount of her money and time on the court. On the contrary,

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

even if she had stayed only two years in the Bahrain, Hawi is distributing horticultural input although the real fact behind Hawi's success is her husband who is better-off economically.

As per my experience, people perceive that migrants with maximum years of return are more likely to reintegrate than those returnees with less years of return. But this is not always the case. From the returnees with maximum years of return, for instance, economically, only Hawi has reintegrated relatively. The other two (Kidist and Yeshe) have not reintegrated yet. On the other hand, from the participants with few years of return, relatively, Kulani is more reintegrated; the success which even the participants with a maximum years of return have never achieved. This shows that besides the extent of the participants' years of stay after return, there are other conditions that have affected their degree of re-integration. For example, while her financial capital helped Kulani to reintegrate economically although she has few years of return experience, the huge expenditure on suit has restrained Yeshe not to re-integrate economically although she has maximum years of return experience.

Table 2: Emerged themes regarding pre-return expectations

| <b>Sub-themes</b>   | <b>Super-theme</b>       | <b>Essence</b>  |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Economic expectations<br>Social expectations<br>Familial expectations | Expectations in homeland | The returnees expected that the homeland situations would be able to earn them living, feel at home and accepted. The limited access to information about home market and the deceptions they faced by friends, parents and husbands made the returnees expect overly about homeland. |

## 4.2 Pre-Return Expectations of the Participants

In this section, the participants' pre-return expectations are described. All migrants had reasons for leaving their homeland. In addition, to greater or lesser degree, all of them had expectations in their homeland. The participants' expectations while they were working in the Gulf-States are diverse but related to each other. These diverse and inter-related expectations are coded and merged together that produced three subthemes. Economic expectations, social expectations and familial expectations are the three emerged subthemes.

### 4.2.1 Expectations Related to Economic Situations

The participants had positive mental picture of the future with a belief of changing their life for good. Since the main reason for they chose to be a domestic worker in the Gulf-States was economic problem, they had been looking forward that there would be changes in them and their families' life.

Their expectations were not without grounds. The main rationale behind was their perception towards the money they had been remitting to their families. They thought that the remittance was enough for earning livelihoods in their community upon their home return. For instance, Mekdes expected an economic success upon return thinking that she had remitted enough money to her parents. She stated that:

*I thought that I would be a successful business woman upon return.... I expected the money I remitted to my parents would be enough to start any kind of business I want to run as per the standard of Olonkomi town.*

Furthermore, the participants had expected that the market situation at home would be good to run their own business. The information they had gathered from their cross-border social networks made them perceive favorably towards the home market. They had been receiving

information about home market from their parents, spouses and friends without any means available to check whether the information was right or wrong.

#### **4.2.2 Expectations Related to Social Situations in Home country**

The participants had positive expectations in their home society. They expected to rejoin the social relationships they had once left upon their emigration. They thought that the acquaintances and relationships they had engaged in with their families and neighbors before their departure would wait for them.

Furthermore, most of the participants had expected that their migration experience abroad would boost theirs and their families' social status in their respective community. Simbo stated that;

*I thought a prestige that follows me and my mother upon my return home.... I know how money matters more from my former friends who had worked abroad before I did. Upon their arrival, we all were forgotten because they brought with them money.... Thus, if you have something on your hand, everybody loves you ....I was so confident that I would make my mother prestigious.*

Similar to Simbo, Kidist also reported that she had expected to be accepted by her community upon her return to Ethiopia. She emphasized the importance of acquiring money in order to be accepted. She stated:

*As far as you remitted money and accumulated assets, the community accepts you. Even if you are rude you don't miss somebody who follows you.... This is why the today's men are valuing what the women have possessing than who they really are.*

However, Kidist unable to secure the acceptance she has expected. She was neglected by her husband. As kidist stated, her parents, even, turned their face away realizing that she was running out of money.

#### **4.2.3 Expectations Related to Family Situations**

All of the participants mentioned that they had positive expectations in their families while they had been working abroad. They reported that they trusted their parents, spouses and friends. This was why the participants had been remitting them money on trust expecting that they would get it back up on home return.

Chaltu, kidist, Mekdes, Kulani and Hawi had been remitting money to their parents on trust. While Damitu and Yeshe had remitted to both their parents and spouses, Sifan, Tsehay and Mekdes had remitted to both their parents and boyfriends. The participants expected that their trustee (parents, spouses and friends) would keep their money as they thought which they would use to do something when they get back.

The other important thing is that the expectation the participants had developed regarding marriage while they had working abroad. Five of the participants had expected that there was someone they would get married to when they come back. Kidist's case indicates how she expected to be engaged and have children. She stated that:

*Although I hadn't had a boyfriend before, I had always thought of the time I would marry and have children.... Before I migrated to KSA I used to kiss kids every time I got them.... I love children a lot.*

On the other hand, Damitu and Yeshe, who had married before, expected to rejoin their marriage life upon their return home. However, they didn't succeed.

Table 3: Emerged themes regarding return preparedness

| Sub-themes                          | Super-theme        | Essence  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Prepared<br><br>Moderately prepared | Return preparation | The participants felt prepared/moderately prepared for they remitted money to their parents, friends and husbands thinking that they would withheld it for them by which they would invest upon back home. |

### 4.3 The Returnees Preparedness: Free will and Readiness to Return

Return preparedness has comprised of two elements; free will and readiness. Free will is the subjective feeling that leads migrants on the decision to choose to go or not back home weather it is time, and weather it is right. On the other hand, readiness to return does mean the extent to which migrants have the ability and opportunity to mobilize the adequate tangible (i.e. financial capital) and intangible (i.e. contacts, relationships, skills, acquaintances) resources needed to secure their return, whether it is temporary or permanent (Cassarino, 2008). Regarding this, all of the participants had some sort of preparedness during their return to homeland.

Based on return preparedness, the participants were categorized in to three groups from which two subthemes were emerged. While the first group of the participants fit into the first theme i.e. prepared, the second and the third group conforms the second theme i.e. moderately prepared.

### 4.3.1 The Prepared Returnees

The first group comprised those participants who felt that they were prepared in mobilizing resources and also willing to return to Ethiopia. The preparation of Mekdes, Kulani, Kidist, Chaltu and Yeshi was manifested in terms of both free will and readiness. In addition to mobilizing both financial resources and keeping cross-border social contacts with homeland while they had been working in the Gulf States, the decision to return was taken voluntarily by their own volition. For instance, Kulani took the initiative to return home by herself without anyone interferences. Furthermore, she mobilized resources for coming home. She pointed out the level of her return preparedness as follows:

*I thought I was prepared enough for home coming.... Within the seven years of my stay in KSA, I saved the amount of money I needed for starting up my own business. In addition, I have a good relationship with my employer whose support was immense in my way to home.... She [her employer] presented me many gifts I would take for my parents.*

In addition to the tangible resource (money) accumulated, Kulani's return preparation may also be manifested through the intangible resource mobilized. For instance, she developed a cross-border linkage with her parents while she was working in KSA. She stated "I had been in continues contact with my family on telephone.... They informed me all what was new. For example, it was through this contact that I sent them money and bought a residential land".

Mekdes's preparation for return was also similar with that of Kulani's. She stated the time she decided to return was right. In addition, she took the return decision by her own initiative. Moreover, she was prepared financially expecting that it would sustain her post-return life although her family wasted more of the money without her awareness.

### 4.3.2 The Moderately Prepared

The participants who were categorized both in the second and the third group felt that they were prepared moderately. However, they differ in the areas of preparation. While the participants in the second group had willingness for return but did not mobilize adequate resources, the participants in the third group felt that they mobilized resources but their return was triggered by their families.

The second category includes those participants who decided to return by their own free will but didn't mobilize enough resources. Tsehay, Sifan and Hawi fit into this category. They perceived that their decision to return was timely and right also. According to Tsehay, she returned back home for marriage and hence it was the right time for return. She described her preparation for return as follows:

*I was prepared in many ways. My preparation started by telling my friends who are both at abroad and in Ethiopia that I'm on the way to home land.... I also contacted my parents and boyfriend on telephone and they agreed for my return. In addition, I bought things that I wanted to take home.*

They (Tsehay, Sifan and Hawi) stated that the financial resource they mobilized was not satisfactory. Sifan sent more of her earning to her mother that was mainly spent for household consumptions. Tsehay, on the other hand, spent part of the earnings for her family and the remaining to her boyfriend. The case of Hawi, on the other hand, was different. She described the degree of her return preparedness as follows:

*I was not prepared for return. For one thing, my families were not happy in my return decision.... Because they expend all of my money for their own needs.... Many*

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

*times they urged me not return.... For another thing what I was thinking was not about preparations rather return.... My desire was only coming back.*

Thus, Hawi's preparedness was only manifested by her willingness to back home in spite of her family's free will.

Contrary to the second category, the third group consisting of Damitu and Simbo was characterized by financial preparedness but the decision for home return was triggered by family related problem. They returned to Ethiopia because of their mothers' sickness. However, although their decision to return was triggered by their mothers' illness, they reported that it was logical and right too. They also maintained cross-border social contacts with their families while they had been working in the Gulf States.

Regarding intangible resources, however, other than mobilizing a cross border social contact with their home family, resources like relationships and skills that would have been mobilized during the migration experience abroad was not acquired. This is the trait which characterized all of the participants that were categorized in all the three groups stated above. The type of activities the participants had engaged in abroad and the inaccessibility of the participants to each other and the host society were the factors that limited the mobilized amount of intangible resources.

Table 4: Emerged themes regarding return motives

| <b>Sub-themes</b>   | <b>Super-theme</b> | <b>Essence</b>  |
|---|--------------------|---|
| The need to realize plans<br>Family related reason<br>The need to take a rest<br>Homesickness | Return motives     | The participants return motives conveyed their enthusiasm to improve theirs and their families' well-being. Behind their return motives, there were hopes that they wanted to happen. |

#### 4.4 The Motives behind their Return

Migrants had several reasons for emigration; there are also several motives for their return too. Conditions both at destination and home country may force them decide to return. Similarly, the study participants have mentioned several reasons for their decision to return. The return motives are attributed to both the home and host country. Four subthemes were emerged out of the return motives. These are the need to realize their plans, the health condition of the family member, the need to take a break and homesickness (missing of the children, parents, friends and the homeland).

##### 4.4.1 To Realize their Plans

The participants have frequently mentioned that the main reason for their decision to back home was the objectives they had set to achieve upon their return. While they had worked in the Middle East, the participants had many plans to be carried out upon their return to home. Changing theirs and their families' life, owning physical assets, starting their own business and getting married and having children are the main focuses on which the study participants' plans were revolving.

Regarding marriage, from the ten participants of this study, three (Tsehay, Hawi and Kidist) have reported that they planned to marry upon return. Tsehay was a domestic worker in KSA for three years. Before she went to KSA she had a boyfriend with whom they spent five years together. She stated her plan as follows:

*KSA was my loneliest place in my life.... I always felt sad every time I remember homeland.... I dream day and night for the time I go back home.... The fact I don't want to hide you is that I was very eager to marry the guy I love very much.*

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Kidist also explicated that, although she had many assignments to be accomplished upon return, the main reason for her return was to be engaged and have children. She highlights it as follows:

*I thought that it was a right time for me to be engaged and lead my own family.... Especially, having children was my big dream that brought me here.... My parents were the one who initiated me to return. They repeatedly reminded me as it is important to be engaged.*

Thus, the need to be engaged is one of the triggering factors for the migrants' decision to return.

In the commercial aspect, starting business was at the heart of the participants' plans. It stretched from opening small shops to planting food oil factory. It encompasses opening cafés, groceries, milk house and poultry. Kulani was a domestic worker in KSA for seven years. When she was abroad she planned to be a poultry woman. She reported what initiated her as follows:

*The simplest but profitable business I always admiring is rearing hens both for eggs and flesh.... From the money I had spent for my first trip to KSA, more than half was gained through selling my parents hens and eggs. From that year on, I realized the potential profit of having poultry.*

Within all the participants there is a tinge of innovation which is manifested through their plans. They all want to be successful and independent. Their objectives manifest their eagerness to stand by their own right and, hence initiated most of the participants for return.

Regarding assets, the returnees had planned to own physical assets like residential land and house. Shelter is one of the basic needs that every people are aspiring to secure. This is also true

for the study participants. All of them had planned to buy residential land in Olonkomi town for house construction. For instance, Chaltu was the one who planned to have a residential land. Before she went to KSA, she led life in rental house with her two children. She explained her eagerness to have her own house as follows:

*My first plan above all was to construct my own house where I and my children would freely live in. This was the main reason why I left my children choosing a migrant life.... I always remember my renter by one thing; he always adds up money.... Since the house is located at the road side, I had many customers who consume Areke and Tela.... What I would do was only to accept the deal. One of my plans was thus to change this situation.*

Thus, realizing what they had been planning was one of the reasons for return.

#### **4.4.2 Homesickness**

The participants have reported that they had missed their families while working in the Gulf-States. In Ethiopia, generally speaking, the communal life is valued than the individualistic one. People feel happy when they have something in common that strengthen their oneness. They feel happy while they talk, work, eat together and even walk together. For a person grown up in such a culture, it is very difficult to work in an environment where nobody concerns for his or her wellbeing.

The participants reported that they felt loneliness for they were neglected; nobody gave them attention. This makes them remember their families, friends and homeland. Chaltu explained why she decided to return home as follows:

*Before I went to KSA, I had never thought that I will miss them [her family] that much. Right after I reached there, the everyday cautions I used to deliver to my son*

*and daughter come to my mind. It made me sleepless.... Always they were in my mind.... I wish if I could stay more but my family's love brought me here.*

Confirming Chaltu's suggestion, Tsehay added that "it was not only the family that you miss a lot; I missed the cattle, the compound and even my mom's utensils I used to work with".

Kulani also indicated the main motive behind her return was the love of her mother and her homeland.

#### **4.4.3 The Health Condition of their Family**

Family has a strong place in the heart of all the participants. As many of them had intentions of changing their families' situation in the first place that let them go abroad, they (families) are the one that lets them decide to return. Damitu's and Simbo's case confirmed the above argument. Both were returned for the same case i.e. illness of their mothers. Damitu explained that: "The main thing behind my return was the health condition of my mother. I heard from my younger brother that she was sick. This repeatedly made me restless.... Thence, I decided for return".

Regarding family's sickness, especially, if the migrants have only single parent who lives alone, their decision to return is instant. Simbo has only a mother. Her brother is a civil servant living far distant from home. While she heard her mother's illness she decides to return. Simbo explained the situation as follows:

*Mom's illness needed more care and follow up.... The hospitalization also took months. In this condition it was difficult to get someone who devoted all his time to care for her.... The only decision I could take is to return.*

#### **4.4.4 The Need to Take a Rest**

The participants had reported that domestic work was very tiresome. The repetitive nature of work for long hours made them very tired. They were expected to clean houses with much class.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Subsequently, they were expected to prepare different dishes. Again, cleaning follows.

Mekdes recounted that in addition to the nature of the work which made her physically drained, the recklessness of her employers; their inability to consider her tiredness always made her disappointed and exhausted.

Kulani's idea strengthens Mekdes's opinion. She stated that: "Even if I had committed enough to work what was expected of me, Arabs' command is never ending....one follows the other. It started immediately the day you go there and continue until the day you back home".

Table 5: Emerged themes regarding the post-return experiences

| Sub-themes  | Super-theme             | Essence  |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| Felt happy upon home arrival<br>Diverse livelihood strategies<br>Discomfort towards working-condition<br>Opportunities<br>Challenges<br>Limited reintegration | Experiences in homeland | Although the returnees were happy upon home arrival, after they go deep in the regular life most of them felt discomfort towards working condition and family situation. For they did not realize their expectations and plans upon return, they were hardly reintegrated. |

#### 4.5 The Participants Post-Return Experiences

There are diverse post-return experiences the returnees have been experiencing right after home arrival. Their return experiences stretch from their home arrival to their current engagement in the social, economic and cultural endeavors. The post-return experiences of the returnees were also manifested in their reintegration realm which is seen from the economic, psycho-social and

social aspects. In addition, all the opportunities available to and the challenges faced by the returnees were part and parcel of their post- return experiences.

The experiences of the participants in their home land are clustered in to six sub themes. These are feeling of happiness upon return, engagement in different livelihood strategies, a feeling of discomfort towards home working condition, opportunities, challenges and limited reintegration.

#### **4.5.1 Feeling of Happiness upon Arrival to Ethiopia**

All of the participants mentioned that they felt happy upon arrival to Ethiopia although Sifan's case was a little bit different. Their happiness emanated from the absence of loneliness, family reunification, and the hospitality offered to them from their parents, friends and neighbors. The returnees were welcomed by their families, friends and neighbors upon their home arrival.

Chaltu, a returnee from KSA, stated that she was very happy upon arrival as she came together again with her children and parents. She explained her feeling as follows:

*I felt happy when I met my brother at Bole Airport. He was the one who welcomed me.... Especially, I couldn't control my tears when I saw my children.... Nothing was as happiest as rejoining them again.... Also, I felt great when I remember the way my parents accommodated me.... It was really good.*

Tsehay, on the other hand, felt happy as her loneliness was ended up upon her home arrival. Her boyfriend welcomed her at Bole Airport. She articulated her feeling as follows:

*I was alone for three years living with peoples of different color, language and way of life.... Upon my arrival, I felt accompanied and free. I speak my mother tongue, ask whatever I need and go wherever I want to go.... All these make me happy.*

Sifan was a returnee who experienced mixed feeling upon her arrival to Ethiopia. For one thing she was happy for getting back to homeland, for another thing she felt sad for she lost barrels of commodities in the plane. She explained the event as follows:

*I was very happy upon return home.... My brother welcomed me at Bole Airport. The hospitality my parents and neighbors offered to me was really amazing.... Unfortunately, I was very sad for I couldn't present them any gift. All my commodities were being lost on my arrival.... I know that I have to give them something but I couldn't.*

In addition, Damitu and Simbo reported that they felt happy as they got their mothers alive.

#### **4.5.2 Being Engaged in Diverse Livelihood Strategies**

The study participants engaged themselves in to different livelihood earning activities. Only two (Yeshe and Sifan) are out of work currently. Chaltu make a living by distilling Areke, brewing Tela and selling dry Enjera. While Mekdes owned a grocery, Damitu earned a livelihood from the café she owned.

On the other hand, Hawi and Kulani were participating in a field of farming. While, Kulani is a poultry woman, Hawi is distributing horticultural inputs for horticulturalists. Simbo is running her mother's business. Formerly, her mother was a trader. In the past it was her mother who covers all the activities such as brewing Tela, distilling Areke and baking bread. Since, her mother was sick, Simbo is the one who covers her part.

Finally, Kidist involved in different gainful activities. She had been working with her the then husband on the horticultural field cultivating vegetables such as chili pepper, tomatoes and onion until she got divorced. Currently, she is washing clothes on hand and baking Enjera to earn money going from house to house in her neighborhood.

As it was mentioned by the participants, cooking and cleaning were their routine activities abroad. However, in homeland, neither of the activities is considered as valuable as per the assumption of the participants. Rather, being engaged in suchlike activities is perceived as failure by the participants. This is the reason why Kidist perceived herself as a “cursed person” for she has washing clothes and baking Enjera in her neighborhood.

#### **4.5.3 A Feeling of Discomfort towards the Working Condition in Homeland**

Seven out of the 10 participants described that the working condition in Ethiopia was challenging. The participants raised different reasons:

##### **4.5.3.1 Being Out of Job**

Yeshe and Sifan were working in Addis Ababa after they got back Ethiopia. While Yeshe had been working in a printing house, she quitted the job for the wage was too low. Similarly, Sifan had been teaching in a kindergarten but quitted as she stated that the salary was not enough to lead a life in Addis. After a while, they got back to their birth place i.e. Olonkomi. Thus, they were out of job.

##### **4.5.3.2 The Inability to Yield Fair Profit out of Businesses**

Mekdes, Damitu, Kidist and Chaltu stated that they were not gaining enough profit out of the business they were running. For example, Chaltu was worrying about the working condition in Ethiopia. She detailed home working condition as follows:

*Although I'm passing a joyful time with my children and the weather is favorable here, I'm not happy with my current work status.... As you can see, I'm distilling Areke that is too far from my expectations....also I have been brewing Tela. But no significant change is happened in my family except this unfinished house; it is my only mark.*

Thinking that she would have better off economically, Chaltu stated that it was better if she had run a business by the money she built a house. She expressed her regret as follows:

*Although I had to prioritize to buy a residential land at a time for its price is doubling now, I should not have built house.... It would have been better, if I run a business with that money.... At least I would have been freed myself from all these fire related works [distilling Areke, brewing Tela and baking Enjera].*

When I met Chaltu for rapport building, I got her simultaneously distilling Areke and baking Enjera. I also observed a group of people drinking Areke. She managed all these works alone. Her house was only partly finished. It serves both as residence and business place. While the customers were sitting in a salon, the bed room was only covered by curtain without a wall.

Kidist was also not comfortable with the working condition in homeland. According to Kidist, washing clothes and baking Enjera on hand is tiresome while the wage is too low. As per Kidist's idea, for a person who worked as a domestic worker for six years, washing clothes and baking Enjera should not have been a destiny. She explained the condition as follows:

*I had never thought a kind of life I'm living now.... By the time I have to take a break and make my children happy, I'm carrying a sick child on my back and moves from house to house for washing clothes and baking Enjera.... This is actually a curse.... All the people I know ever had been blessing me.... I don't know why all these sufferings are happening to me.*

Although Kidist saved money which she called it 'enough' for making a life, it was her husband whom she judged responsible for her sufferings after home return. She narrates what happened as follows:

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

*Right after I got married, we [she and her husband] had taken part in cultivating vegetables.... For the cultivation needs huge money, I spent more of my money on it expecting that I would get it back.... To tell you the truth, he was barehanded at a time; what he contributed was only his labor.... Unfortunately, waiting for my absence from the farm land, he sold all the vegetables within days.... Immediately, by rejecting me and his children, he runs away from home.*

Upon the time of data collection, I also observed that Kidist's older son was weeping. He was a pneumonia and sinus patient. Kidist stated that she spent all the remaining money for curing her son although he is still struggling with the diseases. Even she mortgaged her jewelries in order to buy milk for her sick child.

In addition, Mekdes and Damitu also stated that they were not profiting enough from the businesses they were running. Mekdes built house where she used part of it for residence and the rest as grocery. But she was not interested in a grocery work. The business was not going as she expected. Mekdes said:

*Here, grocery work is very seasonal.... Next to holidays, it is good on market days i.e. Saturday and Tuesday. In the remaining five days of a week, however, I'm successful if could sell even one can of beer.... Especially, in July, august, September and October there is no market at all.... I'm living from hand to mouth.*

According to Damitu, although she owned a café, the market was not promising. Upon my first contact with Damitu in her café, I observed that no one was in the café. Since the time was 11:30 A.M., I thought people could have come at noon. But within my stay up to 1 P.M, I witnessed not more than five people who had a lunch there. Later, she expressed the market condition as follows:

*Although I have been struggling to catch my customers, I could not succeed.... Just upon I opened this café, all the vacant sits you are looking here are occupied early in the morning.... But now I have left only with few customers.... Neither my services nor my behavior was changed since then. I don't know the reason behind their absence.*

#### **4.5.3.3 Family Related Problem**

Families play an indispensable role in the post return- experiences of returnees. Families' action and status may change the post-return experiences of the returnees for good or bad. For example, Simbo's return to homeland was associated with the health status of her mother. The post-return work experience of Simbo was, therefore, influenced by her mother's sickness. She explained the condition as follows:

*I didn't try to start my own business.... My mother is sick and alone too. I'm responsible for covering all what she had been working; unless, mom's customers may not come again.... I'm baking bread and brewing Tela.... I buy a distilled Areke from the wholesalers and retail it to our customers.... Although I'm worrying about my working condition, mom is my consolation.*

In addition, the participants reported that their money is being wasted by their parents, spouses and boyfriends. While Hawi's and Mekdes's parents expend more of the remittances on their own needs more than the amount of money allowed to do so, Yeshe and Damitu sent significant amount of money for their respective husbands whose marital relationships were ended up on their return to Ethiopia. On the other hand, Sifan sent money to her boyfriend believing that he was with her. However, he got engaged with another woman.

#### 4.5.3.4 Lack of Good Governance

The bureaucratic nature of the government structure and corruption were among the factors that made the working condition challenging. To enter in to the business world, they have to pass through a long process which made them lose hope. In addition, corruption was another thing challenging the returnees not to start their own business. The participants have reported that they were unable to get access to rental shops (sheds) because of some officials who rather distribute them partially for their relatives or to others for money.

Only three participants (Tsehay, Hawi and Kulani) stated that the working condition in the homeland was good. While Tsehay and Hawi got engaged after return to men who are better off economically, Kulani owned poultry which earns her ‘sufficient money’ as she stated. As per the opinion of Tsehay, whatever it is, working in homeland makes her happy. In addition, Hawi described her working condition as follows:

*Here the business is almost good.... In addition, I'm free to do what I want to do. I have the right to close it when I feel sick or in convenient or when I want to go somewhere.... There [abroad], it is impossible to move out from madam's house.*

Interviewer: what do mean when you say it is almost good? Does it mean you are earning sufficient revenue from it?

*Hawi: I'm not confident enough to say it sufficient because of the seasonal nature of the business.... There are times when herbicides and insecticides are sold daily. There are also times when I stand the whole day without selling anything.... The same is true for fruit seeds.... In addition, there are illegal distributors without any trade licenses who are selling lower quality inputs for lower prices.... But with all these challenges, thanks to God we are making a living.*

While I was looking into Hawi's shop during the data collection period, I witnessed that it is full of different seeds, herbicides and insecticides.

#### **4.5.4 Opportunities Available to the Participants**

Only, three participants (Hawi, Tsehay and Kulani) felt that they availed to opportunities which enabled them earn livelihood in Ethiopia. For Kulani, living in homeland by itself was an opportunity. She stated that "Here you order yourself. Nobody has a dictating power on you. You are free to go wherever place you want.... Even you are free to do what you want to the extent of your capacity". On the other hand, Hawi's and Tsehay's opportunity was related to their marriage. Although Hawi returned from Bahrain without saving enough money, her husband was the one who enabled her to start a business. Similarly, Tsehay's husband was owner of mill. This created good opportunity for her to sell a variety of cereals; but not without challenges. She stated that:

*Inflation is high in Ethiopia. By the money on my hand, sometimes I feel sad when I'm unable to do to the extent I want to do.... Financial constraint is the main challenge that hindered me from doing my best. The government structure is also very bureaucratic for you to implement what you want to do....Especially, acquiring a trade license took me long time.*

#### **4.5.5 Challenges the Participants have Faced**

Most of the participants mentioned that they have faced various challenges after return. Economic hardship, death or sickness of family member, wastage of money either by parent or spouse, divorce, government bureaucracy, being out of job and unavailability of gainful job were challenges faced the participants. According to Chaltu, there was no opportunity in Ethiopia about to speak that changed her life upon return. She stated that:

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

*Was there any job opportunity here, I have never been engaged in distilling Areke....*

*I feel like I came from fire to fire....I faced many challenges after my return.... as I told you I'm a divorcee.... I'm responsible for feeding my children. Their father has no single penny and we do not expect anything from him.... It's me who cover all the expenses.*

Kidist also described the major challenge she faced since her return to Ethiopia. The unblessed marriage she had never thought to happen that robbed all her money, the frequent illness of her child, and the economic hardships are the major challenges she faced. According to Kidist, even her parents turn their face away.

Furthermore, Yeshi faced many challenges related to divorce, family and job that immersed her in economic hardships. She explained the challenges as follows:

*My post-return life is full of challenges than my pre-return one.... Here I faced many challenges. Right upon my arrival to home, I heard the death of my daughter. It is the event that makes me feel sick till now.... the divorce process, then, continued. I visited a court for two and half a year.... The case was simple but the judges were bribed to make me lost.... Although I won the case, I wasted my time and money on it.... Now I'm numbing because of my endless grief.*

During the interview period, I realized a great grief Yeshi was experiencing. Other than her sobbing while she talks about her deceased daughter, the color of her face by itself could testify how much she had been saddened.

Moreover, all of the participants pointed out that neither government nor nongovernmental organization visited them upon their return. The participants stressed on the lack of support from the Ejersa Lafo Woreda. Although the returnees have an entrepreneurial intention, the Woreda

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

has not been backing them in the areas of accessing microfinances, providing vocational trainings and distributing rental shops (sheds). Regarding rental shop, Chaltu, a returnee from KSA stated that:

*I wish I could get a support from government.... For example, had I got a place for starting my own business, I would have become a successful woman. For I hadn't got a shed I obliged to build house for starting home business.... Now I'm running out of money.... I know there are governmental sheds but who owned them? Only riches.... The poor may get it but where? At periphery.*

As per Chaltu's opinion, it was better for the government either to give money for credit or render a place where it is possible to run their own business if it was really concerned about the returnees. For this to happen, however, according to Chaltu, first those in power should avoid partiality. She stated that "as we all are citizens, we should be benefited equally".

The topic of vocational training was also stressed on the participants. Hawi mentioned that although she had no information about the services the government rendered to the returnees, she is happy if there is any:

*Especially, it is better for a government to encourage the returnees to start their own business.... I know many females who have money but have no knowhow to work, what to work and the type of work which may enable them become successful with the amount of capital on their hand.*

Kidist, on the other hand, stated that although she wants to get a loan from the Woreda, she fears the core idea of micro enterprises which need group formation. She explained her fear as follows:

*I know that there is no time I need help other than this.... Although I want to get a loan from the government I fear to start a business with people.... My past life*

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

*thought me not trust people.... I want to start my own business. But they didn't let me get the loan.*

On the contrary, Kulani has a support for grouping, especially, if it incorporates those who have the same background. She stated that:

*Almost all of us had similar experiences abroad. We faced many challenges there.... As to me, I'm happy if the government brings us together and gives us work that will make us profitable.... If we bring the money we have together and get additional money from the government, for sure, we will be successful.*

Sifan, even, insisted the very nature of microenterprise. As she stated it has nothing good for changing life of the returnees other than preparing them for re-migration. She explained it as follows:

*Okay, organizing a group of people for having access to credit is good. But do you think that the startup capital is good enough to run a profitable business? No. for a group of five or six members they give not more than 100,000 ETB. Look, at least this amount of money was present on each of us upon our return.... so what change do we bring by this money? Nothing.... It may cover the expenses for those of us who want to migrate again.*

Stressing that only if she gets money which she thought of enough for doing a business, Sifan would refrain herself from re-migration. In addition, she urges the government to provide sheds for lower price to the returnees. According to Sifan, being a returnee by itself needs a visit from a government as they had passed many challenges when they were working in foreign countries.

Thus, the participants raised aspects that need to be stressed by the government regarding the services accessible to them including the vocational trainings, loans and rental shops.

#### **4.5.6 Limited Reintegration Back Home**

According to Van Houte and Davies (2008), for a returnee said to be reintegrated, he / she should find his or her own position in society and feel a sense of belonging to and participate in that society. Regarding this, in all the three aspects of reintegration; economic, psychosocial and social networks, the participants faced different challenges.

##### **4.5.6.1 Economic Problem: Unsuccessfulness in Rebuilding Sustainable**

###### **Livelihoods**

Although the participants had overly expected that the economic condition in home country would be good enough to earn them promising livelihoods, what they encountered upon return was different. Financial hardship, market seasonality and absence of job are difficulties they rather faced upon return.

Only Kulani has reported that her income was sufficient to make a living. Mekdes, Damitu and Hawi reported that their income was semi-stable because of market seasonality. Tsehay reported the insufficiency of income because of inflation and budget constraint. In addition, Kidist, Simbo and Chaltu reported that their income was not gainful because of the status of work they engaged in i.e. informal jobs. Moreover, Yeshe and Sifan were out of work without income.

##### **4.5.6.2 Psychosocial Problems**

Although all of the returnees had felt happy right after their return to Ethiopia, they encountered many challenges that made them depressed after they go deep in the regular life.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

The death of child and the illness of family members the returnees encountered upon their return made half of the participants become depressed. Her daughter's death was a great grief to Yeshe. Her brother's illness was a great shock for Sifan. Her mother's sickness depressed Damitu. Simbo also experienced depression while she was caring for her bedridden mother. In addition to the economic shock she experienced, Kidist felt depressed because of her son's sickness.

Furthermore, after realizing they were deceived either by parents, spouses or boyfriend, the participants got disappointed and depressed. Six out of the ten participants encountered this problem. Mekdes and Hawi were deceived by their parents for they (parents) didn't keep their promise of withholding their savings. Both Damitu and Sifan were remitting money to their husbands and boyfriend respectively who had married other women without their awareness. Moreover, Kidist and Yeshe worried due to divorce related problems. Although Yeshe was remitting money to her husband, they got divorced and she didn't get the money back. In addition, Kidist faced financial hardships due to her husband who robbed all her investments.

Other than sending the remittances to their families, spouses and friends on trust, the participants had no means to know whether the money awaits them or not. They over trusted their families, spouses and friends which let the participants sent all their remittances to them.

Thus, the incongruence between the participants' pre-return expectations about their families and the reality at home i.e. the inability to live up to their prior expectations upon their return to Ethiopia made the returnees not to feel at home, especially, after they become involved in the regular realms of life.

On the contrary, all of the returnees stated that there was no new culture they brought to homeland that made them feels isolated and excluded. For they have preserved homeland's culture with themselves during their stay abroad, they readopts it upon return. Although they had been

exercising the destination countries culture it was only for sake of not being neglected and dismissed from job. Thus, the constructed identities abroad didn't influence the participants' way of life after return as they recounted. Simbo, a returnee from Oman, narrated:

*There was nothing I re-adopted upon my return to homeland. After all, I preserved all my home cultures. I'm the one I was before, because I was not changed. Although it rarely happened, there were occasions we celebrated the Ethiopian holly days together. Even if the chance was not available, we remember all the holydays and hence celebrate individually.*

Hawi on the other hand added:

*As to me, it is not re-adaptation to homeland culture that was difficult but the adaptation of foreign culture while I was working there. Their dressing style, food, religion and language were more challenging for me to adapt. Upon my return, I forgot all their way of life right after I get out of plane. Inside, I have all the Ethiopian culture I socialized with. So I haven't got any difficulty in this aspect.*

#### **4.5.6.3 The Weakening of Social Networks after Return**

While they were working abroad, the participants had developed cross-border social contacts with home society through telephone or other social Medias. For example, for those participants who bought a residential land, the role of their family was enormous. It is family that provided them information, choose the place which is convenient for residence and deal in setting the affordable price. Kidist, Mekdes, Chaltu, Kulani and Sifan have bought a residential land through their parents.

Furthermore, after coming home, returnees developed relationships with parents, spouses and friends that helped them both in material and social support. However, for most of them, the

relationships last only few times. The deception most of the returnees faced and the divorce some of them experienced made the relationships blurred. The social status most of the participants thought to be acquired from their respective community also lasts only until they used up their money.

Moreover, while six out of the ten participants have secured membership in Iddirs found in the community, seven out of the ten participants got involved in Ikub. However, other than helping participants both emotionally and materially upon a death of family member, the role of Iddir in rebuilding the livelihood of the returnees does almost none-existent. The same is true for Ikub; it only encourages the returnees for saving.

Table 6: Emerged themes regarding prospects

| <b>Sub-theme</b>  | <b>Super-theme</b> | <b>Essence</b>  |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Thinking of re-migration<br>Preferred to work in homeland | Prospects          | The unfulfilled plans and unrealized expectations triggered the re-migration intention of the participants except some who wants to work in homeland. |

#### **4.6 Prospects as it is Viewed by the Participants**

From the 10 participants, 7 confirmed that they want to re-migrate. Only three participants (Kulani, Tsehay and Hawi) want to stay home. The main reason behind the need for re-migration is that the unfulfilled expectations and unrealized plans. Only Kulani stated that she has accomplished what she had planned. While two of the participants (Yeshe and Simbo) did not fulfilled what they planned before, the rest seven (Kidist, Chaltu, Damitu, Tsehay, Sifan, Mekdes and Hawi) fulfilled only part of their plans.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

According to Mekdes, she realized only part of her plans. She got a hindrance she had never thought before. She explained the situation as follows:

*I encountered financial constraints. My family didn't keep their promise.... They spent almost half of my money for their own seeks.... I'm very sorry for what they did to me. Beyond the money I had sent them for themselves, they also used mine.... So I couldn't realize the objectives I had been working for.*

While Mekdes was asked where she wants to work henceforward, she answered as follows:

*I want to improve my life.... Once again, I want to work abroad at least for the next four years because I can't save money with what I'm working now.... I learned from my past mistakes.... I want to open my private bank account here before I get there. Then I will save the money on my private account.... I think this works for all my fellow women who are stepping to Arab countries.*

Standing resolutely against the people whom she called predators, Kidist also firmly confirmed the idea of Mekdes.

*Many people say "money brought from Arab is only for stuff, no one's life was changed for good". But I say it is not Arabs money but the people who are nearest to us and become worms to our money are responsible for our unsuccessfulness. Look! I'm not living the life I was supposed to.... All my expectations were turned down because of that man [her ex-husband].*

Kidist also mentioned that in order to change her and her family's life, she wants to re-migrate although it was not her wish but the only choice she has. Thus, she stay homeland until her younger son stop breast feeding as she indicated.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Damitu's re-migration idea was also triggered by the betrayal of her husband and the market condition in Ethiopia. She detailed as follows:

*I'm not stable inside. I feel broken and neglected.... So I want to emigrate again.*

*Furthermore, the earlier expectation of the market here is not the same with what I see here physically.... I started the process for re-migration.... I know things are not good in Arab. But it is better to work there than being here and feel jilted.*

Simbo was also waiting only for her mother's wellness. She wants to re-migrate then.

While, Tsehay and Hawi want to work in homeland alongside their husbands', Kulani was the only girl who has a vision of starting a transnational trading. She indicated that:

*I think I have fulfilled what I thought before.... The today's small thing on my hand will for sure get bigger tomorrow. The necessary thing is just to have a vision and a motivation to realize that vision.... Working in my country by itself is worthy.... If God says, I may start to import some goods, at least, on small scale.*

## Chapter Five: Discussion

### 5.1 Over Expectation in Homeland

The participants had developed positive expectations about their homeland all in economic, social and familial aspects. They overly expected that the economic condition in home country would be good enough to earn promising livelihoods. However, their expectations were not realized upon return due to different reasons. For instance, the poor working condition at home which is characterized by absence of job, unfair profit and lack of good governance make the returnees prior expectation of economy unrealistic upon return. Similar to this study, in the review of return migration, Gmelch (1980) stated that economic conditions are worse than anticipated for return migrants as jobs are harder to find, wages are lower and working conditions are poor to abysmal.

In addition, this study has revealed that the information the returnees had gathered from their cross-border social networks made them perceive favorably towards the home market although, mostly, it does not exist in reality. According to Gmelch (1980), relatives exaggerated the benefit of market at home while underplaying or even ignoring its evil sides such as unemployment and inflation. This raised the returnees' expectations higher than the reality of life in the homeland.

Furthermore, the participants had anticipated that they would rejoin their former relationships at homeland upon their return. However, this hardly happened for some of them as they didn't get back the relationships. There are participants who got separated and divorced from their former spouses and friends. This study substantiates the finding of Regt and Medareshaw (2016) which stated that married women's long-term absence may lead to divorce and separation. Similarly, Gmelch (1980) stated that local people may develop new friendships

during the absence of their migrant friends and are not always enthusiastic about resuming old relationship.

The unrealistic expectations developed during their stay abroad made some of the participants depressed upon their return which in turn triggered interest for re-migration. Thus, pre-return expectations influenced the post- return experiences of the returnees.

## **5.2 Return Preparedness**

According to Cassarino (2004; 2008), in order for a returnee to be called prepared, he /she has to decide freely to return by his or her volition and mobilize the tangible and intangible resources needed to secure return. From the three different degrees of return preparedness Cassarino pointed out, two were characterized this study participants. While half of the participants felt that they were both ready enough and freely decide to return that resembles the first degree of preparedness, the rest half of the returnees felt that they were prepared only partly either financially prepared for return or freely decide to return that confirms the second degree of preparedness.

However, there are grounds on which the Cassarino's (2004; 2008) preparedness conception has not fit to this study. First and foremost, the intangible resources like skills and relationships that should have been mobilized during the migration experience abroad were not acquired. This may be attributed to the working condition in the Gulf States which is not favorable for the domestic workers to develop relationships that would help them sustain the cross border contacts after return. In addition, the skills the returnees had developed in the Gulf States like cleaning and cooking are not promising to earn them a living due to their fragility. This is an exemplary echo of the neoclassical economics theory that stated the expertise or

foreign qualifications attained in the place of destination are barely be used in the place of origin because it would be irrelevant locally (SIHMA, 2015).

Second, whereas the distinguishing trait of the second type of Cassarino's return preparedness is time which is regarded as too short to allow tangible and intangible resources to be mobilized, the current study found out the amount of money the migrants had been expending for parents' spouses and friends was considered as the main factor for the returnees' moderate preparedness.

Third, there were participants with maximum years of stay abroad (not returnees with minimum years of stay abroad as Cassarino stated) but got back home due to family related problem. This, on the other hand, substantiated the study of Van Metreen et al (2014) that found participants with moderate preparation are those migrants who got back home due to family reasons or due to negative push factors in the host countries.

Lastly, there is a lacking resource in Cassarino's (2008) types of resource mobilization. Resource mobilization is viewed by Cassarino as both resources that have been mobilized during the migration experience abroad and resources that the migrants had brought with them prior to leaving their origin country (i.e. social capital).

However, there is a resource the migrants had been relying on which is neither acquired during the migration experience abroad nor mobilized prior to leaving home country. It is a resource that the migrants had been mobilizing through cross-border contacts with home country while they had been working in the host country. Some of the participants reported that the cross-border contacts they made with their families on telephone contributed for their preparation to return. It is through these contacts that the participants had bought residential land which was viewed as the most achievement they had done out of migration. In addition, this is

not a kind of resource the social network theorists are stressing which is important for the migrants to retain cross-border contacts after returning to home (Cassarino, 2008) rather it is a resource the migrants had been retaining through a cross-border contacts with their families and friends while they were at destination countries.

### **5.3 The Variety of Return Motives**

The migrants have raised different reasons behind their decision for return such as, the need to realize their expectations, the health condition of the family member, the need to take a break and homesickness.

From variety of the return motives the participants mentioned, the need to realize plans was the dominant one. Especially, those returnees who felt that they were prepared for return outspokenly stated that realizing their plans was the factor for their decision to return. Regarding this, the new economics of labor migration theorists pointed out that a successful migration experience abroad is a major triggering factor for the returnees' decision back home (SIHMA, 2015). Here, it is important to discuss the relationship between return preparedness and return motive. Whereas the participants with the return motive of family related problem were only moderately prepared, the participants with the return motive of realizing plans were relatively well prepared. This is congruent with Van Metreen et al (2014) study who have asserted that returnees with a return motive of going back home because they have met the objectives they wanted to accomplish are more prepared than those returnees with return motives of family related reasons at home country and negative push factors at the destination countries.

#### **5.4 The Context of Ethiopia in which Return took place: ‘...Coming from fire to fire...’**

This study revealed that the participants were returned in a situation where there are little or no opportunities available to them from the government. The participants experienced several challenging situations during their post-return life in Ethiopia.

The unavailability of gainful job, the seasonality of market, inflation, the inability to get promising profit from the business and corruption are the main challenges the participants faced during their post-return period.

In addition, family related problems like deception, death, divorce, wastage of money, illness were the main challenges the participants have experienced after their return to Ethiopia. On this regard, the current study is congruent with the assertion of Van Houte and Davies (2008) who stated that the context of home country in which return takes place in all economic, political, cultural and social aspects shape reintegration either positively or negatively. In this regard, all the economic and family related factors pointed out by the participants are the conditions which negatively affected their reintegration. This is true for participants like Kidist and Simbo who have been double burdened; on one hand, they are taking care of their bedridden families, on the other they are getting involved in low class jobs such as baking Enjera, distilling Areke and washing clothes on hands. The homeland working condition was also explained by Chaltu’s own word as “coming from fire to fire” equating the working conditions in Gulf States with the home land as both are related to fire.

Furthermore, all of the participants developed a feeling of being forgotten. This study found that the support the participants have been gained from either governmental or nongovernmental body is all most nonexistent. Regarding the support of government, the 2013

study of Kushminder entitled “female return migration and reintegration strategies in Ethiopia” found that compared to the supports given to those diasporas with a potential to invest back in their home land, the stance of the government towards the temporary labor migrants returnees, particularly from the middle east is ambivalent. Similarly, the Ejersa Lafo Woreda has not taken an initiative in the areas of accessing microfinances, providing vocational trainings, distributing rental shops that are accessible for customers and providing credits in the manner that makes the returnees feel convenient.

The current study found that regardless of a type of return motive and degree of return preparedness, the conditions in the homeland alone would enormously affect the post return experiences of the returnees. Just as “migrants who are forcefully expelled have no possibilities to prepare themselves for their return, which greatly affects their embeddedness in their home societies” as Regt and Medareshaw (2016) argued, this study found even migrants who are decided to return home voluntarily with some sort of preparedness have faced many challenges due to several contextual factors in home country.

## **5.5 Failure to Reintegration Back Home**

The reintegration degree of the majority of the returnees back home was limited compared to the degree of their return preparedness and return motives. Only one participant out of the five, who felt prepared for return and had return motive of realizing objectives, felt that she fulfilled what she had been planned for. The rest are either fulfilled only part of their pre return expectations or didn't fulfill at all. Kushminder (2013) and Cassarino (2004; 2008) stated that prepared returnees are more likely to contribute to their countries development since they have means for their reintegration. In contrary, the current study found that although there were returnees with relative return preparedness than others, the majority of them didn't reintegrate. This is due to the

presence of hindering factors at homeland after return both family related and economic factors in nature as discussed above.

According to Van Houte and Davies (2008), for a returnee said to be reintegrated they have to re-build a sustainable livelihood comprising of owning or have access to resources and assets economically, they should feel at home during their post-return life psychosocially and they have to be provided with relationships that enable them develop a feeling of being accepted socially. In line with this assertion, the reintegration status of the current study participants was limited in all the three aspects.

Economically, although majority of the participants owned residence, except one, all of them have not secured income which is sufficient to lead their post-return life sustainably. They were either earning insufficient income or out of work at all.

In the study of “return migration and reintegration issues of Armenians” Chobanyan (2013) stated that the main bottle neck for reintegration is lack of capital for getting involved in business. Parallel to Chobanyan’s study, a 2014 study of domestic workers return migration and reintegration to Kerala (Reshmi & Sayeed) showed that since the female migrants were involved in domestic work at the destination, majority of them were not in a favorable situation after return because they could not amass sufficient money for sustaining themselves and their families. This study is also a mirror reflection of the above stated findings. The majority of the participants reported that they encountered financial constraints upon their return to Ethiopia. However, it is not only the returnees inability to amass sufficient money when they had been working in the Gulf States which is related to the type of work they were involved in , the failure to use the already amassed money in business world due to various contextual factors at home

land also degraded their capital. For example, illness of family members drains savings of some participants. Thus, the majority of the participants were not reintegrated economically.

Psychosocially, in a cultural aspect, the returnees didn't get challenged upon return for they had preserved homeland's culture during their stay abroad. It was not readjustment to their homeland's which challenged the participants. The participants have stated that the adaptation to host countries' culture was rather challenging to them. This is not parallel with Sussman (2000) study that stated migrants have constructed partly or entirely new identities in the migration period which makes their re-acculturation experience even more difficult than their original acculturation experience in the host country.

From the four categories of returnees Cerase cited in Cassarino (2004) has pointed out, this study's participants fit to the conservative typology. Return of conservatism pertains to the migrants with an initial return intention after saving some money during the migration period. They stick to the values of the home society; therefore, rather than changing the social structure, they reinforce it back home. In addition, from the four typologies of return migration strategies Cultural Identity Model has identified (Tambyah & Chng, 2006), this study participants fit into sojourners with affirmative identity who accentuates towards their heritage culture

However, death of child and the illness of family member they encountered upon their return to Ethiopia make a significant number of participants depressed. Moreover, after realizing that they were deceived either by parents, spouses or boyfriend, there are participants who got disappointed and lost hope. Thus, the feeling of depression, shock, grief and losing hope after return is not because of the development of new identity which is incompatible with the heritage culture as studies revealed (see Sussman, 2000; Anbasse et al, 2009; Van Houte and Davies, 2008). Rather, it is due to other contextual factors they encountered in Ethiopia after return. The

incongruence might be emanated from differences in the migration experiences of the returnees at abroad i.e. whether they had deeply immersed in the culture of host countries or not. However, their being conservative towards the heritage culture didn't let some of the participants escape from depression.

Thus, as one can understand from this study, the post return experiences of the returnees were also influenced by situations at home land irrespective of whether the returnees had changed their cultural values or not while they had been working abroad.

Socially, this study found that the participants have developed some sort of social contacts and relationships with their families, spouses, friends and neighbors both before and after they returned to Ethiopia. In addition, there are participants who have participated in social organizations such as Iddir and economic organization like Ikub.

However, although parts of the returnees have benefited from the cross border contacts they had been engaged in before return, there are also participants who lose out of the cross-border social networks they had built for they are deceived to it. The experience of divorce, the feeling of being neglected by their husbands and the deception they have encountered from parents also made part of the participants become depressed and shocked.

Moreover, regarding resource mobilization, participants have benefited hardly from their social contacts with home society after return. Rather than material, the support is mainly manifested emotionally. This is mainly due to the expectation of the society about the returnees. For one thing their migration experience is viewed as successful by the society since they have spent a significant amount of years abroad. For another thing, the limited social networks of the returnees which are confined only up to the level of family didn't let them extract opportunities that may leads them get gainful jobs.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Furthermore, the cross-border social network of the returnees seems only unidirectional. Except the cross border social contacts the returnees had developed with the homeland while they were working abroad which yields part of the returns mobilize resources at home, there is no meaningful cross border social contacts the returnees have made since their return to Ethiopia which might be considered as a bedrock for mobilizing resources. Only Kulani reported that she has kept contact with her former employer on a telephone.

Thus, in all the three aspects i.e. economic, social and psychosocial the reintegration degree of the participants is limited. Their inability to be embedded in the larger society in many spectrums of life is the dominant factor that pushes the returnees to develop a feeling of re-migration.

### **5.6 Eagerness for Re-migration**

Re-migration overrides the future of the study participants. From the 10 participants, 7 have confirmed that they want to re-migrate. This is due to unfulfilled expectations upon their return to Ethiopia. In addition to family related problems, lack of gainful employment and lack of capital for starting up promising business, the local government also doesn't created opportunities for the returnees. These are the factors which pushes the returnees for re-migration.

According to Regt and Medareshaw (2016) the Ethiopian government's failure to improve the returnees' economic embeddedness has many implications. Many returnees may opt to migrate again, and in the absence of policies that protect migrants they will make use of irregular channels.

Similarly, this study found that the majority of the participants were eagerly looking for re-migration through whatever means. Beyond their eagerness for re-migration, in practice, I have witnessed that Damitu has re-migrated one week later, right after I interviewed her. Chaltu,

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Mekdes and Sifan also reported that they have already started the process for migrating again.

This study indicates that even in the situation where the government has already banned migration to the Gulf States, the majority of the participants are very willing to reach there illegally. Thus, most of them are susceptible to the potential sufferings ahead of them stating that they are ready to accept both the goods and the evils sides of migration.

## Chapter Six: Conclusion and Implications

### 6.1 Conclusion

This study was undertaken with the intention of understanding return migration phenomenon from the perspective of voluntarily returned female migrants. In an attempt to understand their lived experiences, the returnees' pre-return expectations and preparedness were explored, the situations that influenced them to return were described and their post-return life was explicated. In addition, prospects about the returnees' future were revealed.

Regarding the pre-return expectations, the participants had developed positive expectations about their homeland all in economic, social and familial aspects. Despite their over expectation, however, what they had encountered upon return was different. The home market appeared to them difficult, their social status declined over time and families were not found trusted as they were appeared to them before. The lack of reliable information about the conditions in home country regarding the market situation, the absence of means to follow up their investment at home country and the inability to follow up their family status were the main reasons for the returnees over expectation in their homeland.

Regarding return motives, the need to realize their plans, the health condition of the family member, the need to take a break and homesickness were the main factors behind the participants' decision to return. When preparedness for return comes to concern, there are differences within the participants. Part of the participants' preparedness was manifested both in terms of readiness and free will. These are the participants who were willing to return by their own volition and ready for return too (through mobilizing both tangible and intangible resources). The rest are those who prepared only moderately either willing to return or ready for return. When the context of homeland in which the return takes places comes to concern, this

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

study found that the migrants returned in a situation where there are little or no opportunities available to them from the government. The participants developed a feeling of being forgotten by all the concerned bodies.

Regarding re-integration, this study found that due to the presence of hindering factors at homeland related to economy, social and family related problems, the majority of the participants did not re-integrated well in their home society. Economically, the unavailability of gainful job, the seasonality of market, inflation, the inability to get promising profit from the business they have been running and corruption are the main challenges the participants faced during their post-return period. Socially, family related problems like deception, death, divorce, wastage of money and illness were the main challenges the participants have experienced upon return.

The current study found that regardless of a type of return motive and degree of return preparedness, the conditions (economic, social and familial) in the homeland alone would enormously affect the post return experiences of the returnees. Generally, their inability to be reintegrated in the larger society economically, socially and psychosocially pushes the returnees to develop a feeling of re-migration, even illegally. Thus, most of them are susceptible to the potential sufferings ahead of them since they decided to accept both the goods and the evils of emigration to the Gulf-States.

## **6.2 Implication for social work education, policy, practice and future researches**

As per the findings of this study, the participants faced various challenges that limited their reintegration upon return to home in all economic, social and social network aspects. The challenges are not pertaining solely to the host countries but also attributed to the economic, social and familial contexts in home country upon which the return takes place. This study has, thus, implications for social work education, practices, policy, and future research.

Regarding social work education, there is a need to devise different reintegration strategies that would enable to sustain the post-return life of the returnees. Social work as a profession is intended to enhance the wellbeing of people. In order to achieve this end, the profession has to broaden its body of knowledge with a potential of yielding different models to guide different practices. Here, return migration from the Middle-East to Ethiopia has to gain an attention by social workers. Usually, the available researches including the current one, regarding the return from middle- east show the ugly side of it accompanied with the re-integration problem back home. Since, vulnerable groups are at the center of social work concerns, social work education, specifically in the Ethiopian context, should inculcate the issue of return migration and return related problems in to its pupil. This would elevate their knowledge about the problem in detail which would enable them to come up with viable reintegration strategies that, in turn, would affect the post-return life of the returnees positively. In addition, since the intention of re-migration, even the illegal one, overrides futurity of the participants, social workers in collaboration with the local government and different stakeholders should raise the awareness of the returnees regarding the potential consequences of illegal migration on the life of the returnees and the society at large.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

When policy comes to concern, this study found that Ethiopia lacks an inclusive policy which recognizes the needs and interests of the low skilled migrant returnees. For any action or intervention to be taken regarding returnees, first it should be guided by an appropriate policy. Even if the policy exists, if it is not inclusive enough to incorporate the needs and interests of all, it may prioritize one group of people over another. The same is true for the Ethiopian Diaspora policy; rhetorically; although it claimed the inclusion of the concerns of low skilled migrants, in reality, they are rarely represented.

Improving Diaspora engagement in investment, trade and tourism, enhancing knowledge and technology transfer, encouraging foreign currency inflows and strengthening Diaspora participation, promoting cultural values and promoting image building, advancing Diaspora participation in good governance and democracy and encouraging philanthropic and development associations are the major goals stated in the Ethiopian Diaspora policy.

Recognizing the current status of Ethiopian low skilled migrants in the Middle East, however, it is possible to say that there is a little ground for the returnees to be part of the aforementioned goals. Thus, the Ethiopian Diaspora policy has not well addressed the issues of temporary labor migrants. It needs to be revised or the government should propose a new policy which treats the concerns of low skilled temporary labor migrants.

Promoting social justice either through developing or improving social policy is one of the goals of social work profession. Here, social workers can foster changes through lobbying against the Diaspora policy with an intention of either reviewing in a way that it incorporates the interests of temporary labor migrants or developing a new policy which promotes them. In this regard, social workers can play an activist and policy developer role.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Regarding social work intervention, this study has found that other than the amount of money the returnees had been making in the destination countries, other resources like skills and relationships were not mobilized in a way that they can earn the returnees livelihood back home. After their return, also, the migrants were not enrolled in any entrepreneurial and skill based vocational trainings. In addition, the returnees mentioned about the limited accessibility of credits from micro finances and the inability to get sheds (rental shops) in a place where it is possible to run business. In this regard, the findings have implications for social work practices.

First, there is a need to identify the resources and opportunities available in the communities within which the returnees are residing. For instance, social workers should assess the existing opportunities and resources in Ejersa Lafo Woreda that would help the returnees to earn livelihoods. Besides, the returnees' assets, strengths and interests should be identified and promoted. Then, relevant skill based trainings should be provided for the returnees in order to enable them become active participants in the world of entrepreneurship. Trainings should also be provided based on the areas where the returnees prefer to work on. Here, the social workers should play a broker role through linking the returnees' strengths and interests with the available resources in the community and societal institutions. This would help the returnees to be able to earn a livelihood from the available resources in their community.

Second, social workers in collaboration with the Ejersa Lafo Woreda should facilitate means through which the returnees are able to get access to services such as credits and rental shops. There are participants who have complained that the credits are not sufficient to start business and the place where the sheds allocated are not appropriate for running business. In addition, there was a participant who complained about group formation which is a must for getting access to credits. Social workers should play an advocate role in confronting barriers to

utilizing and accessing appropriate resources to the returnees. The barriers that hinder the returnees' access to micro finances, rental shops and vocational trainings should be confronted by social workers. For instance, social workers can promote the collaboration between different organs of government such as the municipality of Olonkomi town, the micro and small scale enterprises bureau of the Ejersa Lafo Woreda and the available schools in the Woreda that help them to deliver social services timely and adequately (in line with the interests of the returnees) to the extent of their maximum potential.

Third, there is a need to promote cooperative networks within the returnees. This study found that the inability to live up to their prior expectations upon return made returnees not to feel at home, especially, for those who were deceived by their families. Rather than building up social networks, there are circumstances on which returnees are obliged to cease the already established social networks. This in turn developed a feeling of isolation. This is why Kidist, for instance, fears to be a member of group that is mandatory to get access to credits. Thus, there is a need to build social networks at least between the returnees. Social workers should devise a means through which the returnees would congregate. If they come together, they may discuss all their issues and come up with solutions that relieve them from frustrations. For example, they may form their own group and get access to credit services. Since they have similar migration experiences, they understand each other and become successful. Here, social workers would play a facilitator role in bringing the returnees together, in helping them discuss their concerns and in coming up with viable solutions.

This study has also an implication for future researches. The study revealed that although its degree may differ, the reintegration problem was faced by not only the deported returnees but also the voluntary ones. This puts under question a significance of temporary labor migration to

the Middle East for sending countries like Ethiopia. In fact, some of them may become successful upon return to home country whereas a significant amount of the returnees face economic hardships and psychosocial problems upon return. Thus, there is a need to undertake a large scale survey at the national level that intends to come up with the overall impact of the temporary labor migration on the returnees, their families and the home country at large. Regardless of the potential migrants willingness for emigration either legally or illegally, only when it's real impacts are revealed at the national level, it becomes visible for the government to take appropriate measures.

Finally, this study has suggestions for the concerned bodies other than social work profession. As per the findings of this study, some of the participants were deceived by their families while they had been working in the Gulf-States. Other than sending the remittances to their families, spouses and friends on trust, the participants had no means to know whether the money awaits them or not. As a result, they become depressed after return, especially, when they find out that the money was wasted by their trustees. Thus, migrants should be trained about money management mechanism before their departure. Concerned bodies like the Ethiopian ministry of labor and social affairs should inform them how to manage their salaries. For instance, they should be informed to open their private bank accounts. This would help the migrants to keep their salary with themselves. Rather than remitting all the money to their families, the private account would enable them remit only part of it which they think is enough for household expenses.

This study also found that the absence of reliable means to know situations (economic and social) in home country while they were working abroad influenced the reintegration of the returnees back home. Thus, Ethiopian consuls in the destination countries should prepare

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

conferences annually or semi-annually in order for the migrants to be informed and discuss about situations in home country. This may help them be aware of the market conditions at home. In addition, it enables them to make themselves prepared for home coming. Once they become aware of the market conditions at home, the returnees may become ready to be involved in the business which they think of yielding a profit upon home return.

### References

- Abebaw, M. (2012). Trafficked to Gulf States: The experiences of Ethiopian returnee women. *Journal of Community Practice*, 20:1-2, 112-133. doi:10.1080/10705422.2012.649203
- Adamnesh, A. & Adamek, M. E. (2016). The return migration experiences of Ethiopian women trafficked to Bahrain: ‘... for richer or poorer, let me be on the hands of my people ...’ *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 9:2, 243-256.
- Adamnesh, A. (2006). Aspects of Ethiopian return migration. (Unpublished master’s thesis, Addis Ababa University, 2006).
- Addis, E. (2014). International Migration in Ethiopia: Challenges and Opportunities. In A. Bariagaber (ed.). *International Migration and Development in Eastern and Southern Africa*. Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa.
- African Union Commission. (2006). *African Youth Charter*. Banjul, Gambia.
- Anbesse, B., Hanlon, C., Alem, A., Packer, S., and Whitley, R. (2009). Migration and mental health: A study of low-income Ethiopian women working in Middle Eastern countries. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 55(6), 557-568.
- Anthias, F. (2000). *Metaphors of home: gendering new migration to south Europe*. In F. Anthias & G. Lazaridis (Eds.): *Gender and migration in southern Europe: women on the move*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 15-47.
- Babbie, E. (2008). *The basics of social research*. (4<sup>th</sup>ed.). Thomson: Wadsworth.
- Bath, W. & Roberts, B.R. (2012). ‘Forbidden return’: Return migration in the age of restriction. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, 10(2), 162-183.

- Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.
- Beydoun, K. (2006). The trafficking of Ethiopian domestic workers into Lebanon: Navigating through a novel passage of the international maid trade. *Berkeley Journal of International Law*, 1009
- Biber, S.H. (2010). *Analyzing qualitative data: with or without software*. (Power point teaching material, Boston College, department of sociology, 2010).
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, pp.77-101. Retrieved from [www.QualResearchPsych.com](http://www.QualResearchPsych.com)
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods*. (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carter, B. & Rohwerder, B. (2016). *Rapid fragility and migration assessment for Ethiopia* (Rapid Literature Review). Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.
- Cassarino, J. P. (2004). Theorizing return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 6 (2), 253-279.
- Cassarino, J. P. (2008). Conditions of Return Migrants. Editorial introduction. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 10(2): 1817-4574.
- Chilisa, B. (2011). *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.
- Chobanyan, H. (2013). Return migration and reintegration issues: Armenia. CARIM-East RR 2013/03. *Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies*, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute.
- Constant, A. & Massey, D. S. (2002). Return migration by German guest workers: Neoclassical versus new economic theories. *International Migration* 40 (4), 5-38.
- Corbetta, P. (2003). *Social Research: Theory, Methods and Techniques*. Sage

- Creswell, J. W. & Clark, L.C. (2006). *Designing and Conducting Method Method Research*. Sage
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage publications, Inc.
- Davies, A. A., Borland, R. M., Blake, C. & West, H.E. (2011). The dynamics of health and return migration. *Journal of PLOS Medicine*, 8(6).
- Dawson, C. (2002). *Practical research methods: A user-friendly guide to mastering research*. (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). United Kingdom:How to Books Ltd.
- Dawson, C. (2007). *Practical research methods: a user-friendly guide to mastering research*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). United Kingdom:How to Books Ltd.
- Emebet, K. (2002). *Ethiopia: An assessment of the international labor migration situation: The case of female labor migrants*. Gender Promotion Program International Labor Office(GENPROM) working paper number 3, series on home migration, Geneva.
- European Commission.(2005). *Proposal for a directive of the European parliament and the council on common standards and procedures in member states for returning illegally staying third-country nationals*. Brussels: European Communities.
- Fernandez, B. (2010). Cheap and disposable? The impact of the global economic crisis on the migration of Ethiopian women domestic workers to the Gulf. *Oxfam: Gender and Development*, 18(2).doi :10.1080/13552074.2010.491335

- Fernandez, B. (2011). Household help? Ethiopian women domestic workers' labor migration to the Gulf countries. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 20:3-4, 433-453.
- Flick, U. (2004). *Triangulation in qualitative research*. In U. Flick, E. V. Kardorff, & I. Steinke (Eds.): *A companion to qualitative research*. pp. 178-183. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Frouws, B. (2014a). *Blinded by Hope: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Ethiopian Migrants*. Nairobi: The Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS). Retrieved from [http://www.regionalmms.org/fileadmin/content/rmms\\_publications/Blinded\\_by\\_Hope](http://www.regionalmms.org/fileadmin/content/rmms_publications/Blinded_by_Hope).
- Gentles, S. J., Charles, C., Ploeg, J., & McKibbin, K. (2015). *Sampling in qualitative research: insights from an overview of the methods literature*. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(11), 1772-1789.
- Gmelch, G. 1980. Return Migration. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 9, pp.135-159.
- Habets, R. (2012). Sustainable return migration: The return of Iraqi and Mongolian families under the assistance of the IOM (master's thesis, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2012).
- Hart, L., Graviano, N., & Klink, S. (2015). Assisted voluntary return and reintegration at glance. International organization for migration publishing.
- International Labor Organization. (2004). *Gender and migration in Arab States: The case of domestic workers*. Regional Office for Arab States, Beirut.
- International Organization for Migration (n.d). *Return migration. Essentials of migration management*.vol.3
- International Organization for Migration. (2004). *The migration glossary*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration.
- International Organization for Migration.(2011). *International Migration Law*. Glossary on Migration.

- Jamie, F. O. M. & Tsega, A. H. (2016). Ethiopian female labor migration to the Gulf States: The case of Kuwait. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 9 (2), 214-227.  
doi:10.1080/17528631.2015.1083183
- Jamie, F.O.M. (2013). Gender and migration in Africa: Female Ethiopian migration in post-2008 Sudan. *Journal of Politics and Law*, 6(1).
- Jugder, N. (2016). The Thematic Analysis of Interview Data: An Approach Used to Examine The Influence of The Market on Curricular Provision in Mongolian Higher Education Institutions. *Hillary Place Papers (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*, University of Leeds
- Jureidini, R. (2002). *Women migrant domestic workers in Lebanon*. International Migration paper 48, Geneva: International Labor Office.
- Kabeer, N. (2007). *Footloose female labor: transnational migration, social protection and citizenship in the Asia region*. Working Paper 1, IDRC Women's Rights and Citizenship Working Paper Series. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.
- Kalof, L., Dan, A. & Dietz, T. (2008). *Essentials of social research*. McGraw-Hill: Open University Press Ltd.
- Kamrava, M. and Babar, Z. (2011). *Migrant labor in the Persian Gulf: Comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives*: Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar. Center for International and Regional Studies. Summary Report No. 2
- King, R. (2000). *Generalizations from the history of return migration: Journey of hope or despair*. Geneva: IOM.
- Krueger, L., & Neuman, W. (2006). *Social Work Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Applications*. Boston New York San Francisco.

- Kunuroglu, F., van de Vijver, F., & Yagmur, K. (2016). Return Migration. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 8(2).
- Kuschminder, K. and Siegel, M. (2013). "Diaspora Engagement and Policy in Ethiopia" *Emigration Nations*. Ed. Michael Collyer. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Kushminder, K. (2013). Female return migration and reintegration strategies in Ethiopia (Doctoral dissertation, Maastricht University, 2013).
- Kushminder, K. (2014). *Shattered dreams and return of vulnerability: Challenges of Ethiopian female migration to the Middle East*. Maastricht Graduate School of Governance: IS Academy policy brief. No 18.
- Lacey, A. & Luff, D. (2007). *Qualitative data analysis*. The NIHR RDS for the East Midlands / Yorkshire & the Humber.
- Lin, C. (2013). Revealing the Essence of Things: Using Phenomenological Research in LIS Research. *Qualitative Methods in Libraries*, 4, 469-478
- Mack, N., Woodsong, C., Macqueen, K., Guest, G. & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collectors Field Guide*. Family Health International, USAID
- McManus, A.H.E. (2007). Interpretive hermeneutic phenomenology: Clarifying understanding. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 7(2), 1-12.
- Mohammed, S. (2007). *Livelihood strategies and their implications for rural-urban linkages: The case of Wolenkomi town and the surrounding rural kebeles*. Working papers on population and land use change in central Ethiopia, nr. 10
- Mulugeta, B. & Kasaun, D. (2016). The ruthless side of human trafficking in Ethiopia: Returnees recounting their experience of abuse and exploitation in the Arab countries. *Journal of Culture, Society and Development*, Vol.21

- Neuman, L. (2014). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pearson
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2009). *International migration: The human face of globalization*.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluative Methods*. (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.). Thousand Oaks, California, USA: Sage publications, Inc.
- Pinnawala, M. (2009). *Gender transformation and female migration: Sri Lankan domestic workers negotiate transnational household relations* (Doctoral dissertation, Institute of social studies: Hague, 2009).
- Population Health University of Auckland, New Zealand
- Porumbescu, A. (2015). *Defining the new economics of labor migration theory*. Boundaries: A Sociological-Level Analysis of International Migration.
- Regt, M. & Medareshaw, T. (2016). Deported before experiencing the good sides of migration: Ethiopians returning from Saudi Arabia. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 9(2), 228-242. doi:10.1080/17528631.2015.1083178
- Regt, M. (2007). *Ethiopian women in the Middle East: The case of migrant domestic workers in Yemen*. Amsterdam: African Studies Centre.
- Regt, M. (2008). High in the hierarchy, rich in diversity. *Critical Asian Studies*, 40(4), 587-608.
- Regt, M. (2010). Ways to come, ways to leave: Gender, mobility, and il/legality among Ethiopian domestic workers in Yemen. *Gender & society*, 24(2), 237-260.
- Reshmi, R. & Sayeed, U. (2014). Return migration and reintegration: An analysis of international female domestic workers from Kerala. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies*, 2(7).

- Ritzer, G. (2011). *Sociological theory (8<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Scalabrini Institute for Human Mobility in Africa.(2015). Return migration literature review.
- Schewenken, H. & Haimeshof, L.M. (2011).*Domestic work: A significant sector*. In H. Schewenken & L. M. Haimeshof (Eds.): *Domestic workers count: Global data on an often invisible sector*. Germany: Kassel University Press.
- Sussman, N.M. (2000). The dynamic nature of cultural identity throughout cultural transitions: Why home is not so sweet. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4, 355-373.
- Sussman, N.M. (2005).*People on the move: The transnational flow of Chinese human capital*. Conference at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, October, 2005: City University of New York.
- Tambyah, S. & Chng, R. (2006).Revisiting the cultural identity model: Sojourners on the fringe. In C. Pechmann & L. Price (Eds.): *Association for Consumer Research*. 33, pp. 464-465.
- Thomas, D. R. (2003). *A General Inductive Approach for Qualitative Data Analysis*. School of
- Van Hear, N., Bakewell, O., & Long, K. (2012). Drivers of migration: Migrating *out of Poverty*. Research Programme Consortium, Working Paper 1. University of Sussex: United Kingdom
- Van Houte, M. & Davids, T. (2008). Development and return migration: from policy panacea to migrant perspective sustainability. *Third World Quarterly*, 29(7): 1411-1429.
- Van Manen, M. (2007). Phenomenology of Practice. *Phenomenology and practice*, 1,11-30
- Van Meeteren, M., Engbersen, G., Snel, E. & Faber, M. (2014). Understanding different post-return experiences: The role of preparedness, return motives and family expectations for returned migrants in morocco. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 2(3), 335-360.

- Wheeler, R. S., Natali, C. & Black, R. (2007). *Migration, legal status and poverty: Evidence from return to Ghana*. Working Paper, T 19. Institute of Development Studies, International Organization for Migration and Sussex Centre for Migration Research, Geneva.
- Willems, R. (2005). *Coping with Displacement: Social Networking among Urban Refugees in an East African Context in Otaru Ohta & Yntiso D. Gebre*. Displacement Risks. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press.
- Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods (3rd ed.)*. Applied social research methods series. Sage Publications, Inc.

## Appendices

**Appendix 1 :In-Depth Interview Guide for the Returnees**

Interview is the main data collection method utilized for this study. It is through in-depth interview that the returnees background information, their pre-return expectations and preparedness, and their post-return experiences and prospects were explicated. It has the following elements.

**I. The Returnees' Background**

1. Age.....
2. Marital status.....
3. Number of children .....
4. Educational level.....
5. Destination country.....
6. Period of stay at destination country.....
7. Time spent after return.....
8. How did they come (voluntarily/ or not?)

**II. The returnees' expectations and preparedness prior to home coming**

1. What were your expectations about homeland before you return? (Probe: were your expectations positive or negative? Were the expectations encouraged you to return or are you returned beyond your expectations?)
2. What were the motives behind your decision to come home? (Probe: what situations did typically influence you to return? Are you decided to return by your own or somebody decided it for you? In what contexts did you decided to back home? Are you happy when you decided to return?)

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

3. Have you get prepared for return? (Probe: Were you prepared well or not? In what ways do your preparedness manifested? Was there any financial capital mobilized and social capital developed for securing your return?)

**III. The returnees' experiences and prospects after their home coming**

1. What are your post- returns lived experiences looks like? (Probe: how did your families, friends, and neighbor welcomed you? What do you feel about your return then? What are you currently doing to live? In what social, economic, and cultural activities have you participated/ participating? What kind of interaction do you have with your family, friends and neighbors? Are you participating in Iddir? Are you comfortable with the level of your current participation?)
2. How you feel about your life experience here? (Probe: how do you perceive about the working condition in Ethiopia now? Is there opportunity/s available for you after return? Are you comfortable with the available opportunities, if any? Are the available opportunities enough to sustain your return?)
3. Are there challenges that faced you upon your reintegration? (Probe: Are there cultural incompatibilities and economic difficulties? are there problems related with marriage and or friendship, if any? How are you coping with the challenges?)
4. What organization/s (governmental or non-governmental) is working with the returnees? (Probe: Is there any organization which contacts you upon your return? Are they supported you, if any, in your reintegration back home? In what areas? Are you satisfied with the supports? What do you think to be done for returnees by those organizations whom do you perceive are responsible?)

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

5. Was your pre- return expectations met or not? (Probe: if your expectation was met, how?  
If your expectation was not met, why?)
6. Standing on your post-return experiences, what are your future prospects? (Where do you want to work henceforth? Do you want to re-migrate?)

**Appendix 2: Observation Check List**

Observation has significances in supplementing data that are collected through in-depth interviews. I prepared this observation check list in order to guide my observation.

1. The place where the returnees live: Where do the returnees residing? What do the natural setting of their residence looks like? Are they comfortable with it?
2. The activities the returnees are engaged in: are they engaging in any economic activities, for instance, Ikub? What tangible assets (land, capital, house, cattle etc.) do they have? Are they re-integrated economically?
3. The returnees' feelings, doubts and frustrations: How do they react towards their homecoming? To what extent do they freely talk about their experiences? Do they show any sign of fear or shocking?

## Afgaaffii

### 1. Afgaaffii Dubartoota Biyyaa Hambaatii Deebi'niif

#### I. Dur-duubee

1. Umurii\_\_\_\_\_
2. Haala gaa'elaa\_\_\_\_\_
3. Baay'ina ijoollee\_\_\_\_\_
4. Sadarkaa barnootaa\_\_\_\_\_
5. Biyyaa irraa deebi'an\_\_\_\_\_
6. Haggaa turtii biyyaa hambaatti\_\_\_\_\_
7. Haggaa turtii edda biyyaa hambaati deebi'ani\_\_\_\_\_
8. Haalaa itti deebi'an ( fedhidhan/ feedhin alaa)\_\_\_\_\_

#### II. Yaadaa fi Qophii Biyyaa Ofiiti Deebi'uuf Taasifame

1. Biyyaa hamba yemmuu turtetti wa'ee biyya keetii maal yaadda turte?  
(wantoota yaadaa turtetu akka deebitu sitaasisee moo sababa/ sababoota biraatu jira/jiru?)
2. Biyyaa keetti deebi'uu keetiif sababni maali? (ofumaa keetiif deebitee moo nama biraatuu akka deebituu sidirqisisee ykn sikakaase? Yemmu biyyatti deebi'uuf jirtutti haala akkamii keessa turte? Gammaddee turttee?)
3. Qophiin biyyaa keetti deebi'uuf taasifte maal fakkaata ture? (haala gaarin qophooftee turtee? Qophiin ati taasifte maal maalin ibsamuu danda'a? qarshiin qophooftee turtee? Maatii, hiriyyaa fi namoota biyya walino haala kamiin walqunnamaa turte? Wallif bilbiltu turee?)

### III. Haala Jirenya Dubartootaa Edda Biyya Hambaatii Dhufani

1. Haali jirenyaa edda biyyaa keetti deebitee maal fakaata? (yommuu deebitetti, haali simannaa maati, hiriyyaa fi holla kee maal fakaata turee? Yommuu dhufuu keeti maaltu sitti dhagahame? Hamaa hojii maaliratti hirmaachaa jirta? Haali hirmanaa kee kan dinagdee fi hawaasaa maal fakaata? Itti gamaddee jirtaa?)
2. Wa'ee haala jirenyaa kee si'anaatti maaltu sitti dhagahamaa?( Haala hojii biyyaa keenyaa akkamin ibsita? Carra gaggaarin siqunnaman jiruu? Yoo jiraate itti gammaddee jirtaa? Gahadha jette niyaadaa?)
3. Rakinoonni edda dhuftee siqunnaman jiruu? (rakkinni dinagdee siqunnamee beekaa? Wal qunnamti nama waliin qabdu waliinoo? Aadaa waliin wal qabatee rakkoon siqunnamee jiraa? Haala gaa'elaa wajjin walqabatehoo?)
4. Qamnii mootumaa ykn mitmootumaa dhufaati keesan waliin walqabatee sin dubbise jiraa? Gargaarsa gaafatanii beektuu? Maaltuu issinif godhamuu qaba jettanii yaaddu?
5. Wantoonii as yommuu deebitu raawachuuf/ milkoomsuf kaayyefatte siif milka'eraa? (yoo milka'era ta'e akkamitti? Yoo milka'uu baatemoo maaliif?)
6. Haala jirenyaa kee amman tana irra dhabachuun gara fulduraa maal yaadda? (kanaa booda eesatti hojjechuu barbaadda? Biyya hambaatti debi'uu nibarbaadaa?)

### 2. Gumee Daawwii

1. Iddoo jirenya hirmaatootaa (dubartoota biyya hambaati debi'anii).eesa jiraachaa jiru? Halli iddoo jirenyaa isaani maal fakaata?Itti gammadanii jiruu?
2. Hojii isaan keesati hirmaachaa jiran. Hirmaanna diinagdee qabuu?Qabenya akka lafaa, manaa, horii qabuu? Kanaf gama dinagdeetin of danda'anii?

## VOLUNTARY RETURN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

3. Yommuu gaaffii gaafataman akkamiin deebisu? Waa'ee biyya dhufuu isaanii maaltu itti dhagahama?Fuula isaaniraa wanti dubbifamuu jiraa? Ni'aruu? Nigamaduu?

## **Letter of Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any university, and that all sources of material used for this thesis have been acknowledged.

Name of student: Assefa Bayisa

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: Adamnesh Atnafu

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_