

THE LIFE OF WOMEN HOUSEHOLD HEADS AS WASTE PICKERS



Lives of Vulnerable Woman Household Heads as Waste Pickers at ‘Koshe’
Dumpsite in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

By: Bahta Mamo

ID: GSE/5745/09

**A Thesis Submitted to Addis Ababa University School of Social Work in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Work**

Advisor: Debebe Ero (PhD)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Declaration

I, hereby, declare that this thesis is my original work and has neither been presented in any other University nor was published before and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been accordingly acknowledged.

Bahta Mamo

Signature:

Date:

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Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by **Bahta Mamo**, entitled: *Lives of Vulnerable Woman Household Heads as Waste Pickers at 'Koshe' Dumpsite in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*, complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the examining committee.

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Examiner (Internal) _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Examiner (External) _____ Signature _____ Date _____

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA – Addis Ababa

ECLAC-Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean

FHHs- Female Headed Households

FSCE- Forum for Street Children Ethiopia

HHHs- Head of Households

ICF-Inner City Fund

ILO- International Labour Organization

IPEC-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

MOLSA-Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, FDRE

NGO- Non-Government Organization

SWM- Solid Waste Management

UN- United Nations

USAID- United State (U.S.) Agency for International Development

WB-World Bank

WCA- Women and Children Affairs

WHHs- Women Headed Households

WIEGO- Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

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Abstract

Exploring women headed household's life experience and challenges as waste pickers at Koshe landfill of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia was the focus of this research. A qualitative approach is applied, particularly case study with purposive sampling of female waste pickers with headship roles. Data was collected through in-depth interview of thirteen female waste pickers, two focus group discussions and interview of key informants. Among related research on waste collection, the status of the 'Koshe' dumpsite, the only open dumpsite of the capital city of Ethiopia, has been highlighted as being the most poorly managed and hazardous for the surrounding settlement and the informal waste pickers working on the site. The discussion on the need to close the site has also been raised over the years following researches on the city's poor solid waste management. However, the lives of the many waste pickers particularly the vulnerable groups such as women, children and the elderly who continue to operate at the site given the concerning status of the dumpsite needs further investigation and feasible intervention design. Hence, this study reveals the case of women waste pickers with headship roles to better understand the factors they perceive to be contributors to their vulnerable situation, the specific challenges to identify areas of intervention for development and environment programs as well as their coping mechanisms to strengthen through theoretical approaches. The recommendation of this study focuses on improving the waste picking women headed households' livelihoods, health, and social status within the community.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This research was conducted to dig out the life experiences of women waste pickers using qualitative research approach specifically case study; by which multiple data sources were exhaustively employed and detailed knowledge was generated. The research result may serve as an initial point of intervention to any interested body ranging from some remedial actions to policy development for assuring social justice.

In this chapter, background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions and objectives, significance of the study, challenges and limitations are presented.

1.1. Background

Sociological perspective constitutes family as the focal point around which the entire life of the individual revolves. The relationship between family and society is very close, family is the unit of society and society is made up of number of families and households (Kapur, 2018). While “Family” and “Household” are sometimes used interchangeably because of their close relationship to each other, family and household structure and demography have become more diverse as family norms have changed. Households vary with regional settlement patterns, socioeconomic structure, and demographic change. The size changes by some basic patterns due to the decline and the increase in person proportions such as changes from two-person parent to one, couple-only and nuclear households with nonfamily co-residents (Kujisten, 1991).

Fuwa (2000) categorizes household headship based on demographic, economic or self-reported factors. Demographic factors focus on the presence of husbands in the family; economic factors consider the economic contribution of each family member. According to International Labor Organization (2008) female headed households (FHHs) is a household either where no adult males are present, owing to divorce, separation, migration, non-marriage, or widowhood, or where men, although present, do not contribute to the household income. In other

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words, a head of household is female (or adult woman usually with children) in the absence of a co resident legal or common-law spouse (or, in some cases, another adult male such as a father or brother) (Chant, 1977). Decision making responsibilities between head of the family and family members is distinguished, the major decisions are obligatory duties for the head. Suggestions and ideas can be consulted among household members, but the decision-making authority is vested in the hands of the head of the household (Kapur, 2018).

The assumption women headed households are mostly poor has been stressed by many studies in the past as they are often thought to be disadvantaged regarding the access to land, labor, credit, and insurance, markets, discriminated against by cultural norms and suffering from high dependency burdens, economic immobility and the “double day burden” (as cited in Klasen, et.al, 2011). Female headed households in general have more dependents and thus have higher non-workers to workers’ ratio, typically work for lower wages, and bear the burden of household chores that result in time and mobility constraints (Buvinic & Gupta, 1977).

Depending on assertions that pointed female headed households may suffer more from poverty, the increasing share of women’s poverty was linked with higher prevalence of female household headship (Chant, 2003). Other claims sufficiently proved that female headship is statistically associated with household poverty in some countries, but not in others (Morrison, et.al, 2007).

Although there is not much conclusive evidence of the feminization of poverty, and woman headed households (WHHs) higher incidence to poverty, Fuwa (2000) research shows, that the relationship between poverty and female headed households (FHHs) is quite different from ‘gender and poverty’ questions. The possible sources of poverty of FHHs are a combination of both demographic and economic aspects of headship and the likelihood of FHHs

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being poor are likely to differ across countries. The same way as the factors contributing to the increase and decrease of subtypes of FHHs are also likely to differ across countries. The choice of poverty measure also determines whether female-headed households are poorer than male-headed counterparts. Specifically, only when poverty is measured based on standard of living index, female headed households are poorer than male-headed counterparts, and not otherwise (Rajaram, 2009). The evidence surrounding the incidence of poverty in FHHs also needs to include differences in household structure i.e., *de facto* and *de jure* FHHs and as well as analyzing the household formation process (Lampietti & Stalker, 2000).

Although there are many factors to be considered while studying the relationship of poverty and female headship and contrasting evidence exist, Buvinic and Gupta (1997) reviewed 61 studies covering countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, though the evidence is not decisive the hypothesis of higher poverty among FHHs than MHHs. Among the poverty assessment measure findings, consumption expenditure suggested that in 10 out of 21 countries (including Ethiopia) found in Sub-Saharan Africa poverty was higher among females than male-headed households (Lampietti & Stalker 2000).

According to the World Bank survey on female headed households (FHHs) by country, the percentage shows an increasing number of FHHs in developing countries, and this emerged because of economic changes and social pressures, rather in cultural pattern changes (WB, n.d.). Female-headed households are one of the most vulnerable groups of society that confront many problems and challenges that can become a big threat. However, positive outcomes such as self-efficacy and powerful feeling to manage life might be an opportunity in FHHs (Lebni et.al, 2020).

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Among related studies conducted in Ethiopia the findings show, FHHs comprise 40.9% of all households in urban Ethiopia comprising a lower average size of household, 64.3% illiteracy, 39% unemployment rate and mostly concentrating on domestic services in informal sectors with low payment (Assefa, 2003). Muleta and Deressa (2014) logit model for determinants of vulnerability to poverty shows that households with large family size, illiterate heads, small land holding, and less livestock ownership significantly increase the probability of the female headed households to be poor in rural Ethiopia. Sahlu (2019) discovered the existence of social and economic challenges among female headed households is very common and that the access to opportunities for female headed households are very limited compared to that of the challenges.

Consequently, a significant proportion of the female global workforce earn their livelihood in the informal economy, e.g. as “dependent” wage earners in informal and formal enterprises, and as self-employed or own-account entrepreneurs in a wide range of workplaces (i.e. at home, in shops, on streets) (ILO, 2018). Therefore, low levels of earnings are particularly likely to apply to poor women with children who are forced into finding (or creating) part-time, flexible, and/or home-based work in order to reconcile income generating ventures with childcare (Chant, 1977).

Waste scavenging as one of the known activities in the informal economy attracts the poor lacking employment. Most studies report that waste pickers constitute disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of the population, and for many of the poorest people around the globe, it is one of the only livelihood options. It offers flexible working hours (especially for women) and a high level of adaptability (Medina, 2000).

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According to Medina (1997) “throughout cities in Asia, Africa and Latin America, varying numbers of poor individuals survive by salvaging materials from the waste stream. These people recover materials to sell for reuse or recycling, as well as diverse items for their own consumption”. The individuals are generally known as ‘scavengers’ or ‘rag pickers. The United Nation Environment Program (2013) called waste pickers “invisible environmentalists” since it is estimated waste scavenging results in recycling rates of almost 50% for plastics across the developing world, compared to less than 10% in the United States.

Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, seat of the African Union (AU) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has only one open dumpsite, where all collected waste is disposed of. The site is known as "Rappi" or "Koshe" which is in the South West part of the city and located 13 km away from the city center. It has been used as a dumping site since 1964 (Meaza, 2016). It has a surface area of 37 hectares, 40-meter height and the present method of disposal is crude open dumping: hauling the wastes by truck, spreading and leveling by bulldozer and compacting by compactor or bulldozer. The site is surrounded by housing areas and institutions. More than 500 waste pickers per day are estimated to work and live nearby the site and interfere with the operation of the work for collection of salvageable materials such as wood, scrap metals and discarded food (Horro, 2018).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia being the second most populous country in Africa with over 100 million population, it is the 11th poorest country in the world by income per person. Most of the population lives in rural areas while only less than the one-fifth lives in urban areas. But the rate of poverty is just as prevalent in Ethiopia's two largest cities as in rural areas (Milazzo & Walle, 2015).

The demographic profile of urban poverty in Ethiopia shows rapid urbanization led to increasing number of poor urban households where the female headed are reported to be poorer than the male-headed ones (Eskezia, 2011). The findings of Muzzini (2008) on demographic profile of urban poverty showed the extremely high percentage was about 33 to 17 percent of female-headed households in urban settings against the rural.

Mwangi (2017) assessment in Nairobi concluded there is a strong link between poverty, female headed households, and negative influence of poverty on the FHHs that further increases vulnerability to poverty. Households headed by women tend to experience more material insufficiency, social and economic poverty than men headed ones. Lack of employment and income-earning opportunities is also linked with gender roles as women face constraints on movements due to their parenting role (Hossain & Huda, 1995).

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According to ILO estimates (2019), informal work is a greater source of employment for men (63 percent) than for women (58 percent) and in developing countries (19 vs 18 percent respectively). Despite this in developing countries women workers who are informally employed (92 per cent) is substantially higher than the percentage of men informal sector workers (87 per cent). Therefore, women are more often to be found in the more vulnerable categories of work, for instance as domestic help, self-employed home-based workers, prostitutes, street retailers, beggars, and waste pickers. Women waste pickers may be female heads of households in which garbage is the primary source of income by collecting useful items to sell and use items such as clothing and diapers for their family (Wilson, 2002).

Women engaged in waste scavenging an informal activity with less control system, typically earn less than men and often are subject to other forms of inequality on top of the inevitable occupational impacts. Wilson (2002) stated vulnerability characterizes informal employment. Even among informal self-employed workers, women tend to be clustered in less remunerative activities. In waste-picking, for example, men usually collect the higher value scrap metal, while women collect fewer valuable plastics and cardboard (Chen et.al, (2014) as cited in UN Women report, 2015). Obadina, Fisher and Sohail (2014) studied waste workers at five dumpsites in Lagos, Nigeria and found the waste workers' incomes were differentiated by gender with the main points of comparison being by the hours worked daily where women had fewer working hours due to their parenting roles and single marital status.

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The study area is located within the boundaries of two sub-cities under the Addis Ababa city administration, where Woreda 01 of Kolfe Keranio and Woreda 02 of Nifas Silk resident areas are near the Koshe landfill site. The researcher aimed to target the waste scavenging female population who reside in one of the two Woredas. However, the researcher learned the women waste pickers mostly settled illegally near the dumpsite and the majority are not registered as residents at the *Woredas*. For this reason and the landfill being open to everyone made it difficult to identify the total number of women waste pickers. Most reports estimated Koshe to be a home for about 500-600 waste pickers (Alemu, 2017; Cheru, 2016), but the current exact number of either the Koshe dumpsite waste scavenging population or the waste scavenging women household heads is not known. Data from WIEGO also confirms obtaining statistical data is difficult worldwide even though its known millions of people earn living by waste related means.

The waste pickers informal settlement within the area makes the struggle worse because informality makes people less visible and harder to reach through mainstream institutional interventions in terms of human rights and social inclusion (Bertulfo, 2011). The main reason that

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led the researcher to investigate the case of the women waste pickers is the massive Koshe landslide accident that occurred in 2017 which caused the death of 115 people (Aaron, 2017). The media reported 75 of them were women and that the main victims were women and children. The accident also destroyed the waste pickers residents which were built on the toe of the pile and the nearby surroundings in which 80 more residents were reported missing. Although the tragedy was publicized and government declared a three-day national mourning, the researcher observed life of most of the waste pickers has continued the same as before the disaster. Some of the interventions targeted transfer of the survivors to temporary shelters whose houses were destroyed, community contributions went to victims' families and dumpsite rehabilitation project got initiated.

The fact the poor women waste pickers were highly affected by the incident and the research participants which most are survivors of this incident but still are engaged in the activity and living near the garbage pile further triggered the interest of the researcher. Additional to their family daily being vulnerable to such disaster, these women lack advantage in the competition of grabbing valuable items to the male waste pickers and face abuses by certain groups. The scavenging lifestyle affects their status in the community as the job is perceived degrading and they get discriminated. The inevitable occupational hazard is also one of the major challenges these poor city women are faced with for the sake of their household survival. Among the studies conducted on situations of women headed households in Ethiopia, (Assefa (2003), FSCE (1998), Meehan (2004), Retta (2016), Yimam (2013)), the focus was on the general challenge such as poverty, social obstacles, and the impact in their children both in rural and urban settings. The researcher however particularly focused on the women who resorted to scavenging due poverty.

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In Ethiopia, both formal and informal solid waste pickers exist. The formal ones are small scale cooperatives organized and paid by *Woredas* who collect waste from households, streets and dump it to garbage tanks. Whereas the informal ones are collectors such as *Korales* who travel in neighborhoods and buy used items with their own money; foragers are who scavenge waste tanks and the third are the scavengers that work at open dumpsite. The waste pickers at the capitals open dumpsite called *Koshe* are at the bottom of the collector's hierarchy as the materials they find are limited because the other collectors have a better advantage of accessing materials in good shape (Bjerkli 2013; Cheru, 2016;).

Although available research pointed there is a need to improve the poor solid waste management in Addis Ababa (ibid) and a need to close and/or relocate the *Koshe* landfill due to its growing health hazard to the surrounding environment and settlements (Assnakew et.al, 2018), studies on additional challenges exhibited by waste pickers particularly the girls, children, and older women at *Koshe* are not available. Genemo (2010) conducted a study on scavenging children and discovered among many pushing factors the children became scavengers by accompanying their mothers in the field where they became victims as their mothers were found to be a vital support to them and could not afford for a daycare but to carry them around while scavenging.

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Therefore, this study focused on the social and economic consequences of waste scavenging for the informal waste pickers at the *Koshe* dumpsite particularly women with headship roles. It would serve as an entry point for future research on the disparities of men and women household head waste pickers or other informal sectors and inform all interested parties such as governmental and humanitarian organizations towards empowering the said women HHHs and taking mitigating mechanisms. The intervention can highlight the contribution of women in waste collection and can initiate women focused organizations in the formal waste management projects.

1.3. Research Questions

❖ Main Research Question

How do women head of households who are waste pickers at *Koshe*, Addis Ababa, explain their life experiences as garbage collectors including the gains, vulnerabilities, challenges, and coping mechanisms?

❖ Specific Research Questions

This research had finally answered the following questions about the life experiences of women household heads who are engaged in waste scavenging:

1. How do they explain their experiences of waste scavenging?
2. What are the pushing factors to waste scavenging?
3. What is the socio-economic gain of waste scavenging?
4. What are the challenges of waste scavenging?
5. What coping mechanisms are employed to confront challenges?

1.4. Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to explore women headed households (WHHs) life experience and challenges as waste pickers at *Koshe* landfill in Addis Ababa.

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1.5. Scope of the Study

This study was conducted aiming at exploring the life of female household heads who made their livelihood by picking waste from Koshe dumpsite, which has been operational since 1964 and the only open dumpsite for the capital. The dumpsite site is in the city within the boundaries of *Nefas-Silk* and *Kolfe-keranyo* sub-cities surrounded by residents both in poor condition and well-built houses, businesses, schools, factories and so on. This dumpsite is open for temporary and permanent scavengers and estimated to host more than 500 scavengers daily. However, this study is limited to assessing 15 female waste pickers who are heads of a household with children and absence of male figure support. The study also attempted to assess the causing factors, challenges, benefits, and coping mechanisms. Methodologically, the research used a qualitative research approach specifically case study.

In conducting this research, the participants' daily tight schedule between their long hour work at the dumpsite and household responsibilities was too challenging to get abundant time for the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions even though the researcher managed to collect the data. The other challenge of this study was the limited visits due to the hazardous exposure of the dumpsite while talking to the women living around the slum area. Finally, the researcher would like to note some of the waste pickers avoided involvement in any research, fearing information will be passed on to public officials and jeopardize their jobs at the dumpsite.

1.6. Significance of the study

This study is about the vulnerability of woman household heads. It shows how women are affected and what kind of struggle they are forced to face when engaged in the informal economy such as scavenging. It states about the women's social life, gender issues, economic aspects, and household situation. Nowadays, through government and philanthropic

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organizations several efforts are made for empowering women in the economic, social, and political arenas. The economic empowerment intervention mainly geared towards women living in difficult circumstances because of poverty and prone to different social problems. The case of waste picker women is not yet studied, and previous research are mainly focused on waste collection from the street, household and organizations. The life in the open dumpsite is neglected and not considered as an area of intervention. As a result, attention to waste pickers' specifically female household heads with children are missed to get attention and no intervention mechanisms are introduced and implemented.

Therefore, the research helps to fill the knowledge gap about women waste pickers at open dumpsites and helps to answer socio – economic factors that pushed women to engage in it. In addition, it can serve as an initial document to produce evidence informed knowledge that helps development practitioners to design intervention programs; to inform policy makers the problems of those women engaged in informal waste picking; and to produce knowledge that can be used for advocating the rights of women waste pickers.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Woman Headed Households (WHHs)

The definition of a household head has been raised in most research of the past (Buvinic & Gupta 1997; Chant, 1997, 2008; Quisumbing et al. 2001). Families have different structures in their households due to various factors the same way a person defined as the household head can be due to different reasons. Inner City Fund (ICF) International who implements the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) project funded by USAID to assist international development, identifies the head of the household as someone who usually lives in the

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household. This person may be acknowledged as the head based on age (older), sex (often, but not necessarily, male), economic status (main provider), or some other reason (DHS, 2020).

Fuwa (2000, pp.4-6) summarizes the definition terms found on most literatures as self-reported headship when there is unclear definition and assigned by respondent for household surveys; demographic definition when potential FHHs is defined as the households without an adult male partner; economic definition when the female head is the single earner. The heterogeneous nature of FHHs was also analyzed as *de facto* and *de jure*. The first refers to those FHHs where the self-declared male head is absent for a large proportion whereas the latter is where the self-reported female head does not have any legal or common union male partner.

Based on the above definitional guides, this research focused on women as household heads in a *de jure* household or single/never married female household, identified as the breadwinner for the members of the household particularly children and relatives. The absence of the male partner can be due to death, separation, divorce, or migration of the husband in search of work as this reason was discussed in most studies (ILO, 2008; Chant, 1997).

Finally, the researcher used the term woman headed households (WHHs) rather than female headed households (FHHs) since they can be used interchangeably. The term FHHs is used in most literature and the study has continued using it when quoting or citing other works.

2.2. Vulnerability and Woman Headed Households (WHHs)

The concept of vulnerability is mostly relative and dynamic in many scholarly works. According to Decron (2006) it is referred to as, “The existence and extent of a threat of poverty and destitution; the danger that socially unacceptable levels of well-being may materialize” (p.2). In the International Federation of Red Cross website’s context (n.d.), vulnerability is “diminished capacity of an individual or a group to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard. Vulnerability is most often associated with poverty,

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but it can also arise when people are isolated, insecure, and defenseless in the face of risk, shock, or stress". (para 8). Young children, pregnant and nursing women, unaccompanied children, widows, elderly people without family support, disabled persons are examples of potentially vulnerable groups.

Vulnerability and poverty are interlinked in such a way that each causes the other (Philip & Rayhan, 2004). The poor are the ones mostly vulnerable to all the indicators that influence vulnerability in social settings. Social vulnerability is a product of social inequalities and most often described using individual characteristics of people. Gender is one of the characteristics that influence social vulnerability (Cutter et al., 2003).

Additional studies have come closer to concluding women are mostly more vulnerable to poverty due to many life experiences in less developed and developing countries. The strong traditional cultures and norms tend to highlight the effect of monopolization of male in the access to resources and benefits (Aronsson & Carlsson, 2006). As stated in Klasen et al. (2011) most literature on vulnerable women in developing countries can be categorized as disadvantageous based on gender related differences and household head roles.

This research mainly tries to explore the life experience of vulnerable women households from low socio-economic perspective, and the challenges faced in their roles of providing for their families. The study also examines the households coping strategies to overcome the social and economic vulnerabilities.

2.3. Waste and Waste Pickers

Nathanson (2020) defines waste as it is any substance which is discarded after primary use, or is worthless, defective and of no use. Wastes are also classified as hazardous and non-hazardous. Hazardous waste refers to non-household waste that includes hazardous chemicals

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and can unknowingly be found in landfills. This type causes immediate danger to be exposed individuals and environment (Fazzo et al., 2017). The nonhazardous are solid wastes from a community that requires collection and transport to a processing or disposal site. The waste can be garbage or rubbish. Garbage is mostly compostable food waste whereas rubbish is mostly dry material such as glass, paper, cloth, or wood.

Waste collection is required everywhere since waste is generated inevitably. The sources of solid waste include households, hotels, commercial institutions, hospitals, and industries (Cheru, 2016). The waste then can be collected from different places such as garbage tanks, streets, and household containers and be scavenged by actors at different stages. However, waste scavenging at dumpsites is widely operated after the collected waste is transported and disposed at open dumpsites. This informal recycling i.e., the scavenging at dumpsites for recycling purpose is common globally and particularly occurs in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and parts of Europe (Rodic-Wiersma et al., n.d.).

Waste scavenging for recoverable waste is only the most visible of multiple livelihoods derived from waste (Beall, 1977). Disposal sites such as an open dumpsite are therefore the workplace of thousands of men, women, and children who recover valuable materials for recycling (Rodic-Wiersma et al., n.d.). The way waste is collected or managed differs from place to place depending on various aspects of a society. In most economically poor countries waste collection, recovery and recycling activities are informally undertaken by individuals or groups to an end (Bjerkli, 2005). Many landfill sites in developing countries also practice physical sorting of materials.

Most literatures used different terms such as rag pickers (ILO, 2004), waste collectors (Teklu, 2018), waste scavengers (Obadina, 2015), that can be interchangeably understood to

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refer to the people until the term ‘waste picker’ was adopted on the First World Conference of Waste-Pickers in Bogota, Columbia in 2008. Among the terms used prior ‘waste picker’, Mitra (2016), defined scavenger as “a person who totally or partly engages in the occupation of manually removing dry waste, night-soil from dry latrines, or the manual handling of the dead bodies of animals and humans”. The ILO (2004) used the term ‘scavenger’ or ‘rag picker’ to refer to people sorting and selling waste at dumpsites and from street bins and landfills.

Addis Ababa (AA) capital city of Ethiopia as one of the most populous cities with high increasing rate of waste generation, most studies on AA solid waste management (SWM) point there is improper process due to the inequality rates between urbanization and waste management capacity of the municipality (Bjerkli., 2005; Cheru, 2016; Lema et al., 2019). Although accurate data on waste generation is scarce, studies has established the city highly suffers from poor solid waste management. Hence, waste scavenging as part of the SWM in which scavengers search necessities or collect reusable materials to sell for recycling purposes is one of the informal livelihoods that attracts the urban poor in African cities such as Addis Ababa.

Therefore, the researcher will use the term ‘waste pickers’ for the people and “waste scavenging’ for the activity as the paper focuses on those individuals who informally scavenge waste from the only landfill site found in the city of Addis Ababa.

2.4. Women Waste Pickers

Globally one-third of the world’s population is assumed to live in informal settlements with little or no basic services (Gutberlet and Uddin 2017) and most waste pickers of dumpsites belong to those settlements, as well as the disadvantaged and vulnerable categories of the world population. Since scavenging waste is not considered as an ideal occupation, most waste pickers are the poor who are forced to live off the pile of the garbage. The field itself attracts the poor

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that are lacking employment. Therefore, waste scavenging is one field with flexible working hours especially for women and a high level of adaptability (Medina, 2000; WIEGO, 2020).

Most research that used gender as a parameter to categorize waste pickers such as the study conducted to measure the socio-economic costs of waste pickers at a landfill in Lusaka Chileshe and Moonga (2017) showed that more women were involved as waste pickers in the landfill. This is consistent with the claim by Women in Informal Employment Advocacy Group (WIEGO, 2014), as cited in, Chileshe and Moonga, (2017, p.46) that a significant number of waste pickers in the world were women. Obadian et.al (2014), differences according to gender were observed among waste scavengers on marital status and found out nearly 70 % of male scavengers were married compared with 30.6 % (19/62) of females. The rest of the men are single men who have never been married while the remaining women are separated, divorced, single, widowed and head of households with no other means of income.

2.5 Informal Economy, Gender and Waste Pickers

According to ILO (2002) definition (as cited in ILO, Gender and Informal Economy, 2017, p.2):

The “informal economy” refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. Their activities are not included in the law, which means that they are operating outside the formal reach of the law; or they are not covered in practice, which means that – although they are operating within the formal reach of the law, the law is not applied or not enforced; or the law discourages compliance because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs.

Several other studies also showed the jobs in the informal economy are the activities that are not part of a traditional sector but divorced from the modern sector as modernization theory

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(Wilson, 2002). Some of the informal workers as street vendors, garbage pickers, and brick makers are involved in selling the products manufactured in the modern world and providing inputs consumed by the sector.

In the past decades, gender equality and women's empowerment has become a key domain of development studies and policy. However, women are still often regarded as counting amongst the most vulnerable social groups in developing countries where women and men do not yet live-in equality. Women, for example, have low access to decent employment, but are overrepresented in informal employment (Brechtbuhl, 2011). ILO's statistical analysis by sex conducted in more than 44 countries (2011) showed women informal workers outnumbered the men informal workers in industries other than agriculture.

Despite the number of women increasing in labor force participation in many countries, women are still disadvantaged in the labor market and face gender inequality. In the global workforce, an alarming portion of women earn their livelihood in the informal economy as wage earners, self-employed, entrepreneurs in their homes, shops, and on streets (ILO, 2018).

Waste scavenging as one of the known parts of the informal economy, one study showed there is a difference in income across all waste scavengers' demographic characteristics. The female waste scavengers were observed to have the lowest income among the female and the cart pushers among the male (Obadina, 2015). Research findings point waste material specialization and use of tools to scavenge differ based on gender.

Women as waste pickers, is one form of informal employment in the labor world. Studies about gender relations and divisions among waste pickers is very limited but gender issues do exist in waste scavenging or recycling. Women may face challenges regarding access to materials with highest value and may not occupy high positions in case of formalized waste

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scavenging activities. Responsibilities of women such as caring for children and maintaining a household also limit women to engage in formal employment.

2.6. Driving Factors to Women Heads Waste scavenging

2.6.1 Poverty

Poverty can be analyzed from multidimensional aspects. Chant (2003) summarized the earliest studies showed how women were consistently disadvantaged than men in terms of income, and those disparities in earnings gave rise to inequalities in literacy, education, discrimination in labour markets, unpaid work within the home and low social and economic value to women works. The additional features of poverty focused on the internal differentiation within a household unit and the unmatched contribution of women to household survival.

When it comes to female headed households and poverty, female headed households have been discussed as an indicator of the feminization of poverty since the 1970s. Aside the earning disparities and inequalities in employment due to time and mobility constraints, female-headed households need to perform both paid employment and reproductive labour (domestic work and caregiving) in a compatible manner, since most are single parent households, which, unlike male-headed households, do not have female spouses (Milosavljevic, 2003). The links between female headed households and poverty and their homogenizing tendencies has also shown negative economic circumstances (Chant, 2003).

However, the assumption that women headed households as the poorest of the poor or that women suffer greater poverty is not in all cases and a conclusive indicator of female poverty. The Women and Development Unit of the Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (ECLAC) proposed to bring change in the measurement by disaggregating household headship by type of household, size, structure, and age groups. The best example shown was the fact male households can avoid domestic work expenditure as the other members

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of the households especially the women take over the activity and give chance for the male head to engage in another livelihood easily. However, the female headed households lack this resource and take part by covering both the paid and unpaid labor. This situation makes poverty more severe in such households. Hence, it is evident that female headships help to better define the poverty of women, reveal gender inequalities as well as women's greater vulnerability to poverty.

Hence, most women head in low economic status are likely to take part in low paid, low qualification or education requiring activities such as waste scavenging. Waste scavenging for many of the poorest people around the globe, it is one of the only livelihood options (WIEGO, 2020). Beall (1977) study showed, scavenging participants were undoubtedly among the most deprived and vulnerable of the city's poor. Many simply remained trapped in waste scavenging as a livelihood. Women and girls who picked waste in Bangalore were often from female headed households with no other sources of income.

Most studies on female waste pickers discussed women being pushed by poverty and unemployment and pulled by the hope of an income and greater wealth in waste scavenging is highly common (Brechtbuhl, 2011; Chileshe & Moonga, 2017).

2.6.2 Lack of Employment in the Formal Sector

According to the international advocacy group Women in Informal Employment, Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), women take the lion's share of informal employment in developing countries.

The informal sector is often described as a shock absorber during economic downturns for people cut back from formal employment. During this period new entrants join the informal economy and reduced people in the formal sector also struggle to make ends meet by taking up an activity in the informal economy (Bertulfo,2011). In most African cities' residents engage in

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common informal activities such as street and market vending, stone crushing, homebased earnings, and other unusual jobs for the sake of survival. One interesting occupation which has, however, gone on almost unnoticed is that of scavenging on rubbish dumps (Chileshe & Moonga, 2017).

Unemployment due rural-urban migration and lack of formal education mostly lead towards jobs in the informal sector or lack of jobs in formal sectors. Unemployment as defined by World Bank (2014) is “the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment”. Therefore, lack of formal employment in urban areas hence results in extreme poverty among many urban residents (ibid).

The additional factor for women’s preference to join the informal sector is the lack of access to formal childcare due to its cost exacerbates female informal workers’ work burdens. They are dependent on support from family or from neighbors to take care of their children while doing their work. It is also common for them to bring their children to their workplaces when informal sources of childcare support are not available (Bertulfo, 2011).

2.7. Challenges of Women Waste Pickers

2.7.1 Lack of Basic Social Amenities

According to Gutberlet and Uddin (2017), many waste pickers lack access either on the landfill or at home to clean water, proper sanitation, and a clean-living environment. As a result of being unable to get housing many of the waste pickers live in informal structures or in the veld or bushes or on the land fill, where there is no access to proper infrastructure. They live near the dumpsite in poorly built sheds and shanties and some also sleep at the dumpsite with no clean water, sewage, bathrooms, or kitchens. This condition is directly linked to workers’ income and their level of poverty (Obadina 2016; Asim et al., 2012).

2.7.2. Gender Violence

As waste scavenging is one of the only livelihood options for the poorest of the poor, the workers are often subject to harassment and various types of abuses particularly for the women. Issues related to risk of sexual abuse emerges as one of the reasons for the gender difference among waste scavengers in a study conducted in Lagos dumpsite (Obadina, 2016).

Studies conducted in dumpsites revealed exposure to rape, sexual and physical abuses on female scavengers have high occurrence in most open dumpsites (Obadina 2016; Rathana 2009; ILO/IPEC 2004). Schenck et al. (2006) mentioned rape, fights, insults, robbery, and rape as part of the interpersonal risks on the landfills.

2.7.3. Social Stigma

Gutberlet (2018) mentioned waste pickers have historically been stigmatized and that research should interrogate the change in how society perceives waste pickers and how they construct themselves. The social stigma on waste scavenging as an occupation is said to make it difficult for women waste pickers to get accepted in the community (Obadina, 2016). This discrimination is also known to have more social life impact on women than men. As a result of the nature of the job, they get excluded from engagement with people in neighborhoods (Marello, 2013).

The discrimination not only comes from the community but also from local authorities because their job is scavenging through garbage piles at dumpsites where most municipals ignore their contribution. The dirtiness of the work affects the status of the workers with olfactory impact and are mostly accused of being 'smelly' (WIEGO, 2009). This in turn leads to systematic harassment, humiliations and discrimination which burdens their self-esteem.

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2.7.4 Health and Safety Risks

2.7.4.1 Mechanical Risks

This risk refers to cuts, lacerations and bruises sustained in vehicle accidents, and fractures and other injuries due to landfill slides or uneven surfaces. Waste pickers at a landfill are routinely exposed to risks such as glass cuts and injuries, getting knocked by a truck, cuts by sharp objects like needles and wires, and falling in holes on the uneven landfill surface (Schenck et.al, 2019). From Mothiba et al. (2017) study, 22% waste pickers revealed injuries while at work which included bottle cuts, metal cuts, tripping and falling while running for trucks and there were two who were hit by a waste dumper.

This makes waste pickers worry about being exposed to injuries from handling sharp or dangerous items. Particularly for women not only do such risks threaten their ability to earn but also their role in managing households (Gutberlet & Uddin , 2017).

2.7.4.2 Musculoskeletal Risks

This risk is related to body movement. Schecnk et.al (2019) discussed waste scavenging needs an able body and that damage or injury can be the result of hard physical work particularly from pushing heavy loads, pulling heavy laden trolleys, and carrying large bags of recyclables. Additional study showed there is a higher prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders among waste pickers, particularly in the lower and upper back and shoulder (Singh & Chokhandre, 2015).

2.7.4.3 Chemical Risks

Landfills are composed of all sorts of waste including toxic chemicals and when the waste burns polluted smoke with inhalable chemicals emanate. The pollution has an impact on people working at the dumpsite since it affects the respiratory system and creates dermatological conditions. As a result, pneumonia and asthma are frequent pathologies among waste pickers (Vasina, p.37,2018),

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2.7.4.4 Biological Risks

According to Schenck et al.(2019) study biological risks mentioned by waste pickers include Tuberculosis from the polluted air and dust, food poison from eating contaminated or rotten food found on the dumpsite, drinking polluted water, animal/insect bites, smell of rotten meat from dead animals and so on. This is reflected in the high incidence of respiratory illnesses from exposure to toxic and unhygienic material.

2. 8. Woman Headed Households (WHHs) Benefits from Waste scavenging

Informal waste scavenging is part of an informal economy that benefits the informal workers in some ways. Vasina (2018) stated the informal sector is a substantial part of developing countries' economies and deals with work units that comprise unregistered enterprises as well as self-employment. Through their informal recycling activities, waste pickers broaden their sources of income (Medina, 2008), with earnings varying from day to day and depending on the type of material collected, and some of them also collect certain items for personal use (Vasina, 2018).

Waste pickers are mainly those in vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly, disabled, migrants and the unemployed (Medina, 2008). The activity is said to have expanded as a profession in the mid- twentieth century as the vulnerable and/or marginalized group could not find jobs in the formal sector (Marello, 2013).

The informal economy monitoring coordinated by WIEGO (2012) showed 65 percent of the study sample household income mainly came from waste scavenging where only about one quarter of the households had any other income. Nyathi et.al (2018) research in one open dumpsite in Pretoria, showed there were more single female scavengers compared to single male scavengers, falling in the age group 31–40 and majority were females who were single parents.

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Hence, women household heads who are forced to scavenge to support the family not only engage to find income but to also benefit with the flexible working hours at the dumpsite because they are able to determine their own hours and pace of working (ibid). Also, women take their children to the dumpsite unlike other works in both formal and informal sectors as day care is expensive. The women waste pickers do not have another place to leave their children/absence of safety nets in communities (ILO, 2004). Waste scavenging is then mostly a family business with its flexibility and high level of adaptability.

2.8. Theoretical Frameworks

2.8.1. Social Support

It can be defined as the interpersonal interactions and relationships that provide us with assistance or feelings of attachment to persons we perceive as caring (Hutchison, 1999). Social support refers to a social network's provision of psychological and material resources intended to buffer a person from the negative impact of stressors (Cohen, 2004). Three types of social support are identified by Hutchison (1999); emotional, material, and instrumental support. The emotional focuses on interpersonal relationship; instrumental includes services provided by causal contact.; whereas material support includes food, clothing, shelter, and other concrete items. These support systems enhance the resilience capacity of a person who encounters difficulties in his or her life because of different factors.

According to Hutchison (2008) network relationships often occur in clusters and are not synonymous with support; they may be negative or positive. The availability of supportive others in a variety of clusters such as family, friends, neighbors indicates that we are supported in many areas of our lives, rather than being limited to relatively few.

2.9. Social Support as Coping Mechanism

Social support and networks are said to benefit and minimize stressful situation of an individual which leads to increasing coping ability. The experience of stress creates a physiological state of emotional arousal, which reduces the efficiency of cognitive functions. Our social support, particularly our personal network, compensates for our perceptual deficits, reminds us of our sense of self, and monitors the adequacy of our functioning (Hutchison, 1999). Social network which includes the network structure and network activation provides opportunity for social support, access to resource and material goods, social engagement and social influence which intern impacts health through psychobiological, health behavioral and psychosocial pathways (Burkman, 2010).

Poverty and economic insecurity, lack of assets, lack of employment and income earning opportunities and political powerlessness are the major challenges that female headed households confront in their lives and end up with reliance on social relations (Hossain & Huda, 1995).

2.9.1 Models of Social Support

There are formal support systems (service organizations) and *informal* support systems (such as friends and neighbors). Two schools of thought have emerged around the question of how we internalize social support (Hutchison, 1999): the main effect model and the buffering model.

The main effect model, support is seen as related to our overall sense of well-being and the networks here provide an individual regular positive experience. This enables people to enjoy stability of mood, predictability in life situations, and recognition of self-worth. The buffering model is seen as a factor that intervenes between a stressful event and reaction. This

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enables people to diminish or prevent a stress response by recognizing the existing support resources (ibid).

3. CHAPTER THREE: Methods of the Study

This chapter deals with the research methods that were employed in conducting this study. The chapter includes the research design and approach, description of the study area, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis and ethical consideration.

3.1. Research Design

The goal of the study is to provide an exploration into women household heads' life experiences of waste scavenging to investigate the driving factors and identify their opportunities and challenges as informal waste pickers within an open dumpsite context. The study was conducted by using qualitative methods relying on primary data. Bryman (2004) stated this method is helpful in the generation of an intensive, detailed examination and development of concepts that enhance the understanding of social phenomena in natural settings by focusing on meanings experiences and participants views. Besides, a qualitative approach is relatively an open and unstructured strategy which enhances the opportunity of coming across entirely unexpected issues (Berg, 2001). As a result, a qualitative research method is deemed suitable when it is necessary to understand the research participants' lived experiences.

Among qualitative study types, the researcher used an exploratory single case research design. Yin (2009) defines a case study as “a research strategy which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence” (p. 3). The investigator explores a bounded system or multiple bounded systems overtimes through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007). Hence, the case study is on women waste pickers in a large and an only open dumpsite in the city of Addis Ababa.

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The data sources for this research were a mixture of qualitative research techniques such as in depth-interviews(IDI), focus group discussions (FGDs), observation, and field notes. Hence, by employing such an approach the researcher gained deep information from the participants about the pushing factors that force the women to engage in waste scavenging and challenges experienced following waste picking. The unit of analysis for the case study are the women waste pickers who are also heads of their household. The study was conducted using cross-sectional research design where the researcher observes at one point in time.

3.2. Study Area

This study was conducted in an open garbage dumpsite located in the capital city of Ethiopia. The site is known as "*Rappi*" or "*Koshe*" which has been used as a dumping site since 1964. The site was at the time located at the outskirts of Addis Ababa and intended to be a disposal area for all the collected waste of the capital. Currently the site is still the only open dumpsite and now located within the city, has a surface area of 37 hectares, and 40-meter height. UN habitat (2019) reported it receives around 3600 tonnes of waste every day.

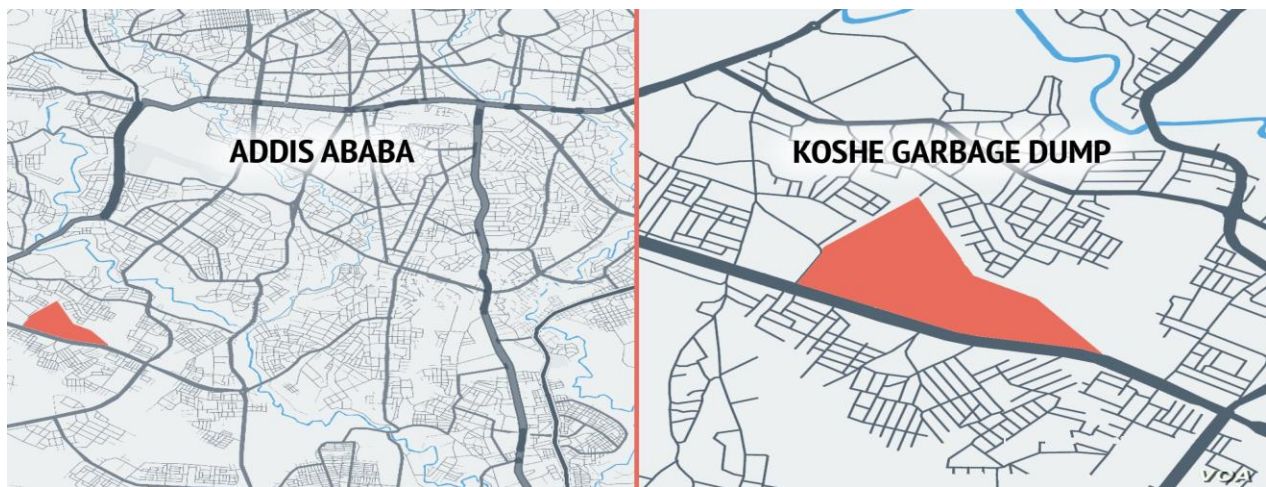


Figure 1. Map of Addis Ababa and location of Koshe (source VOA news)

It is surrounded by settlements as it is within the boundaries of two sub-cities under the Addis Ababa city administration, *Kolfe Keranio* and *Nifas Silk*. Where *Woreda 01 of Kolfe*

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Keranio and *Woreda 02 of Nifas Silk* resident areas are near the *Koshe* landfill site. Hence, the waste pickers are those living in the surrounding community in poorly built houses and some live on the dumpsite in cardboard or plastic made shelters. The researcher observed the waste pickers are the poorest of the poor living in the area.



Figure 2. The image of Koshe dumpsite

3.3. Sampling Technique

Participants of the research were selected using nonprobability sampling particularly purposive sampling was employed in conducting the study. Purposive sampling is important to have study participants that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data in the issue to be studied (Yin, 2011). The researcher specifically used purposive sampling in which the process allowed to secure participants with desired characteristics among the women waste pickers at the Koshe dumpsite. The female waste picker population in the study area was difficult to access

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since they are not registered or documented by the concerned authority which is the sub-city administration and Woreda. The researcher targeted nearby institution particularly the public school where most of the poor residents send their children in the study area to gather contact information and gain entry access. Once an initial informant was secured, the researcher established close contact and was able to purposively build the sample for the in-depth through the informant.

Additionally, the researcher used chain referral system to obtain more participants for the group discussions. The participants of the group discussions were introduced to the researcher through the network of the in-depth interview participants. Here it can be proved the researcher found suitable subjects for the in-depth interview through purposive sampling and used referral system to establish contacts to more subjects.

3.4. Description of Participants and Inclusion Criteria

As described in the above section the researcher used a purposive sampling method which is helpful to purposefully screen participants of the research. Hence the researcher developed and used the below inclusion criteria to select the women waste pickers who are the unit analysis of the case study:

- a. Who were willing to participate in the study.
- b. Who are woman household heads (with the absence of male support) living in the study area.
- c. Women heads whose major source of income is from waste scavenging.
- d. Who are engaged in waste scavenging for over a year.

Additionally, key informants such as the *Woreda* administration particularly the waste management, and women and children affairs section staffs were selected with the aim of exploring the perspective of the government in the research topic; and a nearby NGO staff to

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gain more insight on the situation of the women waste pickers to bring interventions forward. Women with severe health problems and those receiving support from NGO projects in the area were excluded from the study.

3.5. Sample Size

Due to the nature of the study area, scattered living arrangement of the participants, and undocumented resident status, it was difficult to find the subjects easily. Hence trusted access was important to enter the setting and purposively select few subjects at first and build on the size as the data collection progressed. Hence, through the purposive system the researcher found suitable subjects to form a considerable good size and settled with thirteen participants by data saturation technique. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that sample size determination be guided by the criterion of informational redundancy, that is sampling can be terminated when no new information is elicited by sampling more units. The researcher based on different parameters such as the purpose of the study, the study population, and types of codes to understand all the dimensions of the research questions from the interviews. Hence declared saturation was assessed and achieved by justifying the sample size used.

Additionally, twelve participants for the focus group discussions and three key informants from the woreda office and nearby NGO have participated.

3.6. Procedure of Data Collection

In advance of collecting the data from the purposefully selected participants, the researcher strictly followed ethical issues and scientific rules of qualitative data collection methods. First approval was obtained from the researcher's advisor on the collection tools and support letter from the School of Social Work, Addis Ababa University. Then a physical and phone contact was made with the selected participants to ensure participation willingness with detailed explanation of the nature and purpose of the study. Hence, signed informed consent

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form was obtained from all participants during the interviews and group discussions (FGDs). The interviews and FGDs took place in the houses of the participants whereas the key informant interviews were conducted in their respective offices from April to July of 2020. The researcher learned the familiarity of the settings, relaxed the participants, and supported the researcher to capture sufficient data. The media of communication was Amharic with all the study participants. In addition to the notes, a tape recorder was used for the interview and discussion sessions with the consent of the participants.

3.7. Methods of Data Collection (Primary and Secondary)

3.7.1. In-Depth Interview

In-depth interviews in qualitative research allows the researcher to obtain unlimited range of data and explore the topic jointly with the participants. Here the participants express their own thoughts and provides the needed information towards the research objective (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the in-depth interview helped to achieve the insight of the women waste pickers experience from their perspective.

The research involved a semi-structured questionnaire which was used as an interview guide consisting of closed-ended questions (age, education, number of children and children ages, number of relatives in the households, working status, and weekly work hours). The open-ended questions focused on categories such as driving factors to waste scavenging livelihood and associated results such as opportunities and challenges. Thirteen women waste pickers took part in the in-depth interview with each session ranging between 50 minutes up to 1 hour and 30 minutes. The key informant interview sessions each lasted in between 45-50 minutes.

3.7.2. Key Informant Interview

To explore the perception and roles of relevant institutions in the study area, the researcher separately developed open ended interview questions and interviewed representatives

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from the head of the *Kolfe- Keraniyo* Sub-City *Woreda* 01 administration & solid waste management office, the *Woreda* Women and Children Affairs Office, and nearby nongovernmental organization project office. Hence, three key informants participated. The key informant interview sessions each lasted between 45-50 minutes.

3.7.3. Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions (FGDs) are useful for collecting data about experiences, feelings, opinions, and reactions that may not be revealed in one-to-one interviews but may be elicited and observable through participation in a social gathering and through interaction with others in debating issues and exchanging views (Chandler et al, 2013). It is designed for small groups usually between four and eight individuals who are brought together by the researcher. Accordingly, two focus group discussions of women waste pickers were conducted, each group having five and seven participants, respectively. The first group took one hour whereas the second group session took almost two hours. The purpose was to triangulate with the data obtained through the in-depth interview. The researcher acted as a facilitator and a note was taken by one social worker from the nearby NGO.

3.7.4. Observation

Observation may be defined as a process in which one or more persons observe some real-life situation and record pertinent occurrences. It is used to evaluate the overt and covert behavior of the individuals in controlled and uncontrolled situations (Thomas, 2010). The researcher assumed a covert non-participant stance and conducted simultaneously with the interview and discussion sessions to debrief afterwards. Liu and Maitlis (2010) pointed this is often used in tangent with other data collection methods and can offer a more nuanced and dynamic situations.

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Therefore, the researcher observed the behaviors of the participants individually and in group interactions, the nonverbal expressions, and gestures, and witnessed the environment of the participants in regard to their poor living and working conditions within the situation context.

3.8. Method of data Analysis

Among the many types of qualitative data analysis, the researcher applied thematic analysis to analyze the data and interpret within the research question framework. Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative data analysis due to its flexibility and accessibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006); comprehensive process that allows to cross-reference between the data and themes (Hayes, 1997); and most importantly due to its nature that seeks to discover using interpretations.

Therefore, the researcher first organized and prepared the raw data collected from the thirteen participants through the in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observation notes for data analysis purpose. This data included the transcribed notes from the session audio recordings which included the response time of the respondents on each topic, their hesitations and pauses and so on. As the first phase, the researcher started to thoroughly read the data repeatedly, re-listen the audio recordings and immersed self in the data until the meaning of the data was fully understood. Once familiarized with the data content and reached on realization point that the data is relevant with the research question, initial codes were developed by creating linkage with the relevant portion of the bigger text. This phase was stopped when the researcher realized the data is fully coded. The codes then turned to themes as part of the third phase of the analysis. This was done by finding meaningful groups for the coded data and leading to broader themes. The themes were reviewed again against the overall data and initial codes to ensure quality on its meaning.

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. The last phase of the data analysis focused on production of the report through narration of the defined themes. Here the researcher ensured the findings are narrated and described coherently and associated with stories that answers the research questions. Along this process sub-themes were also included and interpreted under the respective theme of the finding.

3.9. Ethical Consideration

The researcher always anticipated the ethical issues that will surface during a study and incorporated good practices during data collection. Hence the researcher ensured to disclose purpose of the study in a broader context, confirm voluntary participation and secure informed consent from respondents. The anonymity of the respondents was respected through coding system and excluding real identity. To further create a comfortable setting for the sessions, the researcher ensured to conduct the interviews and discussions as per their preferences of place and time. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the provided information. The right of a respondent unwilling to provide answers to questions was highly respected. The researcher also handled emotional moments professionally particularly on sessions with sensitive topics such as abuses and rape.

This study was conducted after the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus and the researcher ensured all precautions were exercised to avoid risk. The group discussions were cautiously organized by respecting all the COVID-19 preventive measures such as sitting 2meters apart, wearing face masks and avoiding hand shaking.

3.10. Quality Assurance

According to Stiles (1993) validity refers to the trustworthiness of interpretations or conclusions. Accordingly, researcher used peer debriefing (Janesick,2015) and respondent validation (Creswell & Miller, 2002) to confirm trustworthiness and credibility. For peer debriefing, researcher allowed a peer who is familiar in research works to review the problem

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statement, research question, purpose, research design and the transcribed notes in which the peer and researcher consulted to improve the quality of the finding's interpretation. For respondent validation, researcher compiled the summary of the findings and checked the representation level with majority of the respondents through telephone contact.

CHAPTER FOUR. 4. Findings of the Study

This chapter focuses on the findings of the study. It mainly incorporates the socio-demographic data of the research participants, pushing factors and challenges experienced because of engaging in the field and the possible intervention mechanisms employed by the participants. The finding section also presents themes and sub-themes from interviews with government office and NGO worker that are found through the rigorous data analysis processes.

4.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants

In this study a total of twenty-eight research respondents participated, where thirteen (13) were interviewed in depth, twelve (12) participated in the focus group discussions, and three (03) were key informants. The IDI and FGD participants were all women. The age of the participants lies between the ages of 18-40. All participants are in the productive age group, engaged in waste scavenging and heading a household. The educational background of these participants also ranged from not attending formal education to secondary level.

All of them are heads of their households and their family members ranged from two to eight. The participants' households are made up of their children and near relatives. The age of their children ranged from six month to fourteen years old. The women are the only sources of income in each respective family and responsible to cover all the household needs. The needs include providing emotional and material support. For the research purpose and confidentiality each of them was given identification code. The general background of the research participants is presented in the annexed Table 1.

The three key informants were from the nearby sub-city Kolfe Keranyo, *woreda* 01 administration solid waste management (SWM) and women and children affairs (WCA)

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sections, and non-government organization (NGO). The WCA participant was selected because the office is working on women empowerment projects which some are in collaboration with NGOs. The solid waste management section is also firmly working in keeping the beauty of the city particularly the settlement areas by encouraging the formation of several associations such as women associations that collect solid wastes from houses, organizations, and streets. The office monitors and evaluates the activity and provides different supports for the formally established cooperatives. The NGO focuses on providing daycare, education and feeding programs to vulnerable children by also targeting empowerment programs for their single, divorced, widowed, or separated mothers that works at the dumpsite.

4.2. Experience of Women Heads as Waste Pickers

4.2.1. Household Characteristics of the Women

Even if most of the women waste pickers lived around Koshe long enough, they are not still adapted to the environment. Two of the participants lived in the area for twenty years (IDI P2, P6) whereas the rest range from 1-10 years. All of them live in rental houses found both on the dumpsite and nearby villages by paying from 600-1500 Ethiopian birr per month. Even the women who lived for 20 years did not manage to secure *woreda* administered low-cost houses (woreda houses) due to the nature of their settlement (illegal settlement in the slums) and preference to stay near the dumpsite. The house owners that rent out for the waste pickers are mostly retired waste pickers themselves who built small spaces to generate income. The participants mentioned they also move from one house to another regularly because rent prices go high frequently.

From observation the houses on the dumpsite are mostly built of cardboards, plastics, woods, and muds held together by ropes, they are very small in size and do not accommodate large numbers of family members. The lack of necessities such as water and electricity are also

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another characteristic of the housings. The lack of toilets and kitchens was also highly observed. The houses in the villages such as Kore village even though it is one of the known slum areas in the city, it has slightly better rental houses than the dumpsite.

According to participants the reasons why they live in the poorly built houses near the dump is because of its proximity to their workplace and affordability. As depicted in the socio-demographic information table, the women have children and relatives in their households. P11 from the IDI explained the situation as follows:

“I am a widow and head of my household since I lost my husband in a car accident ten years before. I had three children to feed and did not have any income at the time. I started working at the dumpsite and rented a shelter-like house for my five children and my siblings who live with me. We all sleep on the floor with a mattress, cook in the house and go to the landfill for toilet. We call it a house just because we pay though it lacks everything”.

The infrastructure within the area is lacking basic facilities which highly exposes to hygiene, health, and safety issues for most cases of the participants especially the six (06) women headed households living on the houses built on the toe of the dumpsite.

Apart from providing shelter for the household members these women also have the responsibility to perform household chores when they are not scavenging at the landfill. Hence, the finding shows the respondents with small children and no relatives burden from both heading a household and housekeeping full time. P15 expressed her role as:

“My six year’ old is not old enough to help me so i do all the cooking, washing, cleaning for my family in my spare time away from the landfill on top of taking care of my 1-year-old.”

P8 added.

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“when I’m home my 10-year-old niece watches the kids for me while I do the house chores, that’s the only support I have.”

The above cases and all the responses from the IDI imply these women face difficulties to keep their household running with minimum health and safety in place.

4.2.2. Waste scavenging Experience

The women who participated in this research have waste scavenging experience ranging from 01 to 20 years. All the respondents in the IDI and FGD described their job as the worst anyone can have in the world and as the riskiest occupation compared to any other field. The participants described the day of a waste picker depends on waste trucks arrival time to secure good volume and quality materials. After the collection process from the offloading points the pickers do separation, cleaning and storing of materials. In addition to the arrival time of the trucks, the waste pickers interest picks up by the origin (source of collection) of the trucks. The waste trucks that come from institutions such as hotels and hospitals contain good quality and unsorted items at the previous stages of waste scavenging like that of the household collected wastes.

The views of respondents on waste scavenging experience are mostly similar except on the level of acceptance. Some of the waste pickers has accepted waste scavenging as their lifetime occupation. For instance, P2 who has two children and a nephew in the house responded, *“I have done this for 20 years and I will continue as long as my family needs support to survive”*. The other participants who had more than 10 years of waste scavenging experience (P5, P6, & P11) shared the same view with P2. The ages of the participants with this view ranges between 32-40 years old.

“I support myself and family by working at Koshe. I manage to cover my basic needs even if it is not the everyday case. My family managed to live with the waste for

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twenty years and koshe is our life. I am now 35 years old and waste scavenging is the only job I know how to do. I am not going anywhere.” (P5)

On the other hand, the participants who only had 1 up to 3 years of waste scavenging experience (P3, P4, P7, P8 & P12) responded the dumpsite job is very difficult to accept and they are only working there until they secure a better job. The ages of this group of participants who share the same view ranges between 18-27 years old.

“I am a single mom, but I am young and when my baby starts school, I will change job.” (P12)

The waste pickers are challenged with deadly risks in their daily routine, but they mentioned their great fear is a landslide accident. A landslide accident occurred at Koshe in 2017 (three years ago) and took many lives of waste pickers. This fear is embedded in all the IDI participants and was also confirmed by the FGDs participants.

4.2.3. Economic Aspect of Waste scavenging

4.2.3.1. Waste scavenging as a source of Income

Waste scavenging is a flexible job depending on the self-employment status of the waste pickers and other factors that shape the income earning level. Their income is determined by the amount of recyclable waste they find. They collect mostly plastic materials, metals, bottles, and several other recyclable items for selling purpose. They have regular buyers, and the selling price of each item is usually predetermined by the mass and ranges between 300-700 Ethiopian birr per week. The money is not enough and barely supporting the day-to-day need. Therefore, the women waste pickers are mostly earning for survival and they are in consistent challenges to provide for their household. In this regard most of the participants in the depth-interview expressed what waste scavenging as a livelihood activity means for them as:

“It is not too good or bad. I suffer from making ends meet regularly but at least it saves my household from starving. We are alive so far.” (P13)

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Additionally, women participant 12 said:

“It is not enough but at least I can cover the house rent to save my family from living on the street. We also have food daily and I do not have to depend on anyone.”

The participants who waste picked for long years (IDI P2, P5, P6 & P11) described the number of waste pickers grew in an alarming rate over the years. The competition became worse at the site by pulling down the income compared to their first years after entry (fifteen-ten years back). The competition and the condition of the dumpsite getting worse from time to time has made the life a constant struggle. When asked if they have any other source of income, they all responded waste scavenging is the only source of livelihood for their household. Participant one said:

“Yes, koshe is my only source. There is no one that supports me. My 19-year-old is into drugs and the 12-year-old is a student.”

The study also revealed the waste pickers do business with buyers who are also in the informal sector. The factories that need the recovered materials doesn't buy it from the scavengers but the informal traders in between.

4.2.3.2. Double Burden and Household Size

The other factor the women are the only support of the households is because of their headship roles to take care of their children who mostly are within the school age and below five years old.

Participant 3 said:

“I am 18 a kid myself, but I have a two-year-old who can only depend on me. I take her to the dumpsite with me if I don't get one of the other waste scavenging mothers to watch her for me.”

Similarly, Participant 10 narrated that:

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“The father of my child got very sick and went back to his family at the countryside. He left me alone to take care of our 6months old and my stepson (his son). My stepson is not cooperative and does not help at the house or at the dumpsite. I have to feed both and pay rent and the hustle to achieve both roles is harder when you have a baby that cant even walk. The earnings depend on the time you spend at the dumpsite to collect more. I struggle for being absent at the site sometimes just to protect my baby from that terrible place.”

The above cases of participants indicate the age of their children and household size of the family affects their work hours and earnings. These women are faced with double burden and the situation becomes worse when they have bigger household size to provide for.

Related to this P6 expressed the situation as follows:

“I have five kids and two of my siblings that came from rural area to stay with me for better access to education. When my husband was alive, we shared the household burden of caring for our children and earning money from Koshe. After he passed away, I struggled to make ends meet and provide for my family at the same time. We are a family of eight and cost of living affected us consistently.”

4.2.3.3. Additional Economic Benefits

The participants mentioned they get additional benefit by collecting items for consumption such as wood. This is used as energy source for cooking food. They also collect clothes and shoes and other household materials for reuse purposes. Sometimes they even find food from hotel garbage trucks and they take it home to feed their children.

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4.2.3.4. Income Prior to Waste scavenging

Some participants explained they were economically dependent on their parents or dependent on the male figures of a household as housewives prior to joining waste scavenging. This response was common among P1, P2, P4 and P11. P11 said she believed life would be better when she started working to support the family, but the money she is making is insufficient.

The ones that were independent was working mostly in the informal sector as housemaids, street vendors, domestic workers, traditional crafters, day laborer and other peculiar jobs. P1 explained:

“Before joining waste scavenging, I was a prostitute and only cared for myself but after my babies the waste collection has become my life, I say the money is lesser and the struggle is too much, but this is a better lifestyle to raise my children. If I work hard and collect more to sell, I can survive”.

On the other hand, the in-depth interviews and FGDs data revealed that the previous occupations of the women waste pickers provided better money and quality of life than waste scavenging. For instance, the housemaids lived in a good condition house, and did not worry about food or rent (IDI P3 & P6). But the street vendors, day laborers and cloth washers and traditional crafters responded the income from waste scavenging is better except for the working condition (IDI P5, P8, P9, & P10).

4.2.4. The Social Experience of Women Waste Pickers

4.2.4.1. Community Engagement

When the participants were asked if they are involved in any neighborhood or community affairs, most participants from in-depth interview and focus group discussion revealed they only engage in friendly gatherings among themselves rather with the non-waste scavenging community members.

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On the other hand, two IDI participants (P9 & P5) added they are part of the community 'Iddir', a local association formed by community members living in the same area or by some mutual connection for the purpose of aid and financial assistance during bereavement (Pankhrust & Haile Mariam, 2000). One participant (IDI, P4) added *"I have no social life, no friends and good neighbors. How can I? I cannot dress up I am always dirty; I do not have a husband who can get me the respect I want. I do not feel accepted in the society."*

The waste pickers described their daily routine and double burden does not give them freedom to engage in social affairs regularly. However, even if they want to participate in the community gatherings, they do not get invitations from the organizers or leaders. Participant 1 (IDI, P1) explained:

"I lived here for 7 years and am aware of the social activities because of my landlords. But the focus areas of the gatherings do not highly concern me, and my family compared to the issues we want to be solved by collaborative community efforts."

Participants in FGD 1 argued that:

The community programs do not consider or care about what we go through. For instance, we smell bad after scavenging through a pile of garbage and we would like a better access to water to clean ourselves; better housing services; and health care. Even recreation and day care centers for our children is an issue for us that needs action."

Participants of FGD 2 added:

The non-waste scavenging people in the neighborhood do not engage us in meetings, collective cleanings, and neighborhood change efforts.

The above cases indicate waste picker issues that can potentially be solved by such engagements are considered too complex and neglected by concerned bodies. The waste pickers also do not

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have confidence to engage and be part of the community activities. Additionally, the fact that waste pickers come from different places and live-in rental houses can be a disadvantage to get recognition in community programs organized by government. This programs mostly require legal registration at the woredas.

4.2.4.2. Women Waste Pickers Views on Community Attitudes

The waste pickers were asked views on the community perception on waste scavenging activity and if they feel as a valued member of the community. The respondents revealed that the community members have negative attitude towards waste pickers. Participants coded P2, P3, P4 & P6 expressed their views as follows:

The society views us like trash ourselves just because we collect waste. They do not give us respect. The facial expression people show us when we pass by is enough evidence, they negatively perceive how we make a living. They make us feel low and worthless.

Similarly, one of the young participants from the IDI added:

“One day when I was walking and carrying madaberia full of plastic bottles i collected from the dumpsite. A man passing by spit on me and insulted me with so much hateful words.”

Similarly,

“We are emotionally damaged beyond repair. We feel that we are below everybody because we can’t even use public transport because of the smell we have from digging around the dump” (P5).

4.2.4.3. Relationship among Women Waste Pickers

The women household heads when asked about their relationships with waste pickers at the landfill they expressed it in two ways. One interaction being with their closer circles and the second with the other pickers they meet at the field. The participants from both FGDs confirmed the relationship among closer circles is positive, friendly, and supportive.

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“We are close because we go through the same challenges and try to be there for each other. We have coffee together, we watch each other kids and take care of one another during bad times such as accidents, sickness, etc...”

By closer circles they are referring to group of women united either by ethnic group, living area (rent compounds), long years of working together, and same time of entry and so on. Most of the IDI participants confirmed they have their own waste scavenging clique they always depend on both at the landfill site and the life outside the landfill.

On the other hand, participants in the FGD 2 explained the relationships with other women waste pickers in another clique is somewhat positive. The challenges are the same for everyone on the field and we try to watch out for each other.

4.2.4.4. Relationship between Women and Men Waste Pickers

The study also focused on the views of the women waste pickers regarding the interaction they have with fellow men waste pickers at the dumpsite. As a result, the finding both from the IDI and FGDs revealed the interaction is negative except for some cases. The group one participants of the FGD described they feel safer working with men group of workers from the same ethnic background as their own. Similarly, P3 added:

“The men waste pickers have their own cliques as well and some groups act as if they own the dumpsite. There is violence towards women waste pickers from men cliques with different ethnic groups than the women.”

The participants disclosed they have lots of insecurities and the negative behaviors of some men waste pickers towards them is among the major concerns. They explained the work is very challenging and difficult for a woman because the men have more energy. They have the energy to run after the garbage trucks to collect more items. P3 added:

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“Sometimes the bad guys force me to collect for them and they take the madaberia full of plastics for their own purpose. I feel like this happens to me because am young and easy to be bullied around.”

The above case indicates the man with bad behavior trouble the young women at the site.

The participants mentioned there is violence on the site regularly. The men waste pickers fight in groups, bully each other; stab and even try to kill each other.

4.3. Pushing Factors

4.3.1. Lack of Resource to Sustain Family’

According to the participants responses none of them chose to become waste pickers if it was not for the pushing factors that left them no choice. The women in the study are poor, either widowed, divorced or single mothers with household heading responsibilities that need resources for the survival of the family. The findings of this study revealed that lack of economic resources is the prominent pushing factor that led the women to waste scavenging. P7 said:

“I was facing extreme poverty and did not have any means to feed myself and child.”

Similarly, four participants (IDI P9, P10, P5, & P4) responded losing their husband (Father of their child for some cases) is what caused for the family to lack resources to survive because the male figure was the breadwinner for the household.

On the other hand, the study revealed the women has loss of social, cultural, or religious resources. P5 expressed her situation as follows:

“When I lost the father of my children and I was left to provide for my three kids and my sick brother living with me. My parents in the rural area did not have any money to help us or I did not have any other relatives or siblings to help me financially until I find a job or even psychological support to help me cope. I didn’t have a strong social network to even help me sort things by discussions.”

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Similarly, participant P1 added that lack of any support from her relatives to take care of her sick sister left her no choice but to secure the available source of income in this case waste scavenging.

4.3.2. Lack of Formal Employment

Following poverty, lack of job opportunity was the second reason provided by all the participants when they were asked why they joined the waste scavenging field. They stated their opportunities were limited because of their academic background. Some of the research participants in FGDs argued that being unable to complete at least secondary education level narrowed their chance of getting formal employment in any private organizations or government bureaus. P9 shared the same idea about school although her case was no formal education at all:

“If I had a chance to go to school and at least completed primary education I would have other opportunities.”

The finding showed waste scavenging does not either require any qualification upon entry or hiring person. The participants explained a person can just go to the site and collect materials to earn money without prior experience, hiring arrangement and advance communication with concerned bodies. The dumpsite is open for everyone.

All the participants mentioned they had temporary feeling at the time of joining that they would only stay in the field for a while. This view is common among the participants who worked at the site for less than five years and under the age of 25. But the participants who waste picked for over ten years explained that feeling is no longer there.

“After all these years of waste scavenging, I don’t even have any other dreams. I became aimless and I don’t think I have a chance to secure job in other fields unless I start my own business.” (P9)

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4.3.3. Having Birth at Early Age

In addition to lack of resources and lack of formal employment, having birth at early age and unplanned pregnancies within a family were mentioned as driving forces to look for economic resources which led them to engage in waste scavenging. Participants P3, P12 and P13 are found between the ages 18-21, all three confirmed giving birth at early age pushed them to look for a job.

“I was a student and got accidentally pregnant. I run away from my parents to be with him but the guy who impregnated me did not want to help. I felt very bad and abandoned. I had no choice but to secure a job for myself and my baby.” (P13)

Additionally, P8 who is 28 years old, a mother of two and divorced explained she joined the field when she had her second baby without planning.

The other factor the women mentioned is the dumpsite giving them an opportunity to take their children at the worksite. Because most occupations do not allow for a mother to take care of her child and work at the same time. Therefore, the dumpsite work and its flexibility easily attract the poor women household heads. Even other informal activities such as housemaid work are difficult for these women to secure since no one hires a woman with children. Lastly, as the socio-demographic table depicts all of them have children to take care of without support. This makes it difficult for them to get education and training to penetrate the competitive workforce.

4.4. Challenges Experienced by the Women

4.4.1. Vulnerability to Socio-Economic Problems

The study revealed these women household heads are daily striving to generate income to address the household needs by working at the dumpsite. Although they are struggling to maintain their household, they have trouble maintaining due to their vulnerable situation to

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socio-economic problems such as housing, healthcare, social inequality, youth misconducts and so on.

4.4.1.1. Housing

Leading a life without having access to basic facilities including electricity, water and toilet are the major challenges that the waste pickers experience daily. They are deprived of these basic facilities because of their low economic status. This exposed them for different social problems. One of the research participants described her experience as follows:

“I am living in a house without electricity, water and toilet. I lived there for 4 years without the basic facilities. I am living with my two twin daughters aged one year without any support. Living in such condition exposed me for rape and to end up with giving birth.”

A woman having eight family members lived in such condition for the last twenty years and described why she stayed in such house as follow:

“Since our family is big in number, wishing for a house having all the facilities is luxury for us. We are always working hard at least to have one meal a day. For a family deprived of having enough food a day electricity and water accompanied with clean housing is something impossible not only for having but also for wishing.”

Among the research participants P8 added that living in such extreme conditions is too much below the standard even to be categorized.

4.4.2. Children Inheriting Waste scavenging

Some of the family members especially the eldest children go to waste scavenging to support their mothers as they are the sole income generators of the family. Continuation of such activities ended with the children inheriting the job. This makes the mothers much angry and feel guilty. One of the research participants (P5) responded she passed worse scenarios by waste

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scavenging for more than ten years, but the transfer of such activity to her eldest child makes her feel depressed and worthless. She said, *“my child inherited a bad thing and I feel guilty”*.

Additionally, the children become victims of drugs by working at the site and living in poor neighborhood:

“I lost my son. He is a victim of drugs and out of school at a young age (13). I was expecting him to change our life and help me escape from waste scavenging one day, but I feel like my wish has already failed to happen.” (P6).

Living in the dumpsite with absence of basic facilities, not only makes the life of the women difficult, but also leads to the fate of their children and exposes them to misbehave against the norms of the wider community.

4.4.3. Health Problems

Working in the dumpsite is clearly a cause of different forms of illness for the waste pickers. During the FGD almost all women explained that they frequently visit doctors because of eye illness. Participant P3 had surgery a week before the interview and the doctor told her the source of problem is the waste. In addition to the mothers, children are also victims of health problems. The women stated they take them to the dumpsite, and they are equally exposed. One of the participants said, *“Since I do not have a person to who I can leave my little daughter with, I take her sometimes and she ends up with so many illnesses.” (P12)*

The way they collect waste at Koshe is solely manual or physical sorting. The fact they do not have or use personal protective equipment is also another factor that exposes the waste pickers to different forms of injuries. The participants revealed they suffer from cuts by scraps of glass; from respiratory problems; and back pains. They do not have any mask and safety wears to protect their body from any danger including the stench.

4.4.4. Isolation and Hopelessness

The participants explained they are socially discriminated from community engagements such as social associations because of their engagement in waste scavenging. The participants believe they are serving the community by contributing towards waste management, but this has not been given recognition rather isolated. This in turn led to their lack of hope to better future.

One of the research participants described her experience as follows:

“The nearby community doesn't consider us as a normal person. They do not give us respect and invite us to be part of the broader social life.” (P1)

4.5. Challenges Related with Gender

In addition to the above social problems, the finding revealed that women face gender related challenges by working at the dumpsite. Physical abuse and rape were the major challenges listed which was confirmed by all the twenty-five participants from the IDI and FGDs.

4.5.1. Physical Abuse

At the dumpsite women experience physical abuse from some of their counterpart men waste pickers. Participants explained some men sometimes force the women to work for them. They use their power to take ours and bully us frequently.

“Words cannot express our challenges when it comes to the troublesome men at the site.

Women here are highly exposed to physical, sexual, and emotional abuses.” (P8).

4.5.2. Rape

Most of the research participants disclosed that women get raped by some men waste pickers frequently. One of the FGD group participants described her experience as follow and the rest in the group confirmed her story:

“One day when I was collecting away from my group three guys who were digging nearby saw I was alone, came to me and tried to rape me. If it were not for my friends

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who shouted to help me and run to rescue me, I don't think I would be here today. One of my friends even got hurt that day because one of the guys threw a metal at her.” (P15)

4.6. Coping Strategies Adopted by the Women Waste Pickers

The researcher asked the women what coping mechanisms they adopt during the challenging times and if those mechanisms have helped them to reduce the related risks caused by their occupation. The main coping strategies listed by the waste pickers are explained below.

4.6.1. Creating Strong Social Relation Among Themselves

The women support each other and come together to alleviate problems they encounter in life. One of the research participants described it clearly as follows:

“At the time I started waste scavenging I felt so hopeless and worthless. I felt the discrimination from my neighbors and didn't think I would find the comfort from anyone around me. The burden of life accompanied with the perception of the community towards what we do, and the hardship of the job needs support. But after working there for seven years and finding a group of women I click with made the journey less painful. Now I easily feel happy when im surrounded by them at the site and outside. I have become optimistic when I come together with the women and discuss there is a chance to get out. We share what we have, and we stick with each during good and bad times. The only family I have second to my children are the women waste pickers and their children.” (P1)

The researcher observed this network during the session with the first FGD participants.

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4.6.2. Renting a House with Low price and Reusing Waste

Since the income is too low, some participants with bigger household size described they struggle to pay rent and provide food for the family at most times. As a result, they rent a house without any basic facilities. Most participants said they are thankful those houses exist otherwise they believed their family would be homeless.

They use the items they collected for own consumption such as wood for cooking food, clothes, furniture for the house, cardboards, plastics and so on. They use the open area for toilet.

4.6.3. Adjusting the Waste scavenging Time

To minimize the risks, they face from some of the men waste pickers, all the participants from the IDI said they adjust their working time by discussing with their group. One of the research participants said:

“Since some men feel powerful and they can get anything from girls, they always ask us to sleep with them and when we refuse, they want to force us. Hence, we have adjusted our working time and always go to the site together. We don’t have any other security mechanism.”

4.7. The Waste Picker HHHs Goals

Based on the years of experience and age of the waste pickers the researcher analyzed the responses of the participants regarding their goals or future aspirations at individual and household level. The participants who are above age of 35 years old and who has scavenging experience over 10 years seems to focus on the success of their children and if more profitable engage in other labor works. The second group between age of 30-35 years who has experience between 7-10 years responded they plan is to secure other labor works. The third group between age of 25-30 years who has experience between 2-6 years, responded similar to the above group.

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The last group which are the youngest age group 18-25 who has experience from 1-4 years responded they would appreciate support from NGOs or anyone to engage in small business like culinary and beauty salon. Two of the respondents here responded they prefer labor works and one wished to go abroad.

4.8. The Views of Key Informants

4.8.1. The Sub-City Administration Office

The Kolfe Keranio sub-city, woreda 01 administration office informant responded the sub-city is located near the Koshe landslide and the residents surrounding one side of the dumpsite are administered by the office. Even though the waste pickers are mainly living in informal settlements the office considers them as part of the community. The office recognizes their contribution as they are serving the community and the city. The office has observed the number of waste pickers has significantly increased over the years and the informal settlements has expanded beyond control. They suspect the rural-urban migration is the major reason for the increase of the waste pickers number. The second being the sub-city is known for its slum areas and this attracts poor urban dwellers to settle there which in turn leads some to engaging in Koshe site.

The informant acknowledged there are general hardships for all, and challenges particularly the women waste pickers go through. He advised there are programs designed to improve the life of the women waste pickers working at Koshe. However, the implementation is delayed due to difficulty to address all the women. The woreda only has mandate to support those registered as Addis Ababa residents. But most of the women waste pickers are those who migrated from the countryside.

However, there is a plan on the pipeline that tries to address all the waste pickers particularly for the housing challenges in collaboration with the municipal office and at the same

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time to control the informal settlements. He added the dumpsite is owned by the city and the administration has attempted to close the dumpsite and relocate a couple of times but there is always resistance from the waste dependent community members. This includes not only the scavengers but the hundreds of middlemen that make living by selling to industries.

The informant added some residents of the woreda who previously waste pickers were has benefited and changed their life from the existing youth and women empowered programs. The woreda lends money to small groups to do business and most youth/women formed groups currently exist. On the other hand, the informant mentioned the sub-city tries to support the waste pickers in time of need. For instance, the massive landslide accident in 2017 the sub-city in collaboration with the community was very supportive to the victim families by organizing contributions and temporary solutions for those who lost their houses.

The informant from the women and children affairs section explained the life struggle they have especially the women with children is extremely hard and the office is aware. The office tries to address the issues of all the poor women in the area and does not have a specific program for the waste pickers. Currently, the office has budget to improve women participation in decision making towards allocating solutions for economic and social problems; incorporating women and children related capacity building programs; creating society awareness on sexual based gender violence and abuse of children; decreasing rate of maternal mortality; and building alternative community-based support programs for the vulnerable women and children.

Although the program tries to target all, newcomers make it difficult to implement. There is a long list of women with and without IDs that register to get support from the section, but the budget is limited. The newcomers mostly engage in the waste scavenging activity and they don't have IDs. Hence, the informant said they work with nearby NGOs and tries to facilitate in

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between for those without IDs. The woreda works with several NGOs but they mostly phase out and the existing ones have different criteria to take on the women as beneficiaries.

4.8.2. Non-Government Organization

. The informant explained they work with woreda 01 women and children affairs section to select beneficiaries. The NGO accepts those that qualify for their program depending on existing budget. The NGO gives priority to the waste pickers because they struggle to secure other jobs and take care of their children at the same time.

The informant added the program provides day care and education for their children during the daytime. In doing so, the women get enrolled in women-based empowerment programs. The program has helped many women who used to be waste pickers and they have changed their family's life. But sometimes it gives the women encouragement for a total dependency and they fail to benefit from the programs. There are cases where we find enrolled women going back to begging and waste scavenging. Some don't understand the purpose of NGOs and think their problem will evaporate when they join NGO program.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. DISCUSSION

Currently both environmental conservation and women empowerment are highly important issues, and they are global agendas. Enhancing the participation and benefit of women in political, economic, and social affairs is considered as the first and basic approach to build a developed nation. Likewise, any development program is also expected to consider and incorporate environmental issues. Fortunately, both the environmental and gender issues are coming together in this research. In the following section the findings of the study against reviewed literature are discussed in detail.

5.1. Women Headed Households and Waste Scavenging

Hossain and Huda (1995) described reasons how females become breadwinner of a family. They defined the death of the husband, separation, divorce, or migration of husband in search of work are major reasons for women to take the headship role. In this research, apart from the above reasons' poor women are exposed to form a single female headed family because of giving birth after a rape incident and unplanned pregnancies in relationships. Once this

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situation occurs, the women flee the social stigma and confront the double responsibility of caring for their children and generating income.

According to some studies, (Chileshe and Moonga, 2017; WIEGO, 2014), women waste pickers take the highest share in the waste scavenging field. Obadain et al., (2014) also pointed the women involved in the field are mostly with non-marriage status (either they are separated, divorced, or widowed). The researcher was not able to confirm this for the Koshe dumpsite since the total population is unknown. The available data closer to proving this theory is the landslide accident that caused higher death rate of women than men. Cointreau (2006) said among waste pickers working at open dumpsites, women of childbearing age are said to acquire a significant portion and this links with the fact that most of the victims of the landslide were women and children. However, the women do not choose scavenging but end up doing it because the hardship they face is a matter of life and death for their household.

In reference to the reviewed SWM studies in Addis Ababa ((Bjerkli, 2005; Cheru, 2016; Lema et al., 2019), the informality of solid waste management was established. Hence Koshe being the only open dumpsite where all collected wastes from the city gets disposed of, the study revealed informal recovery methods being applied by waste pickers. The participants scavenge through the pile of garbage physically. In addition, the households depend on the waste for personal consumptions. They explained they reuse some materials like old clothes, household materials and even food without the materials going through proper process.

5.2. Major Factors Contributing to WHHs Waste Scavenging

5.2.1. Lack of Employment

According to Medina (2000) waste scavenging field attracts the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people who are looking for a job. This activity is one of the last resorts for the poorest, it offers flexible working hours, and it is easily learned. Complying with this, the

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research participants described they majorly engage in the waste scavenging business due to lack of opportunities. The women can adjust the time of work to fit their other responsibilities at the house.

The women have low access to decent employment; hence they cover the major representation in informal employment (Brechtbhu, 2011). In Ethiopia according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs analysis (2013), 34.1 % of the population out of the total employed population in urban areas were engaged in the informal economy as like the majority proportion of urban poor in less developed countries are said to be involved in informal economy as chief source of income (ILO; 2002). Among the several ways of earning in the informal sector in urban slum areas such as the Koshe, the study participants engaged themselves in waste scavenging in their quest for survival. Complying with this finding in Koshe, the women collect the materials from the dumpsite and earn 300-900 birr per week which is barely sufficient, but it helps them keep their family from starving and becoming homeless.

Another factor that should be considered for their lacking opportunity and ending up in waste scavenging is their level of education. The socio-economic background data of this research shows out of the thirteen (13) IDI participants, nine (09) of them are at primary level, three (03) has no formal education; and only one (01) has finished secondary level. Therefore, it can be confirmed they were forced to do work that does not require education background and work experience. Like the World Bank (2014) explanation being illiterate and coming from the rural areas complicates the chance of getting formal employment in cities. Lack of getting an education opportunity hurts women in their lifelong journey economically. The participants with no formal education also argued that they lack the chance for not being able to read or write.

5.2.2. Lack of Resource and Vulnerability

The concepts that state most women headed households are poor (Buvinic & Gupta, 1977; Klasen et al., 2011), and that poverty and economic insecurity, lack of assets, income and earning opportunities are among the major challenges that female headed households confront in their lives (Hossain and Huda, 1995) can be directly linked with the case of the Koshe dependent WHHs. These women waste pickers are extremely vulnerable to all sorts of economic and social problems according to the study findings. The extent of poverty displayed among the women waste pickers is too high. They are living to survive.

The study also showed the struggle to provide food and shelter is worse for the WHHs with bigger household size. The responsibility to earn income and maintain household at the same time also puts pressure on their lives and increases their vulnerability. This finding is persistent with Buvinic & Gupta (1977) theory female headed households typically work for lower wages and bear the burden of household chores that result in time and mobility constraints.

Aronsson & Clarkson (2006) came close to concluding women are mostly more vulnerable to poverty due to many life experiences. Hence, social inequality is known to create social vulnerability among individuals. This study showed the socio-economic status of the waste scavenging HHHs has indeed hindered them from having a sense of belongingness to the wider community in turn creating social vulnerability. As the International Red Cross (2018) described that poverty; arises because of isolation, and defenseless in the face of risk, shock or stress, the participants of the study confirmed the lack of social support has worsened their state because they face negative attitude from the wider community.

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Additionally, the women missing emotional and material support from their immediate social networks to care for the family also made them vulnerable to isolation feeling. The reason for this can be the death of the husband, separation, divorce, or migration of husband in search of work (ILO, 2015). Contrary to the literature, the waste pickers in the study have not only lost to get male figure support to provide for the household but also any form of support from kinship relationships. Some of the participants are even the ones responsible to take care of some members of their immediate families in addition to their own children. This finding further links to Buvinic & Gupta (1977) concept of female headed households having more dependents and high non workers to workers ratio in their households.

5.3. Major Challenges Experienced by Women Waste Pickers

5.3.1. Lack of Basic Social Amenities

According to Gutberlet and Uddin (2017) most waste pickers of dumpsites belong to informal settlements with lack of access to clean water, proper sanitation and a clean living environment. In the case of this study area and living status of the participants, the Koshe dumpsite waste pickers did settle informally in the available spaces on the toe of the waste pile and surrounding areas. Six (06) of the study participants live on the dumpsite in shelter like or very poorly built rental houses. Although some live in nearby residential areas, the lack of basic facilities and space to accommodate household members; and poor infrastructure is common for all. The sub-city administration confirmed the settlements are illegal and there is a plan to demolish the houses.

Since waste pickers in Koshe landfill are deprived from basic infrastructures mainly electricity they cook their food by collecting wood. But access to adequate water is impossible and does not help their need to wash daily and stay clean from the dirt. The participants

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explained with the absence of water, they prefer to stay home and isolate themselves to escape any form of stigma resulting from the Koshe stench. Additionally, rented houses not only lack water and electricity, they also don't have latrine and proper fences. Accompanied with absence of water, non-existence of formally built private or community latrine exposes the women and children for diseases which appears to be the result of poor personal and environmental hygiene. This problem escalates during the rainy season.

5.3.2. Health Problems

Landfill is an area where different types of wastes collected from the different areas are coming to be disposed of. The trucks bring solid wastes to the site containing some recyclable materials. Absence of any form of personal protective equipment highly exposes women to different forms of health risks such as mechanical, musculoskeletal, biological, and chemical risks. The participants revealed they suffer first from the mechanical risks which refers to cuts, bruises sustained by bumping to garbage trucks and dozers, and fractures caused from walking on the uneven surface of the landfill. To further validate this finding Cointreau (2006) also discussed waste pickers in developing countries are much more susceptible to the mechanical risks because they mostly scavenge without protection.

Secondly, they listed musculoskeletal risks from carrying big bags of recyclables. This, therefore, not only threaten their ability to work harder but also their role in managing households (Gutberlet & Uddin, 2017). Thirdly, participants mentioned respiratory and skin problems. According to the literature reviewed this problem can be caused from chemicals that emanate from the smoke of the burning waste (Mothiba et al., 2017; Vasina, 2018). They can also be contaminated with hazardous waste when opening tins and buckets that might contain hazardous substances. Finally, the study revealed the children of the waste pickers are also

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victims of the health problems because they care the young ones to the site whereas the elder ones accompany them for support.

The major reason apart from lack of personal protective equipment is, also lack of awareness about the nature of wastes. Like Jerie (2016) it can be concluded lack of awareness exposed the waste pickers for the detected and not yet detected illnesses.

5.3.3. Victim to Social Problems

The major victims of the social problem in the case of this study are the household members of the women waste pickers. These women are perpetuating their living or earning approach to their children not by choice but forcing circumstances. They engage their children sometimes to widen their income and other times to lessen their burden. Due to this and the surrounding life experiences, some of the participants children has developed bad behaviors and they operate against the wish of their mothers. What they see around does not help them build their own personality rather they project a person based on the surrounding. Additionally, the social stigma is believed to have influenced how the children construct themselves.

The lack of social support also plays a role here because the only social network existing among the waste pickers is their interpersonal relationship. The relationship between their relatives and the near community is interrupted. They do not have a attachment feeling towards the community and they daily experience the wider community neglects them and makes no effort to pull them out from this difficult situation. The negligence is exercised not only by the community, but also by concerned government offices. Lack of a supporting social environment causes a feeling of isolation and exposure for psychological problems (Hutchison,1999; Cohen (2004). In compliance with this, the researcher observed the sense of wellbeing and security is very poor among the participants. Their living condition: poor housing, no water, electricity, and

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latrine are also social problems. As a result, it was observed their hope of coping or recovering from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard is very weak.

5.3.4. Gender Based Violence

According to Schenck et al. (2006) rape, fights, insults, and robbery are part of the interpersonal risks on the landfills. In a developing country such as Ethiopia where the patriarchal society is highly valued and recognized, being a female in the informal economy becomes difficult for so many factors. Because challenges resulting from gender differences become inevitable. The finding hence showed the women in Koshe are no different and have become the victims of some troublesome men waste pickers at the landfill. The abuse, bullying and sexual assaults have created big fear and insecurity among the participants. Sometimes power-based thefts also occur in the dumping sites. The participants explained they don't have storing spaces in their house, and they can't take the waste to people's houses hence they store at the field and some men steal it from them.

5.5. Coping Strategies

Challenges and problems encountered in life are preferred to be managed with the support of significant others. Hence, social support is basic for coping and can be a source of material, emotional and instrumental support (Hutchison, 1999). In this research it is described the waste picker's social bond to the community is too weak and they have mostly lost the support of their significant others. However, they have the informal support system which they build among themselves and is evidently helping them cope during time of need.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Conclusion and Implications

6.1. Conclusion

The study was conducted to assess the life experience of women headed households in relation to their waste scavenging activity at Koshe dumpsite. Exploring and explaining the pushing factors, identifying challenges and intervention mechanisms was the objective of this study. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach and the data was collected through employing in-depth interviews for study participants, key informants and through focus group discussions.

According to the findings of this study, the main reason that pushed women to engage in waste scavenging is lack of resources to sustain their family. In the quest of survival means these women were attracted by the low cost of living in the slum areas of the Kolfe-Keranio and Nefas Silk sub-cities. The case of these women further exacerbated due to the difficulty of finding a

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job in formal employment sector. Their low academic status and informal sector work experience is an added factor towards their struggle of securing decent employment. These women also revealed they were priorly engaged in the informal sector such as housemaid and day laborers; shows they had low access in the formal sector. Hence, waste scavenging flexible and non-entry qualification features along with the proximity of the open dumpsite in the slum area attracted and pushed the poor women HHHs to become waste pickers for living. On the other hand, having birth at an early age and unplanned pregnancies without the needed support contributed to the low socio-economic status of the participants which in turn led them to secure the available option to survive. Lack of support from significant others including their husbands and other family members, worsened their living condition and contributed to their choice of waste picking.

Life at Koshe is too hard for women having a double responsibility of generating income for the household and caring for children. The first challenge that they encounter is absence of basic social amenities. Some of the participants are among the informal settlers on the dumpsite and they live inside plastic and cardboard made shelter like houses with literally no basic services such as water, electricity, and latrine. This condition is threatening their family's health and safety.

Secondly, they are exposed to health risks as the dumpsite is dangerous working site and has no treatment plan by the concerned bodies. The stench that comes from the burning waste can be smelled from miles away let alone for the waste scavengers that spend their day-to-day life scavenging through it. Having injuries and illnesses are common to them. Most of them have respiratory and skin diseases due to the toxic nature of the dumpsite and they operate without any personal protective equipment.

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Finally, the social hardships, fear of physical and sexual abuses, fear of landslide were discussed as challenges experienced by the Koshe women waste pickers. This household heads are also concerned about the future life of their children as they are growing such a surrounding and looking up to their mother's lifepath. Disrespect from the wider community and broken social ties with their significant others pushed them to feel depressed and develop a sense of isolation. This makes them feel more depressed and worthless. Instead of communicating with the wider community, they interact with themselves and consider it as one coping mechanism.

In confronting the challenges, they developed their own coping mechanisms. They manage their money and adjust their life accordingly. Strong social bond between themselves, adjusting the working time to avoid conflicts at the dumpsite and renting a house as per their living standard are the major ones. In improving their living condition, no intervention is made by government and non-governmental organizations. Attention is not given; they are marginalized by the community and the government as well.

6.2. Social Work Implications

Nowadays, the national and international development endeavor is geared towards women empowerment and environmental conservation. Our government is also working to ensure women participation in political, social, and economic arenas. A lot of efforts are made to address the needs of women at different levels. But the cases of waste picker women are neglected, and attention is not given. That is why there are women who live in the area by collecting waste for more than ten years. Therefore, the research will have the following implications regarding social work education, practice research and policy.

6.2.1. Implication for Social Work Education and Practice

According to the different socio-economic factors that described the woman's incapability to secure resources and benefit from the social system; the living condition especially those located on the dumpsite raises flag for the social work sector. Social justice is core to social work education. Therefore, the school needs to prompt students and practitioners focus towards regulating and strengthening support system by all concerned bodies towards improving the life of these women waste scavengers.

Even though these women are facing life and death matter, they have managed to provide for their household and become independent by resorting to the worst occupation. However, there is a strong need to encourage further investigation and intervention design towards addressing the needs of the individuals.

Therefore, the researcher suggests the additional social work implications:

1. Intervention on improving the outreach of concerned institutions such as supporting the nearby NGOs and WCA bureaus with biopsychosocial assessment and intervention planning techniques or skills.
 - By giving emphasis on provision of psychosocial, material, and legal support.
 - Creating community ties through community focused programs to solve the waste pickers isolation feeling and social stigma.
 - Creating strength-based problem-solving action plans to strengthen the existing capacity of the women waste pickers. The women are independent and striving to make a living which indicates this group of people have something to offer at individual and community level.

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2. Creating awareness programs on the existing conditions to lessen the risks such as educating the women about self-protective equipment and mobilizing resources for the material support.
3. Giving emphasis on human rights and social justice, advocating on behalf of them is highly expected. Advocacy towards initiating formal workers rights and cooperatives. This can be aimed to benefit the waste workers earning. They can be linked directly with industries rather dealing with middlemen.
4. Students can be encouraged to conduct field practices in this area.

6.3. Policy Implication

Globally, most waste pickers are not given the attention they need or recognized for their contribution to our environment. Particularly the waste pickers at open dumpsites operate out of the municipal waste management system and do not have access to state social protection programs. This study learned the city administration also has failed to properly handle the site and place controlling mechanisms. The dumpsite is not monitored or protected hence it has become the place of many violations.

Although the researcher tried to investigate existing policies on the subject matter, studies focused on policies improving process of solid waste management and the involvement of the actors. Generally, the researcher suggests the below policy implications for the waste pickers at Koshe dumpsite:

1. Development of policies that recognize the role of waste pickers towards integrating their efforts in the formal waste collection and recycling policy and process.

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2. Development of supportive policies towards encouraging waste picker organizations at dumpsite level and mobilizing resources to providing worker education on modernized sorting mechanism.
3. Strengthening partnerships to initiate dumpsite rehabilitation programs such as the ongoing projects at the site by the Japan Government Development Association project implementing agency called JICA.

However, the waste pickers particularly the women HHHs who are a concern of this study need specific policy-based interventions on illegal movements towards the women waste pickers such as gender-based attacks, sexual assaults and physical abuses.

6.6. Implication for Research

Following the key findings, the study recommends for researchers to investigate the experiences of male households who are engaged in waste scavenging and the impact on their children or household members at open dumpsite compared to the women households to develop specific interventions by concerned entities. Additionally, further investigation can be assessed towards developing formal waste collection and recycling mechanisms by incorporating the waste pickers at the open site to improve the WHHs livelihoods, health risks and their social status within the community. The suggested social implications can also serve as indicating factors to conduct other research on intervention programs to improve the women waste pickers and their children.

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APPENDIX I

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Background of the Women Participants for In-depth

Interview

Code	Age	Marital Status	No. of years worked as waste picker	Educational Level	No. of Children	Age of Children	No. of Relatives in the household & Relationship	HH size
P1	30	Single	7 years	No formal education	2	10 & 12	1 (sister)	4
P2	40	Widowed	20 years	Primary	2	12 & 7	1 (nephew)	4
P3	18	Single	1 year	Primary	1	2	-	2
P4	27	Widowed	2 years	Primary	1	9	-	2
P5	35	Single	11 years	No formal education	3	14, 11 & 7	1 (brother)	5
P6	38	Widowed	20 years	Primary	5	13, 11, 9, 7 & 5	2 (sister & brother)	8
P7	23	Single	3 years	Secondary	1	3	-	2
P8	28	Divorced	2 years	Primary	2	3 & 1	1 (niece)	4
P9	33	Single	9 years	No formal education	1	9	-	2
P10	26	Single	6 years	Primary	2	6 months & 15	The 15-year-old is a step son	2
P11	32	Separated	10 years	Primary	3	7, 5 & 3	-	4
P12	21	Single	3 years	Primary	1	1	-	2
P13	19	Single	4 years	Primary	2 (twin)	1	-	3

Table 2: Background Information of Key Informants

Identification code	Age	Sex	Educational Background	Institution
KI 1	38	M	BA Degree	Woreda 01 Administration
KI 2	26	F	Diploma	Woreda 01 Women and Children Affairs
KI 3	30	M	BA Degree	NGO

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3. Purpose of scavenging livelihood

- 3.1. How long have you been waste scavenging for livelihood?
- 3.2. How do you describe the scavenging experience as a means of livelihood activity?
- 3.3. What is your reason for joining scavenging as a livelihood activity? How do you feel about joining? Did having children/dependents limit your employment opportunities?
- 3.4. Do all your family members depend on your income from scavenging? Do you have any other sources of financial support? What type of support structure do you have at home?
- 3.5. What specific impact does the informal livelihood have on you and your family's wellbeing?

4. Economic aspect of scavenging

- 4.1. Working Status: Full time Part Time Please specify by number of days/weeks: _____
- 4.2. What kind of waste materials do you collect for resale? Which materials have good sale prices among the ones you collect? What volume of those materials do you collect during work hours?
- 4.3. How do you get paid? Do you have regular buyers? Is there a fixed sale price for items? Please explain.
- 4.4. How do you describe the earnings in terms of supporting you and your dependent's? Do you think your needs and your dependent's needs are met?

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- 4.5. What additional benefits do you gain by scavenging activity? Do you use the items for other reasons?
- 4.6. How were you making a living before you joined scavenging? Reason for leaving previous activity. Do you think you are earning better than before?
- 4.7. What do you do when work is slow, or income is little? What are your future plans regarding changing your informal work?
5. **Social life of women waste pickers**
- 5.1. Are you involved in any neighborhood/local community affairs? Do you think you and your family are benefiting from the participation? How?
- 5.2. Do you think the nature of your engagement in garbage collection affects your social participation? How?
- 5.3. Do you believe scavenging activity is negatively perceived in the community? Do you feel as valued a member of the local community as a waste picker? Explain your reason.
- 5.4. How do you describe your social relationships among waste pickers at *Koshe* landfill?
- 5.5. Are there any organizations that assist you in your informal employment setting? And are you registered with them?
6. **Gender and scavenging**
- 6.1. How do you describe the experience of women waste pickers at the landfill site compared to men?
- 6.2. Do you believe women waste pickers face different challenges than men? What are the challenges you experience as a woman waste picker?

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- 6.3. How do you describe the working relationship with fellow men who waste pickers at the landfill?
- 6.4. Do you think women waste pickers feel insecure in this sector? Please explain.
- 6.5. Do you think men generate more income than women as waste pickers? How?
- 6.6. How do you cope with the challenges faced as a woman at the landfill site?
What is your vision of the future?

II. Interview Questions for key informants- Sub City Administration

1. What is your opinion about the women waste pickers in the sub-city?
2. How do you explain the challenges women encounter as waste pickers at the *Koshe* landfill?
3. Do you have existing or planned support programs for the women waste pickers? Please explain.
4. Please describe the outcome of the existing support programs? Are they benefiting?
5. Any policy documents or guidelines in relation to informal waste scavenging?
Please explain.

III. Interview Questions for key informants- Women and Children affairs office

1. What is your opinion about the women waste pickers in the area?
2. What is your role in relation to women in informal activity such as scavenging?
3. How do you explain the challenges women encounter as waste pickers at the *Koshe* landfill?
4. Do you have existing or planned support programs for women waste pickers?
Please explain.

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5. Please describe the outcome of the existing support programs? Are they benefiting?
6. Do you collaborate with NGOs and other stakeholders on supportive works?
Please elaborate.

IV. Interview Questions for key informants- NGO Staff

1. What is your opinion about the women waste pickers in the area?
2. How do you describe your role in supporting women and their dependents in the *Kore* area?
3. Do you have a specific intervention plan for women waste pickers? Please elaborate.
4. Do you collaborate with the sub-city and other relevant stakeholders to bring change for women waste pickers in the area?

V. Focus Group Discussion Points

1. What are your opinions on the various issues affecting you as waste pickers?
2. What is your attitude towards the scavenging livelihood?
3. What are your plans to bring change individually and collectively?

VI. Observation focus

1. The conditions of living houses
2. The household structure & responsibility handling
3. The conditions of their work environment
4. The social relationships
5. Other non-verbal observations

APPENDIX III

Informed Consent for Participants

I am Bahta Mamo, a post graduate student at Addis Ababa University School of Social Work. I am conducting a qualitative study on the lives of vulnerable woman household heads who are waste pickers at ‘Koshe’ dumpsite in Addis Ababa. I am conducting this study for partial fulfillment of my master’s degree in social work. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of women who are waste scavenging to provide for their household. If you decide to take part in this study your participation will involve an in-depth interview and focus group discussion. The information you disclose for the researcher is strictly confidential. It will not be passed to any third party and will not be used for purposes other than this research. Your name will not be disclosed, and your responses will be quoted on the research with code. The participation is voluntary. You can choose not to answer certain questions or withdraw from the interview anytime.

By signing below, you will be indicating that you have read and understood the above information and you are interested in participating in this study.

Name of researcher _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Name of participant _____ Signature _____ Date _____