

The Migration of Ethiopian Female Domestic Workers to Arab Countries

: With Special Reference to Returnees

A Thesis Submitted to the Research and Graduate Programs of Addis Ababa University in  
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(MSW)

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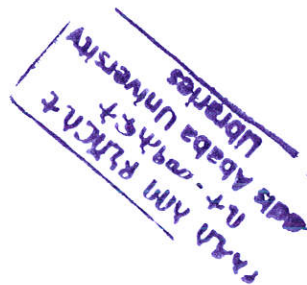
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## ACRONYMS

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| CEDAW   | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women        |
| CRC     | Convention on the Rights of the Child   |
| EPRDF   | Ethiopian People's Republic Democratic Front                                      |
| ETB     | Ethiopian Birr  |
| FDI     | Foreign Direct Investment   |
| FGD     | Focus Group Discussion  |
| GDP     | Gross Domestic Product  |
| GENPROM | ILO's Gender Promotion Program  |
| GTZ     | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, German Technical Cooperation |
| HIV     | Human Immunodeficiency Virus  |
| ILO     | International Labour organization   |
| IOM     | International Organization for Migration  |
| MFA     | Ministry of Foreign Affairs   |
| MOLSA   | Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs   |
| NGOs    | Non Governmental Organizations  |
| UAE     | United Arab Emirates  |
| UN      | United Nations  |
| UNICEF  | United Nations Children's Fund  |

### Abstract

This study is about the migration of female domestic workers from Ethiopia to Arab countries of the Middle East. It tries to explore the causes of migration, the channels used by domestic workers to exit from the country and the difficulties these labour migrants face in destination areas. The study further looks into the prevention mechanisms available to protect the women from abuse and exploitation. Finally, it touches upon the rehabilitation of returnees who sustained physical and psychological traumas in the course of migration and in destination areas. The study draws on international labour theories and qualitative research approach. Snowball and purposive sampling techniques have been employed to select study participants. The data gathering tools used to obtain relevant information are; In-depth interview, Focus Group discussion and Key Informant interview. A total of thirty-eight individuals have participated in the study including twenty returnee domestic workers, five key informants from government and non-governmental organization, and thirteen private employment agencies.

The finding of the study is that migration to the Arab countries has little contribution in sustainable alleviating economic problems of female domestic workers. For majority of the returnees, it even complicated their life adding new difficulties. The study also revealed that compared to female domestic workers who work on contractual basis, freelancers are less exposed to abuses and exploitation. Finally it was found that very little done by government and other concerned parties on prevention part to protect the domestic workers from abuse and exploitation and on rehabilitation of the victims. There is a need for social work intervention and protection of the women from further abuse and exploitation.

*Key Words:* International migration, Domestic work, Illegal Migration, Legal Migration, Migrants, trafficking, Ethiopian Women.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### Background

Ethiopia is one of the countries from which a large number of female domestic workers are migrating to different Arab countries of the Middle East. Evidence shows that the numbers of women migrating to Arab countries is also increasing at an alarming rate.

According to Fernandez (2010) the first migration of Ethiopian domestic workers to Lebanon began in 1989. As stated further in this article, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are found to be the top destination countries for Ethiopian female domestic migrants accounting for 61% and 33% respectively from 2008 to 2009. However, the data compiled by Melashu Hadguo (2013), indicates that the migration of Ethiopian female domestic workers began earlier in 1981 and a total of 6,097 domestic workers migrated to Arab countries in the period of 1981 to 1988. Migration of Ethiopian domestic workers has shown a sharp increase since 1988. According to the IOM report, the estimated number of Ethiopian female domestic workers in Lebanon reached 20,000 to 25,000 in April 2002 (IOM, 2003).

The unpublished data obtained from Ministry of Social and Labour Affairs also shows that 384,216 female domestic workers went to different Arab countries only in the period of 2009 to March 2013. According to Helen and Naomi (2011) three years ago the number of Ethiopians who illegally entered to Arab countries did not exceed 5,000 individuals. This number has increased to 40,000 in 2011.

Although the migration idea and the decisions are mostly made by the migrants, migration is beneficial to both the original and destination countries in that the migrant workers take jobs in the destination countries that are mostly not attractive to the national

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workers but in demand in the labour market. It is also useful for sending countries because it gives employment opportunity for citizens and also becomes sources of external revenue (ILO, 2004). However, studies show that female domestic workers face different challenges including physical, psychological and sexual abuse largely committed by employers, their owners or employment agents during the time the women stay in Arab countries (Helen and Naomi, 2011; ILO, 2010; IOM, 2006).

This study, therefore, explores the major migration channels that the Ethiopian female domestic workers use. It intends to unravel the push and pull factors contributing towards female migration and learn in detail about the problems that the domestic workers faced during their stay in Arab countries. It also seeks to examine the available rehabilitation and protection strategies in relation to returnees and those still working in Arab countries. Since the recruitment and migration process is mostly facilitated by private employment agencies, they are one of the sources of information in this study.

The data obtained in the course of the research was analyzed from the stand point of the international migration theory and social work approach. The finding of this study will help the concerned government and non-governmental organizations to determine what kind of preventive measures and intervention programs should be designed to address the problems.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world characterized by poverty, high unemployment and poor living conditions. Women who constitute half of the total population of Ethiopia are the ones mostly affected by such problems. As a result, they migrate to Arab countries as a coping strategy and means of improving their living situation. However, since most of them are unskilled, they work as domestic workers. As the periodic performance

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report of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) indicates, the number of Ethiopian female domestic workers who migrated to Arab countries in legal migration channel has increased from 39,528 in 2010/11 to 125, 970 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2013. Apart from the legal migration channel, ILO (2011) revealed that significant numbers of female domestic workers are also migrating to those countries unrecorded or in illegal ways through the facilitation of traffickers or unlicensed brokers.

Beydoun's (2012) article also said the following:

The trafficking of Ethiopian domestic workers into Lebanon has proliferated since 1989, and neither government nor influential transnational human rights actors have instituted any meaningful measures to prevent it. Furthermore, research and scholarship has also failed this class of victims, with little attention being paid to their plight in the pages of law journals, human rights reports, and the like- institutional mechanisms which traditionally launch more formal policy interventions into such crises. (p.1010)

Although there is scarcity of information to denote the exact figure of the victims, different sources indicate that significant number of female migrants who are going from Ethiopia both in legal and illegal ways are being exposed to abuse and exploitation in the destination Arab countries. It is also indicated that there is a glaring scarcity of academic research dealing with luring and pushing factors for the migration of female domestic workers to Arab countries and their plight in the destination countries. Thus, there is a need for an in-depth investigation of the issue under discussion.

Therefore, this study investigates the reason for the increasing number of migrant female domestic workers. The study also explores the problems of domestic workers in the

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destination countries by gathering information from returnees who had used the legal and illegal migration channels.

Moreover, this study tries to identify the kind of abuse and exploitation that the Ethiopian female domestic workers face and causes for their vulnerability using empirical data and systematic way of investigation.

This study tries to fill the existing knowledge and information gap pertaining to Ethiopian female domestic workers migrating to different Arab countries of the Middle East.

To attain the intended purpose, the following research questions were raised and answered in the course of the study

### **Research questions:**

1. Why do Ethiopian domestic workers prefer to migrate to Arab countries?
2. What are the channels used by migrants to arrive at preferred destination?
3. What are the problems faced by migrant domestic workers in the destination countries?
4. What are the possible solution(s) to alleviate the problems?

### **General Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this research is to assess the major factors that force the Ethiopian women to migrate to Arab countries and examine their plight while staying in destination areas and upon their return.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To explore the pull and push factors for migration of Ethiopian female domestic workers to Arab countries
2. To examine the problems of the female domestic workers in the destination Arab countries

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3. To assess the channel of migration predominantly used by the domestic workers
4. To find the available coping strategies to address the problems

### Methodology

#### Research Design

In this study, the qualitative type of research design has been employed to collect valuable information. According to Kreuger and Neuman(2006), “Qualitative social work researchers are more concerned about issues of the richness, texture, and feeling of raw data because their inductive approach emphasizes developing insights and generalizations out of the data collected”(p. 134). Therefore, using of qualitative method helps to gain full insight and rich information on the issue.

The qualitative research design was also primarily chosen to easily capture the views, opinions and feelings of the returnee domestic workers. Moreover, it was chosen to gather information from the returnees because it was difficult to determine the total population and the sample size mainly because the migrant returnees are currently residing in different regions of the country after their return. Therefore, it was difficult to get the total targeted population. However, those returnees in the rehabilitation centres of the two NGOs, namely Agar Ethiopia and Good Samaritan Associations were contacted for the interview. More returnees were also interviewed through social contacts or networking.

To validate and support the study, focus group discussions were conducted with Private Employment Agencies. Apart from that, key informant interview was held with government employee at MOLSA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Lastly, the representatives of Agar Ethiopia and Good Samaritan Association were interviewed to get valuable information about migrant returnees found in their rehabilitation centre.

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According to Kreuger and Neuman (2006), triangulation is a process for measuring of something in more than one ways so that it helps the researcher to see an issue from different angles and viewpoints. In this regard, the triangulation has been used to collect information from private employment agencies, Ethiopian female domestic returnees and Government /NGOs using of the focus group discussion, in depth interview and key informant interview.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection was handled by the researcher. At the outset, Agar Ethiopia and Good Samaritan Association were contacted in order to locate some of the returnees. After brief description was given to the organizations about objectives of the research, those returnees who were in a better health condition were identified for the interview with the help of the staffs in the rehabilitation centres. The selected returnees were, then, asked their consent before the interview. Those returnees who were willing to share their experience were then interviewed.

Other returnees were also contacted for the interview using of the social network to further substantiate the research. In this respect, the first returnee was contacted at MOLSA while she was attending the orientation workshop given for migrant women before their departure. At that time, she was preparing herself for second round travel to Saudi Arabia. She was then further used to refer the researcher to other respondents. This process continued to approach many more interviewees.

The researcher also selected representatives of Private Employment Agencies for focus group discussions to enrich the information gathered through other methods. Two focus group discussions were held after the selection of study participants with the support of MOLSA and Employment Agency Association. Moreover, government officials at MOLSA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and NGOs were contacted for the interview to substantiate the information gathered through other methods. The researcher, therefore, applied the

**In-depth Interview**

Primary data collected through the in-depth interview that was carried out with 20 selected informants. Therefore, seven female domestic worker returnees were contacted for the interview using of the snowball sampling technique. The remaining thirteen returnees were selected for the in depth interview from Agar Ethiopia and Good Samaritan Association. As a result, it was able to gather relevant information for the study from the key informants. The technique of personal interviewing was undertaken in order to get the relevant information because it is the most resourceful and productive method of communication.

**Focus Group Discussions**

Two focus group discussions were conducted with private employment agencies. Six representatives of employment agency participated in the first session whereas the remaining seven representatives were made to participate in the second session. Precaution was taken in selection of more representative employment agencies.

**Key Informant Interview**

To substantiate the research, five key informants who have enough knowledge in the area were selected for the interview from Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NGOs working on rehabilitation of female domestic returnees.

**Review of Documents**

Documents like reports, related studies, fact sheets and other valuable documents and magazines were reviewed to collect important information in this area of study. These documents were served as supplementary information.

triangulation method which refers to using of more than one method to cross check the correctness of the response. That means the key informant interview, focus group discussion and the in depth interviews method used to get reliable information as much as possible.

### **Source of Data**

Data were collected from primary and secondary data sources. The primary data includes the interview that was conducted with returnees, the responsible government employees at Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as NGOs working in the rehabilitation of the returnees. Similarly, the Focus Group Discussion which was held with selected employment agencies also served as the major source of information in this research. The secondary data were also gathered from related research papers, books, journals, as well as fact sheets.

### **Sampling Technique**

Qualitative research methods were typically used when focusing into a limited number of informants, whom you select strategically so that their in-depth information will give optimal insight into an issue about which little is known. There are several possible strategies from which a researcher can choose.

Often different strategies are combined, depending on the topic under study, the type of information wanted and the resources of the investigator. For the sake of representativeness and validity, I selected two methods to collect information from the target population. Therefore, I used the snowball sampling techniques to select seven respondents using referrals from one case to another, and then referral from that case, and so forth. The first returnee referred another and the same applies to the next returnees. The researcher then contacted a total of seven returnees for interview.

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On the other hand, the researcher selected eight returnees from the rehabilitation centre of Agar Ethiopia and another five returnees from Good Samaritan Association using of purposive sampling method. The purposive sampling techniques was employed to select those migrant returnees found in the rehabilitation centre because some of them were mentally unstable and were not in a position to give reliable information. Similarly, thirteen private employment agencies and five key informants were selected for this study using of the purposive sampling technique.

### **Sample Size**

I used three methods in data collection. In the first method, seven women returnees were interviewed using snowball sampling technique. The first interviewee was contacted at MOLSA in the pre-departure orientation session preparing for her second time travel. Thirteen returnees were also selected for the in depth interview from Agar Ethiopia and Good Samaritan Association. Moreover, two government employees from MOLSA and one from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who were directly involved in issues related to migrant female domestic workers and have relevant information in the area, were interviewed. Moreover, a representative of Agar Ethiopia and Good Samaritan Association were interviewed to acquire further information on the area. Finally, thirteen individuals from private employment agencies were categorized in to two and made to participate in the two focus group discussion sessions.

### **Method of Data Collection**

For the purpose of this research, data were collected from primary source in order to help the reader to understand more thoroughly. Attention was also given to balance the representation of participants in the focus group discussions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The first limitation of this study is that some of the migrant returnees were not in a healthy condition to give reliable response while others totally refused to participate in the study. Therefore, the necessary precaution was taken as much as possible in identifying those respondents who could give reliable answers. Identification of the respondents was done together with the psychiatrist nurses, who provide regular medical follow up for the returnees, in Agar Ethiopia and Good Samaritan Association.

The main source of information in this study is the twenty individuals who were either purposively selected by the researcher or using of the snowball sampling method. Thus, the study only covered few informants who were purposively selected based on their health status or through the network of each respondent. Therefore, these informants could not be representatives of the whole population. Although, it is impossible to draw conclusion or make grand generalization based on the findings, the result of this study can give good insight about the situation of the returnees. Moreover, the study was supplemented with information gathered from private employment agencies, NGO representatives and government respondents who have good knowledge on the area. Even then, there is a need for conducting further researches on the area.

### **Data Quality Assurance**

Maximum effort was exerted to obtain quality data. In doing so, the primary data edited in order to assure data quality. Firstly, the researcher checked if the answer to each question was given and also verified that the answer to each question was not contradictory. If it was found to be so, the respondent was re -contacted to obtain correct answer. The inaccurate data were corrected. For the sake validation of the interview questions, pre-testing was conducted with some knowledgeable individuals prior to conducting the field work. To

make the sample as more representative as possible, the triangulation method of using different data collection method was implemented in this study.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The descriptive method of data analysis was used for this study. It is intended to give pictorial account of the phenomenon being studied. The major focus of this analysis is to give detail information on the subject. It answers the “what” questions. The goal of this research is to describe the overall situation of the migrant female domestic workers and information about the status of the returnees. The study is mainly based on the primary data of the respondents. Since the researcher used qualitative type of data analysis, the data collection and analysis occur simultaneously in this study.

The data were collected from the primary source through an in-depth interview, Key informant interview and focus group discussions. This is a type of narrative research in which the research studies the life of the migrant returnees by asking them to narrate about their lives while working in Arab countries as domestic workers. The researcher used the voice recorder during the time of the interview and focus group discussion to gather detail information on the subject. The recorded interview was transcribed verbatim. It was then translated from Amharic to English for analysis. Response had been scrutinised for completeness and errors. Response validation was obtained by contacting individuals whose answer appeared inconsistent or unusual.

Thematic analysis is the most common type of analysis used in this type of study to interpret the themes that exists with in the text of the narrative and give meaning to what was expressed by the respondents' female domestic workers. Thematic analysis is a categorizing strategy for qualitative data. Therefore, the data were sorted into categories and then coded. It means that codes of words that serve as labels for sections of data were developed. After all

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the text had been coded, the text segments which seemed significant to this study put under each code. A total of eighteen themes were identified first and merged into fourteen and finally to four themes. The themes are organized and named as indicated in the results of the study analysis.

The respondents were convinced to give accurate and correct information during the in-depth interview, key informant and focus group discussion. The same precaution was also taken in the data analysis and reporting time.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study has some limitation in determining the scope of the study. The study was carried out in Addis Ababa and targeting of a total of twenty returnees who live now in Addis Ababa. Out of which thirteen of them were contacted through NGOs working in migration of female domestic workers using of purposive sampling method whereas the remaining seven returnees were obtained using of snowball sampling method.

### **Significance of the Study**

The migration of female domestic workers to Arab countries becomes the focus of attention nowadays in Ethiopia. This is because it is affecting the life of each and every citizen of the country in direct or indirect ways. This research, therefore, gives an insight for the wide public about the overall situation of the problem. It also invites researcher to conduct further research in the area. Finally, the outcome of this research gives the direction for intervention by government and non-government organizations.

The finding of this research can also be used by both government and non-governmental organizations working in the area to device appropriate strategies to address the problems of the Ethiopian migrant female domestic workers. It also becomes a point of departure to conduct further study in the area. Moreover, it creates greater understanding and

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awareness to the general public about the overall situation of the migration of female domestic workers.

Since there is limited information available in the area, this research can be used to fill the knowledge gap existing on the migration of Ethiopia female domestic workers.

### **Ethical Consideration**

This research was undertaken with the informed consent of all parties that were involved in the research process to provide relevant information. Thus, participants of this study were first briefed about the purpose of the study and why their information is required clearly before starting the study. They were then asked their consent to involve in the study. The researcher also conducted this research putting into practice of all ethical standard of a research.

The researcher informed all the participants that they have all the right to stop or reject the study if there is any inconvenience. The participants were notified that any information or responses given during the interview would be kept confidential. Their right of anonymity and privacy was assured by the researcher. The researcher refrained from asking emotionally charged questions and using of pejorative words.

## Chapter Two

### Related Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Migration is the movement of people from one area to another within a country or from one country to another for the purpose of work, better life, fear of persecution, the horror of war or disaster or just to reside somewhere else (ILO, 2011). International labour migration means the movement of people across the national frontiers for employment purpose (Carling, 1996). Migration is voluntary or involuntary, regular or irregular, permanent or temporary (ILO, 2011)

Migration is a versatile and complex global issue, which touches every country in the world (IOM, 2005). People migrate from one area of the world to another for employment or other purposes. For example, it is estimated that 10 million migrant workers from Southeast Asia, South Asia and Africa live and work in the Gulf regions. Evidence also shows that migrant labourers, particularly domestic workers are highly required in the Middle East countries since 1970s (Manseau G. S., 2005).

According to Fransen and Kuschminder, (2009), Ethiopia has experienced migratory flows throughout its history. It was found to be the largest migrants' producer country in Africa until the early 1990s. The study also indicates that the number of refugees from Ethiopia increased from 55,000 in 1972 to over a million in 1992.

The abolishment of the ban on international labour migration and the right for free movement of people under the EPRDF regime after 1991 has contributed to the increasing number of Ethiopian female migrants to abroad (Marina, 2007).

According to the estimates of the National Bank of Ethiopia, 800,000 to 1 million Ethiopians are working abroad on permanent and temporary basis (National Bank of

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Ethiopia, 2006). The largest international migration flows at present time in Ethiopia is women migrating into the Middle East to work as domestic workers, which also often happens through trafficking (Fransen and Kuschminder, 2009).

The initial surge of Ethiopian women's migration as domestic workers began to Lebanon, as early as 1989. In 2008-2009, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait emerged as the top destination countries, absorbing 61 per cent and 33 per cent of recorded Ethiopian migrant domestic workers, respectively (Fransen and Kuschminder, 2009).

According to IOM, Ethiopian women who migrate to Arab countries are mostly misinformed about the situation awaiting them in the host countries. Therefore, they usually make the initial migration decision by their own free will. Although there is no exact figure about the number of trafficked women, it is estimated that as many as 130,000 Ethiopian women and children reside in the Gulf States. Their top destination areas are Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates (as cited in Fransen and Kuschminder, 2009).

The government and many development agencies consider migration as promising form of development because the remittance is vital in improving the lives of many people in developing countries (ILO, 2011). Migrant remittances have a significant contribution to the economy of Ethiopia. For example, the recorded remittances in 2007 was US\$359 million surpassing the foreign direct investment (FDI) of US\$223 million (Fernandez, 2010)

The recent unpublished report of MOLSA indicates that the migration of female domestic workers is increasing in an alarming rate in Ethiopia. For example, 384,216 female domestic workers went to different Arab countries only in the period of 2009 to 2013, as shown in the table below. Out of this, the highest number of workers which is 295,928 and 85,921 of them left to Saudi Arab and Kuwait respectively. These data indicate that the number of migrant female domestic workers is increasing from year to year. At the same

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time, the number of private employment agencies has increased from 100 to 367 in two- three years time (MOLSA, 2013)

Table 1

*Total number of female domestic workers legally entered different Arab countries in the last five years*

| Country         | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13(July –March) | Total   |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| Saudi Arabia    | 9,399   | 2,396   | 13,446  | 158,959 | 111,728              | 295,928 |
| Kuwait          | 6,976   | 10,837  | 25,457  | 28,476  | 14,175               | 85,921  |
| UAE             | 113     | 142     | 510     | 321     | -                    | 1,086   |
| Other Countries | 905     | 19      | 115     | 175     | 67                   | 1,281   |
| Total           | 17,393  | 3,394   | 9,528   | 18,7931 | 125,970              | 384,216 |

*Note.* Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

According to annual performance report of MOLSA, the highest number of female migrant workers is from Oromia Region which accounts to 129,125. It is followed by the Amhara Region, which is 119,434 and then Addis Ababa city is 66,196. The lowest number of migrant workers, on the other hand, is from Gambella and Somalia regions which accounts to 84 and 106, respectively. It seems that due to the peripheral location of the two regions along the border between Somalia and Sudan, few female migrants seek the help of the central government to provide passport and legal flight. They rather easily cross the borders irregularly.

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Regarding the age category, 64% of the migrant female domestic workers are within the age group of 25-29 while 17.3% of them are 20-24 years of age during the migration period of 2008 to 2013. The report also shows that the majority of the migrants have attained elementary level education (MOLSA, 2013).

In addition to the regular channel, there is also trafficking of women domestic workers to send to Arab countries from Ethiopia. The illegal migrants go to Arab countries either through Bole International Airport or by crossing the borders of Ethiopia using the desert routes.

It is estimated that 75, 000- 100,000 migrants go to Libya, annually. Furthermore, the study on trafficked women shows that 53.6% of the migrant female Ethiopians are within the age group of 19-25, whereas 13.5% are found to be within the age group of 25-30 years. Migrant workers under 18 years of age account for 11.4% (ILO, 2011).

There are three migration channels used by the Ethiopian female domestic workers to go to the Middle East. The first is public migration; that means individuals are officially registered as migrant workers with MOLSA, but secure work contracts abroad through their personal contacts. The second channel of migration is through one of the 367 legally registered 'private employment agencies' which secure contracts for domestic workers with employers in the Middle East, either directly or indirectly through recruiting agencies in the destination countries. The third channel of migration uses the services of illegal brokers that may be individual operators or legally registered companies that illegally provide employment brokerage services to migrants (Fernandez, 2010).

Hein De Haas (2005) argued that immigration policies that allow free circulation of people help to better control the migrants and also enhance their vital contribution to the development of their home countries. Caritas International (2012) also said that migration

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policies which are against to the migrant women's right are limiting their opportunities to use the regular migration channel. Because it is most unlikely to stop migration flows but the migrant women instead forced to use the illegal channels which exposed them to violence for extensive period of time.

There are also legal migration channel wide open for female employees but the kind of job most of the time are unstable, low wages and poor working conditions. Therefore, even when the women are migrating legally, they are exposed to discrimination, abuses, arbitrary employment term, trafficking and prostitution (Caritas international, 2010).

Migration has become a strategy for securing family survival and supplement for declining household recourses in Africa. The household select the family members who have the greatest potentials for generating income and sending remittances. The traditional male dominated, long-term, long distance patterns of migration in Africa is also increasingly feminizing. As a result, large number of women is currently migrating while men stay around to look for a paid work (Massey & Taylor, 2004).

Basically, migration is assumed to be useful to both sending and receiving countries. Because it creates opportunity to employment, remittances and sources of external funding for sending country while it meet an ever growing demand for low status, low skilled and low paid jobs for receiving countries (Fernandez B., 2010 & Kwar M., 2003).

Migration can also be empowering in that it creates higher self-esteem, and increased the economic independence of migrant workers. However, migration can create dishonest employers, recruitment agents and others (ILO, 2004)

As other countries, migration in Ethiopia is considered to be an important strategy to cope with the multiple crises of recurrent famines, conflicts with neighbouring states, political repression, and high unemployment (Fernandez B. 2010).

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It is often true that domestic work labour provides good opportunities and an attractive option for low-skilled migrant women because it doesn't require high skills. The wages are also higher than the salaries earned in the home countries and a large share of the income can also be remitted to family members. Most of the time, the low-skilled and new immigrants particularly that of the illegal ones, are obliged to perform the hardest, the worst-paid, the most unstable, and the least prestigious jobs within the labour market. Salary withholding is common practice in some countries and they also required to do unpaid overtime work with little rest (Labadie-Jackson G., 2008).

As a matter of fact, migration can bring gender equality and women empowerment in that their employment provides the women with income and status, autonomy, freedom, and self-esteem. Women also turn out to be more assertive when they see more opportunities opening up before them. They also exposes to new ideas and social norms as moving to a new country that can promote their rights and enable them to fully participate in the society. On contrary, those women who experience lack of opportunities are easily trapped by traffickers who lure the women into forced prostitution and inhumane domestic work situations. There are evidence for lack of respect for contractual rules and very serious cases of abuses of migrant women in the Gulf States. It is, therefore, important to provide information for migrant women about possible risks and how to avoid them along the whole migrant route including country of destination and countries of transit (Caritas international, 2010).

Massey and Taylor (2004) claimed that globalization, regional integration, network formulation, political transformation is the strategy use for search of cheap labour. The adoption of policies of structural adjustment in cases of economic stagnation also seemed to be the factor for out-migration.

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In Africa, rapid population growth, unstable politics, escalating ethnic conflict, persistent economic decline, poverty, and environmental deterioration are considered to be the major factors that shape the trends and patterns of international migration flow (Massey & Taylor, 2005).

According to the push-pull model, the various environmental, demographic and economic factors are said to be the most determinate factors for women to make migration decisions. (Helen & Naomi, 2011)

As Mesfine Dessye (2011) described, the push factors of migration refers to economic hardships, political instabilities, famine, environmental degradation, religious and ethnic conflicts, and anything that make people unhappy in their existing residence. The pull factors, on the other hand, are employment opportunities, hopes for better life, political and religious freedom, and so forth.

The domestic work is originally women's unpaid work in the home and has the faith that special skills not required to do. However, because of the hidden nature of its workplace and the informal form of employer - worker relationship, the domestic workers face various forms of exploitation and abuses by their employers. This results to lack of social protection and non recognition by the formal sector (ILO, 2010).

As clearly described in ILO (2004) abuse and labour exploitation are well-documented in male-dominated sectors of employment because they work in groups in construction and agriculture which actually is more visible. However, women migrant workers often go into individualized and unregulated work environments i.e. domestic service. Therefore, data on abuse and labour exploitation is most of the time not readily available in occupations like domestic work.

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As Labadie-Jackson G. (2008) further explained, the domestic workers usually perform their tasks alone in their employer house; the domestic workers are isolated from other employees, friends, and relatives. This isolation allows the employers to control their employees. In domestic work, where the women have personal kind of relationship with their employers, there is high probability that psychological, physical, or even sexual abuse will happen. As Manseau G. S. (2005) also said

Workers are frequently victims of exploitation by employers, government officials and recruiters, and they are vulnerable to financial, physical and sexual exploitation that may reduce their earnings and social worth to less than they had when they arrived. Further, they are unprotected by legal or procedural safeguards (p. 27)

Another contributory factor for abuse and exploitation of female domestic workers is the Khafala which is the sponsor-employer of migrants without whom the domestic workers are unable to obtain a work visa. The Khafala confiscate their passport so as to control the domestic worker better and make them unable to change their employer as well. The legal presence of the domestic workers in the country tied to the Khafala (Fernandez, 2010)

In most cases, the female migrant workers mostly get employment in the informal sector which include domestic work, child care, care for the elderly and the like. This sector is not protected by the labour legislation (Anti-Slavery International, 2005). This condition, therefore, makes the migrant women to become more vulnerable to abuses and exploitation. The migrant women can also be required to pay higher payments from agencies, exposed to robbery, punishments, intimidations, ridicule, and humiliations as well as sexual harassment (ILO, 2004).

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According to IOM (2006), the major contributing factors to the migration of Ethiopian women and cause for their vulnerability to trafficker are unemployment, lack of prospect, poverty, the search for better opportunity and income to support themselves and their families.

The most common issues regarding the working conditions of migrant women workers include low wages, long hours, poor training facilities, heavy workloads, and in some countries abuse and restriction on freedom of movement. The act of exploitation which includes the extremely long work hour of between fourteen and nineteen hours per day has been condemned at the international level (Labadie-Jackson G., 2008).

Moors A. (2003) said that domestic workers tend to be labelled in terms of their national origin at the destination country. Religious difference is also considered as a marker of identity in the interactions between employer and domestic worker. Therefore, the social networks of the domestic workers are very important because it provides them with information, material and emotional support.

Fransen and Kuschminde (2009) also mentioned in their study that Ethiopian migrant domestic workers are expected to work 24 hours a day and not allowed to contact other Ethiopians. The female migrants are also obliged to indulge in prostitution. Consequently, most of them are exposed to sexually transmitted diseases and mental disorder emanating from multiple pressures.

In Singapore, an estimated 147 domestic workers died between 1999 and 2005, most by falling out of buildings or committing suicide. In 2004, the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) reported on various cases of violent assaults and deaths suffered by domestic workers in Lebanon, Kuwait, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. (Labadie-Jackson G., 2008)

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As indicated in the IOM report, 129 female bodies returned from Jeddah, Dubai, and Beirut, and arrived at the Quarantine Office of the Addis Ababa International Airport during 1999-2005 (IOM, 2006). Embete Kebede (2001) also confirmed by saying that although bodies are frequently arriving to Ethiopia, the reason for the death is certainly unknown.

Embete Kebede (2001) study further revealed that there is increasing number of sexual and physical abuse of Ethiopian girls in Lebanon. Similarly, Helen and Naomi (2011) said in their study that all the Ethiopian domestic workers are vulnerable to sexual abuse and the male employers are found to be the major abusers of the female domestic workers which accounts to 58%. Similarity, 29.6 percent of the abuser is the female employer. It is indicated in this study that 56.9 % of the women were repeatedly abused.

However, Fernandez (2010) said that the government of Ethiopia has no negotiating power to deal with the governments of destination countries, and can't control the illegal brokers. This writer considers the employment of the Ethiopian domestic workers in the Middle East as a form of "contract slavery." Lack of institutional co-ordination and bargaining power of the Ethiopian government with the destination governments make the problem much worse.

Although this is the case, the Al-Hayat newspaper issued that the number of Ethiopian migrant women in Lebanon is increasing and reached to 17,000 in the year 1999 and 1,000 girls are arriving each month (Al-Hayat Newspaper, 1999). MOLSA (2013) also indicated in the report that about 1, 500 female domestic workers are exiting from the country on daily basis to different Arab countries.

Al-Hayat Newspaper further says that "17,000 Ethiopian women in Lebanon are without diplomatic protection. Their passports are taken away and they are subjected to physical abuse...Trying to escape is impossible". (as cited in IOM, 2006, pp.36).

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Beydoun's (2012) said "Lebanon is comparatively far less wealthy, and economically stable, than other Arab Gulf States (particularly the oil-rich states) where trafficking and servitude are prominent." (p.1016)

On the other hand, a total of 4,497 complaints were reported to MOLSA by returnees or their families from July 2010 to March 2013. The cases reported include no phone calls from the migrant workers, physical abuse, sexual harassment or abuse, food prohibition, unpaid monthly salary etc. The data from MOLSA shows that reported cases are increasing from year to year. For example, 218, 888, 1441, and 1950 cases were reported in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, respectively. The report also shows that 3,132 of the cases were settled with the mediation of MOLSA (MOLSA, 20013).

In extreme cases, physical and emotional problems may lead to permanent disability or death of victims. All forms of abuse, especially when recurrent and severe, also lead to severe psychological and emotional problems (IOM, 2006)

The International Labour Conference of 1965 recognised the urgent need to establish minimum living standard which is compatible with self-respect and human dignity, dealing with domestic work (Anti-Slavery International, 2005). However, there was no international convention to protect the rights of domestic workers until the Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers was adopted by ILO in 2011. The purpose of the convention is to establish an international standard to protect the rights of domestic workers worldwide including migrants who are vulnerable to exploitation and to ensure that governments will extend standard labour rights to domestic workers such as overtime compensation, minimum or higher wages, rest periods, social security, safety and health insurance coverage, and fundamental labour rights such as collective bargaining and freedom to association (Caritas International, 2012).

Nevertheless, the domestic workers are ill-protected by cultural and legal structures in both original and destination countries because the Arab countries have reservation to international treaties and laws for reason of the Islamic Shari'ah law. Such regulation could be achieved through a standardised working contract between employers, recruiters, and employees. Because it will help towards improving workers' bargaining power, allow workers to bring complaints to a judicial authority, provide for fairer and more efficient judicial proceedings (Manseau S. G, 2005).

### **National and International Instruments**

Ethiopia doesn't have comprehensive national policy as well as legal framework on human trafficking in general and trafficking in women particularly. This situation creates the gap on protection of victims and prevention of trafficking in person. Although there is national women's policy, developmental social welfare policy and social policy formulated in the country, none of them deal with the issue of trafficking. (ILO, 2011 & IOM, 2006)

### **National Law on Trafficking**

The provision under the 1995 FDRE constitution provides the framework for the protection of people from trafficking. Article 35(4) and 36(1) (d) incorporate specific provision to address the problem of trafficking. The constitution under Article 9(4) and 13(2) says that all international treaties ratified by Ethiopia to be the integral part of the law of the country. In the same way, articles 597-598 and 635 of the Revised Criminal Code deal with trafficking in person whereas article 596 discuss about enslavement which is indirectly relate to trafficking. The employment exchange services proclamation No. 632/2009 prohibits the act of recruiting and transporting Ethiopians abroad without the proper license even if the purpose of such acts is not exploitation.

### **International Instruments**

Ethiopia ratified different international conventions on human trafficking and labour exploitation that adopted by ILO and UN. The ILO and UN instruments ratified by Ethiopia includes the following

- UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the prostitution of others ,1949
- ILO Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957
- ILO Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958
- UN international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966
- The UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). 1979
- ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, 1984
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1986
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child(CRC), 1989
- ILO Convention No. 181 on Private Employment Agencies, 1997
- ILO convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999
- The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, December 2000

Most women see their employment as temporary and migrate to meet certain personal and family objectives that include saving to start a business, build a house, pay their debit or educating of their children. Nevertheless, it is difficult to achieve their objectives in short period or single contract time because of: problems with debt bondage, withholding of wages,

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receiving less wages than original contract, lack of knowledge on money management and savings, and the like. Therefore, the female domestic workers obliged to stay longer than their expectation or go back and forth for several times between source and destination countries (Kawar M., 2003).

The long-term outcome of migration to the Middle East is inadequate and often leads to dependency on the Middle East remittance because it becomes impossible to maintain the high standard of living of the household after the migrant's return. This dependency and also the difficulty that the women have in re-integrating into their home, society and economy and in finding employment oblige the women to return to the Gulf to find employment again. (Manseau S. G, 2005).

Therefore, the remittance obtained from migration is thought to lead to a passive and dangerous dependency on it. The dominant view since the 1970s has been that remittances are spent mainly on houses, feasts, cars, clothes and imported consumption goods; on the other hand, investment in productive enterprises is rare. (Hein De Haas, 2005)

Evidence also shows that high standard of living of the household during migration period cannot be maintained after the return of the migrants. Therefore, it leads to dependency on the Middle Eastern remittances. This dependency together with the difficulty women face to re-integrate with the family, economy and community particularly in searching of job forced women to return to Arab countries to find employment again (Manseau S. G,2005).

The literatures reviewed above not discuss in detail about the practical cause for the migration of female domestic workers and also have the gap in clearly identifying the problems that the Ethiopian women face in the Arab countries. Thus, my study provides additional knowledge about the causes and experiences of the migrant women exiting from

the country using of the legal or illegal channels of migration. This research also fills the gap in literature on the prevention and rehabilitation endeavours of government and Non government organizations to protect the women from further vulnerability and in addressing the problem of the victims. Moreover, the available literature said not much about the reason for the vulnerability of the domestic workers to different kinds of physical, psychological, sexual and other kinds of abuses.

The literatures also have the gap in discussing about the migration decision and the socio-cultural differences of the original and destination country. Therefore, this study besides to, discussing in detail of the above mentioned issues, it shows the current situation of the migrant female domestic workers and give research based information about factors for the migration of the female domestic workers, their lived experience and the rehabilitation after their return.

### **Key Concepts and Theoretical Framework**

#### **Key Concepts**

According to Nazir. S (2011) , Migration is defined as “the movement of people from one place in the world to another for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi permanent residence, usually across a political boundary” (p 19)

There is no universally agreed definition of the term domestic work. According to ILO (2010) the word «domestic» denotes the tasks performed by domestic workers within the sphere of the home, in the employer’s residence or in his/her premises. The same applies to the word “domestic work”. Since there is no international instrument regulating the domestic work, it has no agreed definition of it.

In this study, the term migrant female domestic worker refers to women seeking employment opportunities beyond national boundaries within the employer's residence and premises. Domestic work means engaging of oneself in one or combinations of sanitary work, cooking, provision of laundry services etc.

There is no universally accepted definition of illegal migration; however, it is commonly used to refer to irregular and smuggled migrants. Irregular migration is the movement of persons that takes place outside the regulatory norms of sending, transit and receiving countries. This, however, does not mean that these people do not want to be legal or regular migrants. Rather they are forced by constraints such as age, lack of awareness, lack of capacity (legal) and human trafficking.

The term freelance domestic workers in this study mean to those domestic workers who find their own domestic work when they need it. They rent their own house and buy their food but do not have legal background to reside or work in those particular Arab countries. In the contrary, contractual domestic workers are those domestic workers who have two years of contractual work agreement. Unlike the freelance workers, they have legal work permit and live in the house of their employer. Moreover, food and medical expenses of the contract domestic workers are covered by their employer.

According to ILO (2011) Migration is the movement of people from one area to another within a country or from one country to another for the purpose of work, better life, fear of persecution, the horror of war or disaster or just to reside somewhere else. Helen and Naomi (2011) define Migration as "the crossing of the boundary of a political or administrative unit for a certain minimum period of time". Migration definition given by ILO can be used for this specific purpose. International Migration, on the other hand, is a territorial relocation of people between nation-states (Helen and Naomi, 2011). International

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labour migration also refers to the movement of people across national frontiers for employment purpose (Carling, 1996). Migration could be voluntary or involuntary, regular or irregular, permanent or temporary (ILO, 2011).

ILO (2011) gives interesting representation of migrants and trafficked persons. It says that migrants are people who migrate to lead a life free from exploitation and coercion once they reach their destination. On the contrary, in a situation where people are coerced, forced or exploited during the migration and /or at their arrival to their destination, they become victims of trafficking.

According to the Employment Exchange Service Proclamation of 632/2009(2009), Private Employment Agency means

Any person, independent of government bodies which perform any one all of the following employment services without directly or indirectly receiving payments from workers;

- i) Services of matching offers of and application for local employment without, being a party to the employment contract;
- ii) Services of making a worker available locally or abroad to a third party by concluding a contract of employment with such a worker; (Employment Exchange Services Proclamation, 2009, pp. 2-3)

Legal Migration means people who enter a country in search of employment with the necessary document and permission while Illegal Migration connotes to people who enter a country, usually in search of employment, without the necessary documents and work permits.

### **Theoretical Framework**

There are international migration theories developed by different scholars. Different types of theoretical models have been developed to explain why international migration occurs. It is difficult to explain international migration in single theory because it is basically interdisciplinary that include sociology, political science, law, economics, demography, geography, psychology and cultural studies. Some of the most prominent theories related to international migration of the Middle East are discussed as follows.

The *Macro Theory of Neoclassical Economics*: this perspective considers that labour migration is caused by wage difference and employment conditions between countries. The migration decision is made by the individual and differential in wages make them to move from low-wage or labour surplus countries to high wage or labour scarce countries. According to this theory, the international migration can be stopped by regulating of labour market and elimination of wage difference in both sending and receiving country (Massey et al., 2005).

When we take the case of Ethiopia, large number of female domestic workers migrates to Arab states because they earn better salary when compared to the payment at home. Interview with returnee indicates that domestic workers employed locally earn on average ten times less than those employed in the Gulf State.

*Micro-Theory of Neoclassical Economics Theory*: individuals came into the migration decision after calculating the costs and benefits of the migration and at times when the expected net returns are greater than the country of origin. The policies that affect expected earnings in sending and receiving countries can influence the size of migration flows (Massey et al., 2005)

*The New Economics of Migration Theory*: sees conditions in a variety of ways, not just labour markets and views migration as household decisions through diversifying the family labour taken to minimize risk and to overcome constraints on family production or consumption. Some of the family members may involve in local productive activities while others work in foreign countries. In cases when economic condition is deteriorating at home to bring sufficient income in the family, the household can rely on migrant remittance for support (Massey et al., 2005).

In the same way, Ethiopian female domestic workers migrate to different Middle East countries with the decision of their families to bring additional income for the family.

*Push-Pull" Factors*: according to Daugherty & Kammeyer, migration is closely connected with "push-pull" factors. Both push factors such as low wages, high unemployment rates, and lack of health care and pull factors such as: high wages, low unemployment incline people towards leaving their countries of residence. In other words, the primary cause for migration is better external economic opportunities (as cited in Massey et al., 2005).

As mentioned in the literature above, Ethiopian women migrate to Arab countries because of both the pulling and pushing factors prevailing at present time. Whether the decision can be made either by themselves or the family, there is obligatory factors that push or pull the women to migrate and work in Arab countries.

*Social Capital Theory*: Casles & Miller argues that networks of interpersonal ties and other social institutions created in the process of international migration have a life of their own that serves to promote additional movement by lowering the costs and risks of migration. Therefore, there is a perpetuation of International Movement. This theory explains international migration through presenting a concept of migrant networks. According to this

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approach international migration expands until network connections are wide enough that all people who wish to migrate to that country can do so without difficulties. Controlling migration in light of this theory is very difficult as migrants network are created outside the country and occurs irrespective of policies pursued (as cited in Massey et al., 2005).

The female domestic workers in Ethiopia have different ways to migrate. It is either through illegally or legally registered private employment agencies or through their friends or relatives living in Arab countries. This is because their friends in abroad inform the prospective migrants with the necessary condition for their travel and facilitate employment situation without the involvement of the brokers or employment agencies. Therefore, social ties can play an important role in migration of female domestic workers in Ethiopia.

*Segmented Labour Market Theory:* relates migration as the structural requirement of modern industrial economies. International labour migration is, therefore, largely demanded-based and takes its beginning from recruitment by employers in developed societies or by governments acting on their behalf. Unlike the industrial countries, the Gulf States are not societies seeking to attract foreign workers to overcome structural employment problem. The situation in oil-exporting countries is that the labour force is dominated by the immigrants and the industrial base is in the process of construction. Throughout the Gulf, there is a wide spread pattern of wage discrimination in favour of natives and against foreign workers. In cases when the foreigner performs the same work with that of the natives they earn less. For example, citizens in Saudi Arabia paid 3.6 times more than the Asians for the same job in 1989. (Massey et al, 2005)

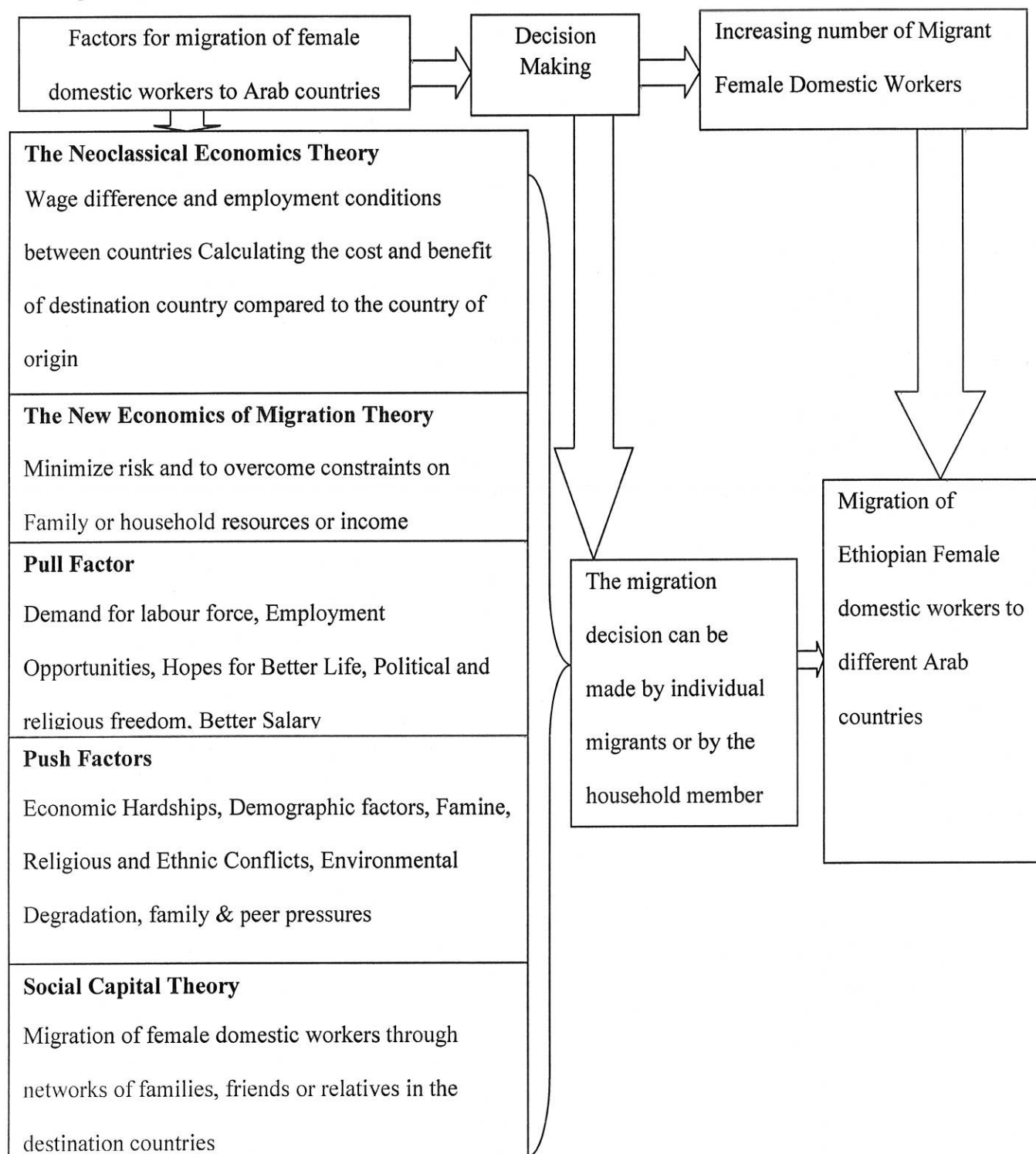
Of all the theories discussed above, the Neoclassical Economics, the New Economics of Migration theory, Pull and Push model and Social Capital theories are more relevant and appropriate than other theories in understanding of international migration of Ethiopian

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female domestic workers to the Middle East countries. The following conceptual framework is developed using of such theories stated above.

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Figure1. Theoretical Framework



*Note. Adapted from* "World in Motion, Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium" by S. D Massey, J. Arango, G. Hugo, A. Kouaouci, A. Pellegrino., J.E.

Taylor, 2005, Oxford University Press Inc., New York

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Results, Discussions and Social Work Implications**

##### **Results**

This section discusses about the finding of the study gathered from the key informants of government ministry, NGOs, the returnee female domestic workers and the employment agencies who participated in the focus group discussion. The findings are categorized into seven parts: Brief description of the study participants, causes of migration, channels of migration, recruitment process, problems of domestic workers in Arab countries, and prevention and rehabilitation. For the sake of anonymity, all the names of the respondents have been coded by the researcher. Thus, name of migrant returnees who participated in this study are coded as Returnee 1, Returnee 2, Returnee 3..., and Returnee 20. In the same way, respondents of private employment agencies are named as FGD 1, FGD 2, and FGD 3..., and FGD 13. Likewise, Key Informants which are coded as Key Informant 1, Key Informant 2, and Key Informant 3.

##### **Brief Description of Study Participants**

A total of thirty-eight individuals have participated in this study. Twenty of the participants are female domestic worker returnees who have worked in different Middle East countries for the last few years. Thirteen of the focus group participants are representatives of legally registered private employment agencies. Two of the key informants are employees of MOLSA and have direct work relationship with the migrant domestic workers by virtue of being government officials processing the travel of these migrant workers. The other key informant is government official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs working on issues related to migration of domestic workers to Middle East country. The remaining two are from

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Non-government Organizations working mainly on rehabilitation of those returnees who are victims of abuse and exploitation.

Table 2

*Profile of Study Participants*

| <b>Study Participants</b> | <b>Category</b>             | <b>Number</b> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Key Informants            | NGOs                        | 2             |
| Key informants            | MOLSA                       | 2             |
| Key Informant             | Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 1             |
| In-depth Interview        | Female Migrant Returnees    | 20            |
| Focus Group Participants  | Employment Agencies         | 13            |
| Total                     |                             | 38            |

*Note.* Field Data

### Demographic Characteristics of Female Migrant Returnees

#### Age Characteristics

Table 3

#### *Age category of respondents*

| Age Category | No of Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Below 18     | -                 |
| 18-25        | 10                |
| 26-30        | 4                 |
| 31-35        | 4                 |
| 36-40        | 2                 |
| Above 40     | -                 |
| Total        | 20                |

*Note.* Field Data

As indicated in the table above, the female domestic returnees participated in this study are within the age group of 19 to 40. The majority of the respondents that is 10 out of 20 participants are found in the age group of 20 -25 years.

**Educational Background/Literacy Level**

Table 4

*Educational Level of Respondents*

| Educational Level   | No of Respondents | Remark                               |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Illiterate          | 1                 |                                      |
| Grade 1-6           | 1                 |                                      |
| Grade 7-8           | 3                 |                                      |
| Grade 9-10          | 6                 |                                      |
| Grade 11-12         | 4                 |                                      |
| TVET                | 4                 |                                      |
| University Students | 1                 | She got dismissed from<br>University |
| Total               | 20                |                                      |

*Note.* Field Data

There is only one informant who is illiterate. However, six out of the twenty respondents are found to be in the category of Grade 9 and Grade10 and four of them are in Grade 11 and Grade12 category. One of the respondents got dismissed from the university when she was a freshman student. Four of the respondents attended one year vocational training upon completing Grade 10.

**Religious Background**

Table 5

*Religious Background of Respondents*

| Religious Affiliation | No of Respondents |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Orthodox Christian    | 12                |
| Protestant            | 4                 |
| Islam                 | 4                 |
| Total                 | 20                |

*Note.* Field Data

The religious background of twelve out of twenty respondents is Orthodox Christian, four of them are adherents of Islamic faith and the remaining four are Protestants. As shown in the table above, the majority of my respondents are from Orthodox Christina religion.

**Marital Status**

Table 6

*Marital Status of the Respondents*

| Marital Status     | No of Respondents |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Married            | 3                 |
| Unmarried          | 15                |
| Separated/Divorced | 2                 |
| Total              | 20                |

*Note.* Field Data

Regarding marital status, fifteen out of twenty returnees participated in this study are found to be unmarried while three of them are married, and two are divorced /separated.

### Place of Origin

Table 7

#### *Place of Origin of Respondents*

| Regional States | No. Respondents |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Tigray          | 2               |
| Amhara          | 3               |
| Oromia          | 3               |
| SNNPR           | 1               |
| Harari          | 1               |
| Addis Ababa     | 10              |
| Dire Dawa       | -               |
| Total           | 20              |

*Note.* Field Data

Ten out of twenty migrant returnees are originally from Addis Ababa regional state. On the other hand, all the respondents of the Amhara region are originally from Wello area while two of the respondents of the Oromia Regional State are from Arssi. As we can see in the table above, two of the respondents are from Tigray Regional State. There is only one respondent each from SNNPR and Harari Regional State.

**Occupation before Departure**

Table 8

*Occupation of the Respondents before their Departure*

| Occupation               | No of Respondents |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Farming                  | 1                 |
| Petty Trading            | 1                 |
| Private Company Employee | 5                 |
| Government Employee      | 1                 |
| Self employed            | 1                 |
| Domestic Worker          | 2                 |
| Student                  | 1                 |
| Unemployed               | 8                 |
| Total                    | 20                |

*Note.* Field Data

According to the information obtained from the returnees, before departure, eight of them were unemployed and five of the returnees were employees of private institutions. There were also migrants who used to be a student, a government employee and domestic workers.

**Destination Country**

Table 9

*Destination Country of the Respondents*

| Country            | No of Respondents |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| UAE                | 4                 |
| Saudi Arabia       | 5                 |
| Kuwait             | 2                 |
| Lebanon            | 3                 |
| Qatar              | 2                 |
| Lebanon and Kuwait | 1                 |
| Lebanon and UAE    | 1                 |
| UAE and Kuwait     | 1                 |
| Lebanon and Yemen  | 1                 |
| Total              | 20                |

*Note.* Field Data

As shown in the table above, out of the total study participants, four returnee respondents said that they went to two countries in their two rounds of employment travel and the remaining sixteen informants worked only in one country. When the domestic workers find their destination countries not as suitable as they expect, they often change place of work within the same country or resort to going another country with the intention of getting a better employment situation in the 2nd country. As shown in the table above, six of the respondents went to Lebanon at least once. The same is true in UAE; six of these participants worked in UAE. Saudi Arabia is also a country where five of the twenty

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respondents used to work in. In the same way, four women worked in Kuwait as domestic workers while two of them worked in Qatar.

According to the returnees, six of them stayed for one to six months in the Arab countries while four of them worked for one to three years as domestic workers. Similarly, ten out of the total twenty study participants spent five to seven years working as domestic workers in the Arab countries.

According to the focus group discussion of private employment agency, although their clients come from all regions, the majority of the domestic workers are currently from Arssi zones of Oromia and Wello zones of Amhara regions. According to the 2009-2010 report of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), Oromia, Amhara and Addis Ababa regions occupy 1st, 2nd and 3rd place respectively in terms of generating migrant domestic workers. The key informants also have the same idea, and stated that those women from Arssi and Wello areas constitute the overwhelming majority compared to other areas of the country. The majority of the people residing in these areas are followers of Islam. This fact seems to suggest that religious affiliation plays an important role in inducing migration to the Middle East. Yet it should be noted that it is not the single most determining factor.

Both study participants in the key informant interview and focus group discussion mentioned that the number of Ethiopian female domestic workers going to Arab countries is increasing in an alarming rate. For instance, one of the key informants working at MOLSA mentioned that in 2010/2011, only 39, 528 domestic workers left the country. This number increased to 187, 931 in 2011/2012 and reached to 125,970 only for July to March 2012/13. Similarly, the number of legally registered employment agencies reached 367 as compared to 100 in 2003.

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It was found that the increasing flow of information from various sources and the growing number of licensed agencies significantly contributes to the increasing number of migrant domestic workers. This is because most of the employment agencies have agents in Addis Ababa and in the regions to disseminate information and recruit the domestic workers, not to mention the presence of illegal brokers/travellers operating in all areas of the country.

### **Causes of the Migration**

According to the key informants and focus group participants, the reasons for the migration of women from Ethiopia are poverty, peer pressure, unemployment, marital conflict, family pressure, poor living condition and the like. The majority of the returnees also said that they decided to work as domestic workers in Arab countries to earn better salary and change their own living conditions and their family. One of the returnee informants, who is 29 years old, reiterated

“I lost my father at my early age, and it was my mother who raised me and my younger brother. I used to sell kollo after school to support my mother. I dropped out from school when I was in Grade 9 and got married. When I recognized that I couldn't support my mother financially, I decided to go to Arab countries to support her and my family. Then, I left my 1 year and 5 months old child with my mother and went to Qatar to work as domestic worker with the facilitation of my friend”(Returnee 14, Qatar)

Some of them mentioned family and peer pressure as the main trigger for their travel to the Middle East. The case of a returnee migrant domestic worker narrated below adequately illustrates this reality.

“My age was 16 at the time when I was co-opted to migrate. By then, I was a married woman engaged in farming activity in Wello area. I didn't have any information even

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about Addis Ababa let alone about the Arab countries. One day, my cousin came to my house and told me about the domestic work in Arab countries. He told me about the prosperity and advancement of those countries, and reiterated that I would get rich in a short time if I got employed there as a domestic worker. Then, being moved by the luring story narrated by my cousin, I decided to try my chance. After making the decision, I went to a private employment agency, got registered and finished my travel process in a short period of time with the help of my cousin and finally went to Dubai to work as domestic worker.” (Returnee 1, Dubai)

This returnee is now in the rehabilitation centre of Agar Ethiopia. She has physical disability problem because her female employer pushed her out from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balcony due to the disagreement created on her return to Ethiopia.

Two participants, on the other hand, mentioned that failure to succeed in their education was the main reason to make the migration decision. My key informants from MOLSA and private employment agencies confirmed peer pressure as the major reasons by saying that many young girls begin to contemplate about the possibility of working as domestic worker in Arab countries while they are in school. This suggestion is supported by the responses of the returnees. For instance, a 26-year old returnee from Addis Ababa whom the researcher interviewed on May 8, 2013 narrated her story as follows:

I and my friends had the idea of working as domestic workers in Arab countries while we were in school. We were aware of the opportunities found out there in the Middle East. In school, we were not worried about our grades. We simply wanted to complete the secondary education. Therefore, when I completed grade 10, I immediately started processing my travel. (Returnee 11, Lebanon)

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This woman is now returned to Ethiopia after staying for three years in Beirut, and currently she is living with her family being unemployed. Thus she is processing her travel to go back to one of the Arab countries for the third time.

Earning better salary was also taken as one of the pull factors engendering migration of female domestic workers. One of my respondents from a private employment agency argued as follows:

An Ethiopian female domestic worker is paid a minimum of 3,500 ETB per month by working in Arab countries. Compared to the salary of those maids working locally, this is huge money and has a luring effect. The dissemination of such information undoubtedly initiates others particularly neighbours and friends to make the migration decision.” The informant further noted that “nowadays, even government employees, teachers and police women are coming to our office to go to Arab countries to work as domestic worker. (FGD 6, Private Employment Agency)

In addition to the above mentioned factors, the family who want to maximize their income also make the decision on the migration of young girl to Arab countries. The above statement has been corroborated by the information obtained from the representatives of employment agencies. In such cases, it is mostly the parents of the domestic workers who usually come to their office to solicit employment information. It is especially the father who sometimes asks to process the employment of his underage girl. A focus group discussant from an employment agency argued in the following way:

Previously, it was mostly an uncle, a broker or brothers who come to my office to process work travel for domestic workers. We found out then that they do this without the consent of the girls and their parents. Therefore, we decided not to entertain the

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employment request unless the domestic worker herself came to our office. (FGD 8, Private Employment Agency)

One of the Key informants further attested that female children in Wello area of Amhara Region are considered as sources of family income at present time. Parents often go to the extent of asking husbands to send their wives to Arab countries after marriage. This indicates that a female is considered to be the appropriate family member to fulfil the resource constraints in the family. This also shows the shift in the gender role in the family because women are becoming the breadwinner of the family.

Some of the returnees, however, described that they made the migration decision because they heard the information about the domestic work in Arab countries from their friends or neighbours. Thus, we can conclude that the migration decision can be made either by the domestic workers or by the household.

A 25 years old returnee informant from Beirut put it as follows:

“I heard about the domestic work in Arab countries from my neighbours and friends while I was in school as it is common to go to Arab countries to work as domestic worker in Cherkos neighbourhood of Addis Ababa. You can hardly find a family without sending one or more of their family members to work as domestic worker to Arab countries in our vicinity” (Returnee 10, Beirut)

Thus, such experience indicates that individuals in vicinity are mostly influenced by the flow of information in the neighbourhood to make the migration decision. Domestic work in Arab countries has already become one of the coping strategies of women and families to deal with resources constraint at home. In other words, it has evolved into a major means of earning a living.

People from other professions are also being drawn into this domestic work by comparing the salary they are earning with what they will be paid in Arab countries. Although the domestic worker spent several years working in Arab countries, they couldn't bring major change in improving their living situation and achieving their migration objectives because most of them are currently economically not independent.

### **Channels of Migration**

As the key informants describe, the migration practice in Ethiopia, they mentioned both the legal and illegal channel. It means that women can migrate to different Arab countries for domestic work with the registration and approval of relevant government organs and large number of women also leaves the country illegally to work as domestic workers abroad. Being deceived by false promises of illegal brokers and traffickers, these irregular migrants pay large amount of money for the traffickers.

The recruitment process of each domestic worker who leaves the country through legal channel is facilitated by the legally registered private employment agencies at no cost based on the proclamation of 632/01. The recruitment process of one domestic worker mostly lasts one to four months according to the focus group participants. The discussants also argued that the process is by and large delayed because of the problem at the Ethiopian Embassy and MOLSA.

The employment agencies have only the liaison role and the employment agreement is made between individual domestic worker and her employer. Each potential domestic worker is expected to cover expenses like medical, finger print, passport, visa, while the life insurance, air ticket and other expenses will be covered by the employer in Arab countries. According to focus group informants, this rule may not apply to all countries because in some countries the insurance is covered by the employment agencies while the air ticket expense is

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covered by the employer, although the employment agencies reiterate that some returnees who went through legal channel spent up to 8, 000 ETB to process their travel to Arab countries.

Most of the returnee migrant domestic workers indicated that they signed two years of contractual work agreement with their employer while four of the returnees said they worked on freelance basis without having work permit. According to the freelance domestic worker, they are free from abuse unlike those domestic workers who work on contractual basis and mostly exposed to abuse and exploitation by their employer. One of the informants, a 29 year old returnee from Dubai described why she preferred to work as freelancer as follows:

“I worked on contractual basis for two years but my employer paid me only half of my salary and refused to pay the other half. So I run away from the house to live with my Ethiopian friends and working as freelancer. Although I managed to save more money, it was difficult to get job during summer time to pay for house rent and food.” She went on saying that “it is illegal to work without work permit. If such a domestic worker is caught by the police she would either be imprisoned or automatically deported out of the country.” (Returnee 14, Dubai)

The fear of deportation, thus, forces most domestic workers to bear the unbearable abuses by the employers. According to one of the respondents who worked for three years on contractual basis

“Although the freelancers have relatively better salary and freedom compared to contractual domestic workers, they have the responsibility to cover their house rent and food expense, which diminishes the amount of remittance they send home regularly.” She keeps on saying that “there is also fear of deportation when working as freelancer definitely without work permit. (Returnee 17, Dubai).

Other migrants, on the other hand, rely heavily on informal network: informal personal contact, casual acquaintances established networks with migrants working abroad help them achieve their goals. Some migrant domestic workers going to the Middle East countries changing their religious affiliation because the employers in the Middle East prefer to have Muslim women for their domestic work. Yet, there are some employers, particularly Christian employers in Beirut, Lebanon prefer those Christian domestic workers. This satisfies Ethiopian domestic workers despite meagre salary.

The informants also noted that there are also cases when the women leave the country through legal channel, but get trafficked as immediately as they arrive in the destination country.

The information gathered from the female domestic worker returnees in the in depth interview shows that, they spent 3000- 12000 birr to traffickers in order to facilitate their travel.

As to the government officials, although it is difficult to estimate the exact figure, there are indicators that large numbers of people are exiting the country in illegal ways. Some of the illegal migrants use the air plane as the means of travel while others pass through the border of Kenya, Metemma-Gonder, Somalia and Djibout on foot, sea, container and car, as both the key informants and focus group participants said.

As the information gathered from returnee shows, twelve out of the twenty participants used illegal way to travel to Arab countries while nine of them left the country using legal way. It is only one participant who switched from illegal to legal channels in two times of travel. Concerning the benefit of using legal channels for migration, one of the returnees provided the following information:

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“I used the legal employment channel to leave the country and I got paid the withholding salary with the help of MOLSA by my employment agent after my return” (Returnee 18, Quatare)

Another female domestic worker returnee also described the benefit of using legal employment agent as indicated below

“I came to my country with physical injury of broken leg caused by my employer. I returned to my country after staying 4 months in one of the hospital in Kuwait. My agency paid me all the medical expenses for follow up and no one will pay me if I went in illegal way” (Returnee 4, Kuwait).

It was also revealed that although the proclamation 632/01 says, the recruitment process should only be done through the approval of MOLSA, the illegal recruitment agencies as well as some of the legally registered employment agencies are sending their clients in illegal way.

The key informants from MOLSA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused Saudi Arabian Embassy which is currently selling large number of visas. This act, as the informants said, can provoke illegal agencies and traffickers to buy more visas and send large number of domestic workers illegally. They further noted that, some of the legally registered employment agencies will also be provoked to send domestic workers in illegal ways to increase their profit and compete with the illegal brokers. As one of the representatives of private employment agencies described it

“The legal way of sending female domestic workers can take 3 to 4 months because the women should pass through different steps in the recruitment process. On the other hand, the illegal employment agencies can send more women in short time. The agents in Arab countries also prefer those employment agencies which can send more

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female domestic workers and don't bother them with legal matters. Therefore, the illegal actors or brokers get more benefited, financially, than the legal employment agencies." (FGD 2, Private Employment Agency)

One of the key informants also supported the ideas of the private employment agencies and said

"The illegal agents send more female domestic workers within short period of time unlike the legally registered employment agencies. Since the legally registered employment agencies don't allow to send domestic workers more than their quota, they may also enter into the illegal recruitment practice. It is good if government can halt the flow of domestic workers going on illegal basis and able to properly manage the huge amount of the cheap labour force because the remittance obtained from this sector would be the major source of foreign currency to the country. Banning of the illegal employment agencies will also reduce the vulnerability of the domestic workers to traffickers or illegal brokers. (Key informant 2, MOLSA)

As the key informants from Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the trafficking act of female domestic worker he said as follows

"There are local brokers in each Keble to facilitate the trafficking of those children with the age of 13 to 14. Since these children are underage, it is not possible to issue identification card from their keble. However, those illegal brokers manage to get the identification card by skilfully changing their ages in the collaboration with the kebele officials. It is also found out that the brokers deflower young girls through deception and false trickery by saying that it is not allowed for virgin girls to go abroad." (Key informant 3, MFA)

According to the informants, Police is trying to arrest such brokers who are involving in such an evil act. One of the informants further discussed the issue of trafficking as indicated below:

“Large numbers of women are trafficked from rural areas and leave by air port with tourist visas, but ultimately to work as domestic worker in Arab countries Lebanon, Qatar..., despite the banning to work in those countries by the government of Ethiopia. These women usually hold plastic bags to hold their things but travel with tourist visa under the facilitation of the traffickers. To stop the trafficking practice, MOLSA is working on legalization of employment agencies and monitor their activities with the power vested in under proclamation 632/01”

The information gathered from the study participant revealed that the licensed agencies are held accountable by MOLSA or relevant government organ to any of the abusive act happen to the domestic worker. Although using of the licensed employment agencies is considered to be the safest way for migration of female domestic worker, the returnees complained that using the legal way of channel didn't stop the abusive act by their employers because they are equally exposed to the abusive act exercised by their employers just like those who are using the illegal channel.

### **Problems Encountered by Female Domestic Workers in the Arab Countries**

There is no data compiled by MOLSA regarding the physical disability, sexual abuse and death cases. However, as an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs mentioned, they received body of 263 female domestic workers in 2012. This number increased to 360 in 2013, though it covers only the period from September to April 2013. Yet this report indicates only those migrants who exit the country through legally registered agency and

recognized by the Embassy. There is no record for those who went to the Middle East illegally.

The information gathered from key informants, focus group participants and the returnees also showed that the domestic workers are highly exposed to social, psychological and physical problems. The most common atrocious abuse cases in the Middle East reported by the domestic workers or by their family include sexual abuse, denial of access to food, physical torture, pouring of boiling water on their body, emotional/psychological trauma, denial of annual leave/leisure time, verbal abuse, withholding of salary, locked in the houses/hoe arrest, pushing/throwing off from the balcony of three to four floors high, murder and the like.

According to the key informants, the employers most of the time snatch the passport of the domestic workers as soon as the domestic worker arrives at their employer's house and this act help the employer to practice their abusive acts.

The above information has been corroborated by the information obtained from one of the key informants from MOLSA who explained that the complaints reported to their bureau by the returnees or their family include cases like denying the domestic worker to communicate with parents and relatives by phone call, withholding of salary, physical abuse, workload and the like.

The result of the in-depth interview gathered from the returnees indicates that all the returnees faced one or more kinds of problem when they worked in Arab countries. The major problem the women reported include; physical disability, sexual abuse, workload, denial of food, denial of annual leave and withholding of their salary.

The employment agencies accuse the government for the multiple abuses sustained by domestic workers because the government of Ethiopia failed to assign labour attachés or responsible body in its Middle Eastern Embassies/ the destination countries to closely follow up the case of the domestic workers and even prosecute whenever possible. They also argued that due to this fact, it has become difficult for the private employment agencies to protect the right and safety of the domestic workers. They further reiterated that domestic workers from other countries such as the Philippines have strong back up/support from the governments.

The study result also revealed that the problem becomes more severe in relation to those domestic workers who travelled through illegal channels; because no one will take the responsibility to anything happen to them. Therefore, all the respondent said that the government should take the leading role in protection of the right and dignity of the domestic workers working in different Arab Countries irrespective of the channels they used to get there. After all, all of them are Ethiopian citizens who deserve equal protection.

The data gathered on abuse and exploitation of Ethiopian female domestic workers as reported by all the respondents categorized in to: Economic, Psychological, Social, and Physical Problems as follows.

### **Economic Problems**

Except three individuals, all of the returnees responded that their migration experience was bad. Regarding their salary, the majority of them earned 2,000-5,000 ETB per month while two returnees said they earned more than 5,000 working as a freelancer. Half of the returnees said they received all their salary and the remaining half, on the other hand, did not receive at all or received only some of their salary. One of the returnees described her experience this way

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“First I decided to go to an Arab country to earn better salary and help my family because what I earned in Ethiopia was not enough to raise my son and support my mother. Therefore, I took a loan of 7,000 ETB from one of my relatives and went to Saudi Arabia. I promised my mother that I would send the money I borrowed from relatives as soon as I get my salary. In spite of the fact that I worked very hard to get the money and send to my mother to pay back the loan, both the first and second employer were not willing to pay my salary. Because of this bad experience I even contemplated of committing suicide rather than returning back to my country without the money to pay my loan.” (Returnee 12, Saudi Arabia)

Most of the returnees also said that they have no rest at all and working more than 18 hours a day. Only three of the respondents said that they had rest in the afternoon. As such, they had no leisure time or vacation even though in the contractual agreement they have been granted one month annual leave or one month salary in lieu of salary, if they continue to work instead of going for vacation. Despite other difficulties, it was found that the freelancers have better leisure time and enjoy more freedom compared to contractual employees.

Almost all of the respondents said that they had huge workload and some of the employers even take them to their relatives to carry out extra domestic works when they finish their work assignments earlier. One of the returnees explained:

“I have a high workload all the days of the week. The only time I got rest was at the time I go to sleep. Everyday, I woke up early morning at 5 a.m. and go to sleep at 1 a.m. in the middle of the night which means I had only four hours to sleep (Returnee 20, Yemen)

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Majority of the returnees replied that they have no saving at present time because they didn't receive their salary from their employers or sent to their family to support them financially as well as paying their debt.

Key informants and focus group discussants from MOLSA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that the remittance that the country earns through sending of female domestic workers can be considered as the biggest advantage for the country. There are also respondents who have the opinion contrary to what has been mentioned above, because they received all their salary to use and for savings. This has been corroborating by the words of a returnee from Qatar. She replied:

"I worked in Qatar for more than five years and received all the money. I used the money for my sister treatment and spent some amount of money for processing the travel of my brother. I have also savings but I am not sure what I am going to do with this money. I am also thinking of returning to my domestic work to earn more money because I have nothing to do here (Returnee 18, 35).

The private employment agencies have also mentioned in the focus group discussion that some of the employers in Arab countries hire domestic workers without having the money or the capacity to pay to the domestic workers. Some of the employers also use the salary of the domestic worker to buy air ticket to send them to Ethiopia. The discussant further said that since the Ethiopian domestic workers don't have the training or the required qualification to work as domestic worker, they paid less than other citizens.

Unless the domestic worker received the money every month, it is less likely to get paid of the one or two years of salary at once during the end of the contract, as the returnees said.

The salary of the domestic worker is much higher than what they earn here at home and the remittance is also a great source of foreign currency if they get their salary properly. However, some of the domestic workers return to home without their salaries and others are exposed to different kind of abuse and exploitation. When this is the case it becomes meaningless for the domestic worker to go to Arab countries. The study shows that some of the returnees are also not economically independent after working for long time in Arab countries, because they were helping the family and spent most of their money for others.

### **Psychological Problems**

The study result shows that the female domestic workers are also exposed to different kinds of psychological problems and mental disorder/ illness. The cultural and language differences is said to be the first cause to the psychological problem of the domestic workers. The returnees claim that

“Besides to the language barriers and misunderstanding, the female employer speaks most of the time with high tone and it is common that most of the new comers get in to confusion at first time communication with their employer. This condition also creates some kind of psychological problem and mental illness.”(Returnee 10, Kuwait)

The other psychological problems mentioned by the domestic workers and the key informants are depression, hopelessness, loneliness and others. One of the returnees described this problem as follows:

“I don’t remember the time that I felt happy or laughed, throughout my two years of service as domestic worker in Yemen. I always felt lonely and isolated. One day, I decided to commit suicide, so I drank detergent and got sick. It was then my employer who took me to hospital and saved my life (Returnee 20, Yemen).

Another returnee also said that

“My employer has very low attitude towards the Ethiopian domestic workers. They consider us like dirt. My female employer frequently said to me that we have nothing to eat in Ethiopia. I tried to explain what we have in our country but she didn’t want to listen to me. This condition made me sick and felt depressed.” (Returnee 14, Qatar).

As another returnee who got mental problem in one month time said

“My employer work outside and I stayed alone at home. They locked me inside and I was unable to get out of the house. So I got mental problem in one month time. Then, I returned to Ethiopia.” (Returnee 2, Saudi Arabia).

Few of the respondents also said that they used to take medications after their return to recover from their mental problem. According to director of an NGO known as Good Samaritan Association noted that those returnees who have psychological problem recovered by counselling, medical treatment and by properly taking of their medicine.

As the finding shows the female domestic workers are exposed to psychological and mental problems because of loneliness, misunderstanding, verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and the like.

### **Social Problems**

There is also evidence that the domestic workers were exposed to different kind of social problems. Language and cultural differences between the employer and the domestic worker is one of the reason for lose kind of social relationship. Besides communication skills, the major problem faced by the women who specially come from the rural areas of Ethiopia was lack of exposure or familiarity to electronic materials used for domestic work in the Arab

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countries. Girls from deep rural and traditional background flock to the Middle East without prior training and acquaintance with modern equipments and that creates a problem.

As the focus group discussant and the key informants indicated, the majority of the domestic workers have problem of communication with their employer for the first few months because of language barrier. The communication, however, gets improved as the domestic workers stay more and learn the language and culture of the Arab family.

As the returnees also mentioned their experience, all of them said they had communication problem with their employer because of the language. Most of them however, said that they learned the language in short time because they have to communicate with their boss to have good working relationship.

Difference in Religion can also be one of the factors for bad personal relationship between the domestic worker and her employer. One of the respondents, for instance, said:

“I came to conflict with my employer several times because of the religious differences. I am a Christian but my employer forced me to change my religion to Islam and to engage in the practice. Finally, I returned to Ethiopia without changing my religion.”(Returnee 14, Qatar)

As one of the focus group participants discussed, the other problems are related to false representation. It was found that some domestic workers take Islamic names by changing their local (Christian names) before departure and pretend as if they are Muslims and true followers of the religion. Then, they came into conflict with their employers when it is found to be false.

Some employers also don't allow the domestic workers to receive any telephone call or have any kind of communication with the outsiders for the case of terrorist attack or other

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reasons. And when they found out that the domestic worker has telephone or other kind of communication with the outside people, she may get into conflict with her employer.

The study also revealed that there is no relationship among the Ethiopian domestic workers living in the same areas. This is true especially when the domestic workers have contractual type of employment because their employers don't allow them. On the other hand, those domestic workers working on freelance basis, live with the Ethiopian compatriots and has the freedom to have relationship with other Ethiopians in their nearby. There are however, instances when some employers allowed their employees to meet their friends and even give food to those Ethiopians who have problem of food. One of the returnees put this as follows:

“My Madam was relatively good compared to others. She even allowed me to take food for an Ethiopian domestic worker living in the same building because this Ethiopian friend didn't get enough food and got hungry most of the time.” (Returnee 11, Beirut)

Besides to the problem mentioned above, the focus group discussant and the key informant also said that, there are times when the domestic workers intentionally create sexual relationship with their male employers to get rich in short period of time.

As the majority of the returnees said they had experienced sexual abuse by the male employers, their agents, son (s) of the employer and others. They, however, said that the sexual abuse was mostly caused by their male employer. As one of the returnees explained the sexual abuse caused by her male employer, she said as follows.

“My male employer was asking me to have sex with him for several times. He also said that he would give me a lot of money if I have sex with him. But I told him repeatedly that he should let me do my domestic work. When his wife knew that her

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husband had interest on me, she developed bad feeling towards me. He frequently came to my bed room. Fortunately, I shared bed room with a Philippino domestic worker. Therefore, she didn't allow him to enter in. I stayed only one month in that house with fear and intimidation. His wife also caused me psychological problem.” (Returnee 13, Saudi Arabia).

The other returnee who stayed for five years in Dubai described the sexual harassment caused by her employer as follows;

“When I first went to Dubai to work as domestic worker, I got employed to a bachelor male. My employer then sexually harassed me from the first day of my arrival. So, I run away from the house and spend three days in an old car parked in the area. When I felt hungry, I went out from the car and met one Ethiopian who took me to my agents.” (Returnee 9, Dubai).

Therefore, when the domestic workers run away from their employer, they definitely exposed themselves to illegal brokers and different kind of abuses.

One of the key informant said that some of the domestic workers returned to Ethiopia within fifteen days escaping from their employers who proposed forced marriage with old men. Three of the migrant returnees were victims of this problem. As one of the returnees specially said, she jumped from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor to escape the marriage to an old man because her employer locked her in the house. As a result, she damaged her leg and recovered after staying in the hospital for six months. Another returnee also got mental problem as a result of this forced marriage.

The returnees said that they become topic of discussion by their neighbours and relatives when they faced physical, psychological and mental problems upon their return to their country. Moreover, it was found that their stay in Arab countries as a domestic worker

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has had an adverse impact on their marriage back home. One of the returnees who stayed for five years in the Middle East described this problem as follows:

“I went to one of the Arab countries to work as domestic worker and support my family financially. Fortunately, it was my husband who made the migration decision. I worked for five years and sent my salary to my mother to use half of it and save the other half. When I returned to Ethiopia after five years, my mother was badly sick. I finally learnt that she withdrew all the money I saved seven day before my arrival. My mother then passed away without telling me about the money. As a result, I came into conflict with my husband several times because he wanted to know where the money goes. He also told me that he had extra marital affair with another woman during the time of my absence. Therefore, I benefited nothing after working for 5 years in Arab country. (Returnee 14, Qatar)

When responding to the reason why problem caused to the female domestic workers, both the focus group discussant and key informants said that lack of proper information about the country they go to the main reason for this problem is that.

All the employment agencies agreed that it is also their responsibility to provide the required information to the domestic workers about the country they go to.

The key informants have the same idea, they said that the employment agencies sometimes don't even know the migrant women physically and most of the women don't have the orientation about their destination countries.

### **Physical Problems**

The information gathered from the returnee shows that in terms of age category they fall within the age range of 19 to 40 years. The NGO respondents providing rehabilitation

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services to the returnees, however, indicated that, their beneficiaries are in the age range of 14 to 26. This shows that most of the returnees who join the rehabilitation centres run by NGOs are those who illegally or irregularly travelled to Arab countries either because of their age (minority status) or trafficked.

One of the key informants explained about traffickers or illegal agencies that send children of 13 or 14 of age to work as domestic workers in Arab countries, he said as follows:

“Most of these children come from rural part of Ethiopia and don’t even have the awareness on how to protect their personal hygiene and handle electronic materials. Their employers in Arab countries also expect domestic worker with 21 or more age as written in their passports. Besides to the language barrier and lack of orientation in cross-cultural differences, these children aren’t physically capable of taking the responsibility of doing all the domestic work assigned to them by their employer. As a result, these children are exposed to different kind of problems. (Key informants 3, Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Despite all the difficulties, some returnees and focus group participants have the opinion that to work as a domestic worker in Arab countries has some advantages. One of the focus group participants expressed this as follows:

“Domestic workers can increase their awareness and knowledge about personal hygiene, child caring and nutrition by working in Arab countries.”(FGD 5, Private Employment Agency)

On the other hand, the female domestic workers are also exposed to different kinds of physical abuse such as beating, physical injury and the like. As one of the returnees explained about her physical disability, she said the following

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There was high workload in my second employer house. I worked the whole day cleaning the house, washing cloth and cooking but I have nothing to eat. When I asked my employer to give me food she always said her husband would buy soon. She didn't even allow me to eat their leftover food. Therefore, when I got hungry I ate the food dropped in the waste basket. One day, I told my employer to take to my agent. My male employer then came to me and beat hard on my back then I fell down. After doing that, they dropped me out from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balcony. I returned back to Ethiopia after staying for three months in the hospital. Now, I have problem in my leg and spinal cord I can't stand and walk for long. I also can't work. I am physically disabled. (Returnee 4, Kuwait)

The other two returnees also faced the same problem. They pushed down from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> balcony of their residence building by their employer. As one of the victims stated

One day, I told to my employer that I wanted to visit my family in Ethiopia after finishing my two years employment contract. However, she didn't want to let me go back to my country. I tried hard to convince her to send me to my family, but she refused to accept my travel to Ethiopia. Then, I started to pack my things and told her my decision to go to Ethiopia the next day. Then, we came into big conflict. I didn't sleep well that night. The next day morning I woke up early to finish my duty and travel to Ethiopia. When I was cleaning the windows standing on the cleaning ladder, I saw her coming straight to me. Then, she came near to me and pushed me down from the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. I got conscious and found myself badly hurt after staying four days in the hospital (Returnee 3, Beirut).

### **Prevention and Rehabilitation**

MOLSA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Employment Agency Association, ILO, IOM, Police, Immigration Department/Office and NGOs working in the rehabilitation areas are described by the key informants as the major stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the migration of Ethiopian female domestic workers to the Arab countries.

### **Government**

#### **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA)**

MOLSA is the responsible government body which has the mandate to follow up and support the implementation of proclamation 632/01, as mentioned by the key informants. In this regard, the formulation of the proclamation 632/01 and the UN conventions ratified by the country consider as one of the prevention measures taken by the government to discourage the trafficking practice on migration of female domestic workers. The government respondents reported that committee that comprises of all stakeholders has been established by MOLSA to work on prevention of trafficking.

MOLSA has been given the responsibility to follow up and monitor the activities of employment agencies. Each employment agency has the obligation to fulfil the preconditions stated in the proclamation to get the work licence from the Ministry. The Ministry also does close follow up in the registration and approval of the work agreement of the female domestic workers and the employment agencies. Moreover, MOLSA is providing training and workshop to the employment agencies to build their capacity as to the informants.

As preventive measure, MOLSA provides half day orientation session for the migrant women before they leave the country. The orientation, they said, will help the female

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domestic worker to have information about their destination country and on how to protect personal hygiene, how to protect their right as working in Arab countries, the culture, the do and don't, the role and responsibility of the domestic workers and more. MOLSA has prepared training manuals and is in the process of providing 3 months basic skill training for female domestic workers before their departure to Arab countries. The training is intended to give basic skills and make the female domestic workers competent in their work as to the informants.

As the informants further said, MOLSA collect the monthly, three months, biannual and annual reports from the employment agencies to follow up the situation of those migrant domestic workers.

The respondents, however, said that MOLSA has not done much in protecting the right of the domestic workers. As elaborating more, they said there is a gap in the implementation of the laws and regulations.

The Employment agencies and the Key informants therefore suggested that there has to be networking and coordination among all stakeholders working in the areas of migration of female domestic workers in Ethiopia. This is especially important to bring together the government, NGOs and employment agencies to have good results. Government has the responsibility to tighten border checks to tackle the problem of trafficking.

The key informants also added that Government and other relevant bodies need to create the mentality among the domestic workers that it is possible to work in their own countries and also create employment opportunity for the youth to curb the increasing migration of the Ethiopian female domestic workers to Arab countries. MOLSA should ban those licensed and unlicensed agencies that send women in illegal ways. Rehabilitation mechanisms should be devised by the government and NGOs to those victim female

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domestic workers who faced many kinds of abuses. There has to be awareness creation of the community and the women to protect themselves from traffickers. The Government of Ethiopia has to establish labour attachés soon in all Arab countries to protect the right and dignity of the domestic workers working in those Arab countries.

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

According to a respondent from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this directorate also has the responsibility to monitor and follow up of the right and benefit of every citizen and also plays a coordinating role for a national committee established by the government in relation to the migration of female domestic workers. This committee comprised of all stakeholders from Federal up to Woreda level in all the regions of the country.

While discussing about the bilateral agreement, the informant said that the government of Ethiopia has only signed bilateral agreement with Kuwait. Although the agreement has aimed to protect the Ethiopian female domestic workers from any kind of abuses, the Kuwaiti preferred to send the victim domestic worker to Ethiopia without any notice instead of presenting their citizens for punishment in the cases of violation of human right of Ethiopian female domestic workers as reported by the key informant.

As to the informant, although the government of Ethiopia tried hard to have bilateral agreement with the other Arab countries, there is no willingness on the side of the Arab states.

The informants also believe that creating awareness among the public help the women to protect themselves from traffickers.

As to the informant, there is no rehabilitation activities practiced by the Ministry so far. However, MOLSA has a department that deals with the complaints of the female

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domestic workers and play a mediator role between the employment agencies and the domestic workers to solve the problems. The employment agencies have the responsibility to give explanation and solution if they are accused by the female domestic workers. The Ministry obliged the employment agencies to pay the insurance and any unpaid salary to the domestic workers according to the work agreement.

The key informant of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the other hand, said after the Ministry gets the report from the employment agencies about the situation of migrant domestic workers, it will send the address of the employer to the embassy of the destination country for the purpose of follow up. Ethiopian Embassy and the labour attaché also call those employers who committed any offence on the Ethiopian domestic workers to discuss about the problem. However, the Ethiopian Embassies in Arab countries don't have the authority or legal background to accuse or take punitive measures on the offender. The Ethiopian Embassies in Arab countries also don't have the resource and capacity to deal with all the complaints of the Ethiopian female domestic workers, as the number of migrants is increasing from time to time. He also said that

“Most of the time, the travel document of the domestic worker was snatched by her employer as soon as she reached. That way they restrict her movement. We can call this a “modern way of slavery”. The Ministry, therefore, plan to create awareness among the wide public to make the citizen stay in and work in their country. For its implementation, the Ministry is coordinating the national campaign which known as “The National Movement Council” that go down up to the Woreda level in each regions of the country (Key informants 3, Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

### **Non-government Organization (NGOs)**

As the key informants and the returnees said it is Agar Ethiopia and Good Samaritan Associations, which are non-governmental organizations that provide the rehabilitation service in the country for those returnees who faced physical, psychological, mental and other problems. There is no, however, close work relationship among the government organ and the NGOs on prevention and rehabilitation of the female domestic workers.

### **AGAR Ethiopia**

Agar Ethiopia is a non- governmental organization established in 2010. As to the informant, the organization is working on rehabilitation programs which include services like food, temporary shelter, clothing, medical, psychological support and skill training. The Re-integration program, on the other hand, focuses on the reunification of the returnees with their family. After the beneficiaries recovers from their illness, they get trained in one of the skill trainings provided by the organization. There is also life skill training provided to the returnees to make them successful in their life.

As the respondent further mentioned, the pre- protection program of Agar Ethiopia focuses on awareness creation among the community on the cause and effect of human trafficking. The pre-protection program of Agar Ethiopia is implementing in Arssi area of the Oromia region and engages in production of brochure, flyer, and poster as part of public awareness activity. Moreover, there is also Media program broadcasting in Oromiffa language on FM 92.3 every week as prevention activity.

As the respondent said, a total of 320 returnees have benefited from this program since its establishment in 2010. The major problems that the respondents mentioned include psychological problem, mental illness, physical disability and the like.

### **Good Samaritan Association**

Good Samaritan is another non-governmental organizations working in areas related to migration of female domestic workers since August 2012. As the director of the organizations described the rehabilitation services, it includes food, clothing, sanitary materials, shelter, medication and counselling of the returnees. As to the informant, the returnees reunify with the family or relatives after short stay in the organization. However, since some of them have some kind of mental problem and can't remember address of their family or relatives, they are made to stay in the rehabilitation centre until they are able to identify their contact address. In another instance, some of the beneficiaries don't have the courage to return to their family empty-handed because they are expected to bring money to pay loan or for some other purpose.

There is also some prevention program run by Good Samaritan Association in Bahirdar of Amhara Region and in Arssi of Oromia region.

Good Samaritan Association collects of returnees who have some kind of health problem or those who don't have families or relatives to pick them from Bole International Air port. The returnees then reunify with their family or relatives after short stay in the shelter of Good Samaritan Association as the director added. As to her, a total of 268 returnees got the rehabilitation service in the organization since August 2012. Out of the 268 returnees, 264 of them were reunified with their family while four the returnees who were not willing to return to their family got employed by the organization.

As to the respondents, the most common problems that the women face while working as domestic worker in the Middle East countries include, mental problem, HIV, unwanted Pregnancy, rape, work load and the like. The returnees also have psychological problem which include depression, instability, as well as social relationship problem. The

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organization helps these returnees to get medical service and assign nurses and counsellor to follow up their case. The informant also said that most of the returnees are within the age group of 14-26 and most of them are from the low income family. Those returnees who died before finding their family become the most common challenges that the organization face in the rehabilitation process. It becomes difficult for the organization to find the family of the returnees and there are also times when their family don't want to take those returnees who have HIV positive status. The organization also doesn't have access to follow up the situation of the returnees after the reunification.

Some of the respondents confirmed that they got medical, psychological and skill training services provided by NGOs such as Agar Ethiopia or Good Samaritan Association.

### **Private Employment Agencies**

According to the work agreement and Proclamation 632/01, the licensed employment agencies in Ethiopia are held responsible to violations of the rights of the domestic workers. These employment agencies communicate the violation of the right of the domestic worker to their partner employment agents found in Arab countries for further follow up. The agents in Arab countries in return report the case to the police to stop the abuse and exploitation of the domestic worker. The focus group discussants said that their agents can go to the extent of voiding visa cards of the employers who violate the rights of the domestic workers. Employment agencies have also the responsibility to pay insurance to the victims and settle their unpaid salaries according to Proclamation 632/01. The discussants, however said that sometimes the complaints of the domestic workers found to be false accusation,

As opposed to the idea mentioned above, the government respondents accused some of the employment agencies because they don't even know the domestic workers physically while processing their travel. Similarly, the returnees also condemned their employment

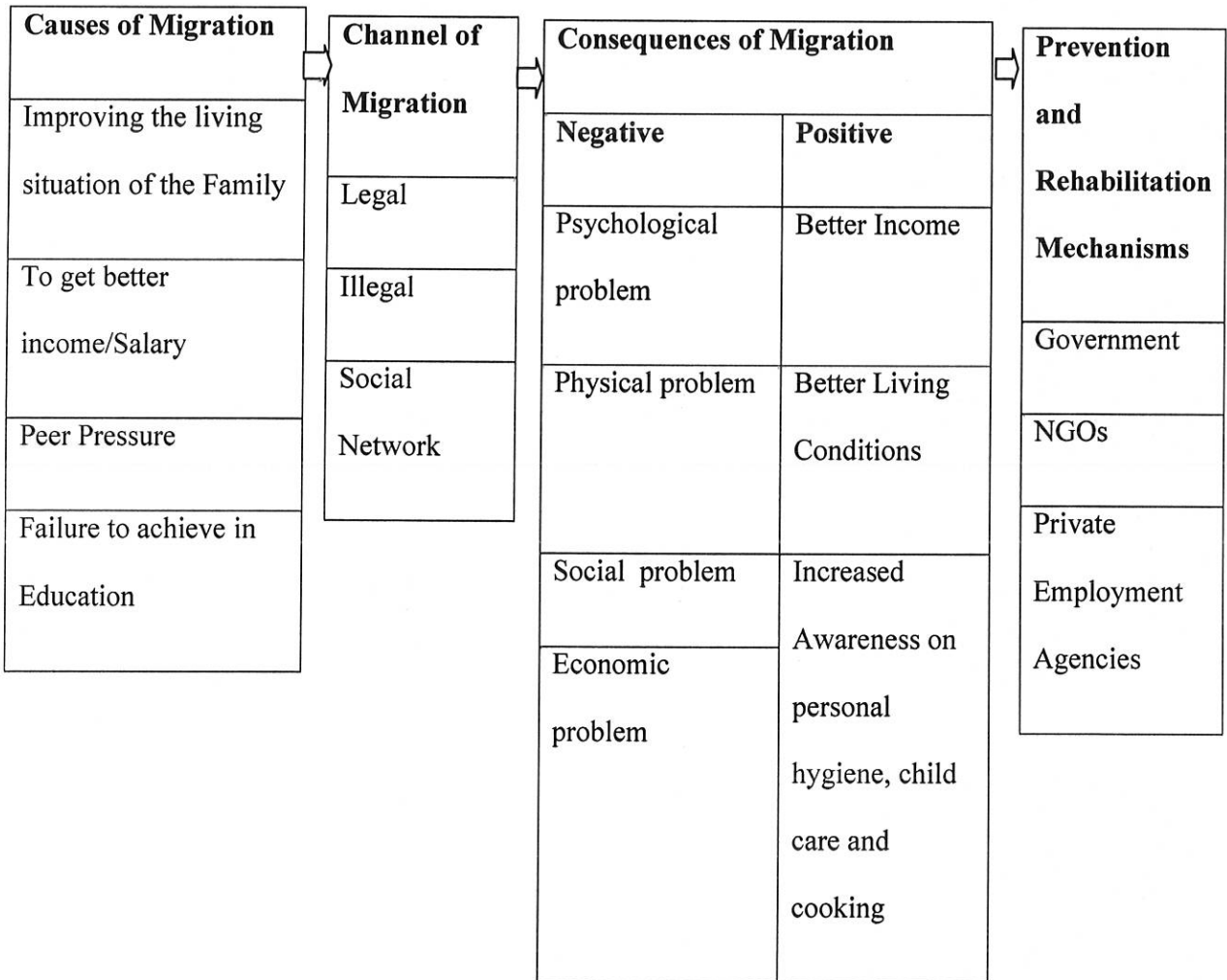
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agencies because they are not good in protecting their right instead they are more interested in the profit they make. They said that some agencies instead collaborate with abusive employers when they are supposed to support them.

As all the respondents agreed, the employment agencies need to carry out their responsibilities in an appropriate manner by protecting the domestic workers from different kinds of abuses and settling of the required payment in cases of violation of the rights of the domestic workers. Each employment agency also has the responsibility to differentiate the qualified domestic workers from the non-qualified ones in the recruitment process because it is the non-qualified workers who mostly face the problems stated so far. It is also mandatory to give orientation about the norm and overall situation of the destination country before their departure as reported by all the respondents.

**Conceptual Framework**

Figure 2 Conceptual Framework



### Discussion

One of the results of this study indicates that women migrate into different Arab countries to improve the living condition of their families. This is in line with the idea mentioned in the literature and the new economics of migration theory mentioned in the theoretical framework (Massey & Taylor, 2004): Migration is considered to be one of the strategies to deal with the insufficient resources of the family; migration is to minimize the risk that the family can encounter and at the same time to overcome any kind of constraints on the household resources.

Similarly, the result of this study shows that most of the returnee female domestic workers were financing their family to supplement the family resources or income. That is why most of the returnees have reported that they don't have savings because they used to send the money they earned to support their families.

It is also indicated in the finding that the women decide to go to Arab countries because what they earned in Ethiopia was insufficient to allow a decent life and they migrated to Arab countries as they needed more income. The motives is, therefore, to earn more income i.e., the amount that satisfies their own needs and their families. This idea coincides with the reviewed literature and the neoclassical economics theory in the theoretical framework which states that *differential in salary is the cause for migration decision that makes migrants move from low-wage or labour surplus countries to high wage or labour scarce countries; they also compare the cost and benefit of destination country with their own country*. In the same way, the study participants made the migration decision after calculating the income they got in their country of origin(Ethiopia) with the income they would get in the destination countries(Arab countries).

As mentioned in the literature of Fransen & Kuschminder (2009), some of the migrants especially those who were trafficked didn't have information or orientation about what they would face in the destination country, and mostly they make the migration decision by their own free will. Similarly, the finding of this study indicates that the majority of the female domestic workers made the migration decision by their own because they didn't have the information about the problems they would face. Instead, they had been skilfully convinced by brokers and sometimes by agencies about the favourable work environment.

The finding of this research shows that using the legal way of migration channel is much better than the illegal way because the licensed employment agencies can be held accountable to pay insurance for any of the physical injury, death and unpaid salary. On the other hand, research result shows that using legal way only can't be a guarantee in protecting the domestic worker from any kind of abuse and exploitation because those domestic workers who had contractual work agreement were more vulnerable to abuse compared to those domestic workers working as freelancers. It may be due to the informal sector of employment or its hidden nature as connoted in the literature review by the Anti-slavery International (2005) ; ILO,(2010).

The research finding also revealed that the female domestic workers are exposed to different kinds of sexual, psychological, physical, social and economic problems when working in the residence of their employer. As Labadie-Jackson G. (2008) mentioned, the kind of work like domestic work where the women have personal relationship with her employer, the likelihood that the women could be exposed to physical, sexual, psychological abuse is high because of the physical proximity and definitely the informal kind of work relationship between the employer and employee as clearly described in the Anti-slavery International (2005) that the domestic work is an informal sector of employment which is not protected by labour legislation.

On the other hand, the study result indicate that difference in Religion and language, the sexual feeling of the male employers towards the female domestic workers as well as lack of knowledge on manipulating or utilizing of the work equipment by the domestic workers considered as source of problem for the bad kind of relationship and the abusive act of the female employer on the domestic worker.

The finding further showed that the Ethiopian female domestic workers have high workload and working more than 18 hours in a day. According to the literature of Labadie-Jackson G. (2008) explaining about economic exploitation of domestic workers, it mentions low wages, long hours, poor training facilities, heavy workloads and long work schedules between fourteen and nineteen hours per day.

Although the remittance obtained from the domestic work of Arab countries are considered to be a good income for the country, the study shows that most of the migrant returnees are still not economically independent after working for long time in Arab countries because they were helping the family and spent most of their money for supplementing their family income. The remaining money they brought is also not enough to engage in some kind of business. According to Hein De Haas(2005) there is dominant view since the 1970s that the remittances obtained from the domestic work are spent mainly on houses, feasts, cars, clothes and imported consumption goods and very uncommon for investment in productive enterprises. Therefore, the remittance obtained from migration is thought to lead to a passive and dangerous dependency as stated in the literature.

The other major problem found in the study is salary withholding of the Ethiopian female domestic workers by their employer. As mentioned in the literature of Mary Kawar (2003), the women stay longer than anticipated time or go back and forth in migration cycles between source and destination countries because they can't overcome poverty due to

withholding of wages and other related problems. This also implies to the dependency on the Middle East remittance.

According to Gwenann S. M. (2005) the domestic workers are highly exposed to abuse and exploitation by employers, government officials and recruiters, to the extent of reducing their social worth and income even lower than to what they have before the migration. The finding also shows that most of the time domestic workers are exposed to abuse and exploitation because their sponsors were not willing to change their abusive employer, rather they cooperate with them. This finding is also substantiated by Fernandez (2010) who says that Khafala is the sponsor-employer of migrants and confiscates the passport of the migrant domestic worker to help them exercise the abusive act. According to ILO (2004) migration can be empowering and creating dishonest employers, recruitment agents and others.

As shown in the finding, the domestic workers face social problems like problem of communication, marriage problem, religious, cultural and language problem, sexual abuse and lack of orientation.

Since there is high restriction in the movement of the domestic workers, the social relationship of the domestic workers with other Ethiopian friends became impossible. Those migrant domestic workers who are married also face marriage problem because they were away from home and their spouse for significant period of time. This finding is supported to some extent by the literature of Labadie-Jackson G. (2008) which says that the domestic workers are usually isolated from other employees, friends, and relatives and perform tasks in the employer's house alone.

Physical abuse which includes injuries and beating are pointed out as some of the problems of the female domestic workers in this study. As a result, some of the study

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participants faced physical disability problem. The study result also indicates that the domestic workers are exposed to psychological problems which include tension, stress and depression as well as chronic mental disorder, particularly post traumatic disorder. As stated by IOM (2006) all forms of abuse when particularly recurrent and severe leads to severe psychological and emotional problems whereas the physical and emotional problems in severe cases may lead to permanent disability or death of victims.

The findings of the study also indicate that neither the government of Ethiopia nor the employment agencies could protect the female domestic workers from abuse and exploitation act caused by their employers. As preventive measures, MOLSA issued proclamation 632/01 and put into practice through monitoring of the activity of licensed employment agencies to ensure the protection of the right of female domestic workers. Despite the presence of this proclamation, all participants of the study still underlined the need for bilateral agreement and labour attachés as a better option for the protection of the rights of Ethiopian female domestic workers working in Arab countries. This point of view somehow related to Fernandez B. (2010): *The government of Ethiopia has no negotiating power and unable to control the illegal brokers.*

Considering the increasing nature of the abuse and exploitation of Ethiopian female domestic workers, the government of Ethiopia has established a National Committee in order to reduce the ever increasing migration of female domestic workers to Arab countries by creating awareness among the community, by creating job opportunities and by tightening its border as found out in the study. Hein De Haas (2005) the immigration policies that allow free movement of people increase the chance of controlling illegal migration. Otherwise, Caritas International (2012) migration policies that defend migrant women's rights are most unlikely to stop migration flows but encourage the women to resort to the illegal migration channels.

The finding, however, shows that besides planning for prevention practice by the government, there is no tangible work done so far to curb the problem. The ILO (2011) & IOM (2006) reports also pointed out the same thing and mentioned that lack of comprehensive national policy or legal framework on human trafficking as a problem.

The rehabilitation of the returnees has not been done so far by the government of Ethiopia; however, few NGOs are currently working in the rehabilitation of returnees who have economic, psychological, and health problems. They provide psycho social support to the returnees. This includes providing of food, shelter, clothing, medical, psychological and economic support.

The Psychosocial support approach is developed for helping people in situations of trauma and stress and provides them with positive human relations, helping to restore their sense of self-respect and ability to overcome anxiety and despair. The use of the term psychosocial is based on the idea that a combination of factors are responsible for the psychosocial wellbeing of people, and that these biological, emotional, spiritual, cultural, social, mental and material aspects of experience cannot necessarily be separated from one another.

### **Social Work Implications**

According to EPAS the purpose of the social work profession is “to promote human and community wellbeing” (EPAS, 2008). The Social workers perform Preventive, Restorative, and Remedial functions to meet this purpose.

#### **Remedial Function**

The female domestic workers most of the time face multiple stressors because of cultural differences of their country of origin and the new culture of different Arab countries. They are expected to act and dress like the majority of the population i.e. wearing of “Abaya”(clothes wear by the Muslim women). In this situation, they struggle to maintain the value, norms and culture of the country of origin in the one hand, and try to adopt the new culture and living style of the Arab countries. Then, they will face stress and identity crisis. Language is also another source of conflict that makes the female domestic workers mostly get into disagreement with their employer. This happens because of lack of communication and understanding and tensions exist in the interactions between the owners and the domestic workers.

In this case, the role the social worker should be to play as a trained expert equipped with remedial solutions that involves the elimination or amelioration of existing social problems. Therefore, the social worker need to understand the overall condition and develop different strategies like, adaptation and integration, accommodates cultural diversity and fosters social cohesion through providing of cross-cultural education.

Given the steady rise in the number of female domestic workers, the social workers need to approach them to address their needs and problems. The social worker is responsible for adjusting and readjusting of the domestic workers to work environment.

The empowerment, strengths based and asset building perspective can be used as an intervention strategy to address the problem of returnee domestic workers. Moreover, the bio-psycho social model can be employed to rehabilitation of the returnee domestic workers.

The welfare and empowerment approaches will be applied to reintegrate the victim and provide her a life with dignity. In cases where there is enough evidence to believe that the individual had better options and chose to participate in trafficking due to some personal gains or interest, she should be held accountable and asked to comply with law enforcement in tracking down the trafficking networks.

### **Restoration Function**

Moreover the social work practice can be applied to restore the functioning of those domestic workers who have physical disability, mental problem and other kind of impairment. This needs prolonged and relentless engagement with victims of psychological abuse for redirection /reorientation of their attitudes.

### **Prevention Function**

One of the roles of the social worker is advocating for the policy formulation which in this case is on trafficking of women in Ethiopia because there is no comprehensive policy and legal framework regarding trafficking on women in Ethiopia. However, Ethiopia ratified a number of international conventions and the employment exchange services Proclamation 631/02 also prohibit and criminalizes trafficking in person for labour purpose. Therefore, the social worker can lobby for its implementation.

Social Workers have also an important public education role to help the public understand the value of immigrants for the receiving economies. Human Rights education and awareness is crucial to effective social work practice.

**Research Implication**

The information obtained from MOLSA indicates that there is an increase in the number of Ethiopian female domestic workers migrating to different Arab countries. Similarly, the report from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs denotes that the abuse and exploitation cases of female domestic workers are also on the rise. This implies that there is a need to do research at national level to clearly understand the magnitude of the problem.

There is research gap in estimating the number of Ethiopian domestic workers migrating every time through legal and illegal ways and also the extent of the problems and its consequences.

## Chapter Four

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### Conclusion

As evidence shows the number of Ethiopian female domestic workers migrating to Arab countries in legal and illegal ways is increasing at an alarming rate. MOLSA is the responsible government body which legalizes and monitors those Private Employment Agencies that engage in facilitation of the travel of those legal migrant female domestic workers. Other than this, there are no as such tangible works done so far by the government of Ethiopia to protect the right of those domestic workers in the destination country.

Lack of awareness among the domestic workers, problem in recruitment of competent domestic workers and absence of legal protection in the destination countries are considered as the major sources of the problem. As a result, significant numbers of female domestic workers are still exposed to physical, psychological, economic and other problems.

These causes haven't been addressed yet; in the wake of this, a significant number of female domestic workers are exposed to physical, psychological, economic and other kind of problems.

Although it is difficult to defend the movement rights of women, having the bilateral agreement with Arab countries and assigning of the labour attachés will at least lessen the vulnerability of the female domestic workers to abuses and exploitations. Some kind of rehabilitation mechanisms should also be devised by the Government and other relevant bodies, to help those returnees who are victims of abuse and exploitation. The awareness creation among the community and seeking of employment opportunities for the youth by the government and private stakeholders should also be considered as the preventive measures for mass migration of the women in Ethiopia.

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Finally, there has to be networking and work collaboration among government and non-government organizations to get better result.

## Recommendations

In order to address the problems stated in the study, the following recommendations are forwarded;

- There has to be networking and coordination among all stakeholders working in the areas of migration of female domestic workers in Ethiopia to bring good result. This is especially important to bring the government, NGOs and employment agencies together.
- The Government of Ethiopia has to establish labour attachés in all Arab countries to protect the right and dignity of the domestic workers working in these countries.
- All Employment agencies need to take the necessary care in recruitment of the domestic workers and give orientation about the norm and overall situation of the destination country before their departure.
- All employment agencies have to give immediate response when the domestic workers face any kind of abuse or exploitations.
- The government of Ethiopia need to create employment opportunity for the youth to curb the increasing migration of the female domestic workers to Arab countries.
- There has to be awareness creation of the community and the women to protect themselves from traffickers.
- Government and employment agencies need to capacitate the female domestic workers with the necessary skill training before their departure.
- Rehabilitation mechanisms need to be devised by the government and NGOs to those victim female domestic workers who faced many kinds of abuses.

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- Government and other relevant bodies need to create the mentality among the domestic workers that it is possible to work in their own countries.
- Government and relevant bodies have to conduct further research on the area.
- Government has to tighten border checks to tackle the problem of trafficking.
- MOLSA should ban those licensed and unlicensed agencies that send women in illegal ways.
- School of Social Work need to provide technical support to these NGOs working on rehabilitation program for the female returnees especially on psychosocial support.

Annex 1.

Informed Consent Form

My name is Sosena Tsegaye. I am a final year student of school of Social Work in Addis Ababa University. I am conducting a research on areas of the Migration of Female Domestic Workers to Arab Countries as a partial fulfilment for the Master degree in Social Works (MSW) at Addis Ababa University. The purpose of this research is to understand and learn more about the situation of female domestic workers working in different Arab countries. Therefore, I would like to particularly collect information about the cause and problems of the migration of female domestic workers as well as the prevention and rehabilitation practice. The data will be gathered from migrant returnees, responsible personnel from MOLSA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NGO representatives, and also from Private Employment Agencies.

I will have questions for you and the answers that you will provide are very confidential. The interview will be recorded but all the conversation will be deleted after use. This interview/discussion is just to increase my understanding in the areas and complete my research. The name of a respondent will not be specified on this form and will not be used in connection with any of the information you provide to me. You have the right not to give answer to questions that you feel not comfortable. You can also terminate the interview whenever you would like to. Nevertheless, your genuine answer to the raised questions will help me to have better understanding on this specific area so as to complete my study. If you have any questions about the study, you can ask me. Do you agree to participate in the interview? Thank You

Signature of the participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Annex 2.

Interview Guide for NGO Representatives

1. What are the services or activities of your organization in relation to female domestic workers?
2. What are the motives to start this program? When did you start the program?
3. What are the criteria for victims' women to join your program?
4. How do you manage to contact the returnees?
5. What are the major problems of the returnees?
6. How many beneficiary women are registered in your organization (monthly or yearly)?
7. What age groups do most of the beneficiaries?
8. What grade level are the victims?
9. What is the family economic background of most of the clients or victims? What is the physical and psychological condition of the beneficiaries?
10. What is the social relationship of your beneficiaries with staff members and among themselves?
11. How many beneficiary women receive skill training every year?
12. What is the problem in the re integration program?
13. What are the qualifications of your staff members?
14. How many victims have successfully finished the skill training and got job?
15. How do you follow-up the progress of the victims?
16. What are the challenges your organization encounters in the implementation of the program?
17. What will be the possible solution to possible challenges?
18. What is the reaction of the government and other stakeholders towards your program, and what work relationship do you maintain with them?

Annex 3.

In-depth Interview Guide for Female Returnees

1. Could you please tell me your \_\_\_\_\_?
  - i. Age
  - ii. Marital status
  - iii. Educational background
  - iv. Religion
  - v. Source of income/livelihood before departure
2. What is your place of origin/ethnicity?
3. What were the specific reasons for your migration to the Middle East?
4. How did you learn about the domestic work opportunities in Arab countries?
5. How did you make the migration decision?
6. How much did you spend to travel into Arab countries for domestic work?
7. Which country did you go? why did you choose that particular country?
8. Which of the following routes of channel did you use to travel to Arab countries?
9. Why did you choose this channel of migration, and how were you recruited for domestic work?
10. What type of employment agreement (contractual or non-contractual) have you signed in the destination country?
11. How long did you work in the Middle East country/countries?
12. How many are the family members of the employer? Name them (Couples, female-headed household, bachelor)
13. How can you explain your work relationship with your employer, his/ her family members and employment agents?

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14. Have you ever worked on freelance basis? If yes, why did you choose, and what did you benefit out of it?
15. How many meals did you have in a day? Could you please tell me the quality of the food you were served?
16. How do you describe your living conditions as a migrant domestic worker?
17. How much did you earn per month in birr? Tell me how often you got your payment? Did you receive all your salary?
18. How often and how much saving, debt payment, and remittances could you make for families and children?
19. Did you have days off work while you were working as a housemaid? Was it a paid leave? How often?
20. How do you describe your level of communication with your boss/ employer?
21. Were there Ethiopians living near your place? Did you have any relationship with them?
22. How often did you visit them? Was it a problem to meet them?
23. What problems or abuses did you face: trial, physical, psychological or sexual abuses?
24. Did you face any accuses from female employers in suspicion of having sexual relations with their husbands, or seducing their sons?
25. What support did you get from the employment agency, the Government of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Embassy, and the Ethiopians living there before and after the abuse?
26. What are the challenges of cultural and religious differences in the country you used to work? Please explain.
27. When did you return home and why?
28. How do you explain your social relationship in the community after you have returned?
29. Do you think you have achieved your aims through work migration? If so, how do you describe the improvement in your living standard and businesses entered into?

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30. What are the challenges you encountered once you returned home?
31. How do you explain your health situation?
32. How do you evaluate your own migration experience? Good or bad, why?
33. What rehabilitation mechanisms or services do you get? From which organization, or individual?
34. Do you have any opinion about women's work migration to the Arab World?
35. Do you have anything to discuss/ say, which you think is relevant?

Thank You!

Annex 4.

Interview Guides for Key Informants at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

1. Name of the Directorate/Department \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your position in the Ministry?
3. What are the mandates and roles of MOLSA/ MFA with regard to the migrations of female domestic workers to the Arab countries?
4. How do you understand the term migration and trafficking? What type of practices is categorized as trafficking? What preventive measures are taken by the Ministry on trafficking?
5. How can the Ministry do the follow up and monitor the situation of the migrant workers and the activity of the employment agencies in the Arab countries?
6. What is the role of the Ethiopia Embassy in the Arab countries? What measures will it take to protect the rights of the citizen from abuse and exploitation?
7. What are the channels of migration for female domestic workers working in Arab countries?
8. Could you estimate the magnitude and trends of migration of female domestic workers going to Arab countries compared with previous years?
9. What are the criteria for issuing of work permit to the employment agencies?
10. What is your work relationship with the agencies?
11. Do you have work agreement with employment agencies? What measures does the Ministry take if the agency fails to comply with the agreement?
12. What are the problems faced by the women while working as domestic workers in the Arab countries?

## THE MIGRATION OF ETHIOPIAN FEMALE DOMESTIC WORKERS...

13. What measures does the Ministry take to protect the women domestic workers from sexual, physical and psychological abuse?
14. How many deaths, physical disability, sexual abuse or other cases reported for the last few years? What is the trend, decreasing or increasing?
15. What make the migrant domestic workers vulnerable to physical, psychological and sexual abuse?
16. What is the attitude of the community about the migration of female domestic workers?
17. What is the existing legal protection practice against the trafficking of women for domestic workers?
18. Do you have work agreement with the Arab countries regarding the employment of female domestic workers? If yes, what measures do you take if the rights of these workers are violated?
19. What rehabilitation measures does the Ministry take to help the returnees?
20. What national legal provisions are available to protect the rights of female domestic workers? What about the international?
21. What do you think are the best possible ways to protect female domestic workers from abuse and exploitation?
22. Which organizations in the country work in the areas of protection and rehabilitation of female domestic workers? What is your work relationship with them? What about in the future?
23. What should be the roles of the government, the NGO and, the community in the prevention and rehabilitation of women domestic workers?
24. Who are the stakeholders in the areas of the migration of women domestic workers? What is your work relationship?

25. Do you have any other suggestions?

Thank You!

Annex 5.

Check list for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the Representatives of Private  
Employment Agencies

1. What are the steps to follow in recruiting of female domestic workers? How much is the recruitment expense?
2. What are the channels of migration? How can you describe the illegal and legal recruitment processes?
3. How is the prevalence of migration and trafficking, compared to the previous years?
4. What are the causes for migration of female domestic workers to different Arab countries?
5. What are the pros and cons of the migration of Ethiopian female domestic workers to Arab countries?
6. How is the employer - client relationships?
7. What are the major problems which women face as domestic workers in the destination countries? (Probe: who are the most vulnerable? Contributing factors for violation and abuse if there is any? )
8. What are the roles of your organization, the government or any other stakeholders on preventing and rehabilitating of female domestic workers from violence, abuse and exploitation? What measures are taken when there is violation of women's right?
9. What support do you get from the government or other stakeholders in the process of recruiting and following-up on the female domestic workers?
10. What rehabilitation services are available to the returnees?
11. In general, what is your opinion about trafficking and migration of Ethiopian female domestic workers to the Arab countries?

Thank You!

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