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COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

CENTER FOR GENDER STUDIES

**SCHOOL FEEDING AS INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITY:
ASSESSMENT OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF IN
SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMS IN YEKA SUB-CITY, ADDIS ABABA**

BY

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF ADDIS
ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN GENDER STUDIES**

DECEMBER, 2022
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my original work. It has not been presented for a degree in any other university and the sources of materials used for the thesis proposal are duly acknowledged and cited.

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Mahlet Worku entitled: *"School feeding as income generating activity: Assessment of opportunities and challenges of Caterer Mothers in school feeding programs in Yeka Sub-city, Addis Ababa"* and submitted to School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Arts degree in Gender Studies.

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Acronyms

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IGA	Income Generating Activities
KII	Key Informant Interview
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental Analysis
PTSA	Parent Teachers and Students Association
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SF	School Feeding
SFP	School Feeding Programs
SIP	School Improvement Person
THR	Take-Home Rations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCSA	Women, Children and Social Affairs
WFP	World Food Program

Abstract

This study makes an assessment of the opportunities and challenges caterer mothers employed in school feeding programs (SFP) face while working as caterers in SFPs in Yeka Sub city, Addis Ababa. The study assessed the practice of the SFPs in terms of the opportunities it offers to the caterer women with regards to job creation and income generation, challenges they face as well as their coping mechanisms as to overcome these challenges. This is a qualitative study in which descriptive research design was employed. The study participants were selected through purposive sampling method. The data was gathered using in depth interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observation using observation checklist. The study results indicate that SFP has created employment and viable income generating opportunity with significant economic as well as social benefits for the caterers. However, the study also revealed that factors such as inadequate price setting per meal, lack of adequate start-up capital, market price fluctuations and hyperinflation, disruptions of utility provisions such as electric power and water, the seasonal nature of the program which leaves the caterers out of work during winter school closures, as challenges worth mentioning. The coping mechanisms adapted by the caterer mothers to overcome the socio-economic challenges include employing the traditional saving mechanism (Equb) to cope up with financial hurdles, peer support mechanisms for women with younger children, capitalizing on the traditional social gatherings such as coffee ceremony, weddings, funerals, forming informal associations (Mahbers). Based on the findings, this research provides recommendations highlighting what more can be accomplished in terms of creating a favorable working condition and sustainable income to enhance the socio economic status of the caterer women. Devising and facilitating additional Income Generating Opportunities to fill in financial gaps during school closures, relevant capacity development trainings to the women, standard micro financing schemes, pragmatic price setting and budgeting are recommendations worth mentioning in this study.

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Key words: School Feeding Programs, Caterer Women, Income Generating Activities, Economic Empowerment, challenges, opportunities

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates background of the study and statement of the problem in-depth. It also contains basic research questions as well as objective of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

School feeding programs (SFP) are designed to provide meals in the school premises for children coming from disadvantaged families. It is believed to alleviate child hunger, improve child nutrition and cognitive development, and provide income for families by way of job creation. According to a report by World Food Program (2020) school feeding programs in countries across all income categories provide new insight into employment dynamics. The report points out that in WFP sponsored school feeding initiatives in 48 countries, a total of 191 million school children benefit from school feeding and 3.1 million jobs are created (WFP, 2020:60). The analysis shows that school feeding programs led to the creation of 1,668 jobs, on average, for every 100,000 beneficiary children. And the vast majority of these jobs are cooks and food preparers (WFP, 2020: 60).

School feeding activities in Ethiopia have mostly been carried out by non-governmental and humanitarian organizations in less structured and selected manner in the regions as well as the country's capital until the Addis Ababa City Administration launched an all-inclusive school feeding project in all primary public/government schools throughout Addis Ababa as of September 2019. The main objective being addressing the basic nutritional needs of students, the school feeding project also created employment opportunity for women caterers by way of income generation from food preparation (Borkena, 2019).

In this regard, income generating activities (IGA) for women can be regarded as an opportunity for self-reliance and strengthened ability to cope with life's demands. The concept of income generation varies in terms of the type of activities and also from one project to another. In this research income generating activity (IGA) is understood as an activity pursued with the aim of

improving the living conditions of women who are participating in the preparation and provision of meals for school feeding programs.

In line with the school feeding initiatives, the city administration of Addis Ababa is spending 42 million Birr per year to feed an estimated 300,000 school children in all government owned primary schools in Addis Ababa, securing job opportunities for over 10,000 mothers (Borkena, 2019). Therefore, in addition to the students benefiting from school meals, the initiative offers an immense opportunity for the economically vulnerable and unemployed women to be engaged in food preparation, enabling income generation.

Hence, on top of benefiting schoolchildren, home-grown school feeding programs boost rural and local economies, as smallholder farmers and commodity retailers find new markets for their produce. Community members, often women, earn an income by preparing meals for children. The benefits extend beyond local economies, as countries that make human capital investments-including through school feeding programs - can reap long-term economic benefits (Behak, 2020).

With this understanding, the research examined the lives and experiences of Caterer Mothers who prepare and provide meals in the school feeding programs in public primary schools in Yeka sub city, Addis Ababa. Accordingly, the study tried to assess the opportunities for women and examined the challenges as well as their coping mechanisms while they engage in the school feeding programs.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

According to a report by Addis Ababa Education Bureau, school feeding initiatives by Addis Ababa city administration are being carried out in more than 250 primary schools in Addis Ababa comprising an approximate of 300,000 students as beneficiaries (Relief web, 2019).

In line with this, it is estimated that more than 10,000 mothers are participating in food preparation and cooking meals for the school feeding programs (Almaz, 2019). Even though the main objective of the school feeding program is to reach out to students and enhance access to education, decrease dropout rates, and improve attendance, it also contributes towards the

improvement of women's economic status and self-sufficiency by way of income generation (Relief Web, 2019).

School feeding programs have created job opportunities for women to earn a living out of the income generated from the catering activities in school meal initiatives for the students. Economically vulnerable women are selected, organized, and trained by Woreda Women and Social Affairs bureau to be assigned on the preparation of school meals. Budget is allocated by the Education office of the sub-city based on the number of students and the women receive budgets based on the number of students that they prepare food for. In this process, a feminist analysis of the school feeding programs was conducted to understand both the positive aspects and the gaps in the program in terms of gender context. Although the main focus of the school feeding program is addressing the nutritional, psychological as well as social needs of the children, women also play an important role taking an active role in the preparation of school meals.

Several studies have been conducted globally as well as in Ethiopia on the implementation and impact of SFP on internal efficiency of education, health and nutritional needs of pupil, etc. Mastewal et al., (2018) stated that SFP provides benefits for disadvantaged children to improve physical growth and cognitive abilities. In addition to reducing malnutrition, SFP had positive impact on education internal efficiency like enrolment rate, students' attendance, dropout rate, repetition rate, and students' result. Studies on Multi Sector Nutrition program Governance Implementation in Ethiopia: Opportunities and challenges by Kennedy et al(2015); Assessment and impact of School feeding Programs on student's performance in Addis Ababa Government Primary schools by (Misrak, 2018) have assessed school feeding programs in relation to activities and performance pertinent to the nutritional benefits and educational outcomes.

Although these studies were essential depending on the initiative they had taken, neither of them consider the women who are caterers of the school feeding programs as a focus of the study. It was difficult to find adequate research with regards to women who participate in the school feeding programs as meal preparers and caterers. The existing literature and reports on school feeding programs are mainly student-focused, evaluating and assessing the school feeding programs in terms of the significance of the program towards meeting children's nutritional

needs, improving school attendance, decreasing dropout rates, etc. However, it is difficult to find adequate research regarding women who are engaged in the school feeding programs as meal preparers and caterers. Hence this researcher was initiated to examine and recognize the role of the caterer mothers in the program as well as to fill the research gap.

In particular, this research aimed to assess the income-generating aspect of school feeding programs by taking the Caterer Mothers as a focus of the study and enrich the existing research on the area. The study explored the lives and experiences of women working in the preparation of school meals in public primary schools located in Yeka Sub city, Addis Ababa. The caterers' lives and experiences were assessed as to how their level of education, health, demographic characteristics, working place environment, government policy etc. affected their ability to attain economic empowerment. Further, the problems that the women faced while carrying out these activities were assessed.

In general the study is set to investigate the impact of the program pertinent with a gender context on the opportunities and challenges of Caterer Mothers who are engaged in the preparation and catering of school meals in the school feeding program.

1.3. Research Questions

Based on the problems explained above, the following leading questions were raised and the study tried to give response for them.

1. How effective is the school feeding program in terms of creating an income generating opportunity for economically vulnerable women?
2. What challenges and obstacles do caterer mothers face while they engage in the school feeding programs?
3. What are the coping mechanisms used by the caterer mothers to overcome the challenges they face while they involve in the school feeding programs?

1.4. Objective of the Study

1.4.1. General objective of the study

The general objective of this study was to assess the practice, challenges and opportunities of school feeding programs in terms of improving the socio economic status of the caterer mothers.

1.4.2. Specific objective of the study

- ❖ To explore opportunities that school feeding programs offer to economically vulnerable mothers in terms of income generation and self-sufficiency.
- ❖ To identify challenges faced by the caterer mothers in due process of implementation of school feeding programs.
- ❖ To find out the coping mechanisms of the caterer mothers in tackling obstacles and challenges while engaging in school feeding programs.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The school feeding initiative is acclaimed for the benefits that it entails for children, families and to the community at large. Although this has created an opportunity for the economic empowerment and self-sufficiency of the women in the way of income generation, there is a research gap in terms of assessing the program in the income generating and gender aspect. Hence, this study has a contribution since

- It helps to promote the understanding of all stakeholders on the practice, challenges and opportunities of school feeding programs in terms of improving the socio economic status of the caterer women.
- It helps to initiate further study on effective assessment of the program in the income generating and gender aspect.
- It provides an input for policy makers.

1.6. Scope of the study

The focus of this research was delimited on assessing the practice, challenges and opportunities of school feeding programs in terms of improving the socio economic status of caterer women.

Although, the school feeding is being undertaken in all primary schools in Addis Ababa comprising more than 10,000 caterer mothers, this study was conducted only on representatives of caterer women's groups. Thus, the conceptual framework of the study was economic status of the women as dependent variable while opportunity and challenges of the program as independent variable. The geographical delimitation of the study was in Addis Ababa City, Yeka sub city in some selected primary schools. The time schedule was from September/2021 - June / 2022.

1.7. Operational Definitions

1. **Challenges:** A challenge is something new and difficult which requires great effort and determination (Harper, 2003).
2. **Economic Empowerment:** Economic empowerment is the ability to make and act on decisions that involve the control over and allocation of financial resource (Golla et al., 2011).
3. **Income Generating Activities:** Jobs for women that can be regarded as an opportunity for self-reliance and strengthened ability to cope with life's demands. (Mebrahtom, 2012).
4. **Opportunities:** A favorable juncture of circumstances the halt provided an opportunity or a good chance for advancement or progress.
5. **Caterers:** Caterer is a person who provides food and drink for a large number of people (Harper, 2003).
6. **Caterer Mothers in SFP:** cooperative businesses in which women who are engaged in SFPs are involved in procuring food ingredients as input for meal preparation, cook and serve meals to students in school premises whereby budget is dispensed by the government every two weeks, aggregated from the set price per student.
7. **Shemachoch:** Consumers cooperative markets vending food items to the community with discounted market price.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

Though the study focuses on assessing the practice, challenges and opportunities of school feeding programs in terms of improving the socio economic status of caterer mothers in Addis Ababa, in Yeka sub city, it has not fully addressed the holistic socio economic assessment. The economic status of the caterer mothers was viewed mostly in the income they have been generating. The women's social environment was also viewed in terms of their relation with the school community. In addition to that, it didn't allow participation of numerous caterer women's with a limited assessment since the study is a qualitative research.

1.9. Organization of the thesis

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter focuses on the statement of the problem and its approach while the second chapter contains the review related literature. The third chapter contains research design and methodology. The fourth chapter also contains data analysis and interpretation whereas the fifth chapter holds summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter deals with a review of related literature. The chapter is divided into four sections. These are definitions and concepts, theoretical literature review, empirical literature review and conceptual framework. The researcher attempted to examine the findings of various studies conducted in the area of the School Feeding Program and its relation to the economic empowerment of women by way of income generation. The theoretical part briefly discusses the theoretical framework of the study by examining feminist theories, particularly using a liberal feminist approach to analyze the experiences of the caterer mothers in terms of their literacy level, employment opportunities and income generation, health and wellbeing. The existing legal and political frameworks were also assessed to identify constructive factors as well as the gaps in addressing gender inequalities.

2.1. Concepts and Definitions

Food security: The commonly accepted definition of food security is the one which is defined by FAO: “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2009).

School Feeding: School feeding can be broadly defined as the availability and the provision of adequate food in terms of quantity, quality, safety, as well as socio-cultural acceptability for schoolchildren. Commonly, school feeding refers to meals served on school premises; nevertheless, complementary modalities of feeding, such as take-home rations (THR), exist. While the concept of in-school meals implies the provision of food to pupils in school, THR are provided to the children’s families, usually conditional upon their children attending school (WFP, EPRI, 2018).

School Feeding Programs (SFP): programs designed to provide meals in the school premises for children coming from disadvantaged families (WFP, 2020). Generally school feeding programs can be classified in two based on their modalities; in – school feeding, where children

are fed in school; and the one which families are given food if their children attend school. Food that is taken to home to feed the family is called take home rations (THR). In-school feeding can also be divided into two common categories based on the program they follow program that deliver meals, and programs that deliver high energy biscuits or snacks (Bundy et.al,2009). SFPs can be regarded as a targeted social safety net programs that provide both educational and nutritional benefits to vulnerable children in the contexts of economic shock, protracted crisis and socio economic vulnerability (Molinas & Marc,2015).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Feminist theories on Economic Empowerment and IGAs

Inequality and oppression in society have been explained using different theories. These different theories have been used to explain gender inequality. All the theories are based on the rationale that the organization of society has contributed to inequality between women and men and such inequality has contributed to women and girls having less access to power, economic empowerment, lower social status, and generally limited opportunities than men and boys. Whilst they generally agree on this notion, the theorists differ on the approaches that can be employed to deal with issues of gender-related inequality and oppression (Samkange, 2015).

Liberal feminism offers a lens to better understand the multi-faceted problems women face in terms of their gender, social status, economic capacity, education, health and other related factors. The Liberal Feminist Theory is premised around several assumptions. Education is the focal element and is seen as a determinant variable that can be used to improve women's situation. Liberal feminists are also concerned with equal rights and freedom of the individual. If there are to be reformed, such reforms have to be gradually introduced without a radical revolution on the status quo. Liberal Feminism holds a moderate view, their approach is not to radically challenge the existing values, and as such they aim for gradual change in the political, economic, and social system. Gender inequalities are the results of various factors. They include culture and the way men and women are socialized within that culture. The other factors are closely related to the attitudes of the individual. All these can be changed through empowerment and education. In essence, liberal feminism is for gradual reforms through advocacy for equal rights for all, and laws and policies that promote equality (Samkange, 2015). Hence, liberal

feminists believe in working within the structure of the mainstream society to integrate women into that structure, with the inclusion of progressive men in the struggle towards attaining gender equality.

It has become commonplace within the feminist theory to claim that women's lives are constructed by multiple, intersecting systems of oppression. This insight - that oppression is not a singular process or a binary political relation but is better understood as constituted by multiple, converging, or interwoven systems - originates in antiracist feminist critiques of the claim that women's oppression could be captured through an analysis of gender alone (Caratathis, 2014). Intersectional feminism centers on the voices of those experiencing overlapping, concurrent forms of oppression to understand the depths of the inequalities and the relationships among them in any given context (UN Women, 2020).

From feminist perspectives, Income Generating Activities (IGAs) can be regarded as an opportunity for women's self-reliance, greater dignity, and a strengthened ability to cope with life's demands. Various Income Generating activities allow women to satisfy competing demands for their time as they balance a disproportionate share of housework and childcare responsibilities. Most women often face time, human, physical, and social constraints that limit their ability to build their financial capacity. Women continue to face huge obstacles in terms of their socio economic wellbeing as they lack capital, loans, together with social constraints and limited time, skill and knowledge (Getachew, 2017).

Marxist feminist theory emphasizes the social relations of work in different economic modes of production in its analysis of social inequalities and exploitations including relations of domination due to race, class or gender. Because of unpaid housework, a private task allocated to women in the sexual division of labor can only be achieved with the development of socialism and the socialization of housework and child bearing in social services provided by the state (Ferguson, Hennessy, & Nagel, 2004). This implies how economic empowerment is manifested as a significant tool towards power relations and domination among the society.

Liberal feminists criticize household chores as unpaid labor leaving women dependent on men and devalued, since this activity is outside the meaningful sphere of public economic production. Liberal, Marxist and radical feminists have all characterized women as doubly alienated in

capitalism because of the public/private split that relegates their work as mothers and house workers tied to domestic duties only, and psychologically undermining their human, civic and political rights as well as their citizenship (Fergusson & Henessy, 2004).

Many radical feminists maintain that women's work is part of a separate patriarchal mode of reproduction that lie beneath all economic systems of production and in which men abuse women's reproductive labor. Intersectional feminists argue that the racial division of labor, institutional racism and different family structures put African American women in a different subordinate status in the society than white and other women (Ferguson et al.,2004).

2.2.2. The PESTLE Analysis

The PESTLE Analysis is used as a tool to situational analysis for business evaluation purposes and is one of the most used models in the evaluation of the external business environment that is highly dynamic. A business interacts with its external environment in its operations and the external factors are uncontrollable by the business. Moreover, PESTLE analysis forms the basis for the identification of the opportunities and the threats. PESTEL analysis factors are: Political, economic, sociocultural, technological, environmental and legal factors provide a framework to analyses and categories environmental influences impacting upon public health (Abhishek, 2013).

[Analyzing factors affecting the school feeding programs in general and the caterer mothers in particular trough the PESTLE analysis will help evaluate the opportunities and challenges of the caterer women within the framework of the political, economic, social, legal and environmental aspects.](#)

Maria et al., 2021) stated that micro or small enterprises are affected by things around them, and a PESTLE analysis is an important framework to analyze the key factors. Those key factors are Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental. Those factors are influencing an organization from the outside. PESTLE aspects help us to get a diverse view to understand the problem.

2.2.2.1. Political factors

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The political trends in a country (government pressure, monetary policy, etc.) significantly influence ~~the company that chooses to establish itself there~~ businesses: established public authorities are making more and more decisions that can have a direct impact on daily operations and the prospects of a ~~company's financial (notional interest, etc.)~~ business and social (employment assistance, subsidies, etc.) aspects. Other elements, such as conflict, the level of corruption, or the degree of state intervention should also be considered. (Salem, 2018).

2.2.2.2. Economic factors

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While it is virtually impossible for a business unit to change the economic situation, it can definitely make preparations in order to better deal with fluctuations.. The economic success of a business also involves the observation of key figures relevant to the sector and the analysis of consumer trends. (Salem,2018). Although they are micro business entities, the performance and income of thecan be evaluated in context of the larger economy taking factors such as inflation, devaluation, levels of unemployment into consideration.

2.2.2.3. Socio-cultural factors

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Knowing the characteristics of a population (demographics, age distribution, etc.) in order to understand its buying behavior is essential to conquer a market. Moreover, history roots and traditions – as well as religious and socio-cultural influences (fashion, media, means of communication, etc.) allow the company to refine their analysis of the specific needs of the individuals involved. (Salem,2018).

2.2.2.4. Technological factors

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Today, many experts are busy working in every corner of the planet, seeking to revolutionize existing processes. While some of these findings are not likely to influence the target market, others have the potential to completely change all norms. The internet revolution came as a surprise to many managers, and those who anticipated its increased use gained a significant competitive advantage. Therefore, it seems natural to investigate the practices in (research and development) and innovation in the chosen field (core business) of the company. Continually

questioning the product, as well as the processes involved in its preparation and acquisition by the customer is the key to successful technological observation (Salem, 2018).

2.2.2.5. Legal factors

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Staying informed of regulations (labor laws, trade laws, etc.) in the country where the company is or Will be located legislation varies from one place to another is now one of the best ways to protect the company from possible legal attacks and act in the best way possible within legal constraints. For example, regulations concerning the carrying of weapons are not the same in every country, and any astute trader wishing to engage in this sector will quickly adapt their communication and distribution according to the legislation in force in the country concerned. Tax incentives may also lead the well-informed manager to turn towards some countries rather than others (Salem, 2018). The implication of the establishment of the Addis Ababa School Feeding Agency and the scaling up of the feeding program to cover all primary schools in Addis Ababa is a major leap in the human centered policy that government has undertaken.

2.2.2.6. Environmental factors

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The 21st century is a continuation of the positioning the environment and sustainable development at the heart of debates more than ever- The worrying climate change, constantly increasing pollution and waste sorting that varies from one country to another, etc.: nowadays these aspects interest and preoccupy more and more people and those (Salem, 2018).

2.3. Empirical Literature Review

2.3.1. Benefits of school feeding programs

Healthy and well nourished children learn better and also have better chances to thrive and fulfill their potential (WFP,2020). Several scholars for example Abiy, 2017; Yohannes, 2017; Misrak, 2018; Feyissa, 2018; Desalegn, 2011 and Sertse , 2019 have assessed different aspects of School Feeding Programs in terms of the benefits that they render to students and their families. Abiy, (2017) examined the impact of the School Feeding Program on the academic performance of primary school students in Arada's sub-city. According to this study, School Feeding Programs have witnessed a minor favorable effect on academic achievement and

attendance, and it recommends that all stake holders involved in the School Feeding Program to concentrate on macro-level interventions to improve the program's efficiency. Where as Yohannes, (2017), and Misrak (2018), investigated the impact of school food programs on pupils' academic performance in a studies conducted in an Addis Ababa government elementary schools.

Both Abiy(2017) and Misrak(2018) recognized the benefits of school feeding in terms of student academic progress with elements having a favorable impact on kids' academic performance. Desalegn Keba (2011) reported in his study that school feeding enhances school involvement among impoverished and food-insecure students. The demand for child labor, the expense of schooling, the availability of schools, the quality of teaching and school facilities, the distance to school, the availability of food incentives, and safety concerns are the key factors determining school enrolment. Those affecting class attendance and student dropouts include illness, labor for money or food, domestic work, hunger during school hours, and a long commute to school. Furthermore, the older the household head, the lower the likelihood of students enrolling in school because older children are very likely to carry the burden of family responsibilities (Sertse,2019). The findings of a study by Feyissa (2018) reveal that while the School Feeding Program has diverse benefits in terms of children's academic achievement and attendance, it is not without flaws recommends the nutritional and economic benefits to be improved in order to significantly enhance the effectiveness of the program.

Assessing the experience of SFP in Kenya based on the research made in public pre-primary schools in Sigor Division, Chepalungu District, Bomet County, we can observe that even if school feeding program has a positive effect on enrolment and retention rates effective management is one that will acquire and allocate adequate resources to be used in implementing SFP is an essential factor (Fisher, 2010).

Sitali(2011) looked into the influence of the School Feeding Program on enrolment, attendance, and performance in selected primary schools in the Mongu district of Zambia's Western Province. The study reveals that School feeding increased attendance, notably in rural low-income schools in Mongu district, but not in high-income schools, according to the data. As a result, it was concluded that school meals can be effective at increasing school attendance

because children receive the meal only if they attend school, and that the opportunity cost of allowing a child to attend school varies across school days and seasons, and that this cost may even be greater than the expected benefit. Mohammed (2014) investigated the impact of the School Feeding Program on school enrollment in the Tamale Metropolis of Ghana's Northern Region. The study's main conclusions were that students were encouraged to stay in school and that as a result, universal basic education had improved. The HGSFP beneficiary schools face several problems, according to the study, including a lack of commitment from key stakeholders in the program's execution (Feyissa, 2018).

The Impact of the School Feeding Program was assessed in respect of school enrolment outcomes, attendance, and performance in selected schools in Mongu region of Western Province in Zambia,' according to Sitali (2011). It was found out that hunger was one of several external variables affecting educational quality, leading to absenteeism, high dropout rates, and high repetition rates as a result of poor attendance. When food is short in a country, parents or guardians frequently decide to pull their children out of school so that they may help around the house while their guardians look for food, according to the study. The research cited the Ministry of Education's launch of the School Feeding Programme in 1999, which provided morning meals in primary schools in collaboration with its partners. This was crucial in promoting high-quality education. As a result, the study advised that long-term strategies be implemented to reduce hunger, increase school enrollment, and improve attendance. This would result in improved learning and an increase in the number of girls attending school (Maxwell, 2017).

2.3.2. Opportunities of school feeding for Caterer Women

Hunt et al. (2016) perceive women's empowerment as a process of personal and social change, taking place over interlinked- and mutually reinforcing psychological, political, social, and economic domains, and through which women individually and collectively gain power, meaningful choices, and control over their lives.

According to a report by Oxfam Canada (2019), workers in the informal economy make up 61% of all workers worldwide with women making up 92% and 84.5% of informal workers in low-income and lower-middle-income countries respectively (Oxfam Canada, 2019). This means that women have limited access to financial services and assets, fewer opportunities for

education and skills development, and no social protection. Social norms are also constraint women's mobility and time that restrict them to home-based or domestic work (Oxfam, 2019).

Designing women's economic empowerment programs must recognize women's diversity and the ways that multiple aspects of identity intersect to create individuals' lived experiences of economic inequality. It is important to recognize and address the needs of women who are most marginalized in communities due to their race, class, sexuality, disability, or marital or indigenous status, among other aspects. Intersectional analysis requires differentiating between women (and men) and ensuring that all workers have the same rights regardless of sex or status. For example, women informal workers have multiple identities as women, as informal workers, as members of poor households or disadvantaged communities and each of these identities creates barriers and constraints (Oxfam Canada, 2019).

Income Generating Activities are activities that generate income for the family. They are programs directed towards an economic focus, and aim to increase the cash available to the family, improve the local economy, and strengthen the livelihood strategies so that the population is less vulnerable. IGA can be supported through training, improving access to productive assets (Mebrahtom, 2012).

In this study the opportunities offered to caterer mothers in the school feeding programs is considered as a source of income and the process of food preparation as an activity. However, there are multi-dimensional factors such as the socio-cultural elements and the social relations and structures that require assessment when talking about women's engagement in income generating activities and economic empowerment. According to Larson (2016), there are criticisms on women's empowerment interventions as a onetime input or a quick fix. For example, by giving women access to money, increasing the numbers of girls enrolled in schools, and representing more women in politics, the empowerment agenda is often believed to be achieved. While these interventions are certainly not bad, feminist theorists argue that quick fix interventions alone are not adequate ways to engage in the complex process of women's empowerment (Larson, 2016).

Larson (2016) further explains that the quick fix approach is criticized for giving the appearance that works on gender is a fast and simple task and gets criticized for undermining the unique

situations that women face. Additionally, the quick fix approach tends to imply that as long as women gain access to particular material resources, usually money, they will become empowered. However, capturing the complexity of the factors that concern women's empowerment and acknowledging the complexity of women's empowerment to understand it as a process that involves interplay of social and structural factors (Larson, 2016). In this context, the income generating activities for women in the informal sector and particularly in the school feedings program is considered to facilitate economic empowerment of the women. Women whose lives have been highly impacted by the socio economic and cultural norms were deprived of opportunities in the education and other social welfare programs.

Mebrahtom (2012) states that health and educational services which given to women are limited. This makes them to be more illiterate, have limited job opportunities and not to be competitive to get job easily in the market. They have high burden to work daily home activities like fetch water, collect firewood, prepare food, and look after children and others. The society has no awareness and acceptance the importance of education for women in improving their livelihood such as increase income and family planning (Mebrahtom, 2012).

To address the struggles of gender and economic inequality with policy commitments to enhance women's economic empowerment will be viewed in a liberal feminist perspective to understand the opportunities and challenges of caterer mothers in the school feeding programs.

2.3.3. Challenges of school feeding program

Implementation of School Feedings programs vary in context. Accordingly, the challenges attached to it have a broad spectrum. Almaz(2019) looked at the challenges and potential of school meals in Addis Ababa public elementary schools, in the Kirkos Sub-city and identified a number of challenges financial constraints and budgeting. The study revealed that allocated money to feed one child does not take into account the current market situation. Besides, physical capital (unavailability of feeding materials, feeding hall, electric power outage, lack of water), policy-related challenges (no clear policy regarding the administration of tax and payments for poor women cookers), and stasis (no clear policy regarding the administration of tax and payments for poor women cookers) were mentioned as challenges. According to the study there is ambiguity on the how of the process in which the cook women recruited.

According to a research by Jomaa et al., the SFP has numerous and never-ending obstacles, many of which are shared by practically all developing countries. The long-term viability of school food is jeopardized by a number of reasons. SFP planners and organizers face a variety of obstacles, including food price inflation and fluctuation, environmental and agricultural changes, and program cost effectiveness.

2.3.2.4. Conceptual Framework

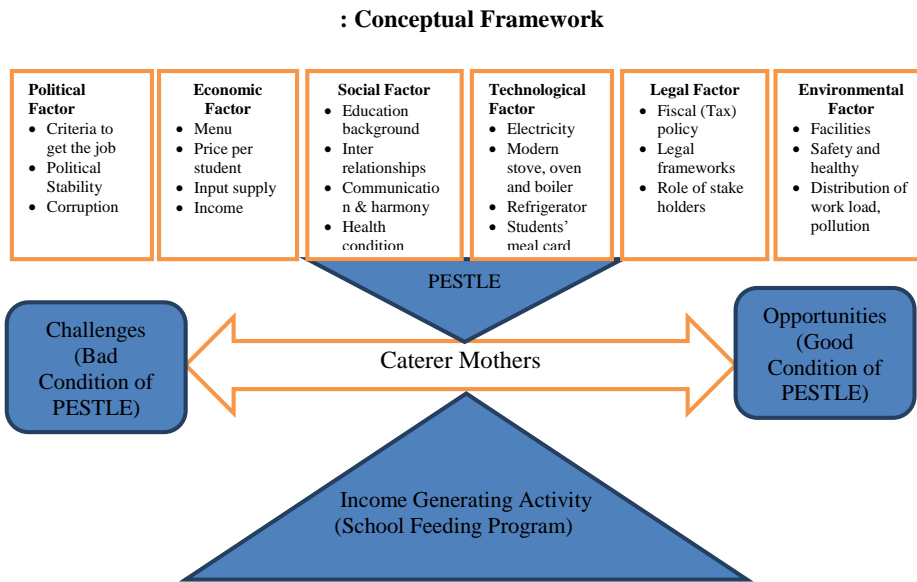
A conceptual framework is a structure which the researcher believes can best explain the natural progression of the phenomenon to be studied (Camp, 2001). It is linked with the concepts, empirical research and important theories used in promoting the knowledge espoused by the researcher (Peshkin,1993).

Thus, the researcher investigated the practice, challenges and opportunities of school feeding programs in terms of improving the socio economic status of women through the assessment of Political Economic Social Technological Legal and Environmental (PESTLE) factors. Hence, challenges and opportunities of school feeding programs were independent variables (IV) while income generation and economic status of caterer mothers was dependent variable(DV).

An independent variable (IV) is a variable that is set to cause changes in or explain another, A dependent variable (DV) is a variable that is set to be affected or explained by another. *Extraneous variables*: are variables which are outside the research question, argument or hypothesis; they are distinct from the dependent or independent variable.

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Figure 2.1



Source: Own survey, 2022

In the above conceptual framework, the independent variables are illustrated under the PESTLE analysis to elaborate the issues in correlation with the economic empowerment of the caterer mothers. In this regard political factors are analyzed in terms of their influence in the implementation of SFPs. Economic factors such as budget allocation and disbursement, menu, adherence to standard quality of meals, market price and procurement of input supply and ingredients for food preparation is assessed. Moreover, the social variables which contribute to the economic empowerment of women such as education, skills development, working relationships and exposures to new skills and networks, social networking, as well as the health aspects are used in exploring the lived experiences of the caterer mothers and their current circumstances. For the same reason, technological, legal and environmental factors influencing the dependent variables in this study are analyzed. Technological appliances and kitchen wares, taxation system in the legal aspects, safety and reliability of working conditions are viewed as they interact to create the outcomes in the SFPs.

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The research developed the above framework to design and reflect the main concepts and issues pertinent to economic empowerment of the caterer mothers through the SFPs.

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CHAPTER THREE

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY CHAPTER THREE

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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This chapter describes the research design, study population, sampling design and procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis. It explains various scientific methods used in achieving the study objectives.

3.1. Description of the Study Area

The study has been conducted in Yeka Sub City, Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa is the capital city of Ethiopia and the diplomatic capital of Africa with a population of above 5.2 million. It is the seat of the national government and home of African Union and other giant international and regional organizations. It is situated at 2,380 meters above sea level (Fitsum, 2019).

Yeka Sub City is one of the eleven sub-cities of Addis Ababa. Its location an area of 85.98 square kilometers and a population of 368,418 inhabitants is considered to be one of the densely populated sub cities in Addis Ababa inhabited by large number of residents (Addis Ababa City Government, 2021).

It also comprises large number of public primary schools. There are 30 public and 48 private primary schools in the sub city (KII, respondent 3, July 2021).

3.2. Research Design

The study used both descriptive and exploratory design to investigate the opportunities and challenges of women who are engaged in food preparation and cooking meals for school feeding

programs. Descriptive design was used to allow researchers to collect data, summarize, display, and interpret it for the goal of clarification. As the goal of this study was not to investigate relationships between causes and symptoms, descriptive research was appropriate. Furthermore, typical descriptive studies focus on evaluating attitudes, opinions, demographic data, situations, and methods (Creswell, 2012). Exploratory studies are an excellent way to learn more about what's going on, gain new ideas, ask questions, and evaluate phenomena in a new light (Yin, 1994). Exploratory research typically includes literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, and case studies.

3.3. Research Approach

The researcher used a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a “subjective” assessment of a problem and takes the form of an opinion, view, perception, or attitude towards objects (that are referred to as an attribute, variable, factor, or question). Thus, the study employed a qualitative research approach.

3.4. Population of the study

The study targeted to assess the practice, challenges and opportunities of school feeding programs in terms of improving the socio economic status of women. Because of this, the researcher focused on a group of women engaged in catering in school feeding programs. However, many stakeholders have been participating in the school feeding program, target population of the study were mainly caterer mothers in public primary schools in Yeka sub-city.

There are 30 public primary schools in the sub city, and the caterer mothers were arranged in groups in each school. The Woreda Women, Children and Social Affairs Office arranged them in groups with the ratio of thirty students for one caterer woman, and a group had up to ten members of caterer. Therefore, two up to eight groups are found in the schools targeted depending on the number of students they have i.e. there are approximately 600 caterer mothers in 60 groups (Yeka Sub City Education Bureau, 2021).

Since it was difficult to involve this huge number of caterer mothers in a qualitative research, the target population of the study was only representative woman from each school. The schools' vice principals who are the concerned person of school feeding program were target population of the study. In addition to that Heads of Woreda Women, Children and Social

Affairs Office, Addis Ababa School Feeding Agency and School Improvement Program department head in the sub city level were target population of this study.

3.5. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

All Woredas under Yeka Sub City and all public primary schools are included in the study through the caterer mothers. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select the chairperson of the group among the caterer women. Accordingly, 30 women were selected from 30 primary schools in Yeka sub city in which about 600 caterer mothers who are involved in SFP. Among these 30 caterers, the researcher selected 12 women i.e. one woman in each Woreda using purposive sampling technique for in-depth interview. The rest 18 women participated in focus group discussions only (FGD).

Moreover, purposive sampling was employed in order to access knowledgeable people who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues; the researcher preferred it to select other participants of the study. Thereupon, Heads of Women, Children and Social Affairs Office in two Woredas, in Yeka sub city which are 7 and 8, Addis Ababa School Feeding Agency and School Improvement Program department head in the sub city level were selected. Purposive sampling assists the researcher in selecting the best-fit participants for the systematic investigation, it allows the researcher to produce valuable research outcomes; it leads to better insights and more precise research results(Creswell, 2012).

In addition to that, convenience sampling technique was employed to select 2 vice principals of SIP from two Woredas. Generally, the sampling techniques used in this study and the sample size taken from the target population is summarized and illustrated in the table below.

Table 3.1: Sample size of the study

Stakeholders	Target Population	Sampling Technique	Sample Size

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All 12 Weredas and all public primary schools in the sub city were under consideration in the study

Caterer mothers in school feeding program	About 60group representatives	Purposive	30 Group Representatives
Heads of Wereda Women, Children and Social Affairs Office	12		2
Director of Addis Ababa School Feeding Agency	1	Purposive Sampling	1
School Improvement Program department head in the sub city level. YekaSubcity	1		1
Vice principals of SIP	30	Convenience sampling	2
Grand Total of Stakeholders	104		36

Source: Own survey, 2022

Sample size for qualitative studies need to ensure there is enough, but not too much, data and too large (Boddy, 2016). Among the caterer mothers representatives 12 women were selected for in depth interview and 18 participated in the focus group discussion in a group of 2.

3.6. Source of Data and Data Gathering Tools

This study relied on data obtained from primary sources. Because of the data was gathered from first-hand source, it had advantage to be reliable and authentic. The researcher used observation, structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussion (FGD) were data gathering tools employed in this study.

Observation

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Observation is one of the most important research tools in the social and human sciences, having a vital role to play in helping to understand and interpret the social, cultural and economic environment (Canals, 2017). The researcher observed two primary schools namely Adwa Ber and Wotatoch Genet public primary schools located in Yeka Sub city Woreda Seven and Eight respectively , using pre-designed observation guideline to collect data how the caterer mothers cook the meal and serve the students. The food preparation and delivery process, the cooking facilities and the working condition, equipment and the working environment were observed accordingly. This enabled the researcher identify and gain an insight on social factors as well as health and wellness issues related to the labor work in the food preparation. In the observation, working relationships among the women amongst themselves as well as with other stakeholders in the program was considered.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a qualitative research method and data collection technique in which a selected group of people discuss on a given topic or issue in-depth, facilitated by a professional, external moderator (Barbour, 2014).

Before the focus group discussion was held, the researcher requested 30 participants who work as food preparers or caterers in SFP to come to the meeting hall of Wotatoch Genet primary school which is found nearby Yeka Sub City administration office adjacent to the area referred as Shola Gebeya. Since the location of this school is in the center of Yeka Sub City, all the participants came to the school on time. The researcher arranged per diem for the transportation cost of the participants in advance. The school management was courteous in arranging and facilitating vacant rooms to be used for the discussion.

This FDG was used to solicit participants' attitudes and perceptions, knowledge and experiences towards the practice, challenges and opportunities of school feeding programs in terms of improving the socio economic status of women. This data gathering instrument encouraged open conversation among the participants to take the lead and give in-depth information. Notes were taken as required to record the body language, facial expressions, and overall attitudes.

The researcher formed three groups each comprising 10 women and arranged a room to have individual discussion after giving orientation to all participants together at the meeting hall. The

discussion started at 09: 00 a.m. in the morning with the researcher as the main moderator and was adjourned at 01: 30 p.m. in the afternoon after all the participants took part and gave inputs depending on the topics and thematic areas designed to guide the discussion. Hence, each group was productive utilizing an hour each and effectively contributed to the outcome of the FDG result.

In-Depth Interview

In-depth interview is a qualitative research technique which is an open-ended, discovery-oriented method to obtain detailed information. It involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspective on a particular issue (Canals, 2017). The researcher conducted unstructured in depth interview with 12 caterer mothers who were selected purposefully out of the 30 group representative women. In the context of this study, the researcher able to view the lived experiences of the in feminist perspectives on the socioeconomic aspects examining the PESTLE analysis towards their health, economic self-sufficiency and empowerment.

Accordingly, the study explored the effectiveness of school feeding in-depth as an opportunity in terms of the socio economic benefits as well as the challenges associated with the program in the eyes of the women caterers. This enabled the researcher to gain an insight on the women's perception towards the school feeding programs in terms of the opportunities they had and challenges they faced while playing a significant role in the program.

Key Informant Interview

Key informant interviews involve interviewing a selected group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information or ideas that can be solicited by the researcher. Using semi structured interview method, the researcher carried out key informant interviews with an officer from Addis Ababa City Administration Feeding Agency, head of SIP department in Yeka Sub City, 2 representatives from Woreda Women and Social Affairs Office, 2 Vice school Principals.

3.7. Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation

Respondents 'demographic information, opportunity SFP for caterer women, challenges that the women faced in the SFP and coping mechanisms to overcome the challenges that the women

faced were entertained respectively. Since, the research design was descriptive and exploratory type, the data collected through observation, interview and FGD was analyzed and interpreted in narrative way. The data was analyzed according to the three basic questions. Under each research question, findings of the study were shown separately through the three data gathering instruments.

3.8. Reliability and Validity

The researcher adopted the instruments from different scholars work, and some of them are derived from standards used as measurement criteria for economic status. Due to this their validity and reliability are proofed; however, it was necessary to insure validity and reliability issues in different mechanism in this study. Thus, the validity and reliability test was conducted as follows:

Validity: Three approaches to validity in qualitative research are validation as investigation, as communication, and as action. Researchers rely upon experience and literature to address the issue of validity, generalization and reliability. It is specified in quantitative paradigm but confusing in qualitative one. In qualitative research validity has to do with description and explanation, and whether or not the given explanation fits a given description (Stenbacka, 2001).

The instruments used in this study were reviewed by stake holders familiar to the subject matter. Hence, the interview guides, observation and FGD tools were validated. The draft of hard copy data collection instruments were reviewed for their content validity. Hence, the items viewed as valid and acceptable and used as assessment tools.

Reliability: The term 'Reliability' is a concept used for testing or evaluating quantitative research, the idea is most often used in all kinds of research. The idea of testing in qualitative paradigm is viewed as a way of information elicitation. Therefore most important test of any qualitative study is its quality. A good qualitative study can help us to "understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing" (Eisner, 1991).

In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, different data gathering instruments i.e. observation, FGD and in- depth interview were utilized and many stakeholders were involved in the study. This enabled the researcher triangulate the reliability of the data.

Hence, on the methodological triangulation, combining the theoretical analysis, and inputs from the caterer women, the wereda officials, and the School Feeding Agency through interviews, group discussions and observations, the accuracy and validity of the findings of the research have a credible outcome.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

A number of ethical considerations were made in this study. The first was asking permission to the schools and other participants officially by giving a letter from A.A.U. to encourage voluntary participation of respondents. Participating to interviews and FGD required significant time and energy which might disrupt their regular activity. For this reason, the researcher explained the objectives and significance of the study to the respondents and allowed them to exercise their right to voluntary participation. To avoid any psychological harm, the questions were framed in a manner that are not offensive and disturb their psychological wellbeing. The participants consent was kept secured ahead of time. Their identities would be kept unanimous and their information confidential. Questions of deception are not used during the entire data collection process. Furthermore, the discretion of their responses, opinions and viewpoints is kept to the researcher as to not jeopardize harmony and working relationships of the caterer mothers amongst each other, as well as with the school administrations and the Woreda officials.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the data gathered through interview, focus group discussion and observation was analyzed and interpreted.

The research tools focused on four basic themes which deal with participants' background information or demographic characteristics; opportunity of school feeding program for caterer women; challenges that the women faced in the SFP and coping mechanisms to overcome the challenges that the women faced in SFP in public primary schools located under Yeka Sub city were presented and analyzed respectively.

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4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Interviewee)

As shown in the table below, the respondents' age ranges from twenty six to fifty five. Out of the twelve respondents seven were married, three divorced, two widowed and the one was not married. All of the respondents had children except one of the women, who have been married and divorced three times but never have any children.

Table 2 4.1.1: Respondents Background Information (In-depth Interview)

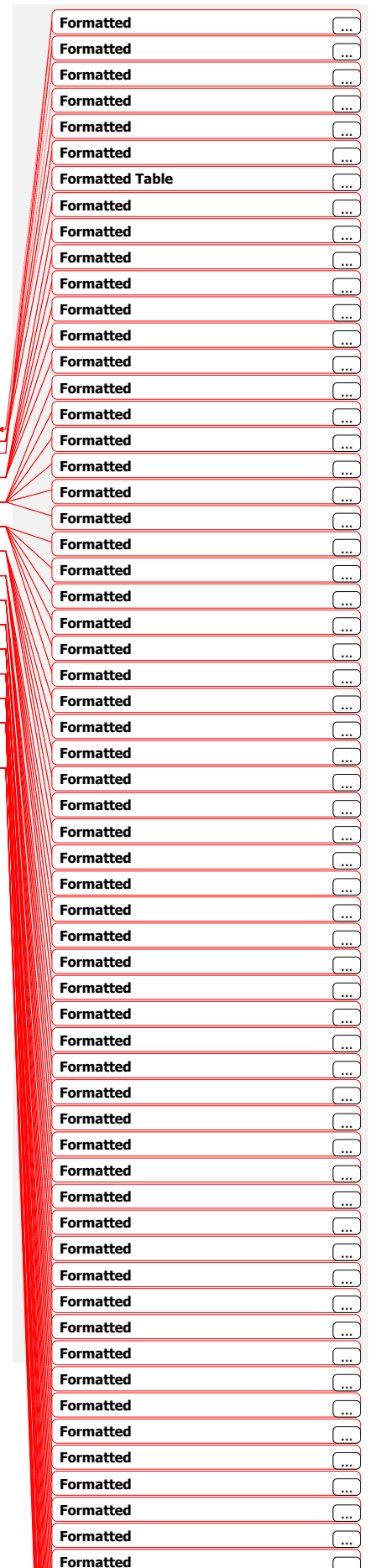
Interviewee	Age	Place of birth	Marital status	Education level	Number of children
Respondent 1.	30	Gojam	Divorced	8	1
Respondent 2.	28	Gojam	Married	10	2
Respondent 3	27	Addis Ababa	Not married	10	1
Respondent 4.	49	Shoa	Divorced	Adults' Education	Nil
Respondent 5.	39	Shire	Married	4	4
Respondent 6.	39	Mekele	Widowed	8	4
Respondent 7.	26	Werabe	Married	8	2
Respondent 8.	45	Shoa	Divorced	5	3
Respondent 9.	30	Bale	Married	10	3
Respondent 10.	32	Gurage	Married	5	4
Respondent 11.	55	Addis Ababa	Widowed	Adults' Education	5
Respondent 12.	38	Shoa	Married	6	3

Source: Own survey, 2022

In this study, the researcher organized three focus groups containing Ten caterer mothers who are working in the public primary schools located in Yeka Sub City. Members of each focus group have been given topics and had actively participating and generating ideas and responses pertinent to their experiences.

Table 3 4.1.2: Respondents Background Information (Key Informant Interview)

Interviewee	Age	Marital Status	Number of children	Educational Level
School V/ principal 1.	59	Married	4	Bachelors Degree
School V/Principal 2.	42	Married	3	Bachelors Degree
Woreda Officer 1.	38	Married	1	Bachelors Degree
Woreda officer 2.	47	Married	2	Diploma



Yeka Education Office SIP	32	Not Married	Nil	Bachelors Degree
Addis Ababab Fedding Agency officer	49	Married	2	Masters Degree

Source: Own survey, 2022

In addition to the in depth interview with the women caterers, key informant interviews made with an official from Addis Ababa Feeding Agency, SIP from Yeka sub city , two representatives from the Woreda Women, Children and Social Affairs office and Two SIPs from the schools produced a significant input for this research.

4.2. Gender and Migration

As observed from the respondents' background, out of the twelve women who were interviewed, ten of them migrated from rural regions to Addis Ababa in search of better opportunities while two respondents were born and raised in Addis Ababa. The caterer mothers came from different parts of the country from Northern, Southern and South Western regions, namely the Amhara, SNNP, and Oromia regions.

Accordingly, the discussion focuses on the women caterers and conditions affecting the migration of women and explores the lives of women who left their place of birth exploring what appears to be the push and pull factors for these women to come to Addis Ababa and start over a new life and how they perceive their lives in the urban settings.

4.2.1. Push Factors

The study revealed that various socio-cultural factors pushed the women out of their hometown and led them to migrate to Addis Ababa. These are related to the challenges that the women faced while at a very young age, gender biases, and social norms which can correspond to harmful traditional practices such as unwanted marriage, forced marriage, biases towards girls' education, gender roles, and so on. One of the respondents said:

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It's been 18 years since I came to Addis. The reason that I left my birthplace is my mother. She wanted me to stay at home and help her with the household chores and wanted me to get married when the time comes and be a good wife. I heard people talking about Addis Ababa and I decided to run away in the hope that I would get a better opportunity in Addis Ababa(Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/2021)

He pretext of school proximity was among the factors that hindered the respondent from attaining her education. Gender biases towards girls' role as being helpers of their mothers in the household chores is also reflected in how the respondent's mother perceived sending girls to school negatively. As such the respondent further explained:

My mother valued house management and cooking skills as the foundations for a better life for girls. What she envisioned for me was to get married to a man that has a good property and respect in the village. She believed that I would be more productive if I stayed at home with her and learned domestic skills. She also expected me to share responsibility as I was the only daughter in the house. The other reason as I understand now is she wanted to make me ready for my future role as a housewife because the destiny of girls in my hometown was to get married, give birth, and then serve the wills of their husbands and raise their descendants. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

According to the UNFPA report (2007) rural women, like women in general, perceive migration as way to escape traditional gender roles, gender-specific discrimination or gender-based violence. These three push factors all have a very specific dimension in rural areas. For example, in the face of numerous difficulties in securing property titles in rural areas, some women may migrate to cities where prospects to acquire property are assumed to be better (UNFPA, 2007).

I ran away and came to Addis Ababa and worked as maid for two years without a salary. When I wanted to change a house, I could not find a guarantor to be hired. Hence, I started working in TelaBet(traditional bar) in asharo(liquor ingredient)preparation. The owner of the Tela bet died of an illness and her husband and brother got into a disagreement which later escalated to a serious

quarrel over the inheritance issue. I was convicted of allying with the husband and got arrested without my fault and spend two nights in prison before I was released. This was among the hardships I faced in a new city (Respondent 12, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

According to Thanikaviel (2018), gender biases and patriarchal culture and tradition continue to exist within the household impacting women's life in public and private spheres. This social structure is pushing women in search of better environments as such Respondent number four puts her reason for moving to Addis Ababa as:

I was fourteen when my grandfather gave me up for an arranged marriage. I stayed with my husband for one year facing harassment. He was a ferocious person and he used to beat me up. I was neither happy nor comfortable with my life. Since the beating and suffering was unbearable, I escaped and went back to my grandfather and refused to return. However, every time I go back to my grandfather, he used to try to convince me telling me that all marriages are like that at the beginning and that they will get better as get used to it. After some time I was fed up and gave all my hopes up and decided to run away from everyone. (Respondent 4, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

Expectations about the attributes and behaviors appropriate to women and men are shaped by culture, tradition, and history. The general pattern is that women have less personal autonomy, fewer resources at their disposal, and limited influence over the decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives(OCED, 2011). In this regard, respondent four explained.

Women face the hurdles and complexities of life's demands in various aspects . The response received from respondent four further explained that:

I have passed through so many unpleasant situations while I was on the run looking for a better life. I have been to different cities, towns and parts of the country. I have been married and divorced two times. I was born in Shewa in a place called Jiru but moved and lived in so many towns. I have been to Addis Ababa, Asela, Hawassa, Arbaminch and then back to Addis. In search of better

opportunities in life, I have passed through lots of sufferings. (Respondent 4, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/2021)

The response of the above women indicates that while trying to win the errands of lives demands, women pass through harsh social and cultural challenges. Reflecting on whether her decision to move to different parts of the country looking for a better life was right, respondent Four puts her view as;

While looking at my past experience, I have come to realize that we portray the urban city life be more convenient, comfortable, and safe for us. We visualize only the good parts of living in the cities. But I have faced problems one after the other. Looking back at my past, I question myself as it appears to me carrying the rural burden looks better than the urban suffering. But since we do not foresee what the future holds for us, we tend to often make mistakes by considering the city life as a safe heaven(Respondent 4,interviewed at Wotatoch Genet, October/2021).

Around the world, more people are on the move than ever before. Many of them are seeking new opportunities and a better life for themselves and their families. Others are forced to move due to disaster or conflict. Gender is central to any discussion of the causes and consequences of migration, whether forced, voluntary or somewhere in between. Gender influences reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where, how people migrate and the networks they use, opportunities and resources available at destinations, and relations with the country of origin. Risks, vulnerabilities and needs are also shaped in large part by one's gender, and often vary drastically for different groups (IOM, 2022).

4.2.2. Pull factors

In some instances the study revealed that the influence or information gained from friends, family members and relatives who moved to the cities previously became one of the factors that affect women's migration. Out of the ten respondents, the three of them stated that they heard appealing stories about former friends and relatives that went to the cities and when they went back to visit their home town they used to come looking sophisticated and financially well off . Hence, the women were attracted towards the city life. One of the respondents explained;

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I came here to Addis when I was a little girl. My parents were poor and thought I would get a better a life in the city. Hence, they sent me to live with my aunt” hoping for better and modernized living conditions where by access to education, medical facilities and modern way of livelihood would be possible. (Respondent 12, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

This can be indicative of the increasing internal migrations of women in their quest to realize a better life and opportunity.

For rural women, even more so than for women in general, the decision to migrate is often highly influenced by intra-household gender relations and hierarchies. Women may have a limited role in decision-making even when it results in their so-called “independent migration” for economic reasons (Bridge, 2005). One of the described how she chose to come to Addis Ababa as:

My husband wanted to come to Addis Ababa because his brother told him that there’s a good job opportunity in the city. Therefore, he moved to Addis Ababa first and asked me to come because he did not want marriage of long distance. We came here five years ago and we did not have any children. However, the life that we encountered was not smooth because my husband could not get a good income earning job that he expected in Addis Ababa. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

Similar to the above, rural to urban migration is also been influenced by male companions decision which was followed by the women. One of the respondent told:

I came to Addis Ababa before eight years. I was living in Bale before coming here. My husband was military and he was called to be stationed in Addis. They gave us condominium therefore I ended up here following my husband. (Respondent 9, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

Hence, the reason behind the decision of the woman to leave their hometown was related to their husbands. As the other respondent explained:

My husband and I used to go to the same school when we were in our home town in Gojam. He brought the idea of going to Addis Ababa and tried to convince me to go with him. I was not convinced at first. Therefore, we agreed that he would go to Addis Ababa first and make all the necessary facilitation for me to move with him. After few months, I followed him to Addis and started living in his brother's house. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

The underlying assumption in the studies of migration has been that it is the males who look forward to amassing capital and move following this interest and the decision to migrate comes from the husbands and the women follow (Pedraza, 1991).

The other factor which was found out in this study is factors other than economic tendency can also be a reason for urban migration of the women as found out in respondent number four interview on why she preferred to come to Addis Ababa

I came to Addis Ababa when I was 16 because I was going through a severe illness and my older brother who was living in Addis Ababa asked me to come here and try following up the religious ritual of healing in Islamic Holy Water(Zemzem) because the holy water was not available in my region. I got healed from my illness but never returned to my home town because of the fear that my illness would recur. I was living with my brother and his wife babysitting their child who had a recurrent illness. I lived with them until the day my brother died and left his house because I could not get along with his widow. Then I started working as a house maid and when my uncle heard about it, he advised me to get married and arranged a marriage for me. (Respondent 10, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

The other respondent who came from the SNNPs agrees to the idea explaining how the urban setting was attractive with a wider prospect for work and better livelihood said “*I came from Worabe, Siltie region in the SNNP in search of a better life and a better job. I had lived for a long time with a relative whom I served as a house maid*”. (Respondent 7, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

For women who move rural-to-urban, migration may mean an immediate improvement of their situation, but precariousness often continues to be part of their lives. Some of them have no other choice than to live in unhygienic, crowded and dangerous urban slums (UNhabitat, 2004). In principle, these migrant women have access to better infrastructure and services in the city. Yet, poverty and the lack of social networks may limit their ability to benefit from them (I.O.M fact sheet, 2012).

4.2.32. Gendered view on the Educational background of the Caterer Women

Studies show that education has undergone significant restructuring and alterations as a concept. Previously, education was reserved for the wealthy, and those who benefited were considered fortunate. However, in recent years, education as an investment in human capital/resources has received a lot of attention, even though it is deemed expensive (Lagbo, 2012).

Education is the process by which individuals gain training to become useful members of society. It is seen as a fundamental human right for all people. Knowledge is provided to children at the kindergarten and primary stages of education, and they become intelligent and well-disciplined enough to manage their own affairs under the appropriate leadership. The means by which knowledge is conveyed allows caterer mothers to achieve self-actualization and contribute effectively to the economy. Furthermore, education helps to alleviate people's dire living conditions by making them healthier, happier, and more productive. (Lagbo, 2012).

According to the data gathered from this study, the highest educational level reached among the participants was 10th grade completion. Dropping out of school was common, it was mainly related to their need to support themselves and their family and earn income at young age. It appears that pursuing education becomes a luxury when you live in a family with low economic status. The low educational status of the women indicates their low literacy level which hinders personal growth and marketability or better job opportunities. The women understood the significance of education and they asserted that they are determined to send their kids to school and provide the support that they require as much as time money and knowledge allows them. One of the respondents pointed out that;

Education is vital for future success. Because I am illiterate, I am left with very few choices only while life offers vast opportunities to the ones that are lucky

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enough to learn in schools. I now understand that education is a tool for growth and personal development. In the urban areas, even the poorest of households understand this fact and send children to school. However, this is not true for the rural areas where by girls education is considered as a waste of time and resource as her prospective place is regarded to be in her husband's home. (Respondent 11, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

Liberal feminists believe that women should be given the same opportunities in political, economic, and educational and that they have the same mental capacity as men. For liberals the key battle is access to education because if men and women are educated equally, then it follows that they will get equal access to society.

Gendered view of girl's education, harmful traditional practices, access to school, distance , gender role and gender bias has seem to restrain women from attaining educational rights and benefits as an equal member of the society as men. This in turn limits girls from attaining a better opportunities with regards to making choices on their endeavors.

Respondent ten further states that:

I have learned up to 5th grade while I was in my home town and I couldn't continue my education because my parents wanted me to stay home and help with household chores as they think that I was a grown up woman and should start helping my mother in the household chores.(Respondent 10, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/2021).

The finding reveals that perceptions of the towards education to be very vital and they consider their lack of solid educational foundation as a factor for their current challenges in the social and economic sphere. The mothers asserted that they give special attention to their daughters' education as they are conscious of the benefits. In this regard, Respondent number 10 said:

I have a 14 years old daughter and she is one of the top students in her class. I always take care not to put a burden of work on her. Even though my daughter has three younger siblings, I make sure that she is not overly occupied with the household chores so that she gets enough time to study. However, she still renders

some helping hands as I do not have any maid or neither of my family member is helping me, I put an effort not to affect her education. (Respondent 10, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

Respondent 1 who is a mother of one daughter asserted the vision she has for her daughter to learn and get equal opportunities and competencies in her adulthood by stating:

Now I had a vision for my daughter to get a quality education support her with everything so that she gets a better education. I hope she will secure a good job and will become successful and lead a good life. I do not want her to struggle like me with smoke, fire and facing hardships in unfavorable working conditions. I ended up like this because I am not educated and hence I am only left with few options in life to earn a decent living. I want to give her windows of opportunities by supporting her in her education. Currently, she is learning in government school here with me. But my plan for the next year is to get her enrolled in a private school so that she will get quality education. And with God's help I will make it happen. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

Caterer training has an impact on vocational and livelihood skills. The ability of reading, writing, and calculating aids in the improvement of the livelihoods of those who are exposed to. A livelihood is made up of the skills, assets (both material and social), and activities needed to make a living. Livelihoods and skills training, in particular, must be customized to the current socio-economic needs of rural people, with a particular focus on disadvantaged women. As a precondition for training in livelihood or income-generating activities, literacy is required. People are encouraged not to begin training in a livelihood until they have mastered reading, writing, and calculating sufficiently to cope with the livelihood's operating and development requirements. Training in a livelihood for women who participate in food preparation has a longer-term goal (Legese, 2012)

The one thing that I found very appealing to come to Addis Ababa was the opportunity to learn. I kept imagining that Addis was a city where everyone can get an education. When I came to Addis Ababa the first thing I wanted to do was to go to school. I wanted to work during the day and learn in evening classes. After a couple of years in Addis Ababa, I finally got the chance to pursue my

education in the evening session. I started working during the day and learning at night. I reached 8th grade and took the national exam. Unfortunately, my result was not good. Hence, I quit learning and that was the end of my vision. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

The above assessments correspond to the idea that educating girls is one of the most powerful tools for women's empowerment. Education provides women with the knowledge skills and confidence they need to seek out of economic opportunities (OCED, 2011). Women tend to realize how they are left with no or little choices in life and tend to give attention towards educating their children as respondent one implied:

While most gave up on pursuing their educational one of the respondents expressed her hope in continuing her educational carrier asserting the following:

I understand that education changes lives. It makes life better and it presents you an opportunity. Since I am living with two little children, my hope has faded. Mostly, females' only chance is to finish their education and the things they want to achieve before getting married and even before giving birth because once you have children, the primary role will be to raise your kids and looking after their overall wellbeing. May be when they grow up, I will consider going to school again. (Respondent 7, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

Education has a positive effect on choosing and having a better income and .livelihood. As respondent 3 explained:

I have learned up to 10th grade. But my result on the national exam was not good. My academic performance in high school was not good at all. I did not give it the required attention because I was being carried away by the relationship with my boyfriend. Now I am paying the consequences. I have one child as a result of my relationship and I am raising my child while my boyfriend pursued his education to the college level, has a good job and got married to another woman. (Respondent 3, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

One Respondent who has never joined a formal education system further strengthens this by explaining:

In my generation and in the place where I was born, it was not surprising if parents did not send their children to school especially the girls. The schools were very far from our village. It takes more than two hours. Hence, it was difficult for parents to send their kids to school. They didn't allow the girls travel that long distance to attend school. I learned in adults' education called 'meseretetihirt' after I came to Addis Ababa. Now I can read and write thanks to the program which forced every adult to participate in the literacy campaign. (Respondent 11, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

The other respondent explained how she never pursued her education beyond 8th grade as:

Since I was the only girl in my family, I used to help in the household chores. Hence, I used to be absent from my classes frequently. I myself was not prone to learning and I preferred to stay at home because I was not comfortable going to school. (Respondent 7, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

When describing family perspectives on education and the required support, she gives her views and observations saying that “Families talk about the importance of educating both boys and girls theoretically; however, in practice they favor boys over girls and fail to allow the girls or support them by providing the necessary material and moral prerequisite”.

In contrast to the findings in Ethiopia, the Swedish Education Act specifies that all caterer mothers in Sweden are entitled and required to attend obligatory education. A fundamental premise is that education should be free, high-quality, and accessible to all people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, social rank, or geographic location (Villaneda, 2013). Nevertheless, as revealed in this study, social norms, gender roles, harmful traditional practices such as early marriage or forced marriage have hindered education opportunities of women. Low educational background in its turn affects the socio economic wellbeing of women.

4.2.43. The process to become a Caterer in SFP:

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In order to understand how much the women were economic vulnerable before they became caterer of school feeding program, it was needed to assess the selection process or how they became caterer in the job creation.

This study revealed that the caterer mothers were selected by the woreda women, children and social affairs office in their respective woredas. The office has all the relevant data pertinent to the women residents in their vicinity including their income status and unemployment. Caterers were unemployed women. That is why they were selected from the community and organized to work as a group by the respective woreda office. These caterers are responsible for procuring food items, cooking, and serving the food to the students.

One respondent spoke of how she came to know about the feeding program,

While I live in the village, I met a woman working in the Woreda women, children and youth office. She asked me where I was going and I told her that I was going to my employers' house to wash clothes. I also told her that I was in a dire financial challenge. She was shocked because she thought that I was well off in my looks. Then she asked me if I want to participate in the SFP, and I agreed. The Woreda organized us in a group of five and started the job. (Respondent 10, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

School feeding is serving as an approach in which women, preferably mothers are selected to ensure that they have a model to ensure that meals would be reasonably served to the children in a healthy and safe condition and as the same time creating employment opportunity for the women. In this regard, another respondent explained how she came to the feeding program as follows:

When I heard about the feeding program, it was a time when I was facing severe financial challenges. I was getting sick severely and had used all my savings from previous jobs to get a medical treatment. I even finished selling the few jewelries that I had and it was in the darkest of my life when I heard about the SFP. I went to approach head of the WCSA and registered as unemployed. The head informed

us about the SFP. When we informed her that we have no financial capacity, she facilitated 5,000birr loan for us from the microfinance and told us to bring kitchen utensils from our house or even borrow from a friend to start the job by feeding limited number of children. (Respondent 4, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

Background stories of the caterer mothers differ from one another. However, according to the study, most of the research participants found out about SFPs through the Woreda Women, Children & Social Affairs offices. Another respondent explained how she got the job as follows:

This is my first job. I used to visit the Woreda frequently searching for job opportunities and also to get unemployment ID. My husband was the breadwinner of the family but his income was irregular depending on many reasons. He was a daily laborer and when the construction sector was slowing down he was out of work so he was sitting idle for most of his time and days. When I asked the woreda officials informed me to join a SFP and talk to the caterers. The already established caterers asked me to make initial contribution in order to be allowed in their cooperative. I borrowed money from relatives and contributed 5000 birr and joined the work. (Respondent 7, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

One of the senior women who have spent four years on the feeding program explains how she started working under the NGO named *YenatWeg*, a school feeding initiative program by the former first lady W/ro Roman Tesfaye, wife of former prime minister H.E. Hilemariam Dessalegne.

I have worked for more than five years in this area starting with YenatWeg. At that moment the Woreda was registering women for the feeding. Many women were hesitant to join because they did not think it was worth. But I immediately went there and applied because I had no other viable options. I finished all the required criteria and started working. The Woreda assigned me with other women to this school. Now I also have a small café as a side business. I rented a small area from the school adjacent to the gate of the school compound (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

The Woreda Women's and Social Affairs Bureau takes the leading role in mobilizing and registering unemployed women and assign them when job opportunity is available. The story of another mother who have spent more than three years on the job coincides with the above. As put in her own words:

I started to work in the school feeding program starting 2011 E.C. the woreda WCSA organized us. I used to sell clothes in a boutique around an area called 22Mazoria before I came to be a caterer. The job as a boutique sales girl seems clean and high status when compared to being a cook, but the money I used to earn was for only my transportation cost. (Respondent 3, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

Out of the twelve research participants, only three women stated that they found out about the feeding program through their social networks and peer groups while majority of them mentioned how they were summoned by the Woredas to start the job. One of the who joined recently explains how she started the job as follows:

I found out about it when I used to come to visit a friend that works in the feeding program. Later on, I asked them if I could join because my husband stopped working and we were facing grave financial problems. I even asked the principal to fill me in if there was a spot in the feeding service. The members, the principal and the teachers felt sorry for me and were empathetic towards me. Especially when they saw me with my kids they were empathetic, and they facilitated for me to start working in the program. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

Head of woreda7 WCSA office was asked on the SFP in terms of job creation for the women and replied that they had records of each household and its members as the woreda divided in to ketenes. They conducted house-to-house inspection to identify the living status of the families. Based on the urgency they include the family members either in the safety net programs or women in the school feeding programs based on available space (KII, November/2021).

As the response of head of the woreda WCSA office, the caterer mothers were selected by the woreda women and social affairs office in their respective woredas. The office had all the relevant data pertinent to the women residents in their vicinity including their income status and

unemployment. Caterers were unemployed women who were selected from the community and organized to work as a group by the respective woreda office.

4.3. Opportunity of School Feeding Program for Caterer Women

Different questions were raised for participants of the study during in the interview and FGD sessions. The response replied by the participants was analyzed under the category of economic aspects and psycho- social aspects of SFP (Social Benefits) towards caterer women.

4.3.1. Economic Aspects of SFP for women

As indicated in the theoretical review, empowerment is the capacity of women to participate in and contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth (OCED: 2011).

In this regard, this study confirmed that the economic opportunities of SFP are its contributions towards the empowerment of the caterer women. The respondents of this study explained how they have been benefited from SFP in terms of income generation. Many responses correspond to the below comment from respondent one as she explains:

Women, Children and Social Affairs Office facilitated a loan for us for startup money from the micro financing loan. We were three when we started the work but as the number of students participating in the feeding increased, we were joined by more women for the cooking and now we are ten. I earn a better income than that I used to earn previously while working as a street vendor. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

Among other economic opportunities, women's ability to earn profit out of the school feeding program is regarded as a positive result. In this regard, Respondent Two mentioned;

Before I started this job, I was not engaged in any work or income generating activity and I did not have any income. I could not work because it was very difficult for me to find a job with my two little children. Therefore, when my

husband stopped giving me money, I was on the verge of going out on the streets for begging. But now after I got this job, I have started to earn an income to take care of my two little children. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

Women's empowerment relates to the ability of women to manage their lives. As such one of the respondents implied benefits that she gained from this job and the prospects for economic growth as:

I have one child and I am not married. I live with my mother and my siblings. Before I started this job, I was dependent on the financial help that I receive from my brothers. But now, I am able to contribute to my family's demands and expenses because I go out and work. I enjoy the financial freedom and the feeling of independence. (Respondent 3, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

Further to the direct economic benefits that caterer mothers gain out of the feeding program, there are intertwined advantages that come with the job as one respondent told:

I have gained a good experience from working on the feeding. If I want to open my small restaurant type of business if I can get a loan or any type of financial support, I will be able to do it much more easily and effectively because I have the hands on experience in the work plus I know where to go to fulfill the legal requirements for license issuance, registration and so on. Knowing the requirements will help me ease the hurdles. (Respondent 9, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

Similarly the other respondent adds on the psychological and emotional attachment with the children as an intangible value of the school feeding program hence explaining:

The income that I earn from this job is better than the previous job which was cleaning. Besides, it satisfies me to see the children eating food. We see them as our own because our children also learn in these public schools and are beneficiaries of the school feeding program. (Respondent 6, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

The process of empowerment is about improving women's ability to manage their own lives through increased access to key resources and activities. Empowerment represents a paradigm shift in leaders, scholars, and ordinary people's assumptions, attitudes, and values, a shift from emphasizing professional or other forms of authority. Equal and valued partnerships from keeping one's distance to working closely and collaboratively from dependency to self-help from ameliorating problems deficits or risk factors to transforming and liberating one self, organization and community towards competence and from focusing on weakness and victim-blaming to identifying developing strengths (Douglas D. Pekins; 2020). With regards to the attitude that men are breadwinners and women are supposed to take the lion's share in the domestic chores and play a major role in raising kids, respondent ten defies the perception by telling:

I have four children whom I am raising from the income that I get from the feeding. My husband does not have a job. Previously he has been working as a guard and there was a time when he got arrested because a thief got into the organization and stole some possessions. After that, we talked about it and he stopped working as a guard. He has been looking for another type of job but right now, it has been five months and he still does not have any work. Hence, I am taking full responsibility for the whole family including himself. (Respondent 10, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/2021)

The economic benefits correspond to the facilitation of the loan for the startup capital through the micro financing institutions, availability of free working premises, and free basic services and utilities such as electricity and water has created conducive environment for the women caterers to engage in the School Feeding Programs. In this regard respondent Seven told:

The Woreda facilitated some loan through the micro financing as we were required to purchase cooking utensils and also start the feeding. The payment was going to be in effect only after we accomplish the work hence the loan that was provided for us was vital as start-up money. (Respondent 5, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

The other respondent asserts that despite the little profit that she earns out of the SFP, other benefits such as having meals at the school, taking away left over foods for home consumption has alleviated some of her economic problems. As such she explains:

Education is free and when the free school meal provision started it was even more beneficial for me because my expenses were alleviated. My daughter and I get free meals at the school and sometimes I may even be able to take some leftover food ration home so that we can serve it for dinner. Therefore the only thing that I need to worry about is paying for house rent which I take care of by the income that I earn through the feeding. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

Hence, the caterer mothers who have kids benefit from the school feeding program as their children were beneficiaries of the school feeding program in addition to the job creation opportunity for their mothers. Other respondent said:

I thank God that I got this job now. I have been on this job for the past two years. There was a time when I was facing a crucial economic challenge as I got separated from my husband and I had nowhere to go and nothing to feed my small children. When you have little kids, no one wants to hire you because they do not want to tolerate your kids or they would think that you would not be effective on your work because you have children distracting you or requiring your time and attention (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October/ 2021)

From the respondents' response, it was evident that the school feeding program has carried economically vulnerable women out of dire economic problems by way of income generation. Women's economic empowerment is one of the most important factors contributing to equality between men and women. Gendered power structures and social norms lock women in positions that limit their productivity and ability to make choices to improve their situation (Thanikaviel&Priya, 2018).

4.3.2. Psycho- Social Aspects (Social Benefits) of SFP

Community engagement helps the SFP linking the school community, parents and students and who are engaged in the procurement of food commodities, preparation and service of the meals play a pivotal role for the effective implementation of the SFP. This research assessed the social issues encompassed in the sector with particular reference to the caterer mothers. The way of lives, values, cultures and traditions are reflected in various forms in the lived experiences of the subjects of the study. In reference to the some of the social issues that arise, one of the respondents explained:

I used to work in street vending before I became part of this job. When I got divorced from my husband, I went and informed the office of the WCSA and they listed me on their unemployed women list. This is a very good job, when conflicts arise or when disagreements occur, we sit down and discuss to solve our problems. We have a meeting every ten days and we discuss all our concerns. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

The other respondent who has a long experience in the SFP expressed her fear and pre caution that she takes with regards to conflicts and squeamish within her team:

As a chairperson of the group, I try to fairly manage the work and the relationship among us. We do not want things to escalate and turn into hatred and revenge. We work in a very volatile environment, fire, hot things etc. Hence it is important to keep ourselves and our emotions calm. Not to become emotionally driven and unstable .We heard a sad story that a caterer woman killed one of her colleague with a knife due to a grudge following wary quarell. We do not want that kind of accident that has happened in other associations to happen to us. Therefore it is very important to avoid exacerbation of disagreements. (Respondent 3, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, October / 2021)

Similarly, the other respondent further explained how they are trying to harmonize their work environment and she told;

We have women coming from different ages and backgrounds. For example, we have one old woman amongst us. We assign her jobs which does not require much labor work and which are light and can be done while sitting for example skinning onion. We have a member who comes with two small children who are not old enough to go to school. We understand her situation because she cannot keep her children anywhere else. Therefore, we arrange a sleeping place as conditions permit. Even though the kitchen is very small in size and not convenient for children, we don't have any other choice. If someone slows down, start doing it myself, and when they see that they will feel embarrassed to sit down and will start working. (Respondent 8, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

Supporting this idea, one of the respondents puts her thought mentioning that women who have little kids face challenges in terms of finding any type of work because having the children around appears to be regarded as an obstacle to most employers.

Women who do not have children can have an opportunity to work on other things as they have better options because when you have kids that you need to carry everywhere you go, no one wants to hire you or give you a job. Washing clothes or cleaning houses is an option for women who are not educated. But that even become a luxury when you have kids. After all, kids are considered an inconvenience. I was desperate. I had the responsibility to feed my children. The loss of weight and malnutrition was started to show on their face and body. It was a difficult time but I have passed it because I got lucky to get into this SFP and started to feed my kids and myself. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

It was stated that social protection enhances the capacity of poor and vulnerable people to escape from poverty and to better manage risks and shocks. Social protection measures include public work schemes such as the safety net program in Ethiopia which is believed to reduce gender inequalities in the household in the labor market and at the community level (OCED, 2011).

I live near Shola Gebeya. I was born here in Addis and I live with my mother. She owns the house. So I have no rent expenses. I have brothers and sisters living

under the same roof as our mom. My siblings work and they earn an income. We contribute to the running cost of the house and also help our mother with her expenses. (Respondent 3, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

In regard to the location of their work place, the respondents agree that proximity of their house to their work area is a positive factor. To support this, Respondent One told;

The closeness of the school to my house makes it convenient for me. Before I joined this group I was working in the safety net program for three years as street cleaner. Since the maximum year to be included in the safety net programs is 3 years, I became idle after I finished my term. But got into this program and started working again. My daughter learns in this school. Hence, we walk to school together and get back home together as the school day ends. (Respondent 9, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

In reference to the relationship among the colleagues in the school feeding program, respondent Four mentioned that even though they sometimes go through disagreements, the relationship among them shows an improvement through time.

At the beginning, we did not know each other and we did not feel comfort with each other. Even if we notice some people lagging on the job, we used to remain silent in the fear of one another. I was not at ease expressing my ideas and views candidly even if I see things that makes me unhappy. But after sometime, we started becoming close to one another. We started expressing our feelings freely. If we think someone is not working appropriately and if is becoming a burden on someone else, we candidly point out our concern so that she improves. (Respondent 8, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

In reference, to the gender roles and spouse expectations regarding the women engaged in this job, respondent ten told;

My mother came from the rural region to babysit my fourth and little child. However after my husband stopped his work, he took the responsibility of taking care of our little daughter staying at home. He is doing a good job and does not

show me any impatience. He seems content with the arrangement. Since it was his decision to quit his job, he never tries to put any blame on me. (Respondent 10, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022).

Result of Observation, FGD and Key Informant Interview towards Opportunity of SFP

Caterer mothers who participated in two FGD mentioned and agreed that they gained so many opportunities from SFP. For example they listed that networking, the peer support amongst each other, the experiences gained from attending various meetings among themselves and with the school administration and the woreda as positive aspects. According to their response, the job creation enabled them generate income and support their family and themselves. This was the most economic benefit they have got from SFP. They considered proximity of the school locations to their houses was also one of the benefits they gained from the program. Moreover, mothers with little children have the option to bring their kids to work which has become a major advantage to the working mothers.

Moreover, KII was carried with heads of woreda WCSA. Woreda 7 Head of WSA was asked if she considers the job creation for the caterer helps the women in self-empowerment. She was also asked about the opportunities of SFP for the caterers. The responses imply that improved economic status of women who are engaged in the school feeding program is being witnessed(KII, WSA, Woreda 7). She also explained that positive physical changes in the overall well-being of their children as well as the mothers themselves is observed. According to the Woreda Head, caterers are getting a good amount of profit out of the feeding. States that *“The women who have been working for the past few years still continue to work despite the complaints arisen from them sometimes. Furthermore, many more women still request to be assigned in the SFPs (KII, WSAO, Woreda 8).*

A key informant interview made with two vice principals from Wotatoch Genet and Adwa Ber Public Primary Schools indicate that the caterer mothers have gained various socio-economic opportunities. Among the benefits they listed, the vice principal of Adwa Ber mentions:

The job opportunity and the income that the caterers were generating was the one and at most chance for these vulnerable women. The job had very good opportunity for the women no matter about the job's profitability. Since majority of the caterers has children in the school, we know the before and after differences in the women's economic background (KII, Adwa BerPrincipal).

The principal of Wotatoch Genet Primary School explains:

It shows that the women and their children had been suffering from poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Before the government sponsored the SFP, mini school feeding program was carried out in some schools with the support of the school community and some donors in order to provide meal for few students. At the time, children of these caterer mothers were included in the feeding program because of they were vulnerable. Even the teachers used to contribute from their salary.

The researcher observed the working places of caterer mothers in two schools namely Adwa Ber Public Primary School and Wotatoch Genet Public Primary School located in Yeka Subcity Woreda 7 and 8 respectively. Though there were so many things needed to improve related to the kitchen and materials used to prepare the meal, the caterer mothers were interested in doing the job. They wore their aprons on top of their cloths, they were communicating very well one another and with the school community including students at breakfast and lunch time.

According to a study by Almaz (2019) found that SFP produces a job for a jobless mother, which is consistent with our study. For kids who are learning with their families and do not have access to food, SFP is vital.

The response of key informant interviewees i.e. deputy director of Addis Ababa School Feeding Agency and SIP department of Yeka Sub City confirmed that SFP has been a means of job creation for unemployed women. According to the SIP, in Yeka subcity alone there are about 750 to 800 women assigned in SFP. Up on them the school feeding program has widespread benefits not only for the students but also for the caterer mothers since it brings economic and psycho-social opportunities for them.(KII, SIP, Yeka Sub City). In the City of Addis Ababa, the women who are engaged in SFP are approximately 10,000 according to the information received from the Feeding Agency (KII, Feeding agency, Addis Ababa).

Generally, this research assessed the economic opportunities of school feeding programs provide in terms of the perspectives of the women caterers who are involved in the preparation of school meals. In this regard, various factors were raised and discussed. Micro financing loan opportunities for a startup capital, availability of working premises without rental fees, provision of free utilities such as electricity and water were raised as favorable conditions for theas pertinent to the SFP. Moreover, the job creation opportunity of the SFP enabled unemployed women to generate income by working as providers of school meals to the students

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1. PESTLE Analysis towards Opportunity and Challenges of SFP for Caterers

PESTLE analysis forms the basis for the identification of the opportunities and the threats or challenges. PESTEL analysis factors are: Political, economic, socio cultural, technological, environmental and legal factors provide a framework to analyses and categories environmental influences impacting upon public health (Abhishek, 2013).

The common question mentioned in both sessions i.e. in the interview and FGD was the one designed to assess the political, economic, Social, technological, legal and environmental factors on the opportunity and challenges of SFP. The response of respondents shown under each category as follows:

5.1.1. Political Factors

Under the political factor, selection process, the process of forming cooperatives (Organization), political stability/ instability, the issue of corruption were assessed in order to understand how they see the SFP from the caterer women's perspectives.

Regarding to the selection process and the process of forming cooperatives or groups in this job, respondent eight explained and many of others also confirmed;

Before the WCSA of the woreda accepted us as caterers, they interviewed us about why we wanted the job and told us, briefed us on what the job require, dedication and integrity, full day commitment, empathy etc. as we will be dealing with the health and safety of children. We agreed to it and started fulfilling the required document such as ID card etc. Then, they arranged us in groups in the schools where our children are learning. Currently the WCSA office substitutes another woman when the one resigns. (Respondent 8, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

She also explained how the political stability/ instability affect their job particularly and the lives of caterer mothers generally;

The school feeding program was in Addis was started when Ato Hailemariam Desalegn was a prime minister. During that time, the first lady initiated and the program was started; however, only some students who were selected as the poorest were benefited. Among 1000 and more students, up to 150 or 200 students got the service in a school. We there were only 2 or 3 in a school. Followed by the reform in the government of our country in 2019, the cabinet of Addis Ababa city administration has approved the establishment of Students Feeding Agency on December 14/2019. Then, the school feeding program scaled up and all the students as they like as they want involved in the program. Many caterers added and they joined the program. Now, there are 20 caterer mothers in our school in two groups. (Respondent 8, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

Similarly, the other respondent further explained how the political circumstances has an influence on the status and implementation of the SFP mentioning her experience and elaborating as:

Not only the political instability as a whole in the country affects our income, the program change in the school also affects our income as well as our live. I remember that the school was closed for two days when Artist Hachalu was killed. We have no payment for the days the school closed. Sometimes, the school may have its own program to close the school like teachers' conference etc. So we get the payment for only the days that we give the service. Since I have not any other income, it can't afford even half of my expense. If it is permanent monthly income or salary, we can get the payment regularly whether we work or not. (Respondent 11, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

Caterer mothers who participated in different groups of FGD also discussed and replied the same question as the interviewees. Their response about the selection process of the women for being caterer in the school feeding program was similar with the response of the interviewees. As they told, majority of the caterers were selected by the office of wereda WCSA from the list where the women's profile described before the job was created. These women were identified as unemployed and they were vulnerable of lack of food and had lived in poverty. The newly joined caterers of SFP apply to get any job describing their living standard. Then leaders of 'Ketena'

give their witness to the office of woreda WCSA about the newly applicants, and the priority has been given for these women in the substitution as the vacancy is available if their problem is persuasive.

Up on the discussion theme of the caterers' FGD, the political stability/ instability has a great impact on their job and the income they generate. For example the rumor that was spread in the city as the food poisonous happened in one school highly affected the SFP in all schools for a few days. At that time, many parents of the students ordered the children to take their own meal from home. Because of this, too much meal was remained and returned to the kitchen since many students stopped getting food from the school feeding immediately as they heard the rumor though we prepared the meal considering all the students as usual.

The women in their discussion also explained that there has been an issue of corruption a little bit in the selection process of caterers. According to their response, nepotism and cronyism types of corruption were committed not only by the ketena leaders but also by the heads of woreda WCSA office. Some leaders favor for their relatives (nepotism) or personal friends (cronyism) which are illegitimate private gain in the job creation. They said that there were many women who had been in a house made from plastic known as 'Shera Bet' in Amharic with their kids. But they didn't get the chance to be caterer despite the woredas should give priority for them instead of selecting the persons who had 'Yekebele Bet' or house of 'KirayBetch' and even their own house.

5.1.2. Economic Factors

In the economic aspect, start-up capital or loans, menu of the feeding and its consideration of the price paid per student, the price fluctuation, input supply, the income that the women had been generating from the program and other issues were assessed.

The respondents stated that the purchasing process is carried out by two women who jointly take the responsibility, to buy the required items from designated bodies such as the cooperatives association and also from other whole sellers when buying the items that are not available in the cooperatives selling center. According to the respondents, the study found out that the purchasing process has a similar pattern and standard. The necessary raw materials for the cooking are bought every two weeks.

I am the chairwoman. We have a vice and also a secretary. The secretary and one more people go to the market to buy the food stuff. They bring receipts and also write down the items and brief us. We choose amongst us and 2 people go out for the shopping. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

The feeding Agency has set a budget for the SFP based on a price of meal per student and that is twenty birr .In reference to the twenty birr feeding cost per child, the told:

The price set and money allocated for feeding per child is very small. The assigned money which is twenty birr per child for breakfast and lunch service is inadequate. We buy all the food items for the feeding such as bread, sugar, eggs, rice, macaroni, teff flour, cooking oil and all the required food ingredients with market price and we cook and serve the meal to the students. We often face financial constraints because of the minimal profit margin when we calculate our revenue and expenses. (Respondent 4, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

The other problem raised by the respondents as an economic challenge was the price fluctuation of the market which affected procurement of food items for the feeding. In this regard respondent nine told:

Inflation affects our income because the price is set at the beginning of the budget year and there are changes in the dynamic current market value and economic situation. The price fluctuation and continuous increment is making it so hard for us to sustain the program. It is a well-known fact that cost of food items is increasing every month. As segments of the society living under vulnerable economic circumstances, we are dealing with our problems to address win the hurdles of life and its challenges day after day. (Respondent 9, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

In the school feeding, this study learned that the women caterers are responsible for procuring the food items, cooking and serving two meals per day; breakfast and lunch, to the students. For the two meals procurement of food items and service, caterers receive twenty birr per student per day. This budget implies that caterers receive ten birr/ meal. In line with this respondent six explains;

I gave birth while I was young. I have been widowed since 2008 and I'm still a single mom. I took sole responsibility for raising my children alone. The financial burden is on me. Even though I used to earn a living through feeding and were able to raise my children, nowadays it is becoming challenging as the price of everything is soaring high due to inflation which is affecting my income. (Respondent 6, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

The other challenge was in reference to adherence to the standard menu while preparing the meal. Menu was issued to all schools and were obliged to follow the menu for preparing food. The schedule for breakfast and lunch service for the five school days a week was outlined and distributed to all public primary schools throughout Addis Ababa. However, the caterer mothers explained that the menu does not correspond to the set price per child which was twenty birr for breakfast and lunch service per one child. In this regard, respondent nine told:

We are required to prepare food in accordance with the menu. I do not believe that enough market studies were made when laying out the meal plan. For example, in one of the days, we are required to cook food with one boiled egg in it. The cost of one egg already consumes half of what is budgeted for us. How does anyone expect us to follow the menu which is very unrealistic and unfair? It becomes impossible to afford to buy even some of the required ingredients. (Respondent 9, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

The SFP committee used to record the number of students who received the service daily and then the school paid the amount every ten days based on the number on the report. Hence, this was one of the major concerns that the caterers raised as serving two meals in accordance with the menu with that amount of money poses a dire financial challenge. In line with this respondent four further explained;

We used to buy bread for breakfast service from Sheger Bread suppliers because of the practical cost and price. However, there were complaints from the school administration and the parent, teacher, students' association (PTSA). They told us to buy from other vendors stating the quality of the Sheger bread was very low and the size was small as well. But this is a government endeavor to reach out for

the vast majority and utilizing that opportunity should not have been a big concern from their side. (Respondent 8, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

Almaz (2019) in her study made on the school feeding programs determined that the money allocated for the cooker was insufficient. Hence, she considers the long-term viability of school feeding as jeopardized by a number of factors. SFP planners and organizers face a variety of obstacles, including food price inflation and fluctuation, environmental and agricultural changes, and program cost effectiveness.

The other challenge raised by the women was interruption of basic services and utilities such as electric power and water supply. In this regard, respondent two told;

Free provision of the utility services is one of the benefits that we gain in this program. But discrepancies arise as these services get interrupted. It cost money and it also affects the flow of our work and process. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

Regarding sustainability of the income generation, the findings of this study showed that they were concerned by the nature of their income which was dependent on the school year and academic calendar of the students. They remain on the job only when schools are open. Hence, in winter breaks and other school closures, the school feeding program halts. Respondent four explains the effect of school closures on their economic situation as;

During winter time, we do not have any income means and it is a difficult period of the year for us. When it is school year, we do not have to worry about feeding our kids because they receive breakfast and lunch service at their schools; however, we are required to feed our kids at home during winter breaks because school is closed. On top of that, we stop working as our work is dependent on the school year. We also have other expenses to cover and hence winter breaks come with its own challenges and problems in terms of our financial capacity. Moreover, there is a new-year holiday, and it is also school opening time. Now since the government is providing uniform and school supplies, the burden is lesser. However, lack of consistency of the work leaves us unsecured and constrained. (Respondent 5, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

The other challenge raised by thewith regards to the income and their economic status was unforeseen occurrences such as the covid 19 pandemic which left them out of work as all the schools were shut down by the government decree as a precaution for the prevention and control of covid 19. One of the respondents remembers how this unforeseen situation caused a problem on their livelihood as;

When school was closed, I was facing severe economic challenges because I lost my source of income which was dependent on the school feeding program. On top of that, I was responsible to feed and take care of four children who have previously been fed at the schools. This put a double burden on me because my kids lost their chances of getting food at the school while I lost my source of income. (Respondent 6, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

The nature of the income generating activity of thewas affected as it depends on the school opening, number of students and frequency of the feeding. Concerning this Respondent nine explained;

Even after the schools partially opened, number of children that we feed per day declined because the students were learning in shifts. When we feed less number of students the income that we earn decreases. This is due to the effect of COVID-19, but the hope that everything will return to normalization kept us continue. (Respondent 9, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

While assessing the challenges, this study found out that out of the twelve caterer mothers nine of them gave particular attention to the taxation system in which they are required to pay as a turn over tax for the business or IGA they engage on. One of the respondents explained;

The money allocated for the feeding is not adequate and on top of that, we are required to pay taxes from the small income that we generate from the feeding. I hope the government bodies will be considerate and devise compensation means for us. (Respondent 12, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

Vitória et al. (2017), said in their study that the cost and cash flow shortfall of SF is a key concern for governments and other stakeholders involved in the feeding program. Other expenses such as food administration, logistics, and control, in addition to the cost of the food, place a financial strain on the government and other agents involved in school feeding. In the context of Ethiopia, the KII and FGD participants of the three schools agreed that the increase in the price of food, the spontaneous start of school feeding without a well-designed and planned program, the lack of fulfillment of the necessary materials for food preparation, the fact that schools still do not have adequate feeding facilities, the cutoff of electric power and water, and the lack of regular control and coordination by higher officials are all issues that need to be addressed.

The above-mentioned problems, in this report, need attention to ensure the program's long-term viability. On the other side, the Ministry of Education established many plans in 2012, including the National School Health and Nutrition Strategy, which declares that every kid has the right to access health and nutrition services, particularly for poor and vulnerable children. In addition to that, Education Sector Development Program V (ESDP V) states that improving access to better health nutrition services for school-age children is a priority, the country's National School Health and Nutrition Strategy aims to assist school children by ensuring access to better quality education and providing opportunities for a better life. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education drafting of a strategic document, as well as the beginning of school meals in all government schools in Addis Ababa. It is a positive start and demonstrates the government's endorsement of the program. Because of the rising price of food materials, what was planned no longer works with the current pricing, the number of children in need of food assistance is considerably higher than can be handled, and there is a lack of stakeholder participation (Sertse, 2019).

The other issue raised by the caterers as a challenge is lack of suppliers' chain. A study on SFP in Ghana, supports the findings of this study. It appears that due to a cash flow mismatch, caterer women in Ghana have suffered economically. Access to products is difficult for caterers: and there is no system in place to help caterers and farmers negotiate (Gelli, Masset, & Folson, 2016).

In reference to shortage of market suppliers' linkage, the study found out that consumers' cooperative associations were required to supply food items to the caterer women. However, the respondents explain;

We buy the food items from business owners with no discounted price. We were supposed to get the required food items from the consumers' associations. However, since they do not hold up enough stock and variety, we are forced to purchase the materials from the market. This is a disadvantage for us because we buy the items with much more price than the planned (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022).

In addition to the interviewee caterers, the women in FGD described how the SFP benefited them in terms of income generation which in turn helped in their economic empowerment and self-sufficiency. However, this did not imply that the SFP was all that and without shortcomings. The women in FGD explained different factors that they consider as challenges while engaged in the program pertinent to their economic situation. Most of the discussed issues in this section related to market price fluctuations, continuous inflation, shortage of raw materials with cooperatives' markets, limited stock of items or ingredients for food preparation, maintaining the standard menu with the set price of twenty birr per child which was ten birr for breakfast and ten birr for lunch, payment in accordance with the attendance of the number of children fed in the day, shortage of electricity which incurs additional expense for fire wood , being out of work during winter and other school breaks, discrepancies in startup capital are worth mentioning. Moreover, lack of financial literacy of the caterers and inconsistent and unsustainable income are raised as challenges on the job which will be discussed in this section.

Regarding to procedure of the payment a few caterers expressed their dissatisfaction as they normally prepared the food assuming the presence of all the students who were interested and included in the SFP. Up on their response, they could not be able to know the exact number. Students might be absent due to so many reasons, but the caterers couldn't be sure, so the number of meals required in the program was prepared for the total students. When a student gets absent the prepared food was remained. Hence, the procedure was a disadvantage for the caterers. Some of the participants in the group discussion said this issue happened in their school

as the program was launched, and it was solved after a discussion with the school administration. The principal understood the caterers' concern and started paying them according to the total number of students unless there was a significant variation of dropped out students or those who stopped getting service from SFP.

Regarding the payment the principal of Adwa Ber discussed about his opinion on the fund provided for the school feeding program and on the payment procedures for the caterers. Accordingly, payment is issued to the caterer mothers every ten working days which makes the payment twice a month. This means the caterers are paid every two weeks for the ten days feeding schedule. However, there's a discrepancy regarding the implementation of the payment procedure as the principal indicated. The payment was made based on an attendance of the students who received the feeding service only. Hence, when there were students who are absent, they had been marked on the attendance as absent and payment would not be issued. The reason these principals raised to do this was the caterer mothers used the remaining food for themselves and they also used to take leftovers to their home. However, this procedure had been a source of complaint from the they cook the meal based on the total number of students.

Similar experiences show in the payment structure in the Eastern Region and Greater Accra region. When caterers were asked how much money they'd need to give the recommended portions of vegetables and protein, most caterers said they'd need at least twice as much as they were getting now, because veggies and protein servings are more expensive to procure and employ in meals. This makes it difficult for them to live a comfortable life, and as a result, their income has been decreasing for a long time (Owusu-Amankwah, 2019).

Due to late and irregular payments for their services from the Ghanaian government, caterers in all regions of the country are having difficulty purchasing food and preparing school meals. When the GSFP was founded in 2005, the Dutch government provided approximately 60% of the funding, which was distributed to caterers in two-week increments. However, it has failed to provide timely and consistent payments since 2010, when the Dutch government stopped supporting school food and the GSFP became solely supported by the Ghanaian government. Delays of three months or longer are common today. Sometimes the delay lasts up to eight months. This makes it difficult for

them to live a comfortable life, and as a result, their income has been decreasing for a long time (Sanogo & Lee, 2015).

5.1.3. Social Factors

Under social factor, education and trainings factors, inter relationships, communication & harmony and health condition of the caterer mothers were assessed. Under this category, the researcher assessed how other stakeholders took their role and how they were supporting the SFP.

i. Training and Awareness Creation

Respondents explained that training on hygiene, dress code, food preparation and presentation is provided by the woreda women, children and social affairs office. Up on them, the woreda supports them in getting the required trainings on kitchen management and hygiene, meal preparation, business management and savings. Special training was also delivered during corona on how to prevent COVID-19 infection by taking the necessary health and hygiene precaution. In this regard, respondent three discussed on how the training was significant for her saying that:

I have gained a good awareness on areas that I have never been familiarized with such as business management and savings. Hence, combining it with the practical experiences that I am gaining, I might be able to start my own small business in catering or preparing traditional food stuff such as shiro and berbere for the market. (Respondent 3, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

Caterers are responsible for cooking the food and serving it to the students. Given their assignment, they are expected to be trained on basic cooking skills, kitchen management and hygiene and also since they work as business groups, they would benefit from trainings on business management (Melat, 2020).

ii. Gender and Health

This study found out that there were many health issues surrounding the lives of women who engaged in the preparation of meals in the school feeding schemes. The physical toll that the

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task puts on these women was exacerbated by unfavorable and hazardous working conditions which have negative health implications.

Provision of water was also reported to be a problem in Adwa Ber School. The women explained that due to shortage of water supply in and near the kitchen area, they were obliged to fetch water in containers from distant locations within the school premises. Water is vital component for meal preparation, cleaning the dishes and cooking utensils. Ensuring the hygiene of the food entails the health of the students. Hence, lack of convenient and easily accessible water source is an area of the concern for the women. Out of the respondents, one of them reported that *she has back pain problems due to heavy lifting and in the due process of procurement of materials, transportation and preparation and service of the food.* (Respondent 4, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

The other problem mentioned by the caterer mothers was the amount of smoke that they are exposed to during the cooking process as they use burning wood fire as a fuel. The women expressed their fear of acquiring illnesses related to smoke they often prepare food using firewood as well as the physical toll that the work creates as they carry heavy weights. In this regard, respondents told:

Smoke problem is alarming to our health. The job requires an intensive labor. As for me, I am strong and that I am performing it efficiently. However, the work requires full health and effort. The smoke is dangerous to our eyes, and also we are prone to breathing problems. (Respondent 3, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

Similar to this Respondent Seven explained;

One of my eyes has an underlying health issue and I worry that the smoke will affect my other eye too. My colleagues usually assign me on tasks such as dish washing, peeling vegetables and the like so as to avoid exposure to the excessive smoke when cooking the meals. (Respondent 7, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

The study reveals that shortage of electricity and lack of adequate electric power are considered as hindering the smooth operation of the tasks, according to the caterer women. The stoves fall short of power and they use fire woods for cooking and also for baking injera. These activities are supposed to be carried out using electric stoves. This poses health hazards in addition to the financial burden that it puts on the women. Similarly, Respondent Four mentioned that they use burning wood to cook the food due to power shortage. *“We can’t use a stove as the electric power does not support the stove. This has caused problems related to my eye. (Respondent 4, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)*

The study found out that there were health workers assigned to inspect the feeding in the school. However, the caterer women’s perception towards the assigned health workers is that;

They show up sometimes and I feel like they are here for the reporting purpose only with no productive outputs. They do not give any attention to our problems. Their concern is the students and feeding related to the students. We are forgotten and not important.(Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

One of the caterers who had a 1 and ½ years old boy expressed:

I carry my small child on my back while I am on duty. I do not want the other women to consider me as unproductive and hence I try putting on every effort to get the job done. But this is putting a toll on my back and feeling the intense pressure and pain. (Respondent 7, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

Most of the participants share the idea that they are working in a risky environment, around fire smoke. They consider their work as challenging catering the needs of hundreds of students. The risks of getting ill from the smoke and also injuries are much likely. They also share the psychological problems of the children coming from economically vulnerable families.

When a hungry youngster’s stomach grumbles for food and there’s nothing to eat, it’s difficult for him or her to concentrate in class; on the other hand, food caterers who try to feed the child carry a psychological burden(Lagbo, 2012).

Good hygienic procedures in food establishments are crucial to protect consumers from food borne illness, and caterers can also avoid sickness if they are properly managed. Food handlers

must have the relevant knowledge and abilities to implement these measures, which is required in the school setting by general hygiene rules. The inherent problems in retaining a well-trained work force of food handlers with the knowledge and skills necessary to proper hygiene procedures are exacerbated by certain aspects of the Portuguese catering business. Food service providers must invest in training and instruction to ensure that their employees have the awareness and information necessary to comply with food hygiene regulations, even if this does not always result in a positive shift in food handling behavior (Martins, Hogg, & Otero, 2012).

To summarize, the study revealed that there are number of issues that correspond to the health of the caterer mothers such as smoke related risks in terms of breathing illnesses or eye problems. The other issue is back pains associated with carriage of heavy weights. In addition, mothers with small children carry their children on their back while working leaving their backs susceptible to back pains. The other issue raised as a risk factor was injury and burns as they work around huge fires and hot boiling water and food.

According to (WHO, 2022), doing gender transformative health research policy, making program design and care requires gender equity measures in terms of health initiatives.

iii. Working Relationships

As indicated in the literature review of the study, implementation of school feeding programs vary in context. This comes with a broad spectrum of challenges depending on various socio cultural factors. This section of the study analyzes the working relationships of the caterer mothers, relations with the PTA, parents and school administrators, the working environment and contentious issues are discussed and explored.

The time of reporting for duty of the women at the schools is 6:30 a.m. as they have to reach very early in the morning to prepare breakfast for the students before class time. Some of the respondents said that they have to wake up their kids very early in the morning and take them to school with them as they cannot leave them behind with no one to look after them. Two of the respondents said that they have children who are in the age range of 7-15 and they take care of themselves and go to school without the help of their mothers or any other relative.

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Regarding spouses and when asked on the role of their husbands respondent ten said that her husband is unemployed because he got terminated from his job as a security guard due to an alleged disciplinary offense and hence, the family depends on the income generated by her. This became more challenging as the mother of her spouse came to stay with them in a small room with her.

In regards to challenges related to the working relationships among the caterer mothers, one of the respondents said:

On top of the challenges of the work itself, we pass through various disagreements and quarrels among ourselves. Since we come from different backgrounds and also with different age groups make us prone to behavioral mismatches and misunderstandings. Among the areas of contentions, division of work by itself becomes source of disagreement. Some are hard workers while others try to take advantage of it. This sometimes creates a rift among us. (Respondent 7, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

The other issues raised by the respondents were absenteeism from work and late reporting for duty. With regards to this many of the caterer mothers share the opinion of Respondent one as told:

Our work requires efficiency and punctuality because we deal with students. We are required to make the meals ready for the students in accordance with the time allotted without any discrepancy because any delay or discrepancy would mean that the children will get hungry. On top of this, their class schedules will be affected if we do not avail the required service on time and that is unacceptable. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

In addition to the above points of contention, the study revealed that the caterer women's outlooks and tolerance level towards the students becomes source of disagreement among themselves. In this regard, respondent one told;

Although most of the caterer mothers are caring and empathetic towards the students, I have noticed one of the women who gets annoyed with the children as

they sometimes fail to line up and keep their queue to take their meals from us. Treating the children in a harsh way is something that I cannot tolerate. Hence, it becomes a source of quarrel. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

One of the respondents told that despite the positive working relationships and benefits of the women who are socially related in this job, it appears that gossiping and side taking sometimes affect the viable environment. She tells her experience as;

I joined the feeding one year ago. The other women already worked on the job for about four years. When I first started working here, the women used to talk behind me they were saying that one of the women was relative of mine because we came from the same region and that she wanted me join for that reason. But the real story is that she saw me suffering and did not want me end up on the streets with my kids. While that was the reality, some of them chose to pass unfounded gossips about me. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

The same respondent explains that since she could not afford to hire a babysitter for her two kids, she brings them to her work place. She said;

Sometimes, having the children around and working becomes difficult because some of the women get agitated when my kids run around or when they disrupt asking me for a breastfeeding. One day, my child accidentally spilled the teff flour on the floor and one of the women yelled at him so loudly and he was traumatized. The women have children too I really do not understand why they were not empathetic and understanding. I still am trying to manage against all the odds. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

In reference to the adherence to the standard, the explained that they sometimes face complaints from the Parent, Teachers and Students Association (PTSA) and the school administration. In relation to this respondent eight told:

The issue of adherence to the set menu gets us in trouble with the stake holders because sometimes it gets very challenging to meet all that is written on the menu. Especially at the current market price, we face serious difficulties related to hyper price inflations and also shortage of food ingredients and no one is willing to understand our struggle. (Respondent 8, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

The study reveals that the experience challenges coming from various actors in the implementation of the program. In support of this point respondent nine further affirms;

Sometimes, it seems that everyone in the school is our regulatory body. While there's a feeding committee comprised of all the required stake holders, other teachers and support staffs act as our supervisors ordering and instructing us on how to do our job and this makes us frustrated because it feels like we are being looked down while we need to get the respect for the significant contribution that we are making for the successful implementation of the school feeding. (Respondent 9, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

The other respondent (three) shared her feelings on the challenges caterer mothers face when encountered with parents who do not understand our work and who have a difficult temperament to deal with. Hence, she shared her feeling as follows:

Sometimes, parents of the school children complain about their child for missing the feeding. When they come late to school they might miss the breakfast and when parents find out that they try to make it look like it's our fault. I remember this particular incident when a parent came to school to scold us about an issue similar to this. He insulted us saying we are stealing the money allocated to his child by the government. It was heartbreaking because we do not have any intention of hurting the kids because our kids are also beneficiaries of the SFP and we do not want them to be treated badly. But some people get judgmental and jump into a quarrel without analyzing the root causes of problems. (Respondent 3, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022).

iv. Role and support of other stakeholders in SFP

Caterer mothers in their FGD discussed and summed up that there were many challenges in the implementation of SFP. Among the challenges they mentioned, lack of training, health problem limited support from other stakeholders were the social factors which have negative impact directly on the caterers and indirectly on the students. Hence, these challenges need to be addressed.

Respondents of key informant i.e. deputy director of Addis Ababa School Feeding Agency and SIP department Head of Yeka Sub City were asked about the main stakeholders and their own role in the implementation of the school feeding programs. As they replied, there are many stakeholders from students up to director of the agency. The role of the agency is planning the implementation and budget of SFP and regulating it. Head of SIP department mainly allocates and distributes students' learning materials to the schools, and the department controls whether the inputs are given for the students properly or not. The department also gives supervision support for the schools on the implementation of SFP.

The same to the interview, the finding of FGD reveals that perceptions of the towards education to be very vital and they consider their lack of solid educational foundation as a factor for their current challenges in the social and economic sphere. Up on them the wereda WCSA office gave them training in 2019 on kitchen management, hygiene and saving. The office also gave training for the caterers in order to create awareness on COVID-19. As the women explained in their discussion, the trainings were not enough, and they need more life skill trainings for the betterment of their job as well as their life. The caterers in their discussion mentioned that lack of facility like electricity exposed them health problem. They also confirmed that misunderstanding and conflict happened among themselves and between the caterers and other stakeholders.

Beside to that, participants in the Key Informant Interview from Woreda WCSA office for the were requested to discuss how their office involved and what responsibility does it hold in the school feeding program. According to their response, the role of Woreda WCSA office was selecting and arranging the caterers, giving short training and facilitating credit for start-up capital. They discuss with the school leaders and solve the problems when the complaint came to their office. Regarding to the health aspects, the key informant from the Woreda explained that the women undergo a period health screening at the health post because it is a requirement to get

up to date certificates in order to prepare food for the children. This is a good precaution for the children's health as well as the women.

Another question was raised to the principals. They were interviewed about the role of the school administration in the school feeding program; they listed down their roles one by one. Up on them, the school administration started their work in SFP by identifying the students who want to take part in the program. They receive the women who are assigned as caterer in the school, and they try to fulfill facilities for the SFP. They arranged school feeding committee that vice principal of SIP leads it. The school leaders facilitate and control the SFP in collaboration with the committee. Finally, the school principal approves the payment which is done by the committee twice a month.

The researcher in her observation of Adwa Ber and Wotatoch Genet Schools tried to observe the group interaction and how the caterer mothers communication with one another and with the school community. The finding of the observation revealed that the caterers mostly communicate smoothly among themselves as well as with students and other stakeholders of SFP. But there were some idle women in some schools while the others were doing their chores. There was also one woman who had eye related problems. But on the positive side, it was observed that the mothers were enjoying their coffee ceremony after they finished serving lunch and the researcher also observed little kids taking naps on a space arranged by the mothers themselves inside the kitchen.

Lehtinen, U. (2011). conducted a case study in Finnish public catering towards sustainability and local food procurement. Unlikely to the Ethiopian context, caterers are not particularly worried with healthy meals or working areas in the Finland; instead, they include entrainment, community activities, and special occasions. Because these features of sustainability are practices of institutionalized in Finnish public catering. Societal support for meal uptake or condition of catering is important. Unlike to our experience of SFP, caterers in Finland were concerned about the quality of obtained food, whether conventional, domestic, local, organic, or even local organic, as well as transportation, waste management as well as energy and water conservation in catering operations and across the food chain.

5.1.4 . Technological Factors

Here under the technological factor, the researcher assess the availability of different technological facilities like electricity, stove, oven and boiler, refrigerator, students' meal card and other cooking utensils.

In reference to availability and adequacy of cooking utensils and conditions of the kitchen, a report by (Melat, 2020) states that Adequacy of facilities is necessary for the smooth functioning of school feeding program like any other program. Results from studies on SFP from 14 countries reveal the convenience of kitchen and food storage facilities and adequacy of cooking and serving utensils is associated to food hygiene. If these facilities are not available in adequacy and good condition, hygienic standards of the food will be compromised.

With regards to the working environment, respondent Two mentioned that:

The kitchen needs renovation and reconstruction, no feeding hall so the kids eat in the outer area in the compound. The confined kitchens that we work in are inconvenient making our work difficult for us to serve the kids and this makes it chaotic. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

The other challenge raised by the women was lack of electric power in many schools. Though electric power was accessed in a few schools, there was high interruption. The only alternative was utilizing fire wood which affects the health of caterer mothers. It also incurs more expense on them. In this regard, respondent five told;

When there is a power outage, we face irregularities as we cannot bake injera using the electric stove and so we will be forced to buy the injera from external vendors at higher prices and this cost makes our profit margin minimal. Shortage of electric power for our stoves forces us to use burning wood for fuel as the only source of energy and this incurs more cost on us. (Respondent 5, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022.)

Similarly, who participated in two groups of FGD explained the positive and negative impacts of technological factors on the SFP and on their income generation. As they explained, having availability of different technological facilities enable the save their time, expense and labor, so they considered it as opportunity for them. But they were forced to incur more expense, health problem and labor and time waste because of lack of electricity, stove, oven and boiler, refrigerator, students' meal card and other cooking utensils.

5.1.5. Legal Factors

Towards legal factors, the issues of fiscal (tax) policy, legal frameworks in terms of legal prerequisites, role of stake holders, and agreement with consumer associations or “Shemachoch” in Amharic tried to be included.

Regarding to this the caterer mothers discussed in their FGD, and they said that their groups in the SFP have legal framework since they fulfilled every procedure required and got a license. They replied that they pay withholding tax or income tax paid to the government. The school cuts the withholding from the women's income always at the time of payment every 10 days. The caterer mothers also respond that they pay annual tax like any other firm or business organization. The participants replied that they didn't have any document about the rule and regulation of SFP except the menu and the agreement paper with consumer associations or “Shemachoch”. The expressed as the double taxation was not fair for the little income they generate not enough for daily meal.

The woreda WCSA officials explained about the legal factors. They said that the only thing that they know was the school feeding agency was established in proclamation, but they didn't know about the existing legal and policy frameworks in regards to the school feeding. Up on them, their office didn't have any policy and directives in terms of the in particular, and this was not incorporated in the documents. The participants respond that they observe and follow up the implementation process of SFP since they create the job for the caterer mothers; however, there is no any specific directive on the caterer women. According to the participants, there are gaps in implementation of the process.

Respondents of key informant were requested to explain the legal frameworks associated to the planning and execution of the school feeding programs. The deputy director of the agency responded that School Feeding Program was commenced based on the proclamation by Addis Ababa City Administration and the duties and responsibilities of all stake holders and government institutions are put forth. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women Children and social Affairs, Ministry of Trade, are the main stake holders working in collaboration to make the program effective. Specific directives and principles are cascaded to all stakeholders of SFP regarding their roles and responsibilities (Deputy Director, Feeding agency, Interviewed on February/2022).

5.1.6. Environmental Factors

The response of the women in their FGD as well as the result of the observation revealed that they were facing a big challenge in terms of working place and working condition. The environmental factor includes the space of the kitchen, availability of kitchen utensils and other facilities like water, sewerage etc. Therefore, the women were providing the catering service in a poor working condition. The place they work was unsafe and unhealthy. Especially, in some schools, there was no lunch hall. Thus, the women serve the meal under the hot sun shine and the students eat their lunch under the tree shade.

5.2. Coping mechanisms of the caterer mothers to overcome the challenges

The question about the coping mechanisms in times of price fluctuation of material, interruptions in basic services, working with small children, handling disagreements, low income and protecting safety and health was given for the participants of the study.

Under this section the study aims to show the coping mechanisms the caterer mothers employ to overcome the challenges associated to their work as caterers in terms of the two major thematic areas identified in this part of the analysis.

5.2.1. Economic Aspects

This study assessed the opportunities and challenges as well as the coping mechanisms employed by the caterer mothers to overcome the socio economic problems they face pertinent to the implementation of the school feeding programs. The economic challenges such as inconsistent incomes due to school closures, price fluctuation and inflation, lack of market linkages with

suppliers and whole sale agents such as the consumers associations and inadequacy of the price allotment per student are mentioned on the previous section of this study.

The caterer mothers employ several ways to cope up with the problems associated with the economic challenges. For instance, respondent one mentions how she tackles those financial constraints that she faces due to school closures during winter time, she explains;

I work in street vending on winter breaks to supplement and fulfill our material needs and fulfill our basic needs because my kid will be staying at home which means there is no school feeding. The other thing is I will be out of work for two months because the school will close by the end of the academic year. Hence, I try to compensate for this by selling corn and earn an income. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

The other coping mechanism employed by the women is the traditional saving mechanism called Equb. The equb system provides a good platform for saving money. Equb is an informal financial support system which has been in use among the society. In relation to this, respondent one told:

We have 'equb' to save our money and we put 500 birr per month. This money will help us survive days that we do not work on SFP such as winter, long school breaks, etc. we do not feel happy when school clothes for holidays like other people because whenever school closes our income gets affected as we do not work and no payment. But we try to make up for the lost times due to holidays by making our 'equb' effectively. (Respondent 1, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

The other solution to compensate for the low profit margin is that they take home the unused foods which are extra foods remaining after feeding the students and use it for dinner. This will enable them to avoid costs related to dinner expenses. Though this is not a regular practice, they use it as one way of supplementing their income whenever there's the opportunity. .

To cop up with the problems that arise due to power shortage, the respondents informed that they sometimes get in the evening shift to prepare the next day's food ready. For instance, when the

menu for breakfast service is ‘anebbero’ or ‘injera’ (flat bread), the women get in the evening and work as the night shift is better for electric power.

Credit has been identified as a major restraint on the ability of food suppliers (caterers) to generate an income by women's movements in a number of nations. As a result, it has been recognized that providing disadvantaged women with access to financial sources could aid in the fight against poverty. Many developing country women's development projects have embraced loans and savings as a way to help underprivileged women and their families better their living situations. For example, at the inaugural International Women's Conference in Mexico in 1975, special attention was paid to the problem of women's access to finance in order to solve and simplify their lifestyle. This was interpreted as part of a growing recognition of the value of women's productive roles in both national economy and women's rights. The tendency of impoverished women utilizing microfinance as a source of livelihood earnings is still robust. Accessing impoverished women to microfinance services in developing countries, such as Ethiopia, is seen as a way to improve their livelihoods and alleviate the problem of poverty in general. As a result, women's economic advancement may be guaranteed (Legese, 2012).

5.2.2. Social Aspects

This part of the research explores the coping mechanisms employed by the caterer mothers to overcome the challenges related to the social aspects of their engagements in the school feeding program. In this regard, participant three shared her experience:

One day a parent came and insulted us saying that we are not putting enough food for his child and accused us of eating the kids food which the government is paying for. He said so many unpleasant things about us and disturbed our mood throughout the day. However, as we discussed among each other we decided to talk to the school principal on how to handle such situations by informing him what happened. He told us never to communicate with parents directly. If there is a parent who has a complaint should report to the office not to the mothers directly. He also raised the issue on the parents school meeting and put a clear directive. So we do not have to deal with such types of encounters. (Respondent 3, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/2022)

Another participant mentions how she copes up with the challenges that arose in relation to her small children saying;

I have two small kids who are coming with me to my work. Some of my colleagues used to get offended and destructed when they are around the kitchen area and used to show me a bad look and impression. I used to feel their irritation and feel it. Since my kids are toddlers it is their age to run around everywhere and be super active. But later on as I started leaving them in the compound they started to get well acquainted to the school guards and cleaners. They became happy and they only come to me when they want to be breastfed or eat. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

She further explains the importance of the peer support and the social values as to how other workers in the school helped her by looking after her children when she is occupied with demanding work:

The support that I receive from the guards and the cleaners has made it for me convenient to do my job effectively and for my kids to be happily and freely play and run around. Besides, they are kept from the risks of getting injured in the kitchen by playing in the school compound. I am happy that we have such kind of social support system with good values but without knowingly doing it. These are not interpreted in monetary value. They are invaluable assets. These people are voluntarily helping me carrying for my kids without asking for anything for return. (Respondent 2, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

A finding from Respondent 12 further strengthened the above social support mechanism as she explained how the mothers used to take turns to look after the children so that the mothers work on their duties.

To overcome the problems that the caterer mothers face due to power shortage, the study found out that the sometimes work in the evenings to bake injera and anebabero (flat bread) for breakfast. Furthermore, the various characters and personalities sometimes clash as they search of solutions at times of disruptions. Hence one of the mothers recalls an incident as;

Our job is challenging because there's no room for mistake. We cannot fail because we are dealing with kids. Their health and their wellbeing is our primary concern. I remember an incident whereby we run out of stock and I recall how we were trying to sort things out. But we couldn't come to an agreement. Some said let us borrow items from nearby vendors while others wanted to buy from whole sellers from Piassa as we used to. This difference of opinions created a disagreement which later escalated into a heated quarrel among the members. One of the women among us who is known to act as an elder whenever such types of incidents arise, once again put us down for dialogue and solved our disagreement. At a time like this the wise advises and mature mediation skills of some women is commendable. (Respondent 8, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

Furthermore, the research participants (respondent five) explained how they face unfavorable working conditions due to the confined, sub-standard kitchens. One of the research participants told:

When it rains the ceiling leaks . We try to manage by putting buckets on the spots to protect our materials equipment's from getting ruined. Sometimes when we come in the morning for work, if it rained during the night, we used to find the kitchen and our equipment's wet. Hence, we started shifting the items, relocating them and also putting the buckets before we leave our kitchen to minimize the damage due to the rain. (Respondent 5, interviewed, Wotatoch Genet, June/ 2022)

Empowering women on a societal level is one of the most long-term and thus hopeful solutions for eliminating poverty in developing nations, including Ethiopia, because women can readily collaborate with society during both happy and sad times. It's a system that allows people, organizations, and communities to achieve control over their own affairs. Despite varying beliefs and techniques, most experts agree that the most effective way of long-term empowering women in poor countries is to educate and train them, or to make them literate and connected to communities that nurture communication skills. Such women are more likely to seek medical attention, send their children to school, and be more economically productive in horticulture, income generation, and little and petty business, implying that economy is also influenced by social factors. The literacy program is extremely beneficial to impoverished women in terms of managing their livelihoods and income-generating activities. There is abundant evidence of the

link between literacy and poverty reduction, as well as the critical role literacy plays for women in particular. As a result, "the overarching aim of eliminating poverty by 2015 will not be met unless governments and the international community act on the important links that exist between improved livelihoods and the development of basic literacy skills" (Legese, 2012).

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1. Conclusion

School feeding programs have proved to bring multi-faceted benefits to children, parents, families and communities at large. School feeding programs in Ethiopia have been carried out by WFP, different NGOs such as Yenatweg and other civic society organizations to address the health and nutritional needs of children coming from economically vulnerable communities.

Addis Ababa City Administration launched a school feeding program in 2019 to boost enrollment, reduce absenteeism among school children, to curb dropout rates and to maximize learning outcomes of the children safeguarding better health and nutrition of the children and also alleviating the economic burden from economically disadvantaged families. This program has also created a platform whereby unemployed and economically impoverished women, particularly mothers of the students in the public schools, engage in income generating opportunities through the school feeding programs.

Hence the caterer mothers are dual benefactors of the SFP; their children receive breakfast and lunch service at school relieving them off the economic burden. Besides reducing the cost of family expenditures for food, the job creation for the caterer mothers led to an income generation opportunity for the mothers. They procure, prepare and serve meals in the school compounds which can be regarded as small scale business units. These are the basic advantages that they gained thorough the program.

In accordance with the findings of this study, it appears that the school feeding programs have created viable opportunities for women in terms of income generation with a prospect to

economic empowerment and self-sufficiency. The program attributed wide range of benefits as demonstrated through the improvement of the socio economic status of women.

Unemployed women, mostly with low educational background, found a way to support themselves and their family from the income they generate from SFPs. Besides, provision of basic services and utilities such as electricity and water without any cost as well as rent free working premises in the school compounds gives the women a viable option to engage in the SFPs. The trainings on financial literacy as well as the practical hands on experience in the budgeting, purchasing, and savings, appear to enhance self-confidence of some of the women who aspire to pursue entrepreneurship and business endeavors. In terms of micro financing and loan for startup capital for the job, though some groups received the service, it appears that there is no consistent standard procedure and hence the experiences vary in different woredas.

The caterer women face challenges in relation to shortage of food supplies(ingredients) for cooking and the hyper inflation affects the net income of the women because they spend significant amount of money on procurement of raw materials for the cooking. Besides, the allotted cost per student seems to raise discontentment among the caterer mothers as they consider it to be inadequate given the constant incremental market price and commodity cost. Furthermore, this research found out that the caterer mothers face hurdles of responsibilities and expectations from the stake holders in the feeding program. Parents of the students, the school administration, the woreda women and social affairs office demand them to carry out the feeding in accordance with the set menu conforming quality, quantity and punctuality of the service. They are affected by factors pertinent to political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental circumstances as stipulated in the findings of this study.

Moreover, the caterer mothers are susceptible to complaints and allegations from the different stake holders as they are dealing with the nutritional and health wellbeing of school children. If they fail to adhere to the required standards, they are at stake for full accountabilities. The result of this study reveals lack of adequate attention to women caterers despite the critical area of work that they are engaged in. Despite having a sound government policy backed by the proclamation, lack of clear directives on the details of the implementation process appears to hinder consistency and uniformity which can in turn compromise efficiency and success of the SFP.

As a coping mechanism for financial challenges, the women employ indigenous saving and mechanism called 'Equb', when feeding activities are interrupted during long winter breaks and other intermittent school closures. Street vending and washing clothes in their spare time, labor works on various social events such as weddings or mourning are some of the activities they undertake to fill in financial gaps. The traditional support system in times of mourning or weddings allows them to help each other both in economic aspects as well as social and emotional needs.

6.2. Recommendation

This section enlists the recommendations of the study. This is the part which focuses on highlighting what more can be done in order to enhance the effectiveness of SFPs in terms of promoting the socio economic status of the caterer women. Pertinent to the research findings, the purpose is to offer ideas that can be implemented so as to address the challenges raised in this research.

- Create more conducive environment for women who are engaged in meal preparation and provision of meals for students in the school feeding programs. The caterer mothers earn an income as long as schools are open and students are receiving the service. However, their work is dependent on the opening and closing of schools. Hence, whenever schools are closed for winter or semester break, they are out of business. This causes an interruption in their source of income leading to economic challenge. Hence, their income generating means is not sustainable. Devising and facilitating additional income generation opportunities for the women during winter breaks is recommended.
- Standard and consistent micro financing system to lend startup capital for new cooperatives to procure kitchen utensils and raw materials for meal preparation is recommended. Similarly, loans should be arranged for new individual members when they join the program.
- Coordination and collaboration of all stake holder government institutions such as the women, children and Social Affairs Bureau, Addis Ababa Trade Bureau, Health Bureau and Education Bureau is vital for the successful implementation of SFP to ensure better working and living conditions of the caterer women.

- Market price researches should be made periodically in order to determine a pragmatic determination of feeding cost per child. The current price setting appears to be inadequate compared to the cost of food commodities. Hence, in order to enhance the economic empowerment of the caterer women, practical and rational price setting and budgeting is recommended.
- To avoid interruption or lack of basic services such as electricity and water, the concerned government institutions should give utmost priority to schools and the feeding program.
- Establish an umbrella association of caterer mothers in SFPs to enhance capacity development with regard to the socio economic aspects. Inculcating business mindset and trainings, to expand their work beyond the school premises. Side businesses help subsidize and supplement their revenue during school closures and will help them remain resilient.
- Create a workable market linkage with local suppliers and consumer associations to help the women get the required food commodities with fair price and also avoid disruptions due to material shortage. Innovative home grown school feeding program models that link school feeding programs with local small holder farmers and suppliers should be encouraged to enhance the effectiveness of the program which intern benefits the caterer mothers as well.
- Establish a daycare system in the school premises for the caterer mothers with small children who carry the weight of double roles. This will relieve the burden off the mothers' and will avoid several safety risks and challenges associated with it.

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APPENDIXES

Addis Ababa University

College of Development Studies

Center for Gender Studies

Annex I: In Depth Interview Guide with Caterer Women

This interview is prepared to explore the lived experiences of 12 caterers/ cook women who are engaged in the school feeding programs to assess the opportunities and challenges as well as their coping mechanisms. These women were from different woreda in Yeka Sub City. First they were selected purposively since they were group representative. Among the group representatives, these 12 women were selected randomly using lottery method giving equal chance for each woreda. The names and information that they provide is kept confidential.

Part One: Regarding to Demographic Characteristics or General Information of Interviewee Caterer Women

1. General Information about the respondents:
 - a) Age
 - b) Place of birth
 - c) Marital status
 - d) No of Children
 - e) Level of Education
 - f) If your place of birth is out of Addis, why did you decide to come to Addis Ababa?

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- Do you think your educational background has any role into how you are in this job? How?
- What were the reasons that hindered you from pursuing your education beyond grade?
- Do you see yourself continuing your education in the future? Why & why not?

• Trainings

• Inter relationships:

- How is the relationship amongst your co-workers?
- How do you handle disagreements while on the job?
- How do you perceive the distribution of work amongst yourselves? Fairness of work or division of labour,
- How is your relationship with the woreda’s women & Children’s bureau?
- How’s your relationship with the school administration?
- What are your perceptions towards the school administration in terms of communication and empathy?
- How do you perceive the school administration and other stake holder’s attitudes towards the work of you and your team mates?

• Communication & harmony

- Do you have any support mechanisms amongst your-self and other stakeholders?

• Health condition:

- Do you have any health concern related to your job?
- Is there any safety problem that you consider as a hazard?

• Role and support of other stakeholders for SFP:

- In your opinion, how successful are the different stake holders in terms of executing a coordinated and efficient work?

D. Technological Factor

- Electricity: Availability electricity
- Modern stove, oven and boiler
- Refrigerator
- Students’ meal card

E. Legal Factor

- Fiscal (Tax) policy
- Legal frameworks in terms of legal prerequisites
- Role of stake holders
- Agreement with consumer associations or “Shemachoch” in Amharic.

F. Environmental Factor

- Facilities: Availability of kitchen utensils and other facilities like water, sewerage etc.
- Working condition (Kitchen): Safety and healthy

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Part Four: Coping mechanisms to overcome the challenges that the women faced

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What are the coping mechanisms?

- a. In times of price fluctuation of material (input) for meal preparation
- b. Irregularities during the feeding (interruptions in basic services such as water and electricity)

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- c. When you have small children that do not go to school
- d. When you get into disagreements amongst yourselves or with the school administration
- e. When the income that you earn is not enough to cover your expenses
- f. In terms of protecting your safety and health (protecting yourself from health & safety hazard)

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Annex II: FGD Guide for Caterer Women

Part One: Regarding the Opportunity of School Feeding Program for Caterer Women

1. What do you think are the benefits of the school feeding programs for you?
2. How satisfied are you with the income you earn from this job?
3. Do you think many women prefer to engage in catering in the school feeding program?
4. How is the demand of this job by other women?
5. Do you consider yourself lucky for having this job?

Part Two: PESTLE Analysis to wards Opportunity and Challenges of SFP for Caterers

What are the political, economic, Social, technological, legal and environmental factors on the opportunity and challenges of SFP.

1. Political Factors

- Selection process:
 - The criteria to get the job as well as the equality and fairness of the chance.
- The process of forming cooperatives (Organization)
- Political Stability/ Instability.
- The Issue of Corruption

2. Economic Factor

- Start-up capital or loans
- Menu: Its consideration of the price paid per student.
- The price fluctuation of the material (input) for meal preparation.
- Price per student
- Input supply: Reliable supply and Availability of cooking materials (inputs).
- Income: How much is monthly income of your group, and how do you share the profits?
 - Is the income that you earn from the school feeding satisfactory?
 - Does the income that you earn from this job help support your family?
 - Have you noticed any change in your living status after you started this job?
 - Does the price fluctuation affect your profit?
 - Has money ever been a source of contention amongst your co-workers?
 - Do you receive on time payments without irregularities from the concerned?

3. Social Factor

- Education background
 - Do you think your educational background has any role into how you are in this job? How?
 - What were the reasons that hindered you from pursuing your education beyond grade?
 - Do you see yourself continuing your education in the future? Why & why not?
- Trainings
- Inter relationships:
 - How is the relationship amongst your co-workers?
 - How do you handle disagreements while on the job?

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Annex III: Guide for Woreda Women and Social Affairs Office

- a) What do you consider as opportunities of the school feeding program for the caterer mothers?
- b) Do you consider the job creation for the caterer mothers help them in self-empowerment?
- c) In terms of job creation for the women, how successful do you think the SFP is?
- d) How your office involved and what responsibility does it hold in the school feeding program?
- e) What are the existing legal and policy frameworks in regards to the school feeding?
- f) What policy and directives does your office have in terms of their particular? (How is this incorporated in the documents?)
- g) Are there any specific directives on the caterer women?
- h) Does your office have any follow up mechanism on the implementation process?
- i) Do you ever receive complaints of any nature from the caterer mothers?
- j) What is your overall observation of the school feeding program (school admin)?
- k) What are the challenges that you face while you implement the school feeding program?
- l) What interventions do you suggest for improvement of the lives of the caterer women?
- m) What gaps do you see in the day to day execution of the feeding program in terms of the women & what do you suggest for improvement?
- n) What is your overall comment on the SFP and the impact in terms of women economic empowerment?

Annex IV: Guide for the School Principal

- a) What do you consider as opportunities of the school feeding program for the caterer mothers?
- b) How the political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors affect opportunities and challenges of SFP related to caterer women's income generation?
- c) What is your opinion on the fund provided for the school feeding program?
- d) What are the payment procedures for the caterers in the school feeding programs?
- e) What is the role of the school administration in the school feeding program?
- f) Are there challenges pertinent to the school feeding programs, specifically regarding the caterer women?
- g) What recommendations do you have for future practices of school feeding programs?

**Annex V: Key informant Interview guide
For A.A. School Feeding Agency and
SIP department of Yeka Sub City**

- a) What benefits do the school feeding programs bring in terms of job creation for unemployed women?
- b) Who are the main stake holders in the implementation of the school feeding programs?
- c) What role does the Feeding Agency and SIP department of the sub city play in terms of the implementation of the school feeding programs?
- d) What are the legal frameworks associated to the planning and execution of the school feeding programs?
- e) What challenges does the program face on the implementation process?

Annex VI: Observation Guide

Observed things	Good	Fair	Not good	Comment
1. Working conditions				
1.1. Space				
1.2. Safety				
1.3. Healthy				
1.4. Sanitary & hygiene				
1.5. Students' meal card				
1.6. Sink and sewerage				
2. Facilities				
2.1. kitchen utensils				
2.2. Electricity				
2.3. Water				
2.4. Feeding hall				
2.5. Refrigerator				
2.6. Stove, oven and boiler				
3. Communication				
3.1. Group interaction and behaviour				
3.2. Relationship with the school administrators				
3.3. Relationship with other stakeholders (woreda women & children office)				
4. Work load: Do they share responsibilities				
5. General observation				