

Opportunities, Challenges and Coping Mechanism of Women Headed Households

Addis Ababa University

College of Social Science

School of Social Work

**Opportunities, Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of Women Who Head their
Households in AkakiKality
Sub-city, Woreda 5**

By

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Opportunity, Challenge and Coping Mechanisms of Women Headed Households

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Sub-city, Woreda 5

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

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my own original work and all the sources or materials used have been duly acknowledged.

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This is to certify that this thesis prepared by BezaKebedeDesta, entitled: “Opportunities, Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of Women who Head their Households” submitted to school of Social Work, college of social science, Addis Ababa University in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in social work complies with the regulations of the Addis Ababa University and meet the accepted standards.

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Abstract

This study describes the opportunities, challenges, and coping mechanisms of women-headed households. The study adopted the constructivist philosophical stance and phenomenological research design. Women who led their household had been considered as a unit of analysis. Thus, purposive sampling was employed to gather data from women who led their household; twenty women participated in in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions were held with 16 women in two groups who led their household. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the research findings data. The study identified the main social and economic challenges of women heading their households. The main social challenges were abandonment, abstinence in social life, psycho-social, economic influence in their children, and stigma. The economic challenges include low income, poverty, losing control over the property. Women who headed a household used different coping mechanisms to address their social and economic challenges. The main coping mechanisms to address the social challenges were being believers and sympathy of the community towards women headed families. To address the economic challenges is working hard, selling different properties, and reducing their living standard to adopt the new situation. Although women-headed households faced social and economic challenges there were social and economic opportunities they experienced in their living. The main social opportunities were able to lead their households because of the absence of their male partner and participate in public activities. And the economic opportunities were involved to income-generating activities, business management, and developing decision-making abilities. It indicated that Women who lead their households faced socio-economic challenges and they need professional and strategic supports in addition to their coping mechanisms.

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Acronyms

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

BOE -Bureau of Education

BOFED- Bureau of Finance and Economic Development

CSA - Central Statistical Agency

FDRE- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FSCE- Forum for street children Ethiopia

HIV -Human Immune Virus

ILO - International Labor Organization

WHHs -Women Headed Households

WHO - World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and significances of the study, scope and operational definitions of the term used.

1. Background of the Study

The term “Female-headed households” is used to refer to two types of households. Those in which no adult males are present or in which women have been established as the household head through some sort of family-level consensus (de jure female-headed households); and those in which a majority of economic support for the household maintenance is provided by women (de facto female-headed household) Nelly, 1998. This research focused on de jure female headship households since the de facto female headship is more difficult to determine and not available in the study Ares.

Much research has been done to document the fact that too many women are not familiar with the right they have particularly in an area that determines their lives, such as ownership of property, disposal of family income, and maintenance of children(Katarina, 1993). That is related to lack of opportunities and encouragement to women households that address an access to equal life. In this regard, Ethiopia is not an exception, in Ethiopia though the law declared somewhat adequate, equal rights and privilege to all women in the country without the distinction based on sex, age, race religion, region but it seems not practicable. There are also customs, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs which guide the society above that rule of the state.

In a conservative society like Ethiopia, there is discrimination against women. The discrimination is not only in developing counters but as Nelly in her book “Women in the Third world’ ’stated:

In many countries, women are unable to obtain livelihood independently of male

family members. Both customary practice and legal system discriminate against women inheritance of agriculture land and often unable to obtain credit or employment (Nelly, 1998, P. 367)

Due to discrimination against women, women-headed households are also severely affected in their social, economic, and political life. Traditionally some women are neither expected nor supposed to have access to resources like land, livestock, and machinery tools. As a result of such beliefs and discrimination, women are considered physically and psychologically weaker; incapable of having managing and controlling resources. Regarding this Nelly stated that decision making, access to credit from institutional and private sources as well as access to information or technology on productivity, are usually denied to women (Nelley, 1998). However, it is tangible that women have all capabilities to own and manage recourse of what they are supposed or expected to lack.

It is obvious that in many parts of Ethiopia when the husband decides to terminate the marriage he would abandon and expel his wife without giving any property they have produced while they have been together. As a result, when mother and children leave their house, she obligated to search for employment to generate income for the family's livelihood. This study aims to explore the lived experience of households headed by women and understand the opportunities and challenges they might have experienced being head of the household in the case of Woreda 5AkakiKality sub - city.

The concept of women who head their household refer, those whereby mothers or women who head their household in the absence of the husband due to death, divorce, separation and illness.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Studies have been conducted on the various dimensions of women by scholars from different disciplines but few dimensions are considered regarding women-headed households. In similar contexts, not much research are conducted regarding opportunities, challenges and coping mechanism of Women Headed Household in the situation of Akakikality sub-city Woreda 5. The phenomenon women who head their household in our country is relatively challenging in comparison to women who live together with their husbands that the later would make adjustments easily to combat problems related to their lives. These issues to the cultural or environmental context in which women who head their households are lives. In such a case, the adjustment women who head their household could vary based on their characteristics and the general condition of the environment in which they are living.

Amare (2011) studied the livelihoods of women-headed households in Amaroworeda SNNP. The study was aimed at investigating the livelihood bases of women-headed households as well as the status of these women in the community. His study revealed the existence of many problems which the rural women-headed households faced in association with their livelihoods. It included livelihood and food insecurity, less access to institutional services and capitals, low infrastructure coverage, disease, lack of labor support, and others. His work mainly emphasis on agriculture and rural development which showed the existence of high food insecurity problem in the WHHs

Etenesh (2007) in her study examined the livelihoods of slum dwellers in general and female-headed households in particular. She indicated that illiteracy rates among women were higher compared to their male counterparts. Most female household heads were engaged in home-based income-generating activities and their incomes were less compared with their male counterparts.

Mutual support groups have high priorities among the poor in Addis slum areas, her analyses also showed female-headed households occupied poor quality houses.

Tena (2006) indicated that due to the socially constructed gender disparity, women were deprived of their basic rights and overburdened with domestic tasks. They were excluded from control and ownership of resources, access to education, credit services, and other basic services. The low access to education resulted in low employment opportunities, lack of control, and ownership over productive resources impede their decision-making power in both the household and the community.

Belete (2005) studied how women cope up in the absence of their husbands due to labor migration, but who have ongoing contact, normally accomplished by the sending home of remittance and identify the major socio-economic and institutional factors that influence their effort to improve their livelihood. "Little is known how the livelihood of women is affected in the long run when their counterparts migrate out and the former assumes the virtual headship of their households' in Ethiopia" (Belete,2005,p.5).

One can also simply observe that the adjustment mechanism taken by female-headed households of Ethiopia may differ from those of the developed world due to the lower status of the former in education, occupation, and income. Such lower status in addition to their limited access to a resource of development and production significantly affect the living condition of their family in comparison to the situation when the husband was present. Women are a disadvantaged group especially women in third world country like Ethiopia is more vulnerable because of the lower economic, social, educational, and occupation status. The aforementioned existing literatures in Ethiopia are limited to the socio-economic problems women headed households are facing. The studies are also considered all women headed households as if they

are with similar background. However, the reality exhibits that there are also significant number of women who migrated from their localities to the urban area whose life experiences are much more complex than those who dwelt in urban area without an experiences of migration in Addis Ababa. Therefore, this particular study encompasses women households who migrated to Addis Ababa particularly Werda 5 AkakiKality sub- city. Accordingly, in this study, the researcher attempted to explore the challenges, opportunities and coping mechanisms of women-headed households in the study area through sticking to their lived experiences in general.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General objectives

The general objective of this study is to assess the opportunities, challenges, and coupling mechanism of women-headed households.

1.3.2. Specific objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To assess the socio-economic challenges that women-headed households face
- To explore the opportunities of women-headed households in AkakiKality Sub-city Wereda 5.
- To assess the mechanisms used by women-headed households to overcome their social and economic challenges.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 Major Research Question

The major research question of this study is what are the opportunities challenges and coping mechanisms of women-headed households face to win their lives?

1.4.2 Specific Research Questions

- What are the Socio-economic challenges of women-headed households?
- What are the opportunities for women-headed households?
- What are the mechanisms women-headed households use to cope up the social and economic challenges?

1.5 Significance of the study

Even though several useful studies on women-headed households have been conducted endeavor, this study is uniquely intended to contribute to other future researches concerning the opportunities and challenges of women-headed households that are dwelling in Akakikality Woreda 5. It is important to show direction for different stakeholders working on Women such as policymakers, government officials, and non-governmental organizations. In addition it is also momentous to inform people and agents working on the women affairs pertinent to policy implementation contexts so as to pay the proper attention in putting women first and set intervention strategy by considering the long term experiences and changes in women lives.

This study can be used as a reference for researchers doing further study in related topics. After completion, this thesis will be given to the concerned bodies. In which it will also important for the women heads of households themselves to share the mechanism and experience discussed in the study.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Interns of scope, this study is delimited to AkakiKality sub-city Woreda 5 women headed households. Also to make the study more feasible interims of time, energy, and finance it delimited its scope to interviewing women who head their household aged between 20 - 55 years old in the Woreda.

1.7 Limitation of the study

The study has been limited to deal the socio-economic challenges and opportunities as well as coping mechanisms of women-headed households in AkakiKality sub-city Woreda 5 which has six thinning. Other social factors related to women headed households are not the focus of this study.

1.8 Operational Definitions

Challenges: - A challenge is that women who head their household face which is difficult and requires great effort and determination.

Coping Mechanism: - An adaptation to the situation or difficulty in which women headed household face that is based on conscious or unconscious choice and that enhances control over the situation and gives comfort for the household.

Opportunities: - Set of circumstances that female who heads their household makes possible to do something because they are the head of the household.

Household: -A group of people lives together under common space as a unit with women as its head.

Socio-economic: - interpersonal relationships of women-headed household and their use of income, wealth, and how they make choices on allocating resources to satisfy their household needs.

Women headed family: - Household in which a mother or adult women is the main income producer and decision-maker because of the continued absence of a father.

CHAPTER TWO

1. Literature Review

This chapter presents the combination of literature related to the challenges and opportunities of women in their livelihood. It has six sections that are arranged according to the following areas.

2.1. Family and Household

“There is no universal definition of families because Contemporary household arrangements are very complex (Nijole, 2005, p.5).” The widely accepted meaning as refereed in this paper, as Margret, 2002 cited in Eshleman “family include persons who united by marriage, blood, or adoption. Its primary members share a common residence its members assume reciprocal rights and obligations to one another. It provides the key function of socialization, particularly of the infant”. (Eshleman, 1991, P.88)A family is a subset of a household where all members of a family could constitute a household. But members in a household may not necessarily be a member of a family, for better understanding a household could be noted as follows.

A household refers to people who occupy the same dwelling and call consist of one or more families, a single person, or a group of related or unrelated people, for example, brothers and sisters, a live-in nanny, or an apartment mate.(Margaret, 2002, P.4)

Families and households, therefore, are seen to have some similarities in that both could serve as the basis for socializing children, common places for the residence of members, e t c. There, differences are also many and it is sated in More the identification of the relationship between the family and the household always requires detailed social and historical analysis in the sense

that kinship and marriage are usually that basis for recruiting a family while their units or bases are not necessarily to serve as bases to recruit a household. (Moore, 1994, P.2)

Those two terms, household, and family, are often used interchangeably, but a household consists of one or more persons living in the same house, condominium or apartment. They may or may not be related. A family has two or more members who live in the same home and are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. All families are also households, but not all households are families.

2.2 Women Headed Households

As the term- women-headed/ supported household by itself implies women's householders are the dominant ones in such a housing unit for economic, social, political, affairs related to the family. The female could be a mother, an elderly sister a grandmother, etc. who reside and alive with children without the continuous presence of the father or the husband Margaret, 2002 cites in Eshelman stated that Female-headed households are the result of illegitimacy (out of wedlock births) never marrying, widowhoods, separation, and divorce. (Eshleman, 1991, P.28)

In most countries, women are not usually considered as heads of households unless no adult male is living permanently in the household. The assumption that the head of a household is always an adult man, even if a woman's economic contribution to the household's maintenance is the same or greater than that of a man, is a form of gender bias. In developing countries, there is a general trend of more and more women being the primary source of economic support for their families. (Moore, 1994)In household headed by women, there may be could act as a father without helping the household economically, as nelly stated in the book "Women in the third world"

De jure female headship varied across countries, but a sizable minority of the households in all countries appears to be headed by women. In contrast to de jure household headship, de facto female headship; those in which a majority of economic support for the household maintenance is provided by women is more difficult to determine.

As mentioned in the introduction this research paper focused on de jure female headship, those in which no adult males are present or in which women have been established as the household head through some sort of family-level consensus. The reason for this is that de facto female headship is more difficult to determine and in contrast, the former one is available in the study area.

Most females who had been living in a household that was under the headship of the husband due to economic power, decisions are made by the husband, and the wife was not required to have a marketable skill which is likely to bring about income. As a result of lack of such skill resulting from low access to education and training the females would be forced to engage in wage employment for higher-income when the husband disappears from the household. In such an attempt to gain income, there are social inequalities based on sex. Etc. Which remains to affect the income females can gain for equal qualification and occupations as the Males (Nelly, 1998). Female householders also face difficulties from the larger society regarding their status that they are stigmatized as husbandless (Mencher and Okongwu, 1993, P. 276)”

Apart from the socio-economic factors influencing female-headed household's cultural and religious aspects also affect these householders negatively. It was stated that under some fundamentalist religions divorce on the part of women is rare, and if divorced women must then

be under the authority of her father or brother; and the bearing of children out of wedlock is severely sanctioned and young widows are expected to remarry ((Mencher and Okongwu, 1993)

It was also argued by Mencher and Okongwu (1993) that even though poverty is measured in relative terms for different countries of the world female-headed households are featured by a poor economic and low level of living. As a result of poorness females leading their households sometimes depend on public assistance to help themselves and their children to have access to a household for living, food, clothing, health, and educational costs. In the attempt to gain income through wage employment female householders including their children drop their schooling. As a result of unbalanced, inadequate, and nutrition-less foods female-headed household members eat, they are easily vulnerable to ill health. (Gudia and Rhoda, 1990, P.38)

2.3 Social Challenges

When enough people in a society agree that a condition exists that threatens the quality of their lives and their most cherished values and they also agree that sometimes should be done to remedy that condition, sociologists say that society had defined that condition as a social problem (William, 2007, P.4)

In most developing countries, women play a major role as farmers, animal lenders, and fuel collectors. Yet, despite their roles, women are not adequately represented in the decision-making processes related to the issues of environment and development at local, national, or international levels. Women have continued to speak out for policies and practices that do not threaten the health and well-being of future generations. The skill, knowledge, attitude, and perception of women have been ignored for years, and women are now demanding that their voices be heard. They continue to fight for improved living standards and the protection of the environment. In

almost all countries, women are disproportionately represented among the poor. (Tegbar, 2007. P.6)

Abda (2016) stated women are an integral part of every economy. All-round development and harmonious growth of a nation would be possible only when women are considered as equal partners in progress with men. However, in most developing countries, women have a low socioeconomic status.

Even if this paper is to consider women's householders in the specific of one Woreda it would be difficult to make a generalized statement. However, it is possible to outline a general framework of women householders' status and living conditions in the Woreda, women of the developing and the developed worlds are of different in many respects.

An Indian woman in the agricultural worker's day, She rises from bed too early before the sun rises to clean the house, wash clothes, prepares the meal for her husband and children, and leaves for the fields and works there until noon. In the field she nurses the small children she took with her. Around the dusk of her way back home, she collects fuel wood and drinking water to cook the evening meal. At the end of the day, she is the very last to go to bed. (Gudia and Rhoda, 1990, P.35)

Like these Indian women, women of most developing nations have traditionally been the invisible workforce contributors to the family and nation's economy. As the "only" contributors men are thought to make decisions in the household, the village, and the larger nation.

As cited by Amare, 2011 from the Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, it has been known from the past, women are not treated equally with men socially, economically, and politically, especially in developing nations. Properties are inherited by males of families, women do not get

access to education, they have no right to refuse marriage and they cannot participate in the political activities of their country. In general, they are considered secondary to everything even in their own country and society. (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008)

As contributors to the societal development of a national women have to have access to resources like land, education, and employment for a tangible outcome in their endeavor to bring about the progress of the society they are in.

Women play a critical role in agricultural production and economies of developing countries (Hill, 2011). They perform 66% of the world's work, and produce 50% of the food, yet earn only 10% of the income and own 1% of the property (OECD, 2012). Furthermore, women represent 70% of those living on less than \$2 a day (Rose, 2011). According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP 2010), six out of ten of the world's poorest people are women. UNDP also reports that some 75 percent of the world's women cannot get bank loans because they have vulnerable or insecure jobs as well as a lack of collateral to offer as security to banks.

2.4 Economic Challenges

72.7 percent of female heads work in the informal sector while 11.7 and 4.8 percent were government and private employees respectively. The average monthly income of the 700 female heads was found to be Birr 124.7 and their median income Birr 75" (FSCE, 1998, P. 4).

Female heads of households are involved in numerous types of petty work in the informal sector. Categorizing them into the formal groups of occupation is rather very difficult. The vast majority of female heads are working in the informal sector.

Women households' heads are very likely to lose control of any land or assets they may have inherited. Access to employment is another severe problem, as there are few jobs available to them and they are relatively unskilled. Problems of Women Headed Households (Hossain, 1995)

In many cultures the importance of land is uncontroversial. People believe a man who has land on earth also has land in heaven. Access to land secures one's survival. Women's access to various benefits derived from the use and exchange of land is challenging and is hardly ever addressed or contemplated in various policies making (Carpano, 2011, P.4).

Women's right to property includes a bunch of rights including the right to acquire and dispose of any movable or immovable property obtained by their labor or through inheritance. Hence, the right to property is a broad notion that has bearing on several legislative frameworks including institutions such as the institution of marriage and inheritance laws. Hussein (2014) described African women as "the most marginalized group in society regarding access to and control over land." (Hussien, 2014, P. 137) He marked that, African women's inalienable rights to possess and own property including land is endangered by comprehensive socio-cultural and religious values and norms.

In countries where the husband is the sole source of income and the only to make decisions in a household in the presence of a wife, he is likely to own household properties including land by his name. at times when he disappears from the household and the wife/mother takes a step to lead the household by possessing household resources including land her husband's relatives would claim the land for themselves wholly by but if they are generous, which is rare, they give a very small plot of land to her as it is conditioned that there are young boys who can take care of and control the land. (Jeanne, 1991, P.128)

Like in other developing countries, women in Ethiopia have also faced gender-based inequalities and discrimination for a long time. They were left out of access to economic resources with men. They did not have equal entitlement to resources and other social and economic issues. In response to this historical legacy in Ethiopia, the FDRE constitution, through article 35 (3) of its provision, entitles them with affirmative measures to remedy this legacy (FDRE, 1995).

2.5 Opportunists of women who head their family

Opportunity for education; Education is one of the most important factors determining the employment status of women. The right to education of women as any other human being have been confirmed and proclaimed by the declarations of an international covenant through the universal declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 26 (1) everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be equally accessible to all based on merit (UN, 1993, P.6)

This principle is indispensable for women. Nevertheless, this principle can offer nothing as it is lest it is changed into actual reality through practice. And it is then that we could acclaim the significances such a principle had contributed to guaranteeing the access of women to education.

It is said that “educating a man is educating an individual but educating women is educating a nation” That is because mothers take the lion’s share in the process of socializing their children their broader mental sophistication plays a great due. In connection to this, it was found out that as Shireens cited in Chabaud.

The more educated the mother the easier it will for her children to win higher education diplomas. Conversely, if left in ignorance, women will hamper the progress that needs to be made in hygiene, dietary habits, child care, and health, and so on". (Chabaud, 1995, P.22)

Despite all these, it is being observed that relatively better environments opening a wider gate to women's access to education are appearing in some nations of the world. Never have women had so many opportunities for access to education as they have today. The barriers that still prevent them from exercising this right are coming down one by one. However, this evolution does not take place without clashes and reservations. For what is involved is a change in an existing state of affairs which is the result of customs and prejudices that have induced for many centuries. The traditional attitudes and progress of women of the way to education and active participation in the life of society are not easily changed. (Chabaud, 1995)

The desire to equal access and opportunities for women's education should not be seen only as a question of equality between the two sexes but also as a prerequisite for the larger nation's half section of the population contribution of sustained development with such lower access to education the possibilities to enter the employment status would also be lower which in turn causes a lower apart from the informal sectors, they should be accessed to training and educations informal.

Opportunity for Employment; Some definitions provided for the concept of employment usually excludes mainly women who provide unpaid household services. Amongst these definitions, the following is an example as cited by Susan, 1994 in Kuper and Kuper.

“Employment is defined as working for at least one hour a week for some payment, either for wage or for profit, or commission, or without pay in a family business” (Kuper and Kuper, 1990, P.241)

As was mentioned in the previous section there are marked differences in access to employment between males and females which arise from differential access to education and training between the two sexes and this is much complicated when women who head their households are come to considered .Employment in the modern sector requires a minimum of education Preparation. The use of universalistic Criteria or recruitment in this sector becomes essential for at Least Two reasons. The first reason is that activities in this sector are more organized and the technology-intensive sector is relatively small with limited labor absorption capacity. As a result, relatively rigid entry requirements are likely to be applied. The easiest and the most obvious factor of exclusion is likely to be educational attainer. (Susan, 1994, P.109)

Earlier it was elaborated that women's access to education in any level of education is much lower than the males due to tradition, customs, etc. As a result of this lower access to education and the rigid requirements of the formal sector for employment, women's access to employment is low. Therefore, women, especially when they are heads of a household could engage in an informal sector like petty trade activity to generate income for the survival of themselves and their families. Tend to prescribe a rigid system of division of labor patterned along gender lines (Susan, 1994, P.102)

For those women who would not like to leave their home because of very young children whom they want to take care of themselves, self-employment in the areas of the informal sector, for example, is a key to raising their income even if they had no education. The ILO report of 1986 in such regard states,

In urban areas, one of the kinds of employment in which women with little or no education could take up in large numbers if they could only be given adequate training is domestic service, both

in private homes and in hotels. It includes both training women to clean, serve at table, in some cases to be a cook, and also to be a children's nurse (an occupation in which several women are already employed in several African countries. Besides, there are openings as domestic servants and ward maids in hospitals, in boarding schools, in child care centers, and in many other community institutions coming into being with economic and social development. (ILO, 1986, P.30)

According to Jeanne, It is a mostly observed phenomenon for females of most developing worlds to marry and become mothers at an early age which would create serious problems on the individual mother and the larger nation. That is, as the woman becomes a mother her opportunities for education, employment, and contribution to the national development would be blocked, and as women marry in such an early age the burden on the country's health and socio-economy sector would be a server. As a result, if women are expected and needed to contribute to the development of a country they must be educated (formally or informally) and advised to marry at the "proper" age. therefore knowing that women have a great deal to contribute to a nation's whole sphere of development marginalizing them as noncontributory and limiting them from opportunities to have resources of any kind as their male counterparts would deter the required development in general and or growth in particular to a country. (Jeanne,1991).

2.6 Coping Mechanisms

Women headed households are encountering different social and economic problems in their lives. These households use different coping mechanisms for their social and economic challenges. According to this study coping mechanisms are defined as an adaptation to the

situation or difficulty that is based on conscious or unconscious choice and that enhances control over the situation and gives comfort.

Coping strategies vary spatially at the community, social class, household, gender, age, and seasonal levels. Therefore, the possibilities of escaping poverty depend on the strategies pursued by different households, the assets that they are able to access, and the general conditions that they face while attempting to reconstruct their livelihoods. This section demonstrates the role of these factors to the most common routes by which women-headed households minimize their socio-economic challenge. Coping strategies employed by women are largely related to diversification of sources of income, reducing number and quantity of meals. And the most prevalent mechanisms for coping with food insecurity were reducing the number of meals per day which accounted for 87.3 percent and 34 percent of female-headed and MHHs respectively.

(Mossa,2013)

Urban poverty is increasing alongside growing urban populations in sub-Saharan Africa. Women constitute a significant proportion of the urban poor but their role is often neglected by development projects. Because of the importance of natural resource-related activities like food production, processing, and trade to poor women in urban areas. Women have developed survival strategies which include migration, marriage and fertility, education, links with rural areas, social networks, saving and borrowing, and home production through urban agriculture. Most women also engage directly in some form of income-earning activity. O'Reilly and A Gordon (1995).

Other links with the natural resources sector are through the contacts that women retain with rural areas of origin (through exchanges, visits, and rights to land and animals) and in their

continuation of farming in the urban setting. The latter is constrained by lack of space and water but is nonetheless significant as a supplement to purchased food. Ways in which women's livelihood strategies could be strengthened are discussed and the need for a multi-dimensional initiative is emphasized. Credit (particularly for the poorest), confidence-building, access to information, and specific income-generating activities (urban agriculture, skills training, and food processing, strengthening trading links with rural areas) are highlighted as major requirements (O'Reilly and A Gordon, 1995).

2.7 Theoretical Perspectives on the opportunities and challenges of women-headed households

2.7.1. Postmodern feminism

The aim of using theoretical perspectives on the opportunities and challenges of women-headed households is to understand their socio-economic opportunities and challenges. The postmodernism theoretical perspective is used in this section as guiding perspectives conducting the study. Thus, the socio-economic opportunities and challenges of women-headed households accordingly envisaged by postmodernism as below.

Postmodernism is the modern branch of feminism that strives for equality for all genders. It is intersectional, which means that it fights for race and sexuality as well as based on gender. A lot of people think of feminism as a very liberal idea that seeks to elevate women above men, but the truth of postmodern feminism is that it is simply striving for adhering equality.

The advent of intersectionalism is an addition to the old tenants of feminism, which focused solely on white women of a certain class. This newer way of thinking includes any women in

need, and regardless of race or class. Postmodern feminism also focuses on survival and health as opposed to bonding through shared victimhood. It encourages women to work through problems in a progressive way and unite instead of separating and bonding only through their pains and faults. Compared to older feminism, it is a much healthier movement for women.(Hossain,1995)

Therefore, this research will assess the opportunities and challenges of women, who lead their families. The revelation from the existed literature indicated that this theory shows the condition of contemporary women and how they are treated. The researcher will assess to identify the opportunities and challenges of women and the mechanism which helps them to coup up their challenge and overcome the socio-economic challenge they face in their day to day life.

CHAPTER THREE

3 Research Methods

This chapter discusses the research methodology. It contains and briefly elaborates on the research philosophical stance and research design used in conducting the study. It further describes the study area and the study population and goes on to explain the sampling techniques, how sampling size was determined and the source of data used along data collection tools as well as specific data collection procedures undergone with the method of data analysis employed in the study and finally details on mechanisms used to assure data quality and ethical considerations respectively.

3.1 Research Philosophy

According to Creswell (2007), the research design process in qualitative research begins with the philosophical assumption. These philosophical assumptions consist of a stance towards the nature of reality, how and what the researcher knows the role of value in the research, language, and methods. Creswell puts worldviews as a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study. Types of beliefs held by individual researchers based on worldview will often lead to the type of approach chosen. Among the four worldviews/post-positivism, constructivism, transformative, and pragmatism, the researcher world view fits with constructivism. This is because as per the views of these paradigms, individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work as well as want to change their contexts in which they live to the best understandings and own definitions of life in their social settings. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences; meanings that are directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple and as a result

leads the researcher to look for the complexity of views or ideas. So far the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2014). Thus, qualitative researcher believes that reality depends on the meaning-making of the individual based on his/her previous knowledge and it is thus socially constructed. Accordingly, in conducting this study, women who are the unit of analysis in the study have their own societal constructions of reality pertinent to their lives and capturing this reality requires in-depth information which is mostly qualitative by nature. The constructive worldview manifest in phenomenological studies, that which individuals describe their experience (Moustakas, 1994). Hence therefore, the study employed a qualitative research method because qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. so the researcher believes as the best method in understanding the research issue under the study pertinent to women who heads their households. Thus, a qualitative research approach was purposefully selected to answer the inquiry under the study through exploring the social phenomenon under which women headed households are experiencing lives by considering it as completely as possible phenomena from the perspectives of the women themselves. This method therefore, enables the researcher to collect any relevant information from the participants based on their own experiences in their own words.

One of the strengths of the qualitative study is the comprehensiveness of perspectives it gives the researcher (Rubin & Babbie, 1993). Besides, Seidman (2006) explained the selection of this approach to people's behavior becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them.

3.2 Research design

The nature of the research intended by the researcher determines the approach of the research to be carried out. According to Creswell (2007), there are five types of qualitative research. Among the five approaches (ethnography, phenomenology, case study, narrative research, and grounded theory), in this case the researcher employed phenomenological research. In this study, the researcher used an empirical interlaid with transcendental phenomenology among the type of phenomenology. The researcher set aside the experiences of the study participants, as much as possible, to take a perspective towards the phenomenon under examination and compile a phenomenology, they report based on how individuals participate in the study view their experiences differently. The phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experience of a concept or a phenomenon. It focuses on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). As Creswell stated there of phenomenology is important to understand common experience to develop practices or policies or to develop a deeper understanding of the feature of the phenomenon. One can write the combination of objective realities and individual experiences within one context of the study. The lived experiences are furthermore conscious and directed to word as well as to an object to fully describe their own experiences which is very important to understand a certain complex social phenomena and social settings as a social worker.

3.3 Description of Study Area

Akakikality sub-city is found in the southern part of Addis Ababa it contains 13 Woredas. This study was conducted in Wereda 5 Akakikality sub-cities. Woreda 5 as per the administration considered as the industrial zone as well as also the woreda is known by deep poverty and jobless peoples and economic insecurity, especially food insecurity, and many families are headed by women. Following the fast growth and urbanization processes of the city,

many people are migrating from the central part of the city and from the rural side of the counters to this countryside place for searching cheap house rent and job in the industries, in which jobless women migrate to this area.

Since the researcher is familiar to the study area through work experience the researcher observed the area /Akakikalitysub city woreda 5, there are a significant number of women-headed households in the area. Thus, women-headed households their challenges and opportunities are evident to be exploring in the study area giving GOs and NGOs which are working in the Woreda are concerned with other related issues but not aware of or consider these types of households.

3.4 Study Participants

The population of the study was women who head their household, which are de jure female-headed households in Akakkality sub-city, Wereda 5. The term as Nelly stated, “Female-headed households” is used to refer to two types of households. Those either in which no adult males are present or in which women have been established as the household head through some sort of family-level consensus (de jure female-headed households) and those in which the majority of economic support for the household maintenance is provided by women (de facto female-headed household).

3.4.1 Sampling techniques

Qualitative social work researchers ‘concern is to find cases that enhance what other researchers learn about the processes of social life in a specific context. For this reason, qualitative researchers tend to employ a non-probability sampling (Kreuger&Neuman, 2006). The researcher used nonprobability sampling and among the nonprobability techniques,

purposive sampling used to select participants from the population. This practical way of gaining access to participants has theoretical as well as methodological advantages. The researcher preferred to use purposive sampling strategies in this qualitative study since it leads the researcher to a specific participant who believed to have credible information about the phenomenon purposely.

Another rationale behind using purposive sampling is to reach the right person based on references to be made from the individuals who knows about those individual female headed households and since also there is no any sampling frame to be referred to sample the participants the researcher ought to use of purposive sampling as appropriate strategy to approach the study. Kothari (2004) added that non-probability sampling techniques amplify the understanding of the researcher on specific issues. Furthermore, Yin (2011), “The goal or purpose for selecting the specific study units is to have those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data, given your topic of study” (p. 88). To do so through selecting purposive sampling, the researcher believes that it yielded better results in an exploratory qualitative study. Therefore, the sample for this study is sited based on the logic of non-probability sampling and thereof, in the study women who head their families who are aged between 20 and 55 years old are purposively drawn to the study. As stated by Pandey and Pandey (2015), the idea of selecting a sampling frame is to make sure that the target population is met. However in this study since the sampling frame is impossible to access the sample size was determined based on data saturation point. Nonetheless, 20 Women who head their households were interviewed and 16 women in two different groups attended the focus group discussion to obtain detailed data from tick experiences of the study participants.

3.4.2 Sampling size

The study participants were women who headed their household and live in AkakiKality sub-city Woreda 5. To have deep insight into the issue, the researcher incorporates 20 households based on the merit and setting criteria as particularly those who are known within the Woreda for their economic challenges. As Creswell, 2007 stated in phenomenological studies recommends that researchers interview 5 to 25 individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher took 20 women who head their household for an in-depth interview and 16 additional women who head their household for FGD.

3.5 Sources of Data

The primary sources of information for this study were women who head their households. The primary data gathered using in-depth interviews and FGD. The in-depth interviews were developed in line to exploring challenges, opportunities and coping with mechanisms of women who head their households. In this case the questions were open ended so as to probe the participants to capture the real experiences in detail both the negative and positive experiences the women encountered. In similar fashion the FGD were also employed to go deep in to capturing different views of women in similar contexts nonetheless with disparities of experiences. These tools help to uncover participants' behavioral and attitudinal feelings developed by being household headed by women. On the other hand, secondary sources of data from Woreda 5 government official documents pertinent to women who headed their households are consulted from the stages of proposal development to the analysis of data. Further some scholarly works such as journals, articles, books, published and unpublished materials are reviewed and taken as secondary data sources. So that according to Kothari (2004), secondary data sources are standard data that had been collected, presented, and analyzed by

other scholars or institutions. Thus, the researcher used the data that are relevant for the study from the existed secondary documents.

3.6 Data Collection Tools

The researcher used the following data collection techniques which were appropriate for this study instruments such as observation, interview, and focus group discussion which are primary sources of data by their natures along secondary sources of to collect data. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data, such as observations, interviews, FGD, and documents, rather than relying on a single data source. Thus, the researcher in this study employed all the aforementioned data collection tools and make sense of it, organized it into categories and themes that cut across all of the data sources.

Observation: Throughout different sociological and anthropological works, observation has been witnessed as an essential method to grasp first-hand information from actual natural settings (Bernard, 2006). As Bernard argues, he emphasized studying the perspectives of the actors', ideas, attitudes, motives and intentions, and the way they interpret their social world through observation of behavior in natural situations and its context. Since qualitative observations are those in which the researcher takes notes on the behavior and activities of individuals, the researcher records in an unstructured or semi-structured way (using some prior questions that the inquirer wants to know), activities at the research site (Creswell, 2009). Accordingly, the researcher observed participants in their house by preparing an observation checklist to know about their interaction and to have full and accurate information regarding their economic and social situations in their physical environments about what physical assets they could have which can't be obtained by interviewing them and other techniques.

In-depth Interview: As Davies (2006) stated in-depth interview is a method of data collection, information, or opinion gathering that specifically involves asking a series of questions. In line with this argument, an interview will help to follow up, probe responses, motives, and feelings, and observe the participant's nonverbal interactions, facial expressions, and gestures that enriched the data participants. In this research, the researcher employed in-depth interview and set some broad parameter for a discussion. This is aimed to get more primary data about the livelihood of female-headed households.

Focus Group Discussion: The focus group defined as an interview-style designed for small groups and using this approach, researchers strive to learn through the discussion about conscious, semiconscious, and unconscious psychological and socio-cultural characteristics and processes among various groups (Berg, 2001). A typical focus group session consists of a small number of participants under the guidance of a facilitator or moderator. So, focus group discussion (FGD) is another method, the active and willing participant selected on the selected issues that enable to clarify the soundness of gathered information through other primary methods. Accordingly, focus group discussion provided relevant insights because the participant generates what they know freely through brainstorming. As Patton (2002) defines the focus group discussion as an interview with a small group of people that ranged from six to ten participants with a similar background and the process last for approximately one to two hours.

Thus, two FGD sessions are conducted with women who are in similar contexts and head their households in the Woreda. Finch and Lewis (2003) also claim that the socio-demographic makeup of the group can influence particularly concerning characteristics such as age, social class, educational attainment, gender, and ethnicity. Based on this argument the researcher conducted the FGD with women who are at the closer group category in terms of age and

livelihoods to reveal the challenges and opportunities across their daily life. This has been led women to have a straight forward discussion openly without fearing each other.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process started with an observation. It is very important to assess the physical living situation and the lived experience of women who lead their families. The second step was an in-depth interview To have effective and framed in-depth interviews with interviewees the researcher developed comprehensive interview guideline. Data collection instruments prepared in English and translated into the local language of the study area (Amharic). To incorporate the suggestions of the community in the data collection instruments pre-tested before the actual work starts. Individuals who participated in the pre-test of data collection instruments have not participated in the actual work. Participants were informed about the objectives of the study as well as to express their ideas and views about the opportunities, challenges, and coping mechanisms of their lives and their effect on themselves and their children as free as they can.

The in-depth Interview also began by briefing the objectives of the study for participants. This takes place when the researcher and the participants agreed to an interview in a place they lived, which was suitable for the participants. This was in line with a constructivist worldview that allows the participants to choose the place of their choices for interviews according to Creswell (2014). During the interview, the interviewer used audio records after the permission of the interviewees obtained. Each day's information collected from using an in-depth interview was written and finalized the same day to avoid failure to remember the information collected.

Finally, the aforementioned steps applied to the focus group discussion. This helps the researcher to grasp information on the issue.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Creswell (2007) stated that data analysis consists of “Preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding, condensing the codes and finally representing the data into table and figures or discussion” (P. 148). This process of analyzing the data through following the aforementioned stages is more general and it fails to specify how the data analysis leads to the report writing. But in his book *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (2014) he came up with an advanced and flexible data analysis approach. Patton (2002) believes that “The analysis of qualitative data involves creativity, intellectual discipline, analytical rigor, and a great deal of hard work” (p. 442).

Accordingly, after the successful completion of data collection, the researcher seriously analyzed the data by cleaning the data. Thus, first, the voices of participants which were collected through in-depth interview and FGDs’ using a tape recorder was carefully transcribed from the local language of the people Amharigna to the research language English. In so doing, in transcribing their voices an attempt was also made to maintain the originality and clarity of information while translating it into English. The transcribed texts after a repetition of readings, memos were identified for further analysis beside reducing the texts to same categories using a coding technique such as verbatim, in vivo coding, topic coding, representative symbols, letters and numbers. Finally, themes were identified and analysed through careful interpretation of meanings and contents. In line with this, the researcher was made a descriptive presentation of the data in verbatim forms reflexively and narratively whilst keeping its original content. Furthermore, the analysis was supported with secondary sources where it worth necessary.

the researcher used the steps of data analysis of qualitative studies by Creswell (2014) which provides a flexible guideline that is free for adaption by any researchers based on their objectives. These steps are briefly paraphrased specifically considering phenomenological research that is employed in this research.

The first step is to organize and prepared the data for analysis. This involves transcribing interviews, cataloging and sorting and arranging the data into depending on the sources of information. And read all the data. This step provided a general sense of information and an opportunity to reflect on its overall meaning. What general ideas are participants said? What was the tone of the ideas? What was the impression of the overall depth, credibility, and use of the information? Write notes in margins of transcripts or observational notes, started recording general thoughts. A sketchbook of ideas can begin to take shape. started coding all of the data. Coding is the process of organizing the data by bracketing chunks (or text or image segments) and writing a word representing a category in the margins as Creswell cited in (Rossman& Rallis, 2012). It involves taking data gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) into categories, and labeling those categories with a term. By using the coding process, generate a description of categories or themes for analysis. Description involves a detailed rendering of information about people, places, or events in a setting. The researcher can generate codes for this description. Use the coding as well for generating a small number of themes or categories. These themes were the ones that appeared as major findings. Themes are shaped into a general description of phenomenology. Advance how the description and themes represented in the narrative. The narrative passage used to convey the findings of the analysis including the discussion that mentions a chronology. Complete with subthemes, specific

illustrations, multiple perspectives from individuals, and a discussion with interconnecting themes.

Finally, data analysis involves interpreting the findings or results. Asking, “What were the lessons learned?” captures the essence of this idea as Creswell refers in (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These lessons include the researcher’s interpretation, couched in the understanding that the inquirer brings to the study from a personal culture, history, and experiences. And a meaning derived from the findings. It also suggests new questions that need to be asked questions raised by the data and analysis that the inquirer had not foreseen earlier in the study. Ethnographers can end a study, Wolcott (1994) said, by stating further questions.

3.9 Data quality assurance

It is apparent that quality data most likely produces quality results or findings of the research. In this research the researcher had developed a social constructivist philosophical stance to make sure that the flow of the entire study is framed by the particular philosophy. And thus an accurate methodology has also been designed for the clear data collection procedure.

Consistently, the researcher had developed a means of building rapport and transparency with the research participants. To assure the quality of data the researchers used data triangulation.

Triangulation is defined by Patton (2002) as “Comparing observations with interviews, what people say in public with what people say in private” (p. 559). According to Patton, triangulation is comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information by times and by different means within a qualitative method. To give a brief description, the researcher employed triangulation which were necessary to keep data quality because different data collected through different methods produce different results which helps to capture reality. Accordingly observation,

interview, and focus group discussions together were used by the researcher to know the why and how of things happen to the research participants.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

There are several reasons why it is compulsory to adhere to ethical issues in research. To address ethical considerations, the researcher had designed an informed consent form that helps the participants to be confident enough about the identity of the researcher and where the researcher comes from (see Annexes: p.100). As Lewis (2003) stated, “Informed consent indicated that it is a critical concept in ethical considerations” (p. 76). The informed consent form ensures the participants to have a clear knowledge of study purpose.

Creswell (2009) added, “Other ethical procedures during data collection involve gaining the agreement of individuals in authority to provide access to study participants at research sites” (p. 90). Besides, some ethical issues involve an abuse of power and trust. The researcher destroyed all evidence that links the respondents to the research after the research process has been completed. And the researcher respected respondents’ privacy and only collect information that is relevant to the research study.

The researchers neither published nor used any information obtained without the consent of the participants. As Fisher (2010) mentions, “When you are doing your research you should not treat people unfairly or badly. You should not harm people, or use the information you discover in your research to harm them or allow it to be used to harm” (p. 72). The informed consent form was provided to the research participants. This form bears a brief description of the research purpose, the researcher’s contact and some space for the research participants to sign as a means of agreeing to participate in the research. All of them were informed that participating in the

study is voluntary and the anonymity of their responses would be maintained. Before the actual utilization of the research techniques, I asked the consent of respondents to be part of the research issue and explained to the respondents that there is no power variation between them and me. Also, I told them that the purpose of the research and the confidential aspect of the information. To affirm an informed consent, I prepared a consent form to be presented for participants to assure the willingness of the participants themselves. Concerning the issue of confidentiality, even though some researchers argue instances when a researcher ought to breach confidentiality in the public interest (Sandelowski, 1994), in this thesis, I used pseudonyms for the quote. Regarding privacy, I did not probe into areas that interviewees prefer to keep private. Similarly, as to informed consent, the participants know about the research and the privacy and confidentiality rules before interviewed.

Chapter Four

4. Finding of the Study

This chapter discuss about, findings from the in-depth interview, focus group discussion, and observation. In the first section the background of the study participants is discussed, then goes on to discussing the findings which are emphasized on the challenges and opportunities of women-headed households that they face in social, economic life, and end up with discussing their coping mechanisms in their lives.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The researcher examined the living interaction and relation of women between their children and neighbor by spending time with them and analyzed to explain the experience of women in their lives. Generally finding from an in-depth interview, focus group discussion, and what examined from the observation are organized and analyzed under major themes. The in-depth interview was conducted with 20 women who lead their household, who selected by purposive sampling from Woreda 5 women-headed households. Further, FGD is one of the major data collection tools for this study. Accordingly, focus group discussion was conducted with women who lead their household the total number was 16. Eight women have participated in each group. Observation as a method was employed mostly in the research as a means of generating and supporting qualitative data. In this case, the researcher has observed their home and their interaction with their children and neighbor. Participant-as-observer was selected as a specific method and the researcher asked questions and make interactions with the household. The following table shows the Socio-demographic information of women-headed households.

Table 1- In-depth interviews participant socio-demographic information

Pseudonym	Age	Religion	Place of birth	Education	Year spent leading their household	Occupation	Monthly income	Marital status	Nu of household member
AberashMekonen	45	Protestant	DebreBirhan	Illiterate	24	Daily laborand small business	15000	Never married	7
AlemituShimles	37	Orthodox	Addisalem	Illiterate	9	Pity trade	3000	Separated	6
AlemetsahyAlemu	40	Protestant	Raya Kobo	Illiterate	15	Small business and daily labor	3500	Widowed	3
AselefechMahder	38	Orthodox	Welkite	Illiterate	9	Pity trade	1800	Divorced	2
AsnakechAbebe	46	Orthodox	Arbaminch	Illiterate	9	Pity trade	3400	Widowed	5
Aster Lema	22	Orthodox	Weliso	Grade 7	5	Janitor and daily labor	2400	Separated	3
BirhaneMoges	40	Orthodox	Weliso	Grade 10	5	Micro finance	3800	Separated	4
BuzneshDubre	34	Orthodox	Selale	Illiterate	15	Secretary	2800	Widowed	4
ElfeGizaw	43	Protestant	Addis ababa	12 completed	17	Secretary	2200	Widowed	3
KalkidanGebre	24	Protestant	Shashemene	Grade 7	6	Pity trade	1000	Widowed	3
MuluLbeni	33	Orthodox	Deredano	Illiterate	7	Pity trade	1500	Separated	2
Neima Ahmed	38	Muslim	Silte	Grade 4	10	Pity trade daily labor	2500	Separated	4
SerkalemKulu	50	Orthodox	Wololali bela	Illiterate	32	Pity trade	5700	Separated	3
MeseretMebrate	30	Orthodox	Weliso	12 completed	10	Pity trade	3100	Separated	4
TsegaMekonen	35	Protestant	Addis Ababa	BA in management	7	Controlling material at EAL	4000	Widowed	2
TsehayEyasu	55	Orthodox	Menz	Illiterate	30	Merchant	12000	Widowed	6

		x						d	
WeseneWerk u	35	Orthodo x	Butagera	Grade 6	5	Pity trade daily labor	3000	Separate d	2
Wubittulu	38	Orthodo x	Burayu	Grade 8	9	Pity trade and daily labor	2800	Separate d	3
YeshTsege	37	Orthodo x	Arusihurt a	Grade 7	8	Seamstress	3000	Separate d	2
Yemegnushal Gemeda	45	Protesta nt	North shoa	Grade 11	3	Micro finance	7000	Separate d	4

The above table shows the socio-demographic information of women who head their households that were participated in the in-depth interview. Their age was between 22 up to 55 and lives in AkakiKalitysub-city. Out of 20 women, only two were from Addis Abeba: the rest came from different sub country for different reasons. Most of them settle in AkakiKalit Sub-city for seeking a job from the available industries or for searching low house rent in which they were unable to have an ID card because they are considered as a new comer since they need to wait for the permissions of the home owners. This also hinders them to get the available support from the Woreda and to save many in a bank as per the views of the women. Among 20 women 13 were orthodox, 6 of them are protestant and 1 is Muslim in their religion. When we come to their educational background almost half of them are illiterate, 6 of them were dropped out from elementary school and 2 of them dropped out from high school, 2 women were 12 grade completed, and only 1 woman a graduate from a college with a BA degree. When we see about the year they spent as head of their household on average was 12 years. Regarding occupation only 3 of them were formally employed and the average monthly income of the women is 4175 birr per month. Pertinent to their marital status, more than half of the women were separated and didn't legally married. There were 7 widowed women and 1 legally divorced mother; there was

also 1 woman who is never married gave birth by wedlock. Their number of household size was 4 on average.

4.2.Challenge of Women Headed Households

In this section, the social and economic challenges of women-headed households were presented. Accordingly, in the in-depth interview and FGD the participants has mentioned several social challenges such as; abandonment, abstinence in social relation, stigma, psycho-social influence on their children life and economic challenge such as low income, poverty, losing control over the property which are detailed below.

4.2.1 Social challenge of women-headed household

4.2.1.1 Abandonment

According to participant women who head their household, after they separated from their first husband and remarried to the other they experienced and exposed to recurrent neglect by their partner and as a result they prone to a propensity of separation latter on. Most of their second husband start to live with them and their children but after some time their husband leaves the women with pregnancy or additional child and, after a while when he wants to leave or when some miss understanding happens between them and when the family faces a problem he leaves the household behind. He starts his own life by changing place or remarries other women. This is the biggest problem of participant women. According to the women, there is a perception that women should have to support their children. And the Woreda community also isn't surprising to such neglect. Alemitu who was the mother of five children narrated about her husband's negligence and the social perception towards women-headed children stated as below.

I had 3 children from my first husband but he was not a type of person to live with, he loved another woman he cheated on me. So I was afraid to be exposed to

different sexually transmitted disease so I let him go. We live together for 8 years but we were not married legally and he didn't take property from me but he didn't want to live in marriage. Later I meet someone at the workplace and he told me that he wanted to help me, so he started living with me but after I gave birth to a son and became pregnant again he also left us. I don't know where he lives now. Because I am a lonely woman two of my children's fathers threatened me badly they left all responsibilities to me. I am raising 5 children alone but their fathers are living their life as a single person, if one of them were good and live with me we would be helping each other. Now the number of my family increased I couldn't afford all things, I am living in a neighbor's house. If my neighbor makes me leave this house, I am thinking to live in this compound by making a tent.

On the other hand, an in-depth interview with some abandoned participant women reveal they don't want to give their children to another person or their fathers. They accept the entire burden to themselves and do not want to remarry by fear of their new partner might hurt their children. Besides, Aberash, the mother of five had narrated.

People try to attack me because I am alone. But the main problem that I face as a woman is; at that time when I am pregnant and give birth in an empty rental house while my boyfriend denied me. I suffer a lot it has still a trauma on my mind.

Further, most of them separated because of fighting, nagging, and physical assaults but didn't want to accuse their partners. If they dared to accuse them they tended to quit because of different reasons like, started a negotiation by elderly people, tired of follow up process and tired of court procedures and give up frightened by their partner. Moreover, the study participants

disclosed real-life experiences of different forms of violence. Instances of physical violence included slaps, punches, kicking, beating with a stick, and use of weapons. The first three were said to be rife in many households.

4.2.1.2 Abstinence from Social Relation

Study participants indicated that those who lead their household didn't have much time to participate in a social gathering. Being alone has an influence on their social relation which means they are too busy by helping the households and face a lot of responsibility. In the FGD one participant mentioned that she worked as a janitor and she was a street sweeper, washed people's clothes for extra income, searched other works available, went to market, brought children from school, prepared food for children in the house. That was the day to day life of many single mothers. If a woman headed family was in a rental house the problem becomes worse and she was forced to search rental houses which made them abstain from social relations. Yemegushal, the mother of 3, narrated about her children.

My children's behavior is out of age. I have no one to take care of my children so they spend time after school at my workplace in which they are exposed to different customer behaviors but people think that it's because I am a woman and I didn't try to discipline them. I am trying to advise my children. I couldn't also participate in the social gathering that much because of my busy schedule and work. I work as a group with my two friends on a public toilet. I had "Eder" but when people die, the member of that Eder I couldn't participate as needed. Then they make me pay penalty payment which is 50 or 100 birr so I gave up the 'Eder'.

As the data indicated mothers who headed their households tried to cover the responsibilities

that were expected to be covered by the fathers in addition to their own. Therefore there was always a gap that should be fulfilled and when they tried to fulfill all the responsibly there will be another gap. There were also a few widowed participants who argued that leading their family alone did not hinder them to from social life participation, they mentioned that they can live with neighbors based on their capacity. But their livelihood might not have the same standard as married women. According to the participants, married women can fulfill everything to their children by cooperating with their partner but children in a woman headed household can't afford to have all the basic needs that they want. Because of these women and children of women-headed households feel inferiority.

The other reason as per women stated is that they didn't have extra money to expend for the social gathering ceremonies. When a mother participates in social gatherings like wedding and funereal ceremonies they lose their time to generate income. Thus, they have to choose between losing income or social ceremonies. The reason behind this is most of them are a daily laborer if they are absent from work their salary will be deducted. Therefore, the inability to satisfy their children's needs because of a shortage of income makes them leave their social life and make them work hard. And in return not participating in social ceremonies hurts their social relations with comminutes. Firehiwot, the mother of two had narrated.

I couldn't participate in the social gathering with my neighborhood because I am busy in different works to support my family financially. I don't want to see my children in need relatively to neighbor children. For example, when my husband left me I have to work while being 9 months pregnant. And now I have no time to go to funeral ceremonies. There is a saying that I used to say, 'the one who fears God will bury me.'

Sometimes these ceremonies happen frequently and create stress on single mothers. Some single mothers say “it’s hard to ask permission, again and again, we don’t have confidence that exposes us for bad treatment from the boss and loss of our job. It’s hard for single mothers to lose half day salary. ’Few participants say whatsoever frequently happens they shouldn’t miss the funeral ceremonies. People couldn’t tolerate it and consider a person who is not participated in a funeral consider like a killer, And happy for the loss of others.

4.2.1.3 Stigmatization

Single mothers, who head their house-hold are mostly stigmatized, married women are more likely respected than women who head their households. In the in-depth interview and FGD data, the community shows more respect for the families in which both partners are living together. When mothers participate in social participation, the one who lives with their husbands has more grace and favor and there are attempts of taking or freighting WHH properties like land. Elfe, mother of two and widowed had narrated.

Because of people gossip, I am facing a mental problem, when I go to a hospital they told me that it was because of stress, Once one of the spiritual people of my church told me a bad dream about my daughter. This was beyond my control, In addition to this; I had an economic problem, which leads me to lose my conscious mind. Peoples also say my husband died because of my sin since we married by ourselves without asking permeation from the church. Spiritual leaders in my church hurt me a lot.

The above single mother case indicates women headed household especially the widowed losing of their husbands in their young age considered as the result of their sin which exposes them to gossip. On the FGD all discussants agree that single mothers who led her household face

stigmatization especially the divorced and separated one. Besides doing more responsibilities to cover the absence of a father, fulfilling children's need she is exposed to stigma. She works to support the family economically, doing the domestic work, need to participate in social interaction in which she may not give more time to socialize her children. And a child who has no father is not respected like the one who has a father, they insulted because he/she is not grown up with his/her father; people make children bad behavior responsible for growing by single mother. Regarding children in the women headed households the society assumes that women couldn't raise their children properly and expected those children like those who don't have a good manner. Tsege from the in-depth interview had narrated.

I took different pieces of training while I was working in Woreda, such as child development and conflict resolution, and so on. I am raising my children in a good situation. Sometimes my daughter tells me that people insult her by saying that "child of a woman" and she asks what it means. and I replay to her that 'people say that to you if you are rude, insult people in the street, people think that you are not properly raised with a father because people assume mothers don't discipline with their children.'

Most of the women themselves believe that children who rose in women-headed household tend to be rude, therefore they warned their children to be decent. There are insult and attack from a neighbor. When there is an argument between neighbor and women-headed households, married insult by making woman-headed household patterns as a bad feature of their lives. Asnakechhad narrated.

I am a strong woman I can lead my family with or without my husband when I live with my husband I was the main source of the income. It was difficult living

with him. I worried every evening what will happen while he drunk, I carry him home while he drunk, but still, I prefer to live with him for me and my children, to have respect in the community.

Some neighbors try to take some land by pushing the demarcation of women headed households. Most of the in-depth interview participants stated there is harassment in their daily life, people tried to make them fear. Tsege a mother of one had narrated.

My former husband harassed me even if I worked in women's and children's Affair Office. I fight for other women's right but I was also a victim when I live with him. I don't want to expose my secret between the people in which I serve as an advocator for women's rights. Then I left him and start living in a rental house, start to pray to God to kill me or him. After I separated from my husband he beat me on the road, he also stabs me by a knife while I am pregnant. Finally, he died and his family took all our property including the house we built in his family compound.

As narrated by the women from her experiences of separation harassment such as insult and beating from their former partner is common, former partner beat their former wives after the separation. This is because the legal bodies don't respond as fast as possible for women's requests and domestic violence.

4.2.1.4 Psych-Social Influence on children

When the husbands were absent in the household the income also decreased, therefore it would be hard if the women had two or many children, It was difficult in a women-headed households to send all the children to school, especially the elder one obliged to work at the day

time and went to school during the evening shift. Children dropped out of school to support the household. On FGD 1 Tirowork, the Mather of four had narrated how the death of her husband affected her children's life and education.

It's better to live with my husband if I have a husband he covers everything, my children's basic needs will fulfill. But when my husband died I become alone I couldn't fulfill everything, later when I get sick every responsibility goes to my children that make my first child drop out of school.

Based on the FGD and observation in addition to school dropout children exposed to stress, depression, and losing weight, jealous of other families who has a father. Which hurt children's holistic development and family wellbeing. Welela, a mother of two said on the FGD 2

My child needs a father who tutors him ...he feels sad when he sees other fathers, once he said to me "if my father does not hit you, insult you and not try to hurt you I wish he lives with us." I feel good when I gave my children what they want because my children couldn't live with both of their parents. My children feel bad when they see other fathers, this is too bad for their development which makes me feel inferior.

An in-depth interview finding indicates that there are men who came and left the family continuously which hurts the family and made them feel insecure. Most of the women were happy about their children and think of them as a purpose in their life. But one young mother explained that she hated her daughter, and said that she beat her whenever she saw her, she also had a plan to give her to relatives.

4.2.2 Economic Challenge of Women Headed Household

The major economic challenges of women-headed households are earning low income, poverty, and losing control over the property.

4.2.2.1 Lack of income

From the focus group discussion participants discussed that they were not paid equally compared to men workers especially in the daily labor; women were paid less than men because people think men are capable and strong than women. Daily laborer women are not paid equally because men assumed to work more than women. There was also a place where women work the same work with men but paid differently. Most women were either illiterate or dropped out of school. Therefore they couldn't earn a better salary. Regarding work time women who head their household have a lot of responsibilities in the house like bring out children from school; go to the hospital when they get sick. That makes her unpunctual, reduce her salary, and also make her lose her job and start another low-income job.

Domestic work and responsibility make them exhausted and do not search for works that require more responsibility which makes them not get a better salary. A single mother couldn't able to work at night in different fabrics that are found in the sub-city, because they don't have anyone to take care of their children. When it compares to both parents one of them takes care of the children and the other can work. Therefore to cover many responsibilities, she employed for a low paying job. In return, her household earns low income. When the fathers depart from the family all finical income might stops which creates a lot of burden, stress, fear, and loss of confidence in the household. Single mothers engaged in different works try to work two or three jobs because the money she earns is low.

4.2.2.3 Poverty

Most of the women didn't want to tell the exact amount of their monthly income. But ten of the participants were among low economic level households in the list of Woreda 5 Women and Children Office and three women used to be in the list but recently their economic status got improved and departed from the organizational support.

From the in-depth interview and FGD, most women are passed through welfare organization support and there were also women in the organization support. They got different scholastic material and food support from welfare organizations because their economic level was low. They get support from the organizations that were found in the Woreda such as Compassion Ethiopia, Silenat, and different church welfare organizations like MKC and Guenet church. Much of the organization's support is school material, school fees, food materials medical treatment, and ethical education for the selected families among the specific household. Few participants describe that their husband was not big support while they were together. But most of them explain Immediate after the separation, mothers don't have money for a basic need like food house rent, school fee and even couldn't pack lunch when their children go to school. Askale had narrated her story as follows..

When my husband was live with me he was not a kind of father who saves money for children, he didn't buy properties he only feeds us, he was addicted to alcohol and cigarette so he couldn't offer us a better life, but he had enough money in that time, he has no idea to change himself or his family he only cares about our food nothing more or less. When he suddenly passed I even couldn't pack food for my children when they go to school.

The FGD participant as narrates above explained that because of the economic problem after the immediate separation or death of their partner they sold property like husband's material, bed, jewelry, and house for basic needs, children's medication, and house rent. Regardless of the ownership of the household, some women become financially poor after either the immediate loss of their husband or separation consequently.

3.2.2.2 Losing control over the property

Participants who lose their property after the death and separation of their husbands explained that when women left their household it's known that they didn't ask property from their husbands or other family members. And when the men left the households most of them took the property they want. There are cases that after women built a house with husbands in their in-law land and when the husband died or left them, the women couldn't stay in their in-laws house. They leave the house behind without any compensation. Even the separation is held by the legal bodies the women may not be benefitted from the decision. Wesene who is a participant in the in-depth interview a mother of three children narrated as below.

My biggest challenge was when I share a property with my first husband. He took all my property, my own house that I own before our marriage and he doesn't want to return. Later I went to court and the judge decided to return the house to me but they couldn't handover it. So he remarries in my own house and starts living with his new family while I am living in a rental house the court decide for me but no one can make him leave the place.

Even if the court decided the house to her the concerned body and police didn't handover the property and they were negligent. And her husband was not willing to return her property. On the other hand Wesene mother of two had narrated

My husband beat me broke my nose and fade my face even if I couldn't hit him back. And this also makes me angry .one day I remember I couldn't refresh the food in the mooring and he leave the house without having breakfast because there was no electricity and gasoline. So I make him good food when he returns. He starts to hit our child and the child starts shouting he also insult me and my passed parents before he beat me I slap him very well in which I feel happy still. And he beat me badly. When we fight he eats food out of the home. And once he hit me and I went to women and children's office but they replay me "this is beating case so go to the police." I left him without asking him any property if I ask him maybe I am dead by now.

The above quote describes that women did not want to accuse their partner because they thought the concerned bodies don't give proper attention to the issue of women. Most of them gave up their property because of the fear of another fighting and to be safe. Misrak FGD participant had narrated.

This day men oppressed their wives and children, they engaged to another woman. So I prefer to live alone and will pay whatever cost me for my children. When I see my neighbors I thank God I have a better peace and happiness I didn't take any property from him.

Participants on the FGDs argued that they will have property only if they are widowed or their partner allows them to have it. Because when the male partner dies the property by default goes to the children in which the mother possesses the property with the children.

4.3 Coping Mechanism

In this section, the coping mechanism of women-headed households to address their social and economic challenges are presented. The main coping mechanism to address the social challenge from the data collected were being believers, the sympathy of the community towards the widowed, and the abandoned women headed family. Besides the main coping mechanism to address the economic challenge is working hard, selling different properties, reducing living standards, and plan for the future.

4.3.1. Coping Mechanism to Address Social Challenges

Based on the finding, the major coping mechanisms for the social challenge that revealed in this study are presented below, which include being believers, the sympathy of the community towards the widowed, and the abandoned women headed household.

4.3.1.1 Being believers

Among the different mechanisms that women use in their difficulties their positive thinking founded by the existence of God and rely on him helps them to be resilient in different difficulties. By being a believer in certain religion they set a goal and live their life. All the single mothers in different economic level have a strong faith in the supernatural power which in return produces for them a positive attitude towards their future. Alem the mother of 5 from the in-depth interview narrated how her faith helps her.

Believing in God helps me a lot. I was in hunger but now I start helping children who are in need. The main difficulty was the conflict with my neighbor because of my husband's debt and fence demarcation. I overcome it by trust in God and working hard. I overcome all my problems in praying.

The social interaction and the bond between the believers of a certain religion are strong and help them to see each other. Because of this bond, they also have an opportunity in which the mother headed household gets support from that religious community. Elefe member of one church had narrated

I serve in the church, in that time when I become widowed there was a kid garden in the church the leaders allowed me to work as a teacher's supporter. The church was doing this to support my family by hiring me as a teacher supporter and then my children join that kid gardener without payment. They also gave me a temporary house in the compound of the church. The church community supports me a lot; they also pay all my payment for a condominium.

Moreover, the above quote shows religious institution is an asset to the women headed households in which the women used the religious institution support as a coping mechanism.

4.3.1.2 Sympathy of the community towards the widowed and the abandoned WHHs

In the in-depth interview and FGD women who lost their husband and abandoned women mentioned that the community and the religious institution has a supportive attitude and ready to help this kind of family. There are also individuals and people who are trying to attack such kind of family concerning different demands. Alemtshay the mother of two and widowed had narrated.

It is hard to lead the family alone, everything is my responsibility, it makes me feel bad, but in my case, it is different because I don't think there will be a good things if my husband was alive, he was not good for me. If he was with me no one care about me because they think I have him but now people has sympathy for me because I am widowed. So unless he couldn't help me it is better to be alone.

Some women shared ideas for their family members like their mother, sisters, and close friends some women didn't want to share ideas for anyone because they thought sharing ideas would cause gossip or will bring nothing. Mulu the mother of two said that before doing anything she shares her problems with her best friends she considers her friend more than relative and she believes that with discussion everything has a solution. She adds by saying

When my husband left us I was pregnant, immediately my friend helps me, she gives me the place to stay. I was working hard while being pregnant I even didn't follow my checkup. Then when I went to the health center they were not willing to accept me since I don't have a checkup and follow up. But later they cooperate and referred me to the hospital. After giving birth within a week I start working as a house servant.

Based on the FGD participant neighbor reaction also different regarding the situation of women-headed households. When they had a good connection to neighbors and people they get support. For instance, Berke indicated that "When I lack something I ask my neighbor and they cooperate me. Once I was very sick and my neighbors encourage me to go to hospitals and also paid for the medicine." some of them, a house owner decrease house rent for single mothers. This indicates that sharing ideas with others helps them like a coping mechanism in which they get relief and get a solution by discussing their challenges with their family and friends.

4.3.2 Coping Mechanism to Address Economic Challenges

Based on the finding, the major coping mechanism to address Economic challenge is working hard, selling different property, reducing leaving standards, and plan for the future.

4.3.2.1 Working hard

Based on the data from the interview and FGD most of the participant women were a housewives when they were with their husband and few of them were do small income-generating activates and work in different fabrics to support their husband, which is enough to cover their need as a woman, like some makeup and daily expense, they didn't work seriously. But after departure from their husband the immediate action of the women were searching for a job to fulfill their children need. Mare the mother of two, her husband left her when she was pregnant with her second child had narrated.

At first, when my husband left me, I was thinking to leave my children too. My firstborn was 4 and I was pregnant, I was also thought to give the boy to an orphanage, I had no clue about what to do. While when I get engaged to work, I become calm and decide to raise them by myself. I don't have the interest to talk about my problems. I make my children look good. Since my relatives think they live with their father. My relatives don't know that I separated from my husband only my families know about it.

The other point was the women coping strategy used to lead the family was they returned to their family's until they found a job. Aster's a mother of two and who has been leading her family for 5 years had narrated.

After my boyfriend left me I try to get support from relatives because at that time I was pregnant I couldn't work, so until I give birth and start work I preferred to stay with my cousin. Then after To raise my child, I did many things like fetching water from far place to neighbors, making traditional spice like 'Berberi" and Enjera, washing clothes, work as a servant for the holy day and I engaged to fabric works to sustain the change.

Participants stated that to win their economic and social challenges they made themselves, strong and hard workers. It's hard for a single mother to attend all social gathering like funeral and wedding ceremonies by giving up her work or by being absent from work, which lead her to lose her job and make her economically insecure. They have to work hard to support their children. But these social issues are valuable in the community so mothers obliged to do so, if not they will outcaste from the community. Especially to attend funeral ceremonies are must.

4.3.2.2 Selling different properties

From the data that were found from in-depth interviews and FGD's, after the separation of their partner, the first chance that the women had to survive was selling property such as their husband's working tools and personal materials, land and the household materials resides within the home. A woman in the FGD discussion said, "At the beginning, I sold many things including clothes but when I started working, I start to earn money." As per this statement it is possible to infer the analysis that some of the women are compel to sold home materials that particularly belongs to their husbands while however only a few mothers are refrain from sailing any household materials. Accordingly, sailing materials which they have either in

common or individually owned is to get a temporary relief from their economic necessities endeavor.

4.3.2.3 Reducing living standard

Based on the data reducing living expenses is one of the coping mechanisms that the women headed household use. By reducing their daily expense they try to sustain the change. By shifting their children from private schools to governmental schools, children who used to have a tutor give up their tutor, reducing daily meal, leaving in a rental house by giving their house for rent, and by giving up their luxury life. Berhane, mother of three her husband left her, because of their child's health condition and the huge expense for his treatment, she had narrated her story.

After I separated with my husband learned many things, we were very wealthy I don't know how to manage my property, in that time I thought I will be rich forever. But that was not true now I know how to save money and respect every property. Because of my son's illness, I sold my house, jewelry, and all the household property that I had.

The above single mother's quote shows that single women become alert for their property management when they start to lead their households and most of the single mothers lead their household to adopt a coping mechanism by reducing their living expenses and luxury life.

4.3.2.4. Plan for future

Living for life goals is the other feature of the women who participate in the interview. Every single mother plans to see their child graduates and to give them a better life. Their plan is focused on their children's lives, to make them successful, which initiates them to be

strong in life. The other phenomenon is that they want to lead a better life, to own property, to be independent of the help of others, and few think to remarry. Mahder had narrated.

I want to see my child in a good place in her education, if she doing fine I will be alright. All I think about is her, I passed what I passed through to pave way for her, I work day and night to send her private school, her father didn't help her he remarried and he is rising his stepchild.

Seven mothers from in-depth interviewees mentioned that through their hard work they possessed a house while their husbands were absent from the households, deposit money in the bank, buy different jewelry household materials, and condominium house 1 up to 3-bed rooms.

4.4 Opportunities to Social and Economic Aspects

The analysis from the in-depth interview and FGD reveals that there are multifarious social opportunities which able women to lead their households and the opportunity to participate in a public place. Even though all women do not consider their participation as an opportunity only half of them consider the occasions as a freedom of participation in public as an opportunity. And the economic opportunity is exposed them to different income-generating activities as result women in this case temporarily opportunistic to gain a relief economically.

4.4.1 Social Opportunities

Most of the women from the in-depth interview argue the community encourages single mother who makes effort to lead their family. Yemegnshal the mother of 5 and separated from her husband had narrated.

The community feels sympathy for me and admired me because I lead my family all alone. I am happy to lead my family without nagging with anyone I like to spend my money by myself. I have a financial problem but concerning my children they don't care about their father, they prefer peace than his bad behavior and fighting with me. When he was with me we fight at least 3 times a week.

The community culture is supportive to the WHHs especially when a single mother is a hard worker. Based on the data from the interview and the group discussion people has sympathy for such family and give moral and encouragement, most of the neighbors are supportive.

4.4.1.1. Opportunity to participate in a public place

When the male partner is absent from house it is the women/Mother who manages all responsibility inside and outside the house in which women who don't participate in public place start to participate and exposed to different network, the mother also improve their communication skill, a public speech like in Woreda, in different associations and Eder meeting. Kalkidan, had narrated.

I am happy to lead my family, the community also helpful for a mother like me. In the community I participated in 'Edir', I and my 10 friends start the Edir. I have good participation in the community. When he was alive it was him who participates in public places. When I am together with my husband I don't work I was expecting money from him for everything, which was hard for me, it's hard always to wait for someone's hand. But now I buy whatever i needed. Start working by myself, having new friends makes me feel confident and happy.

But there are also women who say that they couldn't participate in the community because they are not financially secured and couldn't pay many for different social ceremonies and gatherings. From the in-depth interview, they stated that they don't have the confidence to participate in the community because of their low economic status.

4.4.1.2. Opportunity to Lead Their Household

According to the participant, half of them explain that they did not consider themselves capable of leading their family but after they face the situation they find out that they are capable of leading their household even more than their husbands. Alemtshay, a widowed had narrated.

As a result of my husband death, I lack for nothing. God helped me a lot, when some women lose their husband they go to people for asking help, but for me, since I have a skill I struggle to live. The problem I faced was the problem that I can overcome. And I know that children with fathers also face many problems in the success of their life.

Few women from the FGD stated that loneliness is bad and they wish if they got a good person. They said that it seems Peaceful when single mothers live alone but it has many difficulties to raise a child. Even if it's very hard most of them prefer to be alone than to live with their former husband. Based on the data that are collected from the in-depth interview and FGD most of the women's prefer to live alone because of their partner behavior and their living situation, they stated that if they get a good person it is good to live together for sharing responsibility and for children holistic development but if the relationship is not good living alone is better than having a husband. Mahder, a divorced mother had narrated.

While I was with my husband I work by carrying my infant baby, it was him that

oblige me to work and said to me that 'if you want money, you have to work by carrying the baby, all women's are doing this' so nothing is good about him now after I divorced him I lead my family peacefully. No worry no stress.

Concerning the headship of their household, single mother evaluates their administration as compared to when their husband was present. Most of them feel positive attitude about their administration and when they think about their children they also feel they try to discipline their children and make pressure on them. To make sure that they are not undisciplined because of the absence of the father. Melkam mother of three explains

It was hard to live with someone who doesn't have a plan for the future and not protect himself, God helps me to leave him, it's an opportunity to lead my family. But I feel sad when I couldn't cover all things and feel jealous of married people. If the father is not alive it's easy to persuade children but if he is alive and not supports his children it has pain for them. They feel jealous over neighbors, especially in holidays. I am a mother and at the same time, I act like a father for my children I also help other people who are in need. I save money to teach my children and for their future life. In my opinion, I did well as a woman, even if I don't have the marriage I raised my children by fulfilled whatever they needed, for their holistic development. Three of my children are in success and a good position. But I lost everything like my health and beauty.

Based on the data from the interview and FGD, women who head their family say after the loss of their husbands they become more strong and capable of doing things than before.

Alemtshay the mother of two had narrated.

Living alone makes me strong, when I was with my husband I relay on him. I

don't know what I can do, what talent I have. I lived with my husband as a helpless person. When he was alive I didn't work I was a housewife he was the breadwinner I just try some works to spend time. But now I prefer the way I am, I understand how life works I live in a way I should be.

When we see women who head their household attitude towards the change of household situation ,All agreed that there are changes in their household when they compare it to the past; when their husband lives with them. But the change is different from one household to the other household. The researcher grouped the perception of the mother into threegroup. The first group agreed that the presence of their husband was good to them, their husband supports them and economically manage the household well, so they prefer the time when they were with their husband. But after the separation or death of their husbands, the woman fears to remarry because of many reasons like fearing to raise children by stepfathers. The second group explains their life was better economically while they were living with their husband, the husband manages the family well and the presence of their partner is better for their children but regarding Peace and love their husband was not good for them, so they prefer living alone in their women headed household. Yemegnushal mother of five had narrated.

I am thanking God I am happy now, indeed, some things are not fulfilled when all of my children want something at the same time, I couldn't afford it, I also gave one of my children to my family. But I prefer to lead my family alone.

Some people are helping me; there is a woman that I meet in the church she helps me by giving children clothing and some money.

And there are women from the widowed, separated, and divorced who agreed that in a very direction they prefer to live alone. They believe that their partner didn't support them

economically or socially their partner was a burden for them while they were together.

4.4.2. Economic Opportunities: Exposed to Different Income Generating Activity Decision-making Ability and business management

The data from the in-depth interview show separation and loss of their husband expose them to start work, which brings another insight into their lives to the mother who was housewives before. There are women, who explain that even if they don't want the fact that they are separated from their husbands the opportunity to earn money and expense it by themselves gives them happiness.

Based on the FGD data the women agreed on, when the man absent from the household, most mothers become strong women by default to feed their children and tries to found out what she able to do and win that situation.

Most of the widowed and separated women explain their husbands were the main source of income for the family and they/the women/ were responsible only for small things. But most of the divorced and few widowed argued that they don't have a happy life while they were live with their husband. According to the FGD participants, they were expected to cover their daily expenses while their husbands were present.

4.5 Summary of the Chapter

The finding is emphasized on the challenge and opportunities of women-headed households that they face in social, economic, and coping mechanisms throughout their lives. The participant includes widowed, abandoned, and divorced women who lead their household. The study identified the main social and economic challenge of widowed women that is abstinence in social life, stigma, earn low income, and poverty, their household pattern also influences their children's psycho-social life. The finding indicates that widowed women who lose their partner consider their widowed as a form of punishment from God because of their sin, even if the widowed has more sympathy in the community than the separated or divorced one. The main social challenge for the separated women and the divorced women-headed households are abandonment, stigma, abstinence from social relation, low income, and poverty they also face influence in their children's lives in their educational /cognitive/ physical development.

Women headed households use different coping mechanisms to address social and economic challenges. The main coping mechanism to address the social challenges are being believers and to address the economic challenge they work hard, sell different properties, reduce the leaving standard to adopt the new situation. All the participant women-headed households experience social and economic opportunities that are leading their households and the opportunity to participate in a public place by replacing their husband, exposed to different income-generating activity, business management, and decision-making ability.

Chapter Five

5. Discussion

This chapter discusses the selected findings concerning the challenge and opportunities of Woman headed households in the case of AkakiKality Sub-City, Wereda 5. Thus, the chapter discusses the major identified findings with results found in the existed literature from other studies conducted.

5.1 Challenges of Women Headed Households

Based on the research questions, the study explored the major social and economic challenges that women-headed households faced. The main challenges that were found from the in-depth interview, observation, and FGD were classified in two. These were social challenges and economic challenges. The social challenges included abandonment, abstinence in social relation, stigma, and psycho-social influence on their children's life. The economic challenges include low income, poverty, losing control over the property. Based on the findings of the study the major social and economic challenges that women-headed household faced were discussed with the other literature conducted on the women headed household.

Concerning social challenge, one of the main challenges of the women-headed households was they were abandoned by their male partners/breadwinners. To illustrate, abandonment by their former husband and exposition to the second marriage aggravated the social and economic challenges of women. Moreover, women who had children and remarried exposed to recurrent abandonment by their partner, Hossain(1995) stated that the event of abandonment usually proceeded by the deterioration of the marital relationship, accompanied by financial hardship and/or the husband being unable/unwilling to support the household. Young women were more

likely to return to their parents' home if possible. In this research out of 20 women who participated in the in-depth interview, 7 were widowed and out of 13 women only one woman legally divorced but the rest separated or their husbands left them without supporting their children anything. Even the divorced one did not get support, their husband refused to support their own children and the mothers give up the court process because of prolonged appointments. Therefore, recurrent abandonment affected and aggravated the challenges of women-headed households.

The other challenge of most of the women who lead their household is the inability to participate in a social gathering and ceremonies. Women who lead their family don't have much time to participate in social life, because of their busy schedule in helping their household. They have to choose between losing income or social relation, the reason behind is most of them are a daily laborer if they are absent from work they will be paid below their salary. So that inability to satisfy their children's needs makes them leave their social connection and in return not participate in social ceremonies damage their social relationship with people.

The study identified that there is a lack of respect for the women-headed households when compared to married women, to substantiate this Mencher, and Okongwu stated that. "Female householders also face difficulties from the larger society regarding their status that they are stigmatized as husbandless" (Mencher & Okongwu, 1993, P. 276)

This study also found out harassment in the daily life of women. Harassment such as insult and beating from their former partner was common some partner beat their former wives after the separation. In women headed household children has a different responsibility regardless of their age. Especially in large number of household members, children obliged to work more than

their ability, drop out from school, and they also exposed to depression and stress because of the absence of a father. To substantiate this Gudia and Rhoda stated.

In the attempt to gain income through wage employment female householders including their children drop their schooling. As a result of unbalanced, inadequate, and nutrition, fewer foods female-headed households members eat, they are easily vulnerable to ill health. (Gudia & Rhoda, 1990, P.38)

The other feature of the women headed household is these women earn low income because of a lack of access to employment. This is due to several reasons such as women are not paid equally compared to men, most of the women who live in ward 5 were either illiterate or drop out from school. Therefore they couldn't earn a better salary. To substantiate, this Nelly (1998) agreed as a result of lack of skill resulting from low access to education and training the females would be forced to engage in wage employment for higher-income when the husband disappears from the household. In such an attempt to gain income, there are social inequalities based on sex, which remain to affect the income that the females can gain equal qualifications and occupations comparing to males competent.

Regarding working time, a woman who led her household have a lot of responsibilities that makes her unpunctual which reduce her salary and make her lose her job this in turn led her to start low-income jobs. When the fathers depart from the family all financial income might stop, which creates a lot of burden, stress, fear, and loss of confidence in the household. Similarly, Etensh (2007) stated that most female household heads are engaged in home-based income-generating activities and their incomes are less compared to their male counterparts. Further, she argued that mutual support groups have high priorities among the poor. In her analyses, she shows female-headed households occupy poor quality houses.

In this study poverty was found as one of the major challenge of women-headed households in the Woreda. Some participants were among poor of the poorest households in the list of the Woreda woman and children's office. And some women used to be in the list and removed from the list because of their economic status improvement. For instance, Mencher&Okongwu (1993) argued that even though poverty is measured in relative terms for different countries of the world, female-headed households are featured by poor economic and low levels of living. As a result of poorness females leading their households sometimes depend on public assistance to help themselves and their children to have access to a household for living, food, clothing, and health and education costs.

5.2 Coping Mechanisms

The main coping mechanism to address the social challenge was their faith towards supernatural power, the sympathy of the community towards women headed household, and share the idea at the time of the problem. The main coping mechanisms to address the economic challenges are working hard, selling different property, reducing leaving standard, and plan for the future.

The participant woman has positive thinking towards their future which helps them to be resilient from their challenges. Their positive thinking comes from their religious thoughts. By being a believer in a certain religion they were able to hope and overcome challenges. The social interaction and the bond between the believers of a certain religion also help the women headed family in the group to get support from that religious community.

Community sympathy towards women who lost their husbands and abandoned by their husbands is the main type of coping mechanism. Share idea with others is the other coping mechanism in which the women headed household gets relief and solution. To support this

Naomi & Samiha (1995) stated that the process by which women become household heads generally features help from the community, including close relatives from both natal and marital sides, neighbors, and distant relatives, affluent villagers. Relatives tend to help as far as they can, but it is often somewhat conditional assistance. There are several kinds of help and a corresponding number of ways in which women household heads can earn the help they are given.

After the loss of the breadwinner, the women headed household face many socio-economic challenges. To adapt the situation they need time, in this kind of situation households who have properties sell their properties, and selling property is one of the mechanisms that are used by the women headed household. To substantiate this Naomi & Samiha (1995) stated that, a number of the women reported having sold all or some of their land generally inherited from their husbands after their husband's death, and one was even forced to sell her utensils when her husband left her. Those of the de jure household heads who manage to keep their land, however, not always able to retain control of it. To adopt the change in their household women reduce their expense or the situation forces them to give up their luxury life. Plan for children's future life is another feature of women who led their household. Every single mother wants to see their children successes which incites them to work hard and set a long term plan.

5.3 Opportunities to Social and Economic Aspect

Though the women-headed households face different socio-economic challenges, half of the in-depth interview participants revealed that they get social and economic opportunities such as leading their household, decision making, participate in a public place, doing an income-generating activity, and business management. Losing their husband expose them to start work

this brings another insight in their life. They were not considering themselves as capable to lead their family before but after they face the situation they find out that they found out that they were capable of leading their household. When the male partner were absent from home the women began to lead were household in which women who didn't participate in public places started to participate and exposed to many networks. Similarly, Dirsan (2016) stated that the role of women is impeded because they generally hold low status in many developing countries. Owing to historical and cultural disadvantages, women are also more vulnerable to poverty. He also stated the decision making power of women is the basis for transforming lives at the household level and in the wider society.

Chapter Six

6. Conclusion and Implications

This chapter consists of two major parts. These are Conclusions and Implications. Under implication: implication for policy, Implications for future research, and implication for practice/intervention are presented.

6.1 Conclusion

This study revealed the challenges and opportunities of women-headed households in AkakiKality sub-city Woreda five. The study provided a detailed assessment regarding the social and economic challenges, socio-economic opportunities of women who head their household, and the mechanism that women-headed households cope with the social and economic challenges. The findings revealed that Woreda five women-headed households face social challenges including abandonment, lack of respect, and psycho-social and economic influence on children's lives. These challenges lead them and their family to lose trust in their relationship, stress, depression and aggravate their economic problems, the women who lead their family faces a lot of responsibilities which made them unable to participate in social participation. Most of the women who lead their household in Woreda 5 were either illiterate or dropped out from school. Therefore they couldn't earn better salary. Poverty was the other feature of the women headed household in the Woreda.

Women headed households use different coping mechanisms consciously or unconsciously to address the social and economic challenges. The main coping mechanisms to address the social challenges were faith and hope, Community sympathy towards women headed household, and to address their economic challenge they worked hard, sold different properties

to survive, women-headed households reduced leaving standard to adopt the new situation.

Children's future successes initiated them to be strong in life and to plan for the future. Although women-headed households faced social and economic challenges, there are social and economic opportunities they experienced in their lives.

6.2 Implications

In line with the findings of the study, the researcher draws the following implications. These include implication for policy, the implication for future research, and implication for practice or intervention.

6.2.1 Implication for policy

The finding indicates that women-headed households faced various challenges. While doing this research I was communicating Woreda 5 Women and Children's Affairs Office to get my study population and they told me that there were many women-headed households in the Woreda but there is no special list for this kind of women or support. Even if its known family is the basic unit of social and economic organization in most societies, public policies often fail to recognize the women headed household. It is often assumed that families whether nuclear or extended, are headed by men and rely primarily on a male breadwinner. To address the challenges that are listed in the findings part and to mitigate the challenges social workers who work in government offices and other institutions who are working on women and children, need to set proper strategies and set policy revision based to consider women-headed households.

6.2.2 Implication for future research

The findings of the study showed more than half of the women who head their household grown up in single-parent families and with their relatives. This implies that it needs more researches to be conducted on women-headed households to know more about the relation between the backgrounds of the parents that may lead to a single-parent household.

6.2.3 Implication for practice/intervention

The challenges that had been identified from the finding need intervention to address Women headed household challenges. Social workers who work in Woreda 5 GOs and NGOs should advocate for women-headed households by creating awareness regarding socio-economic, psychological, and community-based problems. In general, all the challenges identified from the research call attention from the governmental, non-governmental, and individual-level participation to bring fundamental change to women-headed households. Thus, the following recommendations have been suggested based on the findings.

Social workers should advocate regarding Woreda 5 WHHs situation to reduce and control abandonment. Each community member and schools also need to work on children, youngsters, and community attitude regarding gender equality and sharing family responsibility to bring fundamental change to the life of the community.

The finding indicated that Women headed household face economic challenges because of the women who head their household illiteracy and lack of skill, which aggravate their problems. Therefore the concerned bodies /the researcher observed many NGOs who are working in the Woreda/ should work on fundamental adult education for the Woredas women.

Most of the participated women come from the rural part of Ethiopia when they were a child for better education and life. But couldn't get the opportunity as they planned and they engaged in marriage. Therefore this gives an insight for the government organizations to work as a national level and work more on child trafficking.

The finding of this study will serve as a platform for policymakers, experts, and other organizations who are working on women's and children. From the finding most women are either illiterate or drop out from school the community also had stigmatization towards these households. Furthermore, the finding could also be used for teaching and advocacy, concerning the situation of women-headed households by the concerned body.

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Appendices 1

1, Informed consent

Researcher: BezaKebede

Title of the research Opportunities, Challenges and Coping mechanisms of Women Headed Household in Addis Ababa: The Case of AkakiKality Sub-City, Wereda Five.

The objective of this study:-the general objective of this thesis is to assess Opportunities Challenges and Coping mechanisms of Women Headed Household.

Procedure: The procedure for obtaining the information required for this research will be done with a qualitative approach. The researcher is going to do a depth study of the Opportunities and Challenge of Women Headed Household in AkakiKality Sub-City, Wereda Five. The data will be collected through interviews, questioner, and observations. The interview will be recorded and the responses analyzed in the terms, themes, and sub-themes.

Risks and discomforts: if there is any discomfort while talking about your experience the researcher will not continue with the interview if any major concern arises and will ensure that you will not be forced to continue the interview in any distress. If it is necessary for any therapy, the researcher will arrange by coordinating with concerning and available governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The benefit of this study is that the policymakers, government officials, professionals, the women themselves, and others may have new insight into a problem and opportunities of women-headed households and strengthening the study area.

Respondent rights:

✚ Participation is voluntarily based

✚ You may withdraw at any stage of the process without negative consequences or with any

information being published or disclosed.

✚ Total confidentiality and anonymity will be highly secured

✚ Access to the results of the research, if you so desired.

Confidentiality and anonymity: The researcher will allocate pseudonyms for you to ensure that after the data has been collected no one will be able to identify who you are. And destroy evidence that links you to the research after the research process completed. Concerning privacy, the researcher will respect your privacy and only collect information that is relevant to the research study.

If at any stage you feel that your privacy is being violated the researcher will reorganize the study to ensure that you are in no way compromised. The researcher is working under the supervision of an advisor (YaniaSeiad , PhD) from the School of Social Work, Addis Ababa University, to ensure that she does not do anything unethical. The researcher can be contacted by telephone, mail, or e-mail if desired.

Cell phone: +251912003137

E-mail:- bezakdesta@gmail.com

Participant's

Researcher's

Name and signature ----- Signature -----

Date ----- Date -----

N.B: This consent form is invalid unless signed by the respondent and the researcher.

Appendix 2

In-depth Interview Guide

The objective of this in-depth interview is for partial fulfillment of the requirement for

the degree of Master of Social Work. Therefore, I designed it to collect data about the opportunities, challenges and coping mechanisms of women-headed households. The data collected by this interview will all be used for this research only. Besides, note that all the collected data will be kept merely in the hands of the researcher. I hereby request you to be open and honest while you participate, so that the research could succeed and achieve the intended goal.

Part 1

Socio-Demographic Information

1. Age _____ Place of birth _____ Place of residence _____
2. Educational level _____ Religion _____
3. For how long have you led the family (alone)? _____
4. How many is the number of your family member? _____
5. Your occupation _____

Part 2

Social Issues

6. Marital Status _____ If you say divorced or separated, Please specify the reason
7. How about share the property _____?
8. Concerning your female headship of the family tell me about your neighbor's reaction?
9. How about your social interaction with married women? Do they help you? in what way
10. Explain changes in the livings condition of the household as compared to the past when your husband was present.
11. Do you share ideas at the time of the problem?
12. Is there any organization to help families like yours? What kind of aid?

13. Have you been sexually harassed because of your sex?
14. What kind of problem have you faced because you are a woman?
15. Please explain your overall social life conditions?

Part 3

Economic issues

16. Tell me about your monthly income?
17. Please explain changes in the condition or ownership of the household you live by now as compared to the past?
18. Is there any household property or else sold since the time of departure from the male counterpart? What kind? /for what purpose?
19. What resources do you have now?
20. Do you have other means or source of income like support?

Part 4

Coping Mechanisms

Social challenge coping mechanisms

21. What coping strategy you have to combat difficulties in your life?
22. Please explain the educational condition of your children as compared to the past when your husband was present?
23. At the time of sharing property did you face challenges how do you overcome it.
24. How do you cope up things regarding social interaction
25. How do you overcome changes in your family
26. How do you overcome the challenges you face since you are a women
27. What is your plan for the future?

Economic challenge coping mechanism

28. What coping strategy do you use to lead the family after you faced the responsibility (to lead the family right after the male breadwinner absent)
29. What coping strategy you have to combat the economic challenge in your life?
30. How do you get income for the survival of the family?
31. How do you manage the resource you have?

Part 5

Opportunity to social and economic life

32. Does being single has an opportunities by itself? Please explain.
33. How do you explain the opportunities you get by being a single mom in your community?
34. how do you explain your opportunity to lead your family
35. Please tell me about the opportunity to earn money and expense it by your self
36. How do you explain the opportunity you get to see what you can do by yourself to sustain the family?
37. How do you evaluate your administration of the household as compared to when your husband was present?

Finally, dear respondent, I appreciate your cooperation and willingness. Thank you!

Appendix 3

FGD guide

1. May you please discuss the major social challenge of women-headed families?
2. .May you please discuss the major economic challenge of women-headed families?
3. May you please discuss the coping mechanisms you employ in your social challenge?

4. May you please discuss the coping mechanisms you employ in your economic challenge
5. How do you explain your social opportunities by leading your family
6. How do you explain your economic opportunities by leading your family
7. Do you have anything to add, please?

Appendix 4

Observation Checklist

- How does the surrounding of the house look like?
- How is their relationship with their children?
- How is their social interaction with a neighbor



Figure 1&2 participant in-depth interview



Figure3 & 4participants in-depth interview and FGD