



Addis Ababa University

College of Social Science

School of Social Work

Pre-Departure Processes of Overseas Labor Migration: The Case of Ethiopian
Women Migrating to Saudi Arabia for Domestic Work.

By

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By

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Advisor: Mesele Mengsteab (PhD)

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Statement of Certification

This is to certify that the thesis presented by Beakal Kora Molla, titled " Pre-Departure Processes of Overseas Labor Migration: The Case of Ethiopian Women Migrating to Saudi Arabia for Domestic Work." submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work, adheres to the university's regulations and meets the accepted standards of originality and quality. Signed by Examining committee

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Date.....

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

COC: Certificate of Competency.

CV: Curriculum Vitae

E-LMIS: Ethiopian Labor Market Information System.

ETB: Ethiopian Birr

ID: Identification

IDI: In-depth interview

KII: Key informant interview

ILO: International Labor Organization⁹.

IOM: International Organization for Migration

MOLS: Minister of Labor and Skills of Ethiopia

PMW: Potential Migrant Worker

POEAs: Private Overseas Employment Agencies

QR Code: Quick response code

TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Abstract

This study examined the pre-departure process of Ethiopian women migrating to the Middle East (Saudi Arabia) as domestic workers by examining the ways information is gathered, the processes of recruitment, preparation (training and orientation), deployment, the roles of various actors, and challenges faced during the process. A qualitative research design was adopted by using purposive and snowball sampling. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 10 migrant workers, 5 Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS) officials, and workers. Key informant interviews were conducted with 11 informants from 6 private overseas employment agencies (POEAs), 3 informants from the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) center, and 2 brokers. Document analysis were also used to gather data. The data was finally analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The findings show that the pre-departure phase involves different processes, such as gathering information through various means. Moreover, the pre-departure process involves potential migrant workers registering on the Ethiopian Labor Market Information System (E-LMIS). The pre-departure process involves mandatory steps facilitated by the E-LMIS platform, including online registration, biometric identification, and obtaining a Labour ID and QR code for tracking and verification. Potential migrants without a Certificate of Competency (COC) must undergo domestic worker training at TVET centers and pass a COC test. The recruitment is often facilitated by POEAs through the musaned platforms if the destination country is Saudi Arabia, after securing job opportunities contract signing will be followed. Furthermore, medical examinations, visa processing, and further document processing facilitated by POEAs and submitting all required documents to the E-LMIS for review and evaluation to obtain approval to work overseas. The evaluation is done by MOLS. However, challenges include potential migrant workers' information gaps, reliance on brokers, and geographical concentration of services. POEAs, TVET, and MOLS also face different challenges during the process. Generally, the recent reforms of labor migration have contributed to better and safer labor migration. However, there are still some challenges in the recruitment, training, and deployment process for overseas labor migration to the middle east countries specifically Saudi arabas as a female domestic worker.

Key words: Pre-departure process, Overseas Labor migration, Domestic Workers, Recruitment.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1. Background Overview

Globally, millions of people seek overseas employment to improve their livelihoods and support their families as domestic workers (International Labor Organization, 2023; World Bank, 2022; McGrath, 2016). According to Khoda & Akram (2017), during the process of labor migration, the pre-departure process is seen as a critical phase that encompasses recruitment, documentation, training, orientation, and overall preparation of migrant workers before their departure. This phase is essential in ensuring that migrant workers pass through safe recruitment, are well-informed, trained, protected, and equipped to navigate and tackle the challenges they may face in the destination countries. However, this phase can also present a variety of challenges that can impact the well-being, rights, and experiences of the migrant workers during the pre-migration (Röthlisberger, 2019)

According to Gutema (2019), the pre-departure process for domestic work begins with the potential migrant's decision to work overseas. This choice involves a careful comparison of the pros and cons of leaving their home country. In Ethiopia, studies show the significant influence of low economic factors, such as low income and unemployment rates, on the decision to seek domestic work in Middle Eastern countries (Arayaselassie, 2013; Retta, 2020; Zewdu, 2017). Furthermore, social and personal networks, including families, friends in destination countries, and brokers, also play a role in facilitating labor migration (Kuschminder, 2016).

After the decision, the procedure tends to entail information gathering, preparation of documents, and hiring by Private Overseas Employment Agencies (POEAs), and brokers are significant actors in pre-departure procedures (Arayaselassie, 2013). While POEAs and brokers may provide quality foreign employment opportunities, they also engage in exploitative practices toward migrant workers by giving false information, messing with work contracts, levying high recruitment charges, providing bad post-arrival support, etc. (Arayaselassie, 2013; Atong, Mayah, Odigie, 2018; Odhiambo, 2021).

Training and orientation are also two of the main elements of the pre-departure process. These trainings are formulated in order to equip migrants with skills and knowledge related to their preferred profession, rights, and responsibilities in the host nation (Taya, 2016). Additionally, according to Taya (2016), such trainings are necessary in order to prepare migrants in making sound decisions and handling potential difficulties. Other procedures are also included in the pre-departure process, such as document verification and processing. This ensures migrant workers get the necessary skills and educational documents, working permits, visas, travel documents, medical screenings, and assessments (Khoda & Akram, 2017).

In Ethiopia, the government, through the Ministry of Labor and Skills (formerly the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs), has recently resumed and promoted regular labor migration after implementing significant reforms. The Ethiopian Labor Market Information System (E-LMIS) was introduced to regulate and monitor recruiting agencies, migrant workers, and the whole process of labor migration. Moreover, E-LMIS serves as a platform to control and evaluate individuals seeking overseas employment in different countries and the employers, aiming to protect migrant rights and ensure transparency in the recruitment process (Takele, 2023). According to the Ethiopian Overseas Proclamation (2021), to have an overseas employment process, both the

potential migrants and private overseas employment agencies (POEAs) or recruiting agencies are required to adhere to the 2016 Overseas Employment Proclamation and follow the guidelines.

According to the 2016 overseas employment proclamations, individuals seeking overseas employment must provide various documents, including educational certificates, a Certificate of Occupation Competency (COC), and medical proof from government-approved hospitals and more based on the proclamation (Ethiopia's overseas employment proclamation, 2021). However, throughout the recruitment, preparation, and deployment process, potential migrant workers and different stakeholders in the process face various challenges and processes. It is crucial to see and examine these processes and challenges at the pre-departure stage.

The study focuses on domestic workers because they represent one of the most vulnerable groups in labor migration, particularly Ethiopian women seeking employment in the Middle East. Domestic workers often face significant challenges during the pre-departure phase, including exploitation by brokers, misinformation, inadequate training, and limited legal protection. Unlike other labor sectors, domestic work is typically informal and isolated, increasing the risk of abuse and reducing access to support systems. Therefore, this research aims to see the pre-departure process of labor migration under the new reform system implemented by the Minister of Labor and Skills (MOLS) before departure. Moreover, it tries to understand what the pre-departure process for Ethiopian female domestic workers for labor migration looks like, who are the main actors in the pre-departure process, what are their roles, and what challenges do they face.

This study tries to see how the new reform way of overseas employment looks in the pre-departure phase and, analyzing the roles of various actors, the effectiveness of existing policies, and the challenges faced by migrant workers. By examining recruitment practices, information

dissemination, pre-departure training, and regulatory frameworks, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how labor migration is managed and processed in the pre-departure stage. In short, this research presents how the current overseas employment pre-migration looks and how we can improve the labor migration process to be competitive in the international market. Furthermore, it can be a source of information on how the pre-departure process for overseas employment looks and discourage irregular migration, rather promoting and advocating for people to engage in the regular and legal migration, which has safety, transparency, and an overall experience of Ethiopian migrant workers.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Several studies have been undertaken internationally on the pre-departure phase for overseas employment, especially for domestic workers who are motivated to migrate and work in Middle Eastern countries (Babbitt, Brown, Antolin, & Toosi, 2023; Ruiz, & Vargas-Silva, 2019). Whereas, most of the studies are related to the pre-departure overseas networks (Paul, 2019), the role of recruiting potential migrant worker (Jones, 2015), pre-departure training and orientation programs, challenges of migrant workers faced before departure (Reza, & Sultana, 2023), and more had been studied worldwide. Meanwhile, there seems to be a dearth of literature on the pre-departure process for labor migration in Ethiopia in generally.

Internationally, Paul (2019) explores the comparison of the pre-migration overseas networks of Indonesian and Filipino migrant domestic workers. The comparison shows that there are significant differences in the pre-migration overseas networks of Indonesians and Filipinos. Filipino potential migrant domestic workers had higher chances of knowing migrants who had already migrated. Moreover, their overseas networks are larger, more geographically dispersed, and have more white-

collar contacts in the destination countries than the Indonesians. These differences in pre-migration networks and information contribute to having a safe and decent labor migration process starting from the pre-departure phase.

Odhiambo (2021) conducts a study on the impact of the recruitment process in prompting right-based overseas employment in the case of private recruitment agencies in Kenya as one of the pre-departure processes for labor migration. It shows that the requirement process in Kenya is unethical. Private recruitment agencies in Kenya have been found to violate the rights of job seekers and migrant workers through practices such as overcharging, human trafficking, and deceptive practices that tarnished Kenya's foreign ethical recruitment image.

Moreover, Samantroy (2014) conducted a study on regulating international labor migration issues in the context of recruitment agencies found in India during the pre-departure process. The study findings show that private recruitment agencies play a crucial role in facilitating labor migration in the pre-departure phase in different ways, mostly by connecting migrant workers and employers in the destination country and by providing labor migrants with an opportunity to work abroad. With this advantageous role of recruiting agencies, there is still a lack of regulation and monitoring of these agencies; those agencies can lead to exploitative and unethical practices. The study emphasizes that effective regulation and enforcement to prevent fraudulent practices can ensure fair treatment of migrant workers in the pre- and post-departure phases.

Reza & Sultana (2023) study the quality and effectiveness of pre-departure training programs on housekeeping for female migrant domestic workers at technical training centers in Bangladesh. This study used four technical training centers to assess the quality and effectiveness of the training. Studies reveal several gaps and challenges in these technical training centers for migrant domestic

workers, such as lack of coherent practices, distribution skill training modules, adaptability of the participants on the food habits of destination countries, no training for the trainers, and fake identity documents for enrollment.

Similarly, Aryal & Kharel (2023) investigate the possibility of pre-departure orientation in protecting labor migrants. The study indicated that pre-departure orientation programs implemented in Nepal to protect migrant workers have substantial limitations in their effectiveness. Despite the fact that over 200,000 Nepali workers are required to take an orientation program before leaving the country, there is no clear indication that the intervention is working as predicted. Available evidence suggests that the program has significant limitations in protecting migrant workers.

Watanabe (2014) conducted a study related to pre-departure programs in providing information for migrant workers. The study stated that different information and training are provided for the Filipino migrant workers who plan to work in the Middle Eastern countries as domestic workers. These programs include providing information to the labor migrant about the destination countries, cultural familiarization, financial literacy, and language training. This program aims to help the migrant worker to understand their role in the destination country and help them to gain different skills that make them ready for labor migration.

In the Ethiopian context, even though there are lacks of studies in the pre-departure phase of labor migration, Kuschminder (2016) conduct a research on the role of networks in domestic worker migration from Ethiopia to the Middle East. The study found that migrant workers' networks are influenced by their weak ties and strong ties with recruiting agencies and fellow migrant workers in the destination country. These networks provide vital information and support during the pre-

departure phase. The study found out that strong ties, like personal connections in the destination country, can lead to better outcomes for migrants starting from the pre-departure process up to arrival, as they can benefit from the experience of their fellow migrant workers in the destination country in following the same footsteps, in choosing recruiting agencies, and in other activities. Conversely, weak ties within the origin country, such as local brokers and recruiting agencies, can expose migrants to exploitation and abuse throughout the entire journey. Consequently, many Ethiopian domestic workers rely on weak ties to migrate to the Middle East.

Arayaselassie (2013) conducted a study on Ethiopian female domestic workers migrating to the Middle East and examined their expectations and experiences prior to labor migration. This study highlights the significant influence of overseas employment recruiters in driving the mass migration of young Ethiopian women to the Middle East for domestic work. The finding shows that migrant workers face different challenges and abuse both in the origin country in the pre-departure process and in the destination countries by recruiters' agencies or agents and employers in the Middle East country.

Although there is the existence of different research internationally that highlights the importance of examining different components of the pre-departure phase to ensure safe and ethical labor migration. Studies conducted internationally have shed light on critical factors such as pre-migration overseas networks, the role of recruiting agencies, pre-departure training and orientation programs, and the challenges faced by migrant workers prior to departure. Those studies didn't show the overview of the pre-departure process rather have a lack of a *comprehensive* analysis of how these components interconnect in the pre-departure phase; rather, they focused on

the specific stages of the pre-departure process for labor migration. Therefore, this study can contribute to showing what the pre-departure process looks like in Ethiopia.

whereas, in Ethiopia, despite a lack of literatures about the pre-departure phase, there are a few studies related to the pre-departure process, like Arayaselassie (2013). However, according to the newly published policies and proclamations on labor migration and the reformed institution of the Ministry of Labor and Skill, different initiatives has been seen regarding labor migration and the pre-departure process. Within these 11 years of research made by Arayaselassie, there are different changes, including institutions, reopening overseas employment in 2018 (which was banned in 2013), and new labor migration systems, regulation, and proclamations were implemented (Ethiopian News Agency, 2018). According to Ethiopia's oversea employment proclamation (2016), it was stated that it was necessary to replace the existing Employment Exchange Services Proclamation with the new 2016 Overseas Employment Proclamation to promotes safe and protected overseas employment and create a domestic job opportunity.

Furthermore, recently the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS) has been actively promoting overseas employment through various media channels. Seeing these promotions on television motivated me to learn more about the process. Previously, before overseas employment was temporarily suspended in 2013, we all heard numerous disturbing stories and experiences about what was happening to Ethiopians in the Middle Eastern countries. During that time, overseas employment agencies were blamed for the unethical conduct of their employees, abuse, and for deceiving Ethiopians into accepting overseas employment in Arab countries, which were illegal, harsh, unprotected, unsafe, and appalling conditions (Ethiopian News Agency, 2018). However, the government is now more involved in the overseas employment process than before. Therefore, this research will not only contribute to existing literature but also provide valuable insights into

the current pre-departure process for labor migration under Ethiopia's reformed overseas employment system.

1.3. Objective

1.3.1. General Objective

The main objective of the study is to explore the pre-departure process of overseas labor migration of Ethiopian women to the Middle East for domestic work.

1.3.2. Specific Objective

- To investigate the ways of information gathering by Ethiopian domestic migrant workers.
- To explore the process of registration/application, preparation, recruitment, and deployment of Ethiopian women domestic workers.
- To identify involving actors and their roles in the pre-departure process of overseas labor migration of Ethiopian women domestic workers.
- To examine the challenges faced during the pre-departure process in Ethiopia.

1.4. Research Question

1.4.1. Main Research Question

This research aims to explore the pre-departure process of overseas labor migration for Ethiopian women seeking domestic work in the Middle East.

1.4.2. Specific Research Questions

Based on the main research question, the study strived to address the following specific questions:

1. How do Ethiopian women domestic migrant workers gather information about overseas labor migration opportunities?
2. How does registration/application, preparation, recruitment and deployment process for Ethiopian women domestic workers migrating overseas?
3. What are the roles of key actors involved in the pre-departure process of overseas labor migration for Ethiopian women domestic workers?
4. What challenges are encountered by key actors during the pre-departure process in Ethiopia?

1.5. Significant of the Study

This study can have various significant implications. First, it closes gaps in the literature by further exploring and examining the pre-departure process for labor migration as a domestic worker through the government recognition, internationally and in the Ethiopian context. This research addressed the relevance of the pre-migration phase in labor migration, whereas most studies on pre-departure focus on specific stages like overseas employment recruitment or the effectiveness of trainings, orientation, and other specific studies that do not include the overall view of the pre-departure process.

Moreover, the research examined and studied the pre-departure process that is important for having a safe and well-being labor migration to the destination countries. It is possible for migrant workers to have fewer struggles and challenges in destination countries if different stakeholders, including overseas recruiting agencies and government institutions, do their role in the pre-departure phase. Additionally, although the majority of labor migration research has focused on the aftermath of labor migration and the irregular labor migration, there is a lack of study that focuses on the pre-

departure phase of labor migration. Prior to pre-departure, it is crucial to understand the process and challenges faced by workers in their home country. This study closed the gap and provided insightful information on the entire pre-departure process for labor migration.

The research can contribute to interventions during the pre-departure phase in mitigating recruitment abuses and other challenges in the pre-departure process for overseas labor migration. According to Odhiambo (2021), different studies have shown various forms of unethical abuse in the recruitment process and lack of training for labor migrants seeking overseas employment. By understanding the pre-departure process and challenges, different professionals, including social workers, can play a crucial role in fostering and promoting safe labor migration for Ethiopians during the pre-departure process.

In terms of policy the study can contribute to strength different aspects of the pre-departure process for overseas employments as a domestic migrant worker. By looking at the current challenges in Ethiopian labour migration that includes skill gaps, reliance on brokers, the effectiveness of Private Overseas Employment Agencies (POEAs) and also the recruitment and deployment process of domestic migrant workers to the middle east specifically Saudi Arabia

1.6. Limitation of the Study

Among the limitations of the study, there was a challenge due to brokers being unwilling to participate. Despite considerable efforts, only two brokers were successfully interviewed. Even though the influences of brokers are significant in the pre-departure process, they are seen as being legally prohibited from participating due to previous exploitative behaviors and high commission fees, according to the 2016 Ethiopian overseas employment proclamation; if brokers engage in such activities, they will face legal consequences. Due to this reason, most brokers

were not willing to engage in the research for their own safety, which might somehow in a little affect the study in understanding the perspectives and diverse roles of the brokers deeply.

1.7. Operational Definition of Key Terms

Pre-departure: refers to the period before migrant workers leave their home country for employment abroad, encompassing administrative, legal, and logistical preparations.

Pre-departure Process: The structured steps taken before migration, including information gathering, registration, recruitment procedures, preparation (such as training and orientation), and deployment activities.

Potential Migrant Worker: are people who are willing to worker abroad as a labor migrant that are in the pre-departure process in their home country.

Labor Migration: The movement of individuals from one country to another for employment purposes, often influenced by economic, social, and opportunities for oversea employment.

Overseas Employment: Work opportunities secured in a foreign country through formal channels, typically requiring legal steps, regulatory compliance and legal documentation.

Domestic Work: Employment in private households involving tasks such as cleaning, childcare, and elderly care, often performed by migrant workers under specific labor agreements.

Private Overseas Employment Recruiting Agencies: are private entities or organizations that are licensed to facilitate the recruitment and placement of workers abroad.

1.8. Organization of the Study

The study is structured in a logical manner to explore the pre-departure process of Ethiopian female domestic workers for labor migration to the Middle East. The paper has five chapters.

Chapter one includes an introduction and a statement of the problem, highlighting the need for research on the pre-departure phase in the Ethiopian context. Chapter one also includes clearly stated general and specific research objectives, main and specific research questions, the significance of the study, and its limitations. Finally, it defines key terms or operational definitions.

Chapter two is Literature Review, which provides a comprehensive review of existing literature relevant to the study's focus. Whereas chapter three is methods, focusing on the methodology employed in the research, including, research design, study site and population, sampling technique, sampling procedure, sample size, data analysis, quality assurance, and finally ethical considerations.

Chapter four focuses on findings and discussion. whereas, chapter five presents conclusion, implications for social work practice, policy and research and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This literature review chapter tries to review existing scholarly works relevant to the study's focus on the key aspect of the pre-departure processes of overseas labor migration women seeking domestic work in the Middle East. This literature review chapter tries to review existing scholarly works relevant to the study's focus on the key aspect of the pre-departure processes of overseas labor migration women seeking domestic work in the Middle East. The chapter discusses the empirical and theoretical evidence from diverse sources like academic journals, books, organizational and government reports, and research theses, which align with the study objectives. The chapter provides detailed information on the topic of pre-departure processes of overseas labor migration, ways of gathering information, the role of social networks in the pre-departure process, the involvement of recruitment agencies and government institutions, the recruitment process, the effectiveness of pre-departure training, challenges faced by potential migrant workers, POEAs and government institutions, and more. Additionally, this chapter discusses relevant theoretical frameworks related to the pre-departure process for overseas labor migration.

2.2. Conceptualizing Pre-Departure Overseas Labor Migration

A report from ILO (2017) states that millions of workers are seeks employment overseas in pursuit of economic advancement. Pre-departure is a significant phase where the migrant workers go through different processes and practices before departing from their country of origin for labor migration. This stage also shapes the experiences, skills, and knowledge of the migrant worker before arriving in the destination country (Samuel Hall & International Labour Organization, 2022; International Labour Organization, 2016).

Pre-departure stage of global labor migration entails some processes. It includes the process of preparation, recruitment process, orientation and training for the labor migrants, and legal and traveling documents, followed by deployment, all of which have a prominent role to contribute towards the success of labor migration (Odhiambo, 2021). According to ILO (2016), it entails more than one activity and decision affecting the safety, health, and economic well-being of the migrant workers when arriving at the host countries.

Moreover, Samuel Hall and ILO (2022) stated that adequate preparation in the pre-departure stage can influence the migrant worker's success in the destination country and accessing their rights and responsibilities in the destination country. However, if there is a lack of knowledge, skills, and information about the destination country's legal frameworks, culture, and working habits, it can lead to high vulnerability to exploitation and abuse for female migrant workers.

In the Ethiopian context, women are often pushed towards overseas labor migration due to poverty, unemployment, limited opportunities, their social position, and other push and pull factors (Busza, Shewamene, & Zimmerman, 2022; Kodama, 2024; Arayaselassie, 2013). Moreover, family and peer pressure, as well as misleading information from illegal brokers, also contribute to the decision of working overseas (Gutema, 2019). After having a motivation and making a decision to work overseas, the labor migrants will start by gathering different information, which marks the beginning of the pre-departure process (Gutema, 2019).

Ethiopian domestic migrant starts their process by gathering information about job opportunities through informal networks and family recommendations (Arayaselassie, 2013). In the pre-departure process, migrant workers try to navigate bureaucratic procedures at government offices to obtain a passport. After receiving a passport, they will approach private employment agencies for overseas job placements. These migrant workers also must attend a mandatory pre-departure

orientation, which can help them learn about their roles and rights. However, the effectiveness of these sessions often raises another question. Finally, if they secure a job in the destination country, they will proceed to secure a visa for labor migration. During this whole process, migrant workers face different challenges and exploitations by different actors and institutions, like private employment agencies, brokers, and other organizations, (Arayaselassie, 2013; Busza, Shewamene, & Zimmerman, 2022).

Furthermore, Busza, Shewamene, & Zimmerman (2022) stated that some migrant workers receive misinformation about working overseas. This misinformation can sometimes lead to high expectations about their job conditions and earnings. The lack of accurate information about the destination country can result in a high vulnerability of the migrant worker in the destination country, which can lead them to be abused in the destination country.

2.3. Gathering Information for overseas Labor Migration

2.3.1. Sources of Information

In Ethiopia, information about domestic work labor migration is distributed through private employment agencies that send domestic workers to the Middle Eastern countries and local brokers (Arayaselassie, 2013). However, the information they offer is frequently questionable in terms of reliability and trustworthiness. It is well known that brokers, in particular, use deceptive methods and spread false information, which leads to high expectations among the potential migrant workers (Arayaselassie, 2013; Gutema, 2019). This is further complicated by the fact that while some overseas recruiting agencies adhere to ethical standards, others engage in exploitative practices, making it difficult for inexperienced migrants, especially domestic workers, to discern trustworthy organizations (Bhattacharjee, 2018).

Alongside formal channels, informal networks such as family, friends, and returnee migrants can serve as sources of information (Jamie & Tsega, 2018; Röthlisberger, 2019; Kodama, 2024). Individuals planning to migrate frequently seek assistance from close family members or neighbors who have prior experience with overseas employment (Röthlisberger, 2019). These "strong ties" are often considered more reliable due to their vested interest in the migrant's well-being (Kuschminder, 2016; Granovetter, 1973). Returnee migrants play a huge role in distributing information about the jobs, visa requirements, and way of living in destination countries (Kuschminder, 2016). However, the information offered by these networks may be biased, emphasizing one positive aspect rather than the negative aspects (Kodama, 2024). This biased information might result in a lack of awareness of potential risks, such as having high expectations and difficult working circumstances (Kodama, 2024).

2.3.2. Social Networks and Their Gendered Dynamics

Social networks are crucial during the pre-departure stage because they affect the choices made by potential migrants, their access to information, and their understanding of the labor migration process (Garip & Asad, 2016; Paul, 2016). Word-of-mouth and extended family networks are crucial in Ethiopia, especially in rural regions, where women look for domestic employment opportunities overseas (Kodama, 2024).

According to Kuschminder (2016), the safety and well-being of female domestic workers are greatly impacted by the quality and reliability of the information they obtain from these networks. The researcher explains Granovetter's strong and weak ties by mentioning that while weak ties, like those with local brokers and networks of overseas recruiting agencies, can provide initial opportunities but frequently provide inaccurate or incomplete information, putting labor migrants

in Ethiopia at risk. Whereas strong ties, which are defined by close relationships like family and friends, can offer emotional support and practical guidance.

Kuschminder (2016) moreover noted that there are limited regulations and controls of these intermediaries. increase the vulnerability of the migrant worker in the pre-departure process for overseas employment, such as document fraud, deception, and human rights abuses. The lack of transparency and accountability in these networks can lead to exploitative and abusive labor practices. According to Lindquist (2008), most women migrant workers are more dependent on social networks compared to male migrant workers.

However, the safety and well-being of female domestic workers are generally impacted by the reliability of the information obtained from these networks (Kuschminder, 2016). Thus, it is essential to understand the function of these networks in the pre-departure phase in order to reduce risks and guarantee migrant workers' safety.

2.4. Process of Recruitment for Labor Migration

The recruitment process for labor migration is a vital stage in the pre-departure process for overseas labor migration that requires careful oversight and regulation to protect the rights and well-being of the migrant workers. The stage involves different stakeholders that play a crucial role in facilitating the movement of migrant workers to their destination countries (Chaloff, 2015).

According to different literatures, the recruitment process begins with the identification of job opportunities by the employers or recruiting agencies based on the demand of workers in the destination country and is then followed by selecting suitable candidates based on different requirements like skills, qualifications, and experience. These selections are done by overseas recruiting agencies in the origin country and the sponsors or employers in the destination country (Gutema, 2019). During the selection process, migrant workers should provide their information

and documents to the recruiting agency. These documents include educational background, a Certificate of Occupational Competency (COC), medical certifications, valid passports, and other documents based on the requirement (Gutema, 2019).

Once candidates are selected, the recruitment process will proceed to completing administrative procedures, contract signing, and more. During the recruitment stage, overseas recruiting agencies assist the migrant workers in different ways, including obtaining visas for the migrant workers and other legal documents required for the labor migration. This phase also includes negotiating employment terms to ensure clarity and mutual agreement between parties (ILO, 2017). According to Paul (2019), in home countries, where workers are being recruited for overseas employment, sponsors are responsible for paying a fee to the recruiter and covering various expenses for the workers. These expenses include airfare, visas, work permits, wages, and the cost of returning airfares to their home country. After the administrative formalities are completed, migrant workers undergo pre-departure orientation and training programs to prepare them for the challenges and expectations of their new work environment. (Tayah, 2016).

One important aspect of the recruitment process is the issuance of job offers to migrant workers. These job offers should clearly outline the terms and conditions of employment, including wages, working hours, benefits, and job responsibilities (ILO, 2017). Moreover, these private overseas employment agencies play a crucial role in the recruitment process for labor migration, facilitating the placement and deployment of migrant workers to destination countries. In coordinating the recruitment, documentation, and travel arrangements for migrant workers. (Arayaselassie, 2013).

According to Koser and Martin (2011), the overseas employment recruitment process should be guided and followed by ethical principles and international labor standards in order to ensure fair

and safe labor migration. Overseas recruitment practices that violate workers' rights and safety should be condemned. Meanwhile, the government should be responsible for enforcing laws and regulations that can promote safe and ethical recruitment for labor migration.

In the labor migration process as a domestic worker, the Kafala system is known for sending domestic workers to the Middle Eastern countries. According to Hvidt (2016), the Kafala system serves as a sponsorship system for bringing domestic workers to the Middle Eastern country. The system also handles visas and residency permits and moreover regulates the rules and practices of overseas labor migration as domestic workers in the Middle Eastern nations.

In the labor migration process as a domestic worker, the Kafala system is known for sending domestic workers to the Middle Eastern countries. According to Hvidt (2016), the Kafala system serves as a sponsorship system for bringing domestic workers to the Middle Eastern country. The system also handles visas and residency permits and moreover regulates the rules and practices of overseas labor migration as domestic workers in the Middle Eastern nations. Under this system, migrant domestic workers go to the Middle East with a two-year contractual agreement. During this process, the employer in the destination country serves as a sponsor for the cost of the migrant worker; this includes visas and air tickets. However, if there is any disagreement between the migrant worker and the sponsor in the destination country, the employer can break their contract agreement, and the migrant worker's visa will be cancelled and sent back to their home country (Pattadath & Moors, 2012).

According to ILO (2021), the International Labor Organization (ILO) has established policies for recruiting domestic workers for overseas labor migration to provide them a safe labor migration. These policies include protecting and safeguarding the migrant worker from any exploitation and abuse and accessing their rights during the pre-departure stage and post-departure.

2.5. Pre-Departure Preparation: Training and Orientation

2.5.1. Training Programs

In the pre-departure process for labor migration, different training programs are provided for migrant workers. These training programs are designed to help the migrant workers with basic skills so that they won't face difficult challenges in the destination countries while they are working, especially domestic migrant workers (Gutema, 2019). Moreover, different studies emphasize that it is important to provide the migrant workers with relevant and high-quality training that aligns with the specific job requirements and destination countries (Sultana and Reza, 2023; Tayah, 2016). Effective training programs should not only focus on practical skills but also incorporate cultural sensitivity and language acquisition components (Tayah, 2016). These programs aim to equip participants with the core skills and information required to adapt to the language, work environment, and culture of the host nation (Sultana and Reza, 2023). By addressing language barriers and cultural differences, training programs can empower migrant workers to navigate potential challenges and enhance their overall well-being (Shewamene, Zimmerman, Hailu, Negeri, Erulkar, Anderson, Lo, Jackson, & Busza, 2022).

Despite the recognized importance of pre-departure training, many sending countries, including Ethiopia, lack comprehensive programs that adequately prepare migrants for the realities they will face in destination countries (Samuel Hall & ILO, 2022). Different findings highlight the deficiencies in existing programs, such as inadequate content, short duration, and a failure to impart essential knowledge about contractual obligations, cultural norms, and workers' rights (Samuel Hall & ILO, 2022; Kebede, 2002). Addressing these limitations is crucial to ensure that training programs effectively prepare migrant workers for the complexities of overseas employment.

2.5.2. Orientation for labor Migration

Pre-departure orientation programs are one of the core components of the process of labor migration, especially for domestic workers, it equipping migrant workers with Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities (Aryal, & Kharel, 2023; Arayaselassie, 2013). By providing insight into legal protections, workers' rights, and channels of support, orientation courses can empower employees to cope with likely issues and mitigate the hazards associated with migration (Shewamene et al., 2022).

Literatures indicates that pre-departure orientation is required for effective labor migration. However, many migrants leave their countries of origin without adequate information regarding their rights, legal protection, and prospective health hazards. Such problems can lead migrant workers for exploitation and abuse due to their lack of knowledge of labor rights in the host country (Kebede, 2002).

Cultural adaptation is also a central aspect of pre-departure trainings and orientation, with migrants faced with the daunting fact of settling in unfamiliar cultures (ILO, 2016). Research confirms that trainings, including basic skills as well as cultural sensitivity, contributes to the mitigation of the abuse risk and obtaining successful integration in host nations (ILO, 2019).

Despite the hoped-for advantages, there has been proof that many pre-departure programs have minimal content and hence are not so effective in protecting migrant workers (Mandal, 2021). The quality of these programs is often intermittent, and this creates uncertainty about their accessibility and comprehensiveness (Kebede, 2002). Addressing such challenges requires focus on developing training material that is relevant, appropriate, and tailored to the specific needs of migrant workers (Tayah, 2016).

2.6. The Role of Key Actors in the Pre-Departure Phase

2.6.1. Migrant Workers

Migrant workers play a crucial role in information gathering, decision-making, and labor migration preparation (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014). Potential migrants are involved in various activities and decisions during the pre-departure phase (Kodama, 2024). After a decision has been reached to migrate, the migrant gathers various information to commence the process through informal and formal networks. s (Arayaselassie, 2013; Shewamene et al., 2022).

Moreover, Potential workers proactively seek to obtain passports and fulfill mandatory bureaucratic needs (Kodama, 2024). Potential workers also avail themselves of private foreign employment agencies, which demands undergoing complex hiring procedures (Gutema, 2019).

Besides, the migrant workers need to participate in the pre-departure orientation and training. The training and orientation could be useful after the potential migrant workers arrived at the host country (Gutema, 2019). However, the effectiveness of the training and orientation is doubtful because some of the migrants are not properly prepared for working overseas conditions (Arayaselassie, 2013). In addition, future migrant workers need to be aware of the law, regulations, and procedures regarding migration and other matters (Busza, Shewamene, & Zimmerman, 2022). Generally, the role of migrant workers in Ethiopia's pre-departure process is intricate and daunting. They are themselves active participants in information searching, bureaucratic processes, and are involved in oversea labor migration training and orientation. Through studying the pre-departure process of Ethiopian domestic migrant workers, one must measure the effectiveness of government regulations and pre-departure training schemes to ensure the safety and well-being of Ethiopian migrant workers.

2.6.2. Recruiting Agencies

Overseas employment recruitment agencies are very important in the pre-departure phase of labor migration. They act as intermediaries between foreign employers and potential migrant workers. Their role is complex, encompassing logistical support, legal advice, and provision of information. (Jones, 2015).

Recruitment agencies also have the responsibility of obtaining visas and work permits for the migrant worker, so that immigration legislation and proclamations are adhered to, and organizing the labor migration complex. For Ethiopian migrants, who might not be able to handle these procedures independently, recruiting agencies also play a huge role in helping the migrant worker. Also, they provide pre-departure orientation to the migrant worker in order to help them adapt different challenges and problems while working and living abroad (ILO, 2019; Martin & Malit, 2017). The function of brokers is also a crucial issue to address. Brokers have been blamed in different researches for misinforming, taking advantage of, and arbitrarily implementing legal structures. Brokers promise migrant workers better employment conditions that are not forthcoming, leading migrant workers in harsh and exploitive environments in the destination countries (Arayaselassie, 2013).

2.6.3. Government Roles and Regulations.

According to Martin and Abella (2011), the pre-departure process of labor migration involves various roles for governments to safeguard and ensure the welfare of migrant workers. Government intervention is required in the formulation of a framework that ensures the protection of the rights of migrant workers and prevents exploitation during the process of labor migration. Governments play an important role in formulating policies and regulations to regulate the recruitment, deployment, and managing the labor migration. Additionally, regulation by the government is

essential in ensuring accountability for the actions of recruitment agencies and employers taken in the pre-departure process for labor migration (Koser and Martin, 2011).

The government is also bound to collaborate with the sending and receiving countries to resolve cross-border matters of labor migration. Through negotiations, information exchange, and cooperation with other countries, governments are able to increase their capacity to address matters of migration and promote the rights of migrant workers (Babbitt et al., 2023). Moreover, governments have a tendency to engage in bilateral agreements with receiving countries to establish mutual agreements for labor migration. (Atong et al., 2018). Governments also play an important part in disseminating information among migrant workers about their rights, responsibilities, and available support services (Frade and Darmon, 2005). Government information campaigns inform migrant workers about risks that might be involved and to which they can have access. By providing reliable and accessible information, governments can ensure the greatest safety and well-being of migrant workers at the pre-departure phase, the most important function of government (Babbitt et al., 2023).

2.7. Ethiopian Oversea Employment Proclamation 2016

In the protection of the overseas employment rights, the Ethiopian ministry of labor and skill or the former name known as ministry of labor and social affairs developed a Proclamation No. 923/2016, known as "Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation," published in 2016. The proclamation attempts to regulate the overseas employment exchange services and secure the rights, safety, and dignity of Ethiopians for employment overseas.

This proclamation provides a direction towards the governance of overseas employment, i.e., licensing and regulation of private employment agencies that are undertaking overseas employment

exchanges services. Moreover, the proclamation states the major role of the three actors which are the government agencies, the recruiting agencies and potential labor migrant responsibility.

Moreover, Protection of Workers' Rights which outlines provisions to protect the rights of Ethiopian workers employed abroad, including the establishment of minimum wage standards, limitations on work hours, provisions for rest and leave, and ensuring a healthy and safe working environment.

Regarding the Prohibition of Trafficking and Illegal Recruitment, in line with proclamation provisions that forbid labor abuse, servitude, and human trafficking, the proclamation expressly forbids unlawful recruitment techniques and human trafficking intending to use the victim for employment abroad. Furthermore, the proclamation prohibits third part which is brokers.

The proclamation also it mandates the preparation of a model contract of employment for overseas workers, ensuring that employment agreements adhere to legal standards and protect the rights of the workers.

The proclamation also attempted to determine whether it was compliant with national and international legal frameworks. Ethiopia has ratified a number of international agreements, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Forced Labor Convention. These accords are all compatible with the proclamation's purpose. Moreover, the proclamation includes Administrative Measures and Liability. The proclamation creates administrative procedures, such as the use of suspension and revocation procedures and the concept of joint and several liabilities, for handling violations of employment contracts and proclamation violations.

2.8. Theoretical Framework

This section presents a discussion of relevant theoretical perspectives that illuminate the pre-departure process of overseas labor migration of Ethiopian women domestic workers migrating to the Middle East. These discussions consider the broader context of the pre-departure process of overseas labor migration.

2.8.1 Social Network Theory

Beyond having an advantage of strong tie in social network, Granovetter's (1973), 'Strength of Weak Ties' in social network suggest that even weak ties can offer access to valuable resources and knowledge. However, within the Ethiopian context, Kuschminder (2016), indicates that female domestic worker's strong family ties serve as a more reliable, accurate, and trusted source of information, significantly lowering the risks associated with migration than weak ties. This is primarily because such information access is often facilitated by family members and strong community ties, who can provide a relevant guidance.

However, as Kuschminder argues, weak ties can also be useful in the migration process. Despite the potential for misinformation and incomplete details or information from brokers, recruitment agencies, or informal recruiters who facilitate the migration process, Kuschminder acknowledges that weak ties can still serve as important channels for initial information. The relationships established with these weak ties can provide valuable insights, enabling migrants to navigate their options and make informed decisions regarding their migration journeys.

Lindquist (2008), argue that most women migrants more than men rely on social networks for information and support acquisition. All these perspectives contend that strong and weak tie

strength is an important factor in understanding how Ethiopian women undergo the pre-departure process through different networks.

2.8.2. Feminist Theory

Feminist theory can be a critical lens to understand the pre-departure experience of Ethiopian domestic workers migrating to the Middle East because it draws attention to the gendered power relations that shape their experiences within the pre-departure process. According to Lindquist (2008), although women depend on social networks to acquire information, women also face power differentials where they are dependent on other individuals who have the information, like family members, brokers, as well as recruiting agencies. Women predominantly receive low and erroneous information due to their gender. It is hard for women to get accurate information from society due to their gender.

Moreover, Arayaselassie (2013) maintained that a complex web of power relations in Ethiopia exposes women's labor to exploitation by different actors like foreign recruiting agencies and brokers. Moreover, gender, class, and nationality influence the lived experiences of Ethiopian domestic workers, and the interplay of these factors creates unique vulnerabilities. Pre-departure processes like recruitment and training do not address the vulnerabilities of women, thereby leaving females unprepared for domestic work in the Middle East.

Furthermore, Lutz (2018) examines gendered stereotypes and reinforces power imbalances, contributing to the exploitation of migrant women by recruiting agencies. Women are subjected to gender in the global labor market. The lack of adequate regulatory that can protect women has caused women's to be vulnerabilities in the labor migration process. Additionally, it's also wise to see the gendered division of labor. According to Röthlisberger, (2019) shows how the demand for

domestic work in the Middle East is rooted in the traditional gendered division of labor, where women are primarily responsible for care work.

2.8.3. World System Theory

World-Systems Theory, in particular its interest in global inequality and the international division of labor, provides a good theoretical context in which to study the pre-departure experiences of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers in the Middle East. According to the theory, the structure between Ethiopia as a periphery nation and the Middle Eastern nations as semi-peripheries or cores is paramount. As Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2020) stated, there is still a "global care deficit," with rich nations dependent on women from poor countries to take up caregiving work. This is what fuels the demand for Ethiopian domestic workers in the Middle East. The pre-departure process, therefore, is not a one-time event but an essential component of the integration of such workers into the world labor market, a reflection of the power relations embedded in the world system. (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2020).

Furthermore, recruiting agencies must be addressed within the framework of World-Systems Theory. The agencies typically operate in a transnational system, facilitating the semi-periphery-to-periphery circulation of labor. Kuschminder and Siegel (2018) present how the recruiting agencies exploit the economic marginality of Ethiopian women, demanding them exorbitant fees and providing them with inadequate information about working conditions. This exploitation is not only an individual failure but a structural issue, one that reflects the commodification of work in the global economy.

Based on the above discussions, this study has a feminist, world-systems and social network theory approach as its theoretical framework. These theories bring together to understand the pre-

departure processes of overseas labor migration of Ethiopian women domestic workers migrating to the middle east countries.

Exploring the pre departure process of Ethiopian women domestic workers for overseas employment through Intersectionality is important. This approach recognizes that the experiences of Ethiopian domestic workers are shaped by the intersection of gender, class, and nationality. It can also acknowledge the unique vulnerabilities and power dynamics faced by these women. Moreover, Feminist Lens can be helpful by incorporating feminist theory, the framework highlights the gendered power relations that influence information access, recruitment, and training. It examines how gendered stereotypes and the division of labor contribute to the exploitation of these workers. Moreover, the role of social network in the process and understanding World-Systems Theory provides a macro-level understanding of the structural inequalities that drive the migration of Ethiopian domestic workers to the Middle East. It examines the role of global economic disparities, recruitment agencies, and remittances in perpetuating these inequalities.

By combining these frameworks, this model facilitates analysis of the Pre-Departure Processes of Overseas Labor Migration: With Particular Emphasis on Ethiopian Women to the Middle East for Domestic Work. The model allows for more holistic analysis of the complex factors that influence the pre-departure process of Ethiopian women domestic workers, providing a solid foundation for the research.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Methods

3.1. Introduction

Chapter three discusses the research method employed for examining the pre-departure processes of overseas labor migration with a particular focus on Ethiopian women going to the Middle East as domestic workers. This chapter tries to cover a detailed description of the research design and the sampling techniques used to select participants. Moreover, it covers the methods of data collection by using in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and document analysis. Furthermore, the chapter presents the data analysis techniques employed to obtain meaningful insights from the collected information. Finally, at last, it explores the quality assurance of the study and ethical considerations.

3.2. Research Design

Different scholars stated that research design is one of the most important parts of research. For this research, I used a qualitative research design. The reason to utilize qualitative research design is that it can help me to understand the pre-departure process for overseas labor migration based on the perspective of the participant who engages in the process. By giving the participants a space to explain the process, based on my research objective and questions.

According to Agius (2013), it is important to remember that qualitative research primarily seeks to answer the question "What?" as opposed to "How often?" By providing descriptions and interpretations of events, qualitative techniques seek to illuminate what is happening rather than attempt to measure the frequency of an event or association like quantitative. This research aimed

to define the pre-departure process for overseas labor migration and the roles that different actors play in the process by using “what” and “how” the pre-departure process looks at labor migration, which involves description and interpretation, rather than identifying how frequently.

Furthermore, using a qualitative research approach also has the advantage of allowing researchers to deeply analyze difficult problems and occurrences from the viewpoint of the participants. According to Colorafi and Evans (2016), it is particularly useful in answering exploratory research questions that aim to gain a deeper understanding of participant experiences regarding the pre-departure process for employment abroad. Therefore, to get a better understanding of the pre-departure process for migrant workers, the prescription of potential labor migrants, recruiting agencies, and government agencies for those who work in the pre-departure process for labor migration is important.

Similarly, qualitative research design can provide me with different data collection tools such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, which can provide me with rich and powerful data related to my study based on the perspective of my participants. Haradhan (2018) stated that a qualitative research design can enable researchers to investigate human’s experiences and perceptions by employing various data collection methods. This allows for a holistic approach and provides an in-depth and detailed understanding of the topic.

According to Ugwu & Eze (2023), researchers can collect data by using techniques like interviews, which provide respondents a chance to express their opinions. The methods that were employed were in-depth interviews (IDI) with potential labor migrants and government officials, using open-ended questions to understand the pre-departure processes of overseas labor migration, focusing on Ethiopian women migrating to the Middle East (Saudi Arabia) for domestic work. Moreover, I

utilized key informant interviews with POEA representatives to understand the recruitment process and the general overview of the pre-departure process for overseas employment. I also used KII interviews with TVET training providers to understand the quality and challenges in providing skill trainings to the potential labor migrants. As well as with broker key informant interview was used. Furthermore, document analysis was used in order to gather rich, detailed, and context-specific data about the process. The thematic analysis approach was utilized for identifying, organizing, and interpreting the data.

3.3 Study Site and Population

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The capital city serves as the central hub for government institutions, numerous Private Overseas Employment Agencies (POEAs), medical examination health centers for potential migrant workers, and more. Moreover, different potential migrants come to the city to do the process and gather information since most of the POEAs are concentrated in the capital, and due to the low number of POEAs in the rural areas, different potential labor migrants from the country come to the city. Most of the POEAs used for the study were located around Piassa, Addis Ababa, since most POEAs are found there.

The study population comprised three key segments involved in the pre-departure process. The first ones are POEAs. This segment consisted of representatives from Private Overseas Employment Agencies operating in Addis Ababa. These agencies are licensed and recognized by the government and send potential domestic migrant workers to the Middle East, especially to Saudi Arabia. They facilitate the recruitment and placement of Ethiopian workers abroad and provide information and orientations. POEAs was helpful in understanding the pre-departure

process, including recruitment, preparation, deployment, and challenges faced during the pre-migration process.

Moreover, the study included officials and workers from the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS). Participants were drawn from various levels within the ministry, including higher-level officials working in the labor migration process. Additionally, MOLS woreda-level workers who directly interact with potential migrant workers. Document checkers, who are MOLS employees responsible for examining, evaluating, and approving potential migrants' eligibility to work overseas, also participated. Furthermore, trainers from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers, which are under MOLS were included in provide datas regarding to the pre-departure training process for potential labor workers.

The third group consists of potential labor migrants. This segment comprised Ethiopian female individuals who were in the process of preparing for labor migration to Middle Eastern countries, primarily seeking employment as domestic workers and coming from different parts of Ethiopia. Additionally, brokers when included is this study as well.

3.4. Sampling Technique

According to Ethiopia's overseas employment proclamation number 923/2016, POEAs are required to obtain a license from the government and follow the rules and regulations outlined in the proclamation. To ensure the homogeneity of recruiting agencies, six private overseas employment agencies were used based on their similar characteristics, roles, and services provided to clients. The similarity characteristics and roles of the POEAs were that they should be legal, licensed, and recognized by the government, abide by national regulations, offer employment in the same overseas destinations (especially Saudi Arabia) and occupations (domestic workers),

consider gender, and provide other services to clients like orientations before their deployment and similar ways of recruitment processes.

Using a non-probability sampling technique called purposeful sampling, researchers specifically choose participants based on criteria or standards that are relevant to the study issue. Using this strategy, researchers can focus on people or organizations that have the knowledge or expertise that is most important to the study. This method is useful when the goal is to gain in-depth insights from individuals with specific knowledge, experiences, or perspectives related to the research topic (Showkat & Parveen, 2017).

The purposive sampling technique was suitable for this study in investigating the pre-departure process of overseas labor migration and the role played by potential migrant workers, POEAs, and government officials. Through the selection of participants having firsthand knowledge and experience with the process, the researcher gathered extensive and relevant data which suits the purposes of the study and research questions.

Snowball sampling, on the other hand, can be best utilized where reaching the target population is challenging (Naderifar, Goli, & Ghaljaie, 2017). Additionally, Bryman (2016) contends that snowball sampling is a method of non-probability in which individuals nominate or refer those with similar circumstances.

for the purposes of this study, snowball sampling was effective for identifying and accessing participants that could not be directly identified through conventional sampling techniques. This technique was initially used to select a few key individuals, such as potential labor migrants, POEAs, and government representatives, and then ask them to refer other relevant individuals who can provide valuable perspectives for the study. By utilizing this technique, the researcher gains

access to individuals who possess firsthand knowledge of the pre-departure process for labor migration as domestic workers. These techniques were useful in acquiring potential migrant workers and brokers for the study.

3.4.1. Sampling Procedure

3.4.1.1. Procedure of Sampling POEAs

According to Ethiopian's overseas employment proclamation no 923/ 2016, POEAs act as intermediaries between labor migrants and employers in the destination country. They play a critical role in the pre-departure phase. There are more than 200 agencies in Ethiopia according to MOLSA. In selecting POEAs I used the following procedures. First and foremost, I started by selecting six POEAs that have a homogenous role in providing services to their client, agencies that have similar function, destination country, overseas employment process, reputation, experience and agencies found around Piazza.

Official data was obtained from government regulatory bodies that give license to POEAs regarding the performance, compliance records, and complaints against specific recruiting agencies and talk into them specifically in what their role is and services they provide for the migrant workers.

3.4.1.2. Procedure of Sampling Potential Migrant Workers

Potential migrant workers, who aspire to work as domestic workers in Middle Eastern countries, play a crucial role in understanding the pre-departure process for overseas employment. They can offer firsthand experiences and insights into various aspects such as gathering information, preparation, recruitment processes and deployment.

For sampling potential migrant workers, the plan was to select from the selected POEAs; however, this was not possible. POEAs informed me that they could not provide information about their clients due to their company policy. Therefore, I employed a snowball sampling technique and visited locations where potential migrant workers gather, such as clinics and hospitals, where most potential migrant workers undergo medical examinations after securing job opportunities in destination countries.

Although most potential migrants live in geographically dispersed and difficult-to-reach areas, I managed to recruit 10 participants from these locations, like clinics, and achieved data saturation. Moreover, I managed to build a good relationship with the potential migrant workers and received their phone numbers for further interviews and information until their departure from Ethiopia, and this technique was successful in collecting data. During participant selection, I established criteria to ensure the participants were suitable for this study. These criteria focused on homogeneous characteristics, including age, gender, educational background, destination country, and previous experiences. While selecting potential migrant workers in places like clinics, I also managed to find some brokers who came with the potential migrant workers to assist them in navigating the city and the process during the medical examination. Even though most of the brokers were unwilling to participate in the study since they are illegal to involve in the labor migration process. However, I managed to conduct an interview with two brokers.

3.4.1.3. Procedure of Sampling Government worker

Governments also play a vital role in overseas employment in regulating and monitoring the labor migration process. They implement policies, monitor recruitment agencies, and provide support and protection to migrant workers. The following sampling procedure was used identifying

relevant government entities: Identify key government departments responsible for evaluating and monitoring the labor migration process. These include the Ministry of Labor and Skill (MOLS), under MOLS there is an office that works on overseas employment at higher office and woreda level. Moreover, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutes, which are under MOLS and provide training skills for the potential migrant workers, were part of the study.

3.4.2. Sample Size

In identifying the sample numbers, two methods were used: data saturation and an academic perspective on qualitative literature. Nixon and Wild (2010) state that there are no guidelines that can be used to determine a sample sizes for interviews, nor are there any guidelines that explain how saturation might be determined. The concept of data saturation, which states that data collection should continue until no new information or themes emerge from the interviews, it is usually used to guide the determination of sample size in qualitative research.

According to Creswell (2009), five to six samples are frequently obtained using a case study approach if the samples are homogeneous. The study does, however, go on to say that ten individual interviews are usually sufficient to achieve data saturation, with some evidence suggesting that this can be done less for respondents who are homogeneous. Guest et al. (2006) recommend a sample size of 6–12 for preliminary exploratory research and 12–25 for studies looking for more detailed information. Saturation, however, is emphasized as the crucial stopping point. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling and theoretical saturation should be the guiding concepts instead of predetermined sample sizes.

According to the Ethiopians Overseas Employment Proclamation 923/2016, domestic workers who are willing to migrate as domestic workers to the Middle East should be above eighteen years

old. Based on the proclamation, the study specifically targeted potential migrant workers who are over eighteen years' old. Regarding gender, the study used female participants since most domestic work in the Middle Eastern countries is done by women. This aligns with the findings of the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2019), which states that approximately 76.2 percent of the 75.6 million domestic workers worldwide are women. This data highlights that women are the primary source of domestic workers.

Furthermore, to ensure homogeneity of the study, according to the Ethiopian Overseas Employment Proclamation 923/2016, it stated that labor migrant workers should have at least completed grade eight or primary education; they also have to take a skill training and obtain a certificate of occupational competence. Additionally, the study specifically targeted individuals who have previous experience or potential migrant workers who are seeking overseas employment as domestic workers in the Middle Eastern countries.

In choosing a sample size for labor migrants, I used data saturation and an academic perspective. From an academic perspective, I employed Creswell's (2009) and Guest et al.'s (2006) recommendations for the study. I chose 10 potential migrant workers until I reached data saturation. Similarly, I used data saturation also for the 6 POEAs and government officials.

3.5. Methods of Data Collection

According to Creswell (2009), the purpose of gathering primary and secondary data is to create a fully-fledged research study. These three actors, which are potential migrant worker, POEAs, and government institutions (MOLS and TVET centers), were the main respondents in the primary data collection process to obtain first-hand information on the pre-departure process for labor migration. Through in-depth interviews, key informant interview. Secondary data were also used by document

analyses, reading reviews of relevant works, policies, and proclamations, looking up sources online, watching interview videos, reading theses and dissertations, and reading a variety of published and unpublished reports.

3.5.1. Tools of Data Collection

3.5.1.1. In-depth interview (IDI)

In-depth interviews involve one-on-one conversations between the participant and the researcher, providing a good exploration of the participant's experiences, beliefs, and perspectives (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). According to Crang and Cook (2007), it is possible to conduct interviews in a highly structured, semi-structured, or unstructured manner. But most of the time, in-depth interviews are used by qualitative research since they can provide rich and detailed data and capture the context and ideas of participants' experiences and opinions and impressions. This helped to understand the pre-departure process for labor migration.

The ability to obtain an extensive understanding of the participant's experiences and viewpoints is one of the main benefits of conducting in-depth interviews. This is so that a more in-depth examination of the subject can be conducted. The interviewer might do this by exploring more and asking follow-up questions. In-depth interviews also provide flexibility in the research process because the interviewer can adjust the questions based on the participant's responses. (Baillie & Gill, 2018)

For the in-depth interview, I employed unstructured in-depth interview guidelines or questions. It is true that unstructured questions can provide rich and detailed data that can shed light on the subjective experiences of the participants, including their thoughts and feelings. Furthermore,

unstructured questions are flexible in asking questions in the research process. I also raise questions based on the responses received from the participants at the moment. This flexibility has enabled the exploration of emergent themes and the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to clarify or delve deeper into specific areas of interest.

For the in-depth interview, the primary participants were the potential migrant workers. The main reason to conduct an in-depth interview on migrant workers is that the participants need to express their thoughts and experiences on the pre-departure process for labor migration because they are the first persons to be influenced in the process, the pre-departure phase for overseas employment. Moreover, IDI can help me to get detailed data related to my research questions, like how they get information, what the processes of recruitment, preparation, and deployment are, and challenges they face in the process. By using in-depth interviews, we can gain rich and detailed data about the pre-departure phase.

Furthermore, in-depth interviews were used to gather data from governmental organizations like MOLS, both higher officials, workers and woreda-level workers. Under MOLS, the overseas employment office is the main branches that governs the process of overseas employment, which includes the pre-departure phase for overseas labor migration, by approving labor migrants to work overseas after reviewing their documents. This institution controls POEAs in recruiting potential labor migrants and more. By using different research questions on how they control the pre-departure process of labor migration, their roles in the process, challenges they face, and more related to their initiative related to labor migration in the pre-departure stage. Similar IDI to MOLS woreda-level officials that work on overseas labor migration employment. Finally, IDI was also conducted with document checkers from MOLS to understand the deployment process and their role in approving potential migrant workers for overseas labor migration.

3.5.1.2. Key Informant Interview

Akhter (2022) stated that key informant interviews (KII) are one of the most important qualitative research data collection tools. This method helps researchers to gain insights from people who are experts or have knowledge and understanding about specific issues or fields. According to Pahwa, Cavanagh, & Vanstone (2023), researchers are required to differentiate key informants from other participants in the study, since their insights are valuable and have different experiences and knowledge relevant to the phenomenon that is being studied. Key informant interviews can be both semi-structured or unstructured questions. This lets the participants answer more freely and openly. This helped in exploring topics in depth while maintaining a focus on the central issues of the study. (Muellmann, Brand, Jürgens, Gansefort, & Zeeb, 2021).

For this study, key informant interviews (KIIs) were employed to gather primary data with private overseas employment agencies (POEAs). KIIs were selected to gather data from POEAs due to their expertise and direct involvement in the process of labor migration. According to the Ethiopian Overseas Employment Proclamation (2016), they are responsible for connecting potential migrants with employers in destination countries. Therefore, knowing their perspectives is crucial for understanding the recruitment and deployment processes of overseas labor migration for potential domestic migrant workers. Furthermore, POEAs are responsible for providing pre-departure information and orientations to potential migrant workers during the pre-departure phase of overseas labor migration. Generally understanding the perspective of POEAs is important since they have a big role in the pre-departure process for overseas employment. Moreover, KII was employed with participants from TVET training providers to gain insight related to the trainings provided for domestic workers, the quality of the training, the skills of potential migrant workers, and challenges faced during providing training for the potential domestic migrant worker. Finally,

KII was also conducted with the broker to understand their role in the pre-departure process for overseas employment.

3.5.1.3. Document Review

Document review is a method commonly used in qualitative research for data collection and analysis. Document analysis can be seen as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents. Those documents can be published or unpublished and can be found in both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) materials (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; see also Rapley, 2007).

For studying the pre-departure process, document analysis or review was helpful in understanding the process of the pre-departure stage. I gain insights from Document review from reports, articles, news, proclamation documents like the Ethiopians oversea employment proclamation 2016 and the 2021 amendment, and other written materials that were relevant to the research topic. This was helpful in understanding the pre-departure process. Moreover, during the data collection, I had the chances to see how the contract agreement looks like and also the training curriculum for domestic migrant workers.

3.6. Data Analysis Techniques

The qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interviews (IDIs) with potential migrant workers, government officials, and workers like MOLS document checkers and MOLS woreda levels, whereas other data were collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) with private overseas employment agencies (POEAs), technical and vocational education and training (TVET) trainers and brokers.

The study was analyzed primarily by using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a flexible and widely used method for identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) across a qualitative dataset. This approach allowed for a rich and detailed understanding of the pre-departure process for Ethiopian female domestic workers migrating to the Middle East. The process of thematic analysis, as applied in this study, involved the following stages, informed by Braun and Clarke (2006):

The researcher was able to familiarize himself with the data. The initial stage involved the researcher becoming deeply familiar with the data collected from all sources. This included repeated reading of interview transcripts (from IDIs and KIIs) to gain an overall sense of the content and to identify initial areas of interest. Similarly, documents such as the Overseas Employment Proclamation No. 923/20165, policy documents, reports, and training curricula were read thoroughly to understand the formal procedures and information landscape related to labor migration.

Following familiarization with the data, the study generated an initial code and systematically coded. For the interview data (IDI and KII), it involved identifying specific words, phrases, or segments of text that appeared relevant to the research questions. Codes were developed inductively from the data, capturing the participants' experiences, perspectives, and challenges related to information gathering, recruitment, preparation, and deployment. For the document analysis, codes were used to mark sections related to specific procedures, regulations, roles of different institutions, and key information provided in these documents.

The generated codes were then examined to identify broader patterns and relationships, leading to the formation of potential themes. This involved grouping similar codes together and looking for

overarching ideas that connected different parts of the data. Data from all sources was considered at this stage. The identified themes were critically reviewed to ensure they were coherent, meaningful, and adequately supported by the coded data extracts. This stage involved going back to the original data interview transcripts, and documents to check if the themes accurately reflected the content and context. Themes that were not sufficiently supported or that overlapped significantly were refined, merged, or discarded.

Once a satisfactory set of themes was established, each theme was clearly defined and given a concise and descriptive name that captured its essence and its relevance to the research questions. The definitions outlined the scope and content of each theme, providing a clear understanding of the identified patterns of meaning across the dataset.

Finally, the final stage involved writing up the findings of the thematic analysis in a coherent and insightful way. This included presenting the identified themes, providing detailed descriptions of each theme, and supporting these descriptions with quotes from the interview data, and relevant extracts from the analyzed documents.

3.7. Quality Assurance

In order to have precise and legitimate findings, it was critical to keep up with the quality of this research study. In the context of empirical studies, it suffices to say that data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation were the major players. Data analysis that was expertly carried out clearly showed that the study's material was indeed valid. Validity of the concept, and statistical, external, and internal validity were the defining features of a well-executed essay (Marczyk, et al., 2010). This not only implied but also assured that the study reflected trustworthy results.

The reliability, credibility, and conformability of the data were the most important issues that were focused on the analysis of the data about the pre-departure process for a female domestic worker migrating to Middle Eastern countries to be employed. The following paths were chosen to insure the integrity of the data: dependability was preferred to reliability; credibility was preferred to internal validity, and conformability (Shenton, 2004).

Denzin & Lincoln, (2011), stated, "Dependability can be defined as the consistency and stability of the research process and findings." A crucial tactic to guarantee the dependability of the research was triangulation. The dependability of the results was increased by using a variety of data sources and methods. Apart from comprehensive interviews, additional information was gathered by analyzing documents, participant observations, focus group discussions and more. A comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the pre-departure process for labor migration was possible through the triangulation of data sources.

According to Tracy, (2010), trustworthiness and originality of the research findings were also considered aspects of credibility. To make sure that this research study was credible, member checking was used. Participants had the chance to examine and offer comments on the preliminary results in order to increase trust after the interview. Participants were able to confirm the accuracy and reliability of their opinions as provided data collection through this member confirmation procedure.

Morse et al., (2002), mentioned that conformability refers to the neutrality and objectivity of the research findings. In terms of insuring conformability, peer review was used. The research findings and interpretations were subjected to an external peer review process. Independent researchers with expertise in the field critically reviewed and evaluated the research process, data analysis, and

interpretations. The feedback received from the peer reviewers contributed to the objectivity and conformability of the study.

3.8. Ethical Consideration

No matter the method, ethical issues arose during field data collection, analysis, and dissemination of qualitative findings (Sarantakos, 2005). The rights, dignity, and wellbeing of the research participants were protected as part of this study's commitment to performing the research in an ethical manner. A thorough, informed consent form in their native language was given to each interested participant before their involvement. The permission form included a detailed description of the study's objectives, the voluntary nature of involvement, the processes to be followed, any possible risks or benefits, confidentiality standards, and the researchers' contact details. Before participating in the study, participants had enough time to read the contents, ask questions, and submit written consent.

The good will of the responders was seen in their observation that the study units were not harmed by any actions. Justice was done, regardless of the manner in which they responded. Their responses were not used in any form or with the intention of dominating the other participants. Since the study did not use the respondents' true names, their privacy was properly maintained. The data was stored in a secure location after it had been gathered and examined.

According to Flick (2017), maintaining the anonymity of the participant is important in gathering data for a study. Throughout this study, participant confidentiality was respected. All data that was gathered from the participants was anonymously and secretly kept. Moreover, to ensure the participants' safety, the researcher used pseudonyms in the findings. Participant identities were not being disclosed in any publications or presentations that came from the study. Furthermore, the

raw data that was gathered by the participants was kept safe and only accessible by the researcher during this research.

Flick (2017) emphasized that respondent participation in research should be voluntary. Moreover, the researchers should respect the rights of the participants to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences on them. The researcher clarified that the withdrawal of a participant would not negatively affect them in their lives for not participating in the study. During this study, the researcher explained to the participants how they could access their rights and withdraw at any moment if they felt uncomfortable.

In the data collection, there were not any labeling or fabrication during the study and writing process. Creswell, (2009), suggests that terminology and terms that are discriminatory against people due to their gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, handicap, or age should not be used in study. The potential for hiding, falsifying, or inventing findings to satisfy the demands of a researcher or an audience was another ethical concern while writing the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1. Finding

4.1.1. Introduction

The finding section represents the findings that were obtained from the participants during the study. In this study, different institutions and individuals have been involved for an interview. These main participants are the potential migrant worker, private overseas employment agencies (POEAs) that are found in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, participants from the government institutions, officials, and workers from the Minister of Labor and Skill (MOLS), and TVET centers under MOLS, woreda level offices that are under MOLS and brokers.

The finding is basically categorized in four main sections, which are section one, brief descriptions of the main study participants, the second section is about the way of government and agencies provide information to potential migrant workers and. The second main section includes the pre-departure process with include three main sub section which are how labor migrants are prepared, recruited and deployed. The third section focused on the main actor's role and influences in the pre-departure process which include migrant workers, agencies, brokers and government institutions. And the fourth main section is challenges faced in the process of pre-departure for labor migration based on the perspectives of the migrant worker, POEAs and government institutions.

For the purpose of anonymity and confidentiality, the names of all respondents and participants have been coded for their rights. Thus, the names of potential migrant workers who participated in this study are coded as potential migrant worker or PMW 1, PMW 2, PMW 3 ..., and potential

migrant worker or PMW 10. In the same way, respondents of POEA are named as agency 1, agency 2... and agency 6. Likewise, from government institutions, those who are officials from MOLS are coded as MOLS official 1, and MOLS official 2, those who are workers in the woreda levels under MOLS are coded as MOLS woreda level worker 1 and 2. For MOLS document checker are coded as document checker 1. for the TVET training providers they are coded as TVET trainer 1, ... and TVET trainer 3. Finally, for brokers they are coded as broker 1 and broker 2. In the findings potential workers were also called as trainee while they were doing trainings.

4.1.2 Brief Description of Study Participants

This study involved several key participants who play distinct roles in the pre-departure process of Ethiopian female domestic workers seeking employment in the Middle East. The characteristics of these participants are crucial for understanding the dynamics and challenges within this phase of labor migration. Potential migrant workers participated in the study. A total of ten informants participated in the study. They were all Ethiopian women over the age of 18 up to 29 who aspired to work as domestic workers in Middle Eastern, specifically Saudi Arabia. A key characteristic is their desire to improve their livelihoods and support their families through overseas employment. Their involvement in the pre-departure process includes seeking information about job opportunities, going through recruitment process and more. Many potential migrant workers that participated in the study particularly came from rural areas. The participant is from Addis Ababa (3 participants), South Ethiopia Region (2 participants), Oromia (4 participants), and Amhara (1 participant). The interview was held during their medical examination when they came for medical examination, further interviews through phone calls has been made to gain more information after the initial interview during the medical examination stage.

Private Overseas Employment Agencies were other important informants that participated in the study. Eleven informants from six POEAs based in Addis Ababa participated in the study. These POEAs were licensed entities that serve as intermediaries between Ethiopian potential migrant workers and employers in Middle Eastern countries. Their primary role in the pre-departure process was providing information, recruitment and deployment.

From MOLS, two officials' have participated, from the Woreda Level, two participants, and MOLS Document Checker, one participant, took part in the research. The five government informants from the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS) play a role in the regulatory and oversight of the pre-departure process. They also provide information to potential migrant workers. MOLS officials are involved in policy implementation and monitoring of POEAs and potential migrant workers. Woreda-level workers were involved in the proactive identification and initial registration, receiving potential migrant biometric information, and facilitating potential migrant workers to take part in overseas domestic workers training, which is provided by TVET. Document checkers are responsible for verifying the documentation and eligibility of potential migrants to work overseas.

TVET training providers also took part in the research. Three informants from TVET centers under MOLS participated in the study. They are responsible for delivering pre-departure training to potential domestic workers. Their involvement includes imparting essential skills in areas such as service provision, housekeeping, and cooking, as well as providing some cultural orientation. These trainers possess expertise in their respective vocational areas and an understanding of the basic requirements for domestic work in Arab countries.

Two brokers were interviewed in the study; according to them, brokers operated in the pre-departure process for domestic work labor migration as informal intermediaries. They connect

potential migrant workers, particularly those from the rural areas, with POEAs. Their knowledge and networks related to labor migration in the community make them dominant in providing information to the local community. Since most formal channels, like POEAs, are hard to reach in the rural communities, these brokers are most dominant in those places in providing information to the potential migrant workers and as intermediators between potential migrant workers and POEAs. Their role in this process also includes assisting the potential migrant worker with different activities, including basic paperwork and more.

4.1.3 Information Access and Dissemination

4.1.3.1. Through Social Networks

In information dissemination, Social networks play a vital role for potential migrant workers. Potential migrant workers often rely on friends, family, or acquaintances who have firsthand experience in overseas employment according to the findings. These connections provide critical insights into the migration process and help to start the process for overseas employment after making a decision to work abroad.

One informant shared how her sister-in-law, who worked in Saudi Arabia, became her primary source of information: PMW 3 stated,

My brother's wife went to Saudi Arabia as a domestic worker. She has been working in the same household for over nine months. After she left, I started talking to her about the process she did and what to expect in the destination country. She told me about the process she took and suggested I avoid certain things, like working with random agencies (POEAs) and brokers, as they might lead to a bad household. She provided me a trusted agency that

she knows. Finally, I started the process. Additionally, she explained the documents I need to give to the agencies.

These personal relationships provide not only information but also other support in financial and emotional, PMW 3 moreover stated that her brother wife help her financial for the process of oversea employment and other expenses.

4.1.3.2. Through Licensed Private Overseas Employment Agencies (POEA)

Licensed private overseas employment agencies (POEAs) are key sources of information for potential labor migrants. They offer detailed guidance about the migration process, including legal requirements, terms of employment, and preparation for overseas work. The finding shows most of the potential migrant workers get information from POEAs. Agency 4 explained:

We provide essential information to migrant workers about the oversea employment process, including requirements for labor migration to the Middle East, what document they need to provide to start the process, the step and procedures that they need to follow, employment contract terms, rights and obligations, and also the legal processes for overseas employment. We ensure transparency, from registration of the potential migrant to airport departure, moreover, addressing challenges they may face during the pre and post departure.

However, according to POEAs some potential migrant workers mistrust agencies and rely more on brokers. According to agency 5, When POEAs provide information based on Ethiopians Overseas Employment Proclamation, especially the prohibition of service fees, potential migrant workers often react with suspicion, interpreting the information as a form of manipulation. This reaction

frequently stems from a profound sense of surprise, as many have already engaged with brokers, paying them for assistance in securing overseas employment

While some individuals ultimately place their trust in the official channels and proceed without broker involvement, a considerable number remain skeptical, their doubts fueled by prior experiences and established relationships with the broker. Agency 3 stated that Potential migrant Workers tend to trust brokers more than POEAs because of this brokers come from the same communities of the potential migrant worker. Especially the rural girls, if they decided to work oversea and want to get information, the first person they will ask is the broker who is found in their areas or community.

Despite these challenges, according to most informants from POEAs, their agencies strive to build trust and good relations with potential migrants by being transparent and accountable. Moreover, the findings show that out of the 10 potential migrant workers who participated in the study, only 4 did not use brokers and obtained their information from POEAs and other sources. The remaining 6 utilized brokers to secure overseas employment as domestic workers in Middle Eastern countries.

4.1.3.3. Through the Government

The Ethiopian Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS) disseminates information about overseas employment using multiple channels, such as social media, television, radio, and district offices. MOLS officials 1 noted that:

Following the reformation of MOLS, various initiatives, such as the E-LMIS platform, have been implemented to ensure safe labor migration and combat illegal practices. This platform provides detailed information about potential migrant workers and POEAs and

manages the labor migration process. The government has been actively promoting overseas employment opportunities to the unemployed through social media, television, radio, and other digital platforms, such as websites and mobile applications. Furthermore, MOLS distributes information directly to communities at the woreda offices.

4.1.3.4. Through Brokers

Brokers are significant information sources, especially in rural areas. They often serve as intermediaries between migrant workers and POEAs, providing information's, guidance in local languages and offering assistance with paperwork and more. However, their role is controversial due to concerns about misinformation and financial exploitation.

PMW 2 stated that she receiving information about job opportunities in the Middle East from a local broker, who detailed the required procedures. After deciding to work overseas, the broker outlined the services he would provide and the corresponding expectations. The broker also disclosed his commission, assuring the worker that he would manage all necessary documentation and procedural tasks. Driven by a pre-existing relationship and trust in the broker, PMW 2 paid half of the requested amount upfront, with a commitment to pay the remaining balance upon completion of the overseas employment process. The broker's assistance extended beyond information provision and arrangement facilitation; he also accompanied PMW 2 to medical examinations, addressing the worker's unfamiliarity with the city and the locations of medical facilities. Some brokers defend their role, arguing they fill gaps left by agencies. Broker 1 stated,

While many perceive us negatively, we play a vital role in assisting potential migrant workers. However, the government is attempting to eliminate our involvement in the pre-

departure process for labor migration, alleging us as exploitative. We simply charge a commission for the services we provide.

Agency 6 acknowledged the value of brokers, although it is illegal for POEAs to work with brokers. Despite the government's efforts to remove brokers, some POEAs find brokers potentially useful because they serve as intermediaries and reduce misunderstandings between the POEAs and potential migrant workers.

4.1.4. The Pre-Departure Process

Once a potential migrant worker decides to engage in overseas employment, all actors (potential migrant workers, POEAs and Government workers) must follow the procedures outlined in the Ethiopian Overseas Employment Proclamation by the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS). The initial step begins by registering in the Ethiopian Labor Market Information System (E-LMIS) platform.

4.1.4.1. The Role of E-LMIS Platform and Registration

The Ethiopian Labor Market Information System (E-LMIS) platform plays an important role in ensuring a streamlined and secure process for Ethiopian migrant workers looking for overseas employment.

An in-depth interview with MOLS official 2, E-LMIS serves as a centralized platform where potential migrant workers can register using their email or phone number. The platform ensures accurate data collection by requiring applicants to provide personal information, including

residence, contact details, and educational qualifications, such as Competency Certificate (COC) or more documents and information based on what the system asks.

Through E-LMIS platform Potential migrant workers are required to fill the form online, if these potential migrant workers don't not have the knowledge of filling the form or access to the platform and internet they can go to the nearest center of MOLS in the woreda level or POEAs and register.

According to MOLS woreda level workers 2 after the registration on the platform, potential migrant workers receive a QR code. This QR code enables MOLS to effectively monitor the processes of both the potential migrant workers and agencies. By presenting the QR code at the woreda-level office, potential migrant workers are required to provide biometric identification. This biometric data includes fingerprints, iris/eye scans, ear, and facial recognition. This data is essential for securely storing all the information and documents of the potential migrant worker.

Following biometric data collection, the office will issue an International Labor ID. This labor ID consolidates and securely stores all pertinent information about the worker, including personal data, training certifications, and employment history and the background information profile of the potential migrant worker. This labor ID serves multiple purposes like, tracks the number of workers within and outside the country, it officially licenses and authenticates migrant workers, it provides a sense of security for workers, as their data is recorded in the system and potentially deterring illegal activities or abuse

E-LMIS platform further facilitates communication with POEAs and other government offices, such as immigration, by generating letters that expedite processes like passport issue if the potential migrant work doesn't have a passport. According MOLS official 1, If the potential migrant worker

does not have a passport, MOLS will send a letter to immigration offices to published a passport as soon as possible for the potential migrant worker which might take an of average of 21 days.

4.1.4.2. The potential Migrant Worker Preparation Process

Once a potential migrant registers in E-LMIS and receives their labor ID, the preparation process will continuous. This involves two primary steps: training and having a certificate of occupational competency (COC) and other document processing. After the biometric data collection, potential migrant workers are directed to a TVET center to take an oversea domestic workers training if they don't have any COC.

According MOLS woreda-level worker 1, The MOLS woreda-level office facilitates enrollment for potential migrant workers in a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) center within their sub-city. According to the informant, In Addis Ababa, there are approximately 12 TVET centers offering short-term training for domestic workers. All training expenses, including service fees are provided free for the potential migrant workers. However, they are required to pay approximately 500 ETB for the Certificate of Competency (COC) test.

4.1.4.3. TVET Domestic Workers Trainings for Potential Migrant Worker

According to TVET training providers this training skills are crucial component of the pre-departure stage for potential migrant workers. These skills are taught by both governments Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and private training schools. However, due to the closure of private training schools for unethical practices during my data collection, this study primarily focused on government TVET institutions. These institutions, overseen by the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS), deliver essential training to potential

domestic work migrants heading to Arab countries. The curriculum emphasizes three core areas: service provision, housekeeping, and cooking.

TVET trainer 1 stated that The training is a short term training focused on service provision, housekeeping, and cooking. Its duration is more flexible, ranging from one month to three months, depending on the trainer's assessment of the trainee's (or potential migrant workers) existing skills and learning speed some might finish the training within a weeks and proceed for the COC examination.

Beyond TVET trainer informants, I conducted a second source data collection, which was a document review with the help of the TVET training providers. I reviewed the domestic worker's curriculum and found out that the trainees are required to complete the curriculum within approximately 228 hours. When it comes to the content of the training TVET The curriculum focuses on developing self-awareness in diverse workplaces, basic Arabic and English communications in their domestic workplaces, household maintenance and cleaning, laundry and ironing, food preparation and service, plant and pet care, and childcare.

Following the training, a competency test is administered, and candidates are required to pass the practical component to receive a Certificate of Competency (COC). Successful candidates receive a COC from the Occupational Competency Assurance Agency. The COC provider uploads this certificate to the E-LMIS system, and the TVET institutions also issue a hard copy to the trainees.

TVET trainer 1 stated:

Even though the training is provided free for all. I Believes that there needs to be at least a small fee that does not hurt all the trainees. I say this because many potential migrant workers don't pay attention since they haven't spent any money on the training. Some might

not even come to the training at all, or they might not pay attention and follow up during the sessions, may be if they pay a little amount they might take it seriously and start to have an engagement and commitment to the trainings. But Rather, they only think about attending the trainings in order to get their COC, not about accumulating skills. But there are some people who take it seriously at the same times.

According TVET trainer 3, stated about the current trend, he explained that in the past, private schools provided training for potential migrant workers, specializing in domestic work and security guard positions. However, those in Addis Ababa are currently closed due to unethical practices. While these institutions are closed in Addis Ababa, some operate in the Oromia region and other parts of Ethiopia. The government is aware of these training schools for domestic workers engaging in unethical practices and is actively working to regulate them. Despite the closures in Addis Ababa, potential migrant workers still travel to Oromia or areas near Addis Ababa, paying 10,000 ETB or more to take the competency test and obtain their COC. Furthermore, there are reports of individuals purchasing COCs for approximately 50,000 ETB, bypassing the entire training and examination process.

According to TVET trainer 3 and other trainers they oppose potential migrant in engaging to unethical practices in obtaining COC, moreover the trainee or potential migrant need to have a motivation and commitment to the trainings. they believe that the COC certificate is nothing if the trainees don't have any skills and knowledge, they would be the one who face challenges and consequences in the destination country.

4.1.4.4. Document Processing

Once the potential migrant worker finishes their training and takes their COC, they will continue with document processing where they need to organize their documents according to the overseas employment proclamation, to process with the recruitment process. For the recruitment process, two things are mostly asked by POEAs. All potential migrant workers stated that the agencies asked them to provide their passport and COC.

PMW 6,7,8 stated that after they provide them their passport and COC, the POEAs asked them some questions like their education background, if they had ever worked in the Arab countries before, and more on their skills, like what things we can do or not to get more information about them.

Throughout the preparation process, the labor ID remains an essential identifier, linking all data and processes to the individual worker. This ID is vital not only during pre-departure but also after the worker has migrated, as it holds all critical information related to their employment and legal status. Once the worker has their passport and required documents, the potential migrant workers can proceed to engage with recruitment agencies (POEAs). Then POEAs will start looking for sponsors or employers with the partner agency found in the destination country.

4.1.5. Recruiting process

The recruiting process is a critical stage in the pre-departure process for labor migration. Based on my research, it commences when potential labor migrants visit the POEA with their documents to seek overseas employment, primarily as domestic workers in Middle Eastern countries. But it's also good to understand how POEAs get potential migrant workers.

4.1.5.1 Ways POEA get Potential Migrant Workers

Most POEAs use different mechanisms in recruiting or getting their potential migrant workers through Promotional Activities, Social Networks, Direct Walk-ins to their offices, through E-LMIS System, and Brokers.

Based on my informant's, agencies employ different promotional strategies to attract more clients by using social media platforms, radio advertisements, posters, brochures, flyers, and more. Among these methods, social media, particularly platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, is the dominant tool. Agency 1 noted that they use social media to spread information, requirements for overseas employment, and more by engaging with the potential migrant workers through social media, also encouraging them to utilize their agency's services. Additionally, agencies 2 and 5 stated that using printed materials, such as posters and flyers, helps to promote their agencies and reach out to the communities.

Moreover, social networks, especially recommendations from family and friends who have previously used POEAs, are the primary sources for POEAs in getting potential migrant workers. POEA sometimes relies on referrals from individuals who have successfully used their services. Agency 1 stated that they got most of their clients (potential migrant workers) through social networks. According to the agency, they had recently received 14 clients referred by friends and family who had used their services before.

Furthermore, some potential migrant workers approach agencies independently at their office to gather information. These individuals, often living nearby, visit the agency offices after seeing posters or other advertisements. Agency 5 mentioned that individuals who see their agency posters also visit them to learn more about the process and decide if they wish to proceed with the process.

After potential migrant workers come to their agency, they tell them all the things they need to know about the overseas employment process based on their preferred country and occupations (mostly domestic workers).

Additionally, according to my informant from POEA, E-LMIS is managed by MOLS. It is a formal mechanism through which agencies acquire clients. Potential migrant workers initially register their intent to seek overseas employment through the E-LMIS platform. Subsequently, E-LMIS allocates these registered individuals to various POEAs. This allocation is determined by the POEAs' stated capacity to send potential migrant workers to destination countries, with the distribution based on the requested number of clients by each POEA and their ability to facilitate the deployment of domestic workers, particularly to Middle Eastern countries.

4.1.5.2. Ways Government gets Potential Migrant Workers

A discussion with MOLS official and workers, according to the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS), there is a crucial component of the pre-departure stage where they get their potential migrant workers in most of woreda's MOLS established "One-Stop Shops." These are offices operated under the MOLS, found in every woreda (district) across Ethiopia with over 2200 nationwide, including approximately 121 in Addis Ababa

According the MOLS Official 1 stated that These One-Stop Shops play a dual role the first one is mostly as Proactive Identification where MOLS workers in woreda level conduct door-to-door surveys in communities to identify unemployed individuals who are interested in seeking overseas employment opportunities as providing job opportunities to those who are not employed. Moreover, this centers also played as a places of Registration where Individuals can also

voluntarily register at the MOLS office in their woreda if they are interested in pursuing overseas employment.

According to MOLS woreda level worker 1, potential migrants provide necessary information and documents, including identification and, if applicable, Certificates of Competency (COC). If the potential migrant has a lack of necessary skills and don't have a COC, they will still be register on the E-LMIS platform and provide biometric identity and generate a labor ID and QR code then the office will have referred them to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers to attend the training which focus on domestic workers then if they pass a COC test and obtain their COC we will distribute them to POEAs. MOLS Woreda level worker 2 additionally stated,

... However If the potential migrant works have all information and document required including Passport and COC they will be register in the E-LMIS server, give biometric identity, then we generate them a labor ID and QR code. Then we sent them to POEAs for a recruitment.

4.1.5.3. Overview of the Recruitment Process

According to my informants there are different actors involved in the process, like potential migrant workers, POEA, and relevant government institutions. During the process, all stockholders must adhere according to the Ethiopian Overseas Employment Proclamation, the legal framework governing labor migration or overseas employment.

Moreover, agency 5 stated that The reforms in the Minister of Labor and Skills have introduced significant improvements, enhancing accessibility and safety for migrant workers. The Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS) developed the E-LMIS platform to streamline and monitor the labor migration process which everything goes through the platform.

In terms of the recruitment process agency 4 stated that after the potential labor migrant gets their QR code, labor ID, and documents (COC, passport, and other documents like education level), potential migrant workers will go to POEAs to proceed with the job search as domestic workers. Based on the potential migrant worker's preferred destination country, most of the time Saudi Arabia, as the system is relatively simpler and less demanding in terms of requirements, such as overseas work experience and intermediate language proficiency, compared to other Arab countries like Qatar.

If the potential migrant worker is planning to work in Saudi Arabia, then the POEA will use a Musaned system that governs the employment process. According my informant, Musaned is an online platform simplify and improve the recruitment process for domestic workers it is launched and by Saudi Arabia's government in 2015. Its primary goal is to protect the rights of both employers and workers during the employment. it has three key phases of the domestic labor recruitment process. The first one is Before the worker's arrival to the destination country, during Contract agreement is done and thirdly after the potential migrant worker arrived in Saudi Arabia.

POEAs should attach various information and documents to the Musaned system that describes the potential migrant workers. These documents may include a CV that shows the workers, skill, experiences, education, training, and other programs completed; a recent biometric photo; and a copy of their valid passport. COC and other relevant documents that may enhance their employability will be uploaded. Based on these documents, recruitment partners in the destination country will assess the potential migrant worker's eligibility for employment in that country and find a sponsor or employer.

Furthermore, Agency 4 stated about preparing CV for the potential migrant worker, according to my informant their agency prioritizes by highlighting the quality and skills of the potential migrant

worker in their CV. Moreover, Proficiency in different languages and possessing valuable skills significantly enhances chance of getting a job. The agency also includes a short video (approximately 2 minutes) where the potential migrant worker introduces themselves in Arabic. Furthermore, the POEA attach their educational background and work experience details. This comprehensive approach helps the POEAs effectively showcase the suitability of the potential migrant worker for the intended destination. If these potential labor migrants are accepted and find an employer, the process will proceed to the next step which is signing the employment contract agreement.

4.1.5.4. Signing Contract Agreement

According to all POEAs informants the contract agreement involves four key actors which are the migrant worker, POEAs in the country of origin, Partner agencies located in the destination country and The employers in the destination country. Agency 1 manager stated that the contract agreement outlines the information of the main actors, including the migrant worker, POEAs in the country of origin, partner agencies located in the destination country, and the employers in the destination country, and includes the agreement between the migrant worker and the employer, covering aspects such as salary, working hours, and other relevant details. The contract is typically drafted in both English and Arabic. The contract typically includes the names and addresses of all parties involved: the migrant worker, POEA, the partner agency, and the employer. It specifies the agreed-upon salary, which usually ranges from 1000 to 2000 Saudi Riyals per month, depending on the migrant worker's experience. Furthermore, the contract outlines the migrant worker's responsibilities, working hours, and other legal terms. It also includes information such as the migrant worker's address, guardian's contact details, and phone numbers.

Some POEAS like agency 1,2,4, and 6 acknowledge that some migrant workers may not be able to know how to read either English or Arabic. To address this, the agencies ensure that the contract agreement is explained to the migrant worker in a clear and understandable manner based on the migrant worker's preferred language, avoiding any misinterpretation before they sign the contract, ensuring full comprehension and acceptance.

After they sign the agreement they will proceed to the next step which is the medical examination. According to agency 3, The medical examination process is not simple that the migrant worker can go to a certain health center and do the examination. It should be done under the Wafid system. hospitals that are reorganized and selected by the gulf countries and the government of Ethiopia.

4.1.5.5. Medical Examination Process

After the contract agreement between the employer/sponsor in the destination country and the potential migrant workers, the potential migrant workers must undergo a mandatory medical examination. This medical process is facilitated through the Wafid system.

The examination must be conducted at health centers chosen by both the host country and Ethiopia. Those hospitals are 12 hospitals which are currently authorized for medical examinations under the Wafid system: Arsho Medical Laboratories, Hellelujah Center for Internal Medicine and Chest Diseases, Bethany Internal Medicine Specialty, Al-Afia Higher Clinic Clinic, Bethzatha Health Services, ZAK Higher Clinics Pvt. Ltd, KT ST. Gabriel Higher, Sante Medical Center, TOZ Higher Clinic, Wosene Internal Medicine Specialty Clinic, Washington Health Care PLC and Zenbaba General Hospital. Which majority or almost all medical examination are found in Addis Ababa which forces the potential migrant works to come from different region of the country, far or near.”

During this process the Wafid system automatically assigns potential migrant workers to one of these hospitals to do their medical examination, based on the system random distribution of the healthcare centers, the potential migrant worker will go to the chosen healthcare centers.

According to agency 3, Medical examination results are rejected if the examination is not conducted at a facility selected and assigned through the Wafid system. Therefore, potential migrant workers who use non-Wafid facilities waste their money. All medical examination costs, approximately 3,200 ETB, that should be covered by the potential migrant worker.

During my visit in one of the healthcare centers, I encountered some potential migrants who had undergone the medical examination process before they received their contracts. When I inquired about the reason, they stated that the POEA had instructed them to visit this X healthcare system for a health check. I tried to gather more information on this, and it became evident that not all agencies require migrant workers to undergo a medical examination before securing a contract. Those agencies that do require this pre-contract examination may be trying to minimize the risk of having to terminate a contract later due to a failed medical examination. Some POEAs mentioned that the medical examination process for Saudi Arabia is particularly serious and mostly done when they receive the contract agreement. However, the POEAs are leading the potential migrant workers to unnecessary expense since they have to do it again after they secure a job based on distribution.

Nevertheless, according to my informant after potential migrant secure job and pass the medical process, the potential migrant worker will receive their result and the clinic that done the medical examination will send the result to the Musaned and to E-LMIS online to reduce the possibility of fraudulent results and document manipulation putting the clinics accountable.

If the medical examination is successful, the agency will proceed in creating a life insurance to the potential migrant workers. POEAs is responsible in buy life insurances from Nyala Insurance company to the migrant worker. then, the Visa process will proceed.

4.1.5.6. Visa Process

During the visa process, POEAs apply for the Potential migrant worker a working visa for the migrant worker at the embassy of the destination country, in this case, Saudi Arabia. According to all POEAs, the agency will submit all required documents to the embassy, including the passport, work agreement, and other documents as per the embassy's requirements for a working visa. Upon completion of going to the embassy, the migrant worker will receive their visa within a short period for instant if they applied today they will get the visa tomorrow or in the second day.

During this process Musaned plays a crucial role by approving the necessary documents. The embassy checks the migrant worker's status within the Musaned system and if every this is alright the potential migrant worker will receive their visa based on how many years they work. According to my all agency informants the Visa rejections are generally infrequent, unless issues arise with the medical examination results or if the passport photo does not meet the required standards. Moreover, during the Visa process the potential migrant workers are not required to come to the embassy for interview or other reasons, the agencies are responsible to finish this tasks”

After the potential labor migrate received their visa the Agency will book an air travel ticket for the potential migrant worker, this expenses are full covered by the POEAs. After that, the agency will submit all relevant documents to the appropriate authorities. including on the E-LMIS platform. In the E-LMIS platform the agencies are required to upload all documents and show their progress. Via the platform MOLS department that is responsible of oversea employment will examine and assess the documents. Those nine essential documents are Passport, Work agreement

contract, Insurance, potential migrant and their guardian Identification card (ID), Certificate of occupational competency (COC), Visa, Medical examination report and Air ticket.

4.1.6. Deployment Process

After the potential migrant worker receives their visa, the POEAs will book an air travel ticket from the origin country to the destination, upload all documents on the E-LMIS platform, and wait for MOLS to review the documents that are uploaded. The deployment period will continue until MOLS checks the documents and sends a verification and QR code that say that the potential migrant worker can be deployed for overseas employment. During that period, some agencies will provide a small training and orientation session.

4.1.6.1 Orientation Provide by POEAs

In the deployment process POEAs provide orientation session on what the potential migrant need to know before they departure. Agency 5 stated that the orientation focus on what are the migrant worker's responsibility, duties and obligation while they arrived in the destination country. Moreover, Agencies 6 stated:

Our orientation covers what they need to do upon arrival in the destination country. We inform them that a representative from a partner agency in the destination country will receive them. If they do not arrive on time, they can call to our partner in the destination country to pick them up by the phone number we provided them before they departure. We also provide orientations on the potential migrant worker's responsibilities, rights, and duties

Agency 3 also stated that they provide orientation on the destination country, including its culture, working environment, laws, and communication practices. The POEA also provides orientation to

the potential migrant workers on who they need to contact if there are any emergencies and abuse. Agency 1 further noted that they host sessions for potential migrant worker, inviting migrant workers who are currently employed in the destination country via online and also those who have returned from extended employment in the Middle East. Moreover, they facilitate direct communication with these experienced workers to help the potential migrant workers to gain realistic expectations of their overseas employment.

Agency 4 stated that their trainings also provide psychological support to boost their confidence, particularly in communication. they thoroughly educate them about their rights as workers in the destination country, based on the bilateral agreement between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia.

Agency 5 also mentioned that they provide orientation to their potential migrant on how to maintain their personal hygiene and sanitation. Moreover, they advise them to not engage in any sexual or romantic relationships with employers or other individuals, as these can negatively impact their employment and personal well-being. They also inform them of the procedures for addressing wage-related issues, such as delayed or unpaid wages.

According to my informant from POEAs, the agencies are responsible for follow-up generally extends throughout the initial contract period (typically 2 years and 45 days). “If the worker chooses to extend their contract, the agency's direct follow-up responsibilities may cease. However, the agency may still offer support and guidance as needed. Visa renewal procedures will be the responsibility of the worker and their employer.

4.1.6.2. Role of E-LMIS Checkers

An in-depth interview with the MOLS document checker explained the role of MOLS document checkers. According to the informant, once all required documents are submitted to MOLS through

the E-LMIS platform by agencies, MOLS document checkers will review the uploaded documents and verify whether those documents are real, genuine, and valid. If any of these documents contain incorrect information, fake documents, or if there are any other issues or doubts about the documents, they will be rejected for approval for overseas employment.

However, rejected documents are sent back to the agencies for correction and re-upload. However, if the verification department approves the documents, they are sent to the issuance team for further examination. The issuance team has the authority to reject documents if additional problems are identified. If all required documents are approved by the issuance team, a QR code is generated and sent to the Ethiopian immigration office and to the POEA that is handling the potential migrant worker's case.

Then, after all documents are verified, the POEA provides the potential migrant worker with the QR code along with other essential documents, such as a passport, visa, insurance, and work contract, to get ready for her journey. The potential migrant worker proceeds to immigration, where there is another department that verifies the potential migrant's documents, allowing her to leave the country from the airport. However, if the immigration department finds any incomplete files or suspicious documents, they can reject the application and request corrections through the agency. If all documents are verified and approved, immigration sends a confirmation to the foreign agency in the destination country, the Ethiopian embassy in the destination country, and MOLS that the potential migrant worker can leave Ethiopia for a labor migration to the destination country.

According to the MOLS document checker 1, this confirmation finalizes the migrant worker's eligibility to leave Ethiopia for employment abroad. Moreover, this approval matters once the potential migrant worker arrives at the airport. The QR code is essential during check-in;

immigration officials in the airport use the QR code to determine whether the potential migrant worker is authorized to leave the country as a labor migrant.

According to MOLS official 1, the E-LMIS system is interconnected with various institutions, including COC centers. When a migrant worker's documents are checked in the system, it becomes evident if they have not completed the required training, resulting in rejection. E-LMIS noted that most document rejections occur due to two primary reasons: the involvement of brokers in recruitment processes and the lack of accountability and weak structures of that agencies.

4.1.6.3. Final Deployment

Finally, after they received a green light from MOLS saying that the migrant worker is eligible for a labor migration after they examine the documents submitted through E-LMIS, POEAs will often provide the migrant worker with a QR code and some distinctive uniform. According to agencies 6, this uniform can help the receiving agent in the destination country easily to identify the arriving potential migrant workers.

POEAs are also responsible for transporting the migrants to the airport and assisting them with check-in procedures. Agency 4 noted that since some of the potential migrant workers are unfamiliar with airport procedures, the agency is responsible to take them to the airport. Once the migrant workers have departed, the agency will inform the partner agencies in the destination country about the flight details, including the expected arrival time. This allows the receiving agents to coordinate a proper welcome and ensure a smooth transition for the arriving migrants worker.

During the departure process at the airport, migrants must present their documents, including the QR code obtained from E-LMIS. according to different POEAs, The QR code of the potential migrant workers should be with the potential worker at every time. This QR code serves two primary functions. The first one is tracking the progress of the migrant's journey in the pre-departure stage within the E-LMIS system, as it contains their personal information and departure confirmation, which the QR code is scanned at the airport to confirm their authorized departure for labor migration.

4.1.7. Challenges Faced in the Pre-Departure Process

Based on the collected data, this section explores the challenges faced during the pre-departure process for labor migration to the Middle East. These challenges are faced by key stakeholder's like potential migrant workers, private overseas employment agencies (POEAs), the Ministry of Labor and skill (MOLS) and training providers (TVETs). The challenges faced by these actors are interconnected. The challenges experienced by potential migrant workers can influence POEAs and government institutions.

4.1.7.1. Challenges Related to Potential Migrant Workers

During my interviews, almost all key stakeholders mentioned a lack of information and knowledge among potential labor migrants is one of the challenges. This deficiency influences other stakeholders, including the government, POEAs, and TVET institutions.

Agency 1 stated that many potential migrant workers has lack sufficient knowledge about the formal labor migration process. They may not know where to go, what documents are required, or how the process works. This lack of awareness makes them vulnerable to exploitation, especially by brokers. According to different POEAs, potential migrants that used brokers are reliance on

brokers, particularly in rural areas for getting information about the process. This dependence stems from several factors, including limited access to technology and information channels. Moreover, PMW 9 from a rural area explained the following:

In our area, many people rely on brokers because potential migrant workers often lack the knowledge and resources to access information online. Instead, our primary sources are brokers, individuals preparing to migrate, those who have returned, and those who have already migrated.

Agency 6, indicates that potential migrants place significant trust in their local brokers. The informant stated, Migrant workers often trust local brokers more than licensed agencies because they are from the same places, believing they won't put them in danger. This sentiment was in somehow confirmed by Potential Migrant Worker 1 (PMW 1), who stated that she trusted her local broker more than the POEA due to their shared village and ethnic background, suggesting a heightened sense of trust and security. Furthermore, she explained that if something happens to her, the broker is the first person her family will ask or contact. Since her family knows the broker and lives in the same community, the broker could be held accountable for anything that happens to her.

However, some POEAs disagree, Agency 2 expresses concern regarding to the accountability of the brokers. The informant explain that brokers may prioritize their financial gains (commissions from the migrant workers) over the safety and well-being of these individuals. If migrant workers face any danger, the agency, rather than the brokers, is held responsible and accountable by the government.

Moreover, one of my potential migrant worker informants from Addis Ababa shared her experience in a positive way. PMW 5 stated that she initially tried applying for overseas employment through a licensed agency, but the process was slow for her. Seeing her friends get faster results through brokers, she eventually aborts her application and contacts a broker that her friend used, who later quickly connected her with a good and active agency that helped her to secure employment in the destination country in a short period. She stated that sometimes brokers can be helpful in speeding up the process. Some agencies might be slow or lazy and others might be fast and active. However, the broker knows the system, which agencies to use, and which agency can help her to find a safe household in the destination country, but when it comes to trusting the broker, she has low trust in him since she doesn't know him well. Based on the informant perspective there are POEAs who are committed and work hard and on the other hand there are POEAs who are lazy and unethical in working their job.

However according to Different POEAs, and potential migrant's workers, they believe that brokers can often provide misinformation, manipulate documents, and charge high commissions for their services. According to PMW 2:

Some brokers may lack transparency. My broker did not provide timely updates after I registered in the E-LMIS and submitted my information and documents to the agencies. The broker was saying he would inform me of there is any updates, but whenever I inquired, he simply said it in process. When I requested him to visit the agency for updates, he tells me I was not required to go, assuring me the agency would handle it and he would tell me any new information. He just doesn't want me to go to the agencies even if I want to get other information's.

Another significant challenge faced by potential migrant workers was the scarcity of POEAs and training centers (TVETs) in rural areas. Most of the POEAs are concentrated in Addis Ababa, requiring migrants to travel to the capital city to follow up on their process applications. Moreover, when it comes to training institutions, a MOLS official stated that efforts are underway to establish more centers closer to rural communities, even though there are few TVET centers and private training schools.

Furthermore, medical examinations are often required for the potential migrant workers to come to Addis Ababa, as most Wafid-affiliated hospitals are located in the capital city. This travel poses considerable challenges for potential migrant workers those who are from rural areas. For example, an informant PMW 8 from Wollo, Amhara region, who traveled miles to Addis Ababa for a medical examination, explained:

When I came for the medical examination from Wollo, I had to pay double the usual transportation tariff because many vehicles weren't traveling to Addis Ababa due to the conflict in some part of regions in Ethiopia. Sometimes roads are closed, which can affect me to be on time for the medical examinations and impacting my chances of working abroad. Besides the transportation costs, I also needed money for overnight accommodation because I couldn't travel back immediately due to the far distance.

Potential migrant workers also face difficulties in navigating the entire process on their own. They may encounter challenges in understanding and completing all the required steps, from registering in the E-LMIS system to obtaining a passport, Certificate of competency (COC), and other necessary documents. This can be especially difficult for those from rural areas who may be unfamiliar with bureaucratic processes and urban settings. As a result, these migrant workers

become dependent on others for information and guidance. Some use brokers, while others use social networks to gather information about the process.

Despite the legal requirement that POEAs cannot charge service fees and other expenses for the process, there are some expenses that the migrant workers should cover. According to all potential migrant workers, they are expected to pay for some services like medical examinations, COC tests, passports, and broker commissions if the potential migrant worker used brokers. Furthermore, travel to the capital city for medical check-ups and to follow up with their agencies can create an additional financial burden. PMW 6 moreover stated that some potential migrant workers travel from distant areas who need to stay overnight; we also face other costs because we don't have family or friends in the city.

4.1.7.2. Challenges Related to POEAs

According to different POEAs, they also mention challenges that they are facing, from the potential migrant, the government (MOLS) and some brokers.

Agency 5 stated that when the government, through the E-LMIS, refers potential migrants to their agency, some potential migrant workers do not respond to their phone calls. Furthermore, some potential migrants do not have a passport or certificate of occupation competency (COC), which are mandatory requirements for overseas employment. Additionally, some registered potential migrant workers on the system are not committed or motivated to work overseas as domestic workers. It appears that some potential migrants are registered in the E-LMIS without a genuine interest in overseas employment, perhaps due to encouragement or pressure from local woreda workers. Nevertheless, a number of registered potential migrants are either uninterested or unresponsive.

Migrant worker behavior also presents challenges for some POEAs. Agencies 3 and 5 stated that some migrant workers can be difficult to work with during the process for overseas employment. Agency 5 stated, even after completing all the necessary processes, some workers become unreachable or fail to show up for their departure. Moreover, Agency 3 noted that some potential migrant workers change their minds during the middle of the process after the POEAs get the potential migrant worker a sponsor or employer in the destination country. Agency 3 stated that potential migrant will give you different reasons, like they do not want to go because they got employed, some will say their families influence them not to go to the Middle East, some will get married or get pregnant, and some might even switch off their phone or change their phone numbers. According to most POEAs respondents, it is not always a 100 percent guarantee that all migrant workers who are registered in the E-LMIS and sent to us are willing to go to the Middle East as domestic workers.

Agency 1 also noted that ongoing conflict in different parts of Ethiopia leads to road closures, causing potential migrant workers to miss their flights. This, in turn, puts pressure on agencies, as employers in destination countries often demand immediate replacements and start looking for a new potential migrant worker. The agencies then have to begin the recruitment process anew. Agency 6 Furthermore, stated that employers may insist on the specific worker they initially selected, making it even more difficult to find a suitable replacement. These and other challenges can strain relationships between agencies and employers in destination countries.

Another challenges faced by most POEAs is the preferences and requirement of the destination countries employers or sponsors, according to agency 2, Destination country employers also have specific requirements and preferences for the migrant workers they hire or sponsor. Some employers' preferences are based on the worker's religion; some prefer Christian workers, while

others prefer Muslim workers. Moreover, some employers focus on the physical appearance of potential migrant workers. According to Agency 6, some Arab employers prefer female workers with slightly lighter skin than a dark skin girl. These preferences really matter, making it challenging to match workers with suitable employers.

Moreover, some potential migrants may fail the required medical examination after agencies have secured the, employment in the destination country. Some potential migrant workers might fail the medical examination process. This is often due to the potential migrant worker's carelessness, such as becoming pregnant or other unforeseen health issues. Moreover, my informants stated that these failures force agencies to restart the recruitment process, causing significant delays and creating bad relationships with the employers in the destination countries. Furthermore, some POEAs stated some potential migrants from rural areas may have limited or no proficiency in Amharic. This language barrier can create communication difficulties between the potential migrant worker and the agencies.

Moreover, according POEAs, Brokers works as intermediary between the potential migrant workers and the POEA. Even though POEAs knows working with brokers is illegal, there are some POEAs and Potential migrants that used Brokers secretly and this affect other agencies in creating bad image for other POEAs and unfair competition between POEAs. Moreover, potential migrant workers also used brokers that influences the POEAs work. Agency 2 stated:

Sometimes, when E-LMIS distribute or send us potential migrants to find them a jobs in the Middle East, we call them to get more information. However, it's always a man who answers the phone. When we ask for the phone number owner, he says it's her brother or uncle, saying that he is willing to accept information on behalf of the potential migrant

worker. We're sure this person is a broker, it makes it difficult to receive information and contact the potential migrant worker.

4.1.7.3. Challenges Related to government institutions

The government believes brokers had a negative influence on overseas employment even before the 2013 ban, alleging they exploited migrant workers in collusion with some agencies. According to MOLS officials, and MOLS woreda-level workers, the government aims to eliminate brokers from the process. Because brokers present a significant challenge, as some of them operate outside the legal framework and can undermine the system through fraudulent documents and illegal practices. They can affect the process in a negative way. However, one broker I interviewed commented, “Even if the government is making efforts to exclude us, we will find ways to continue working in sending labor migrants to the Middle East, as it is our livelihood and income it’s our bread”.

Furthermore, MOLS woreda level workers acknowledges that their need to be a stronger monitoring and enforcement policies and law of labor migration processes. MOLS Officials 2 have stated that their intention to monitor agencies and ensure compliance with regulations, preventing illegal activities that tries to bypass through the E-LMIS platform. Furthermore, according to MOLS official 1, monitoring and evaluating the POEA is crucial because some agencies are irresponsible and careless, submitting incomplete or even fake documents for potential migrant workers to the server. This forces MOLS to reject these applications and restart the process again which is waste of time and resources.

The current challenges faced by the government is the deportation of migrant workers back to Ethiopia. MOLS official 1 acknowledged that a large number of potential migrant worker’s

returnees, many of them are due to a gap of skills. Their skills not meeting the employer expectations in destination countries.

MOLS official 1 stated that Recently in a day we had received 120 migrant workers from the middle east due to lack of skills and conflicts with their employers. This shows that there need to be an improvement on providing trainings and facilities and the process for obtaining competency certificates (COC).

4.1.7.4. Challenges on Training Providers (TVET) for Overseas Employment

In an in-depth interview with TVET providers, they stated that they face numerous challenges in delivering effective training. One of them is the class dynamic. An age diversity trainee is a challenge in the class while providing training for the domestic workers. TVET trainer 1 stated that

In the class or training, we might have someone as young as 21 and another as old as 45. This diversity presents a real obstacle in delivering training. This forced the trainer to adapt to different learning styles and ways. This age gap also creates questions about the suitability of some trainees, particularly older individuals, in being domestic workers abroad. This leads us to a concern about whether the recruitment criteria are correct and selective. Perhaps focusing more on age range and potential productivity, like the younger ones, is essential. While inclusivity in training is important, it should focus on those who are most likely to succeed in the destination country as domestic workers.

According to the TVET training providers for overseas employment as domestic workers, there are some challenges related to the curriculum and suggestions for a revision by experts based on the cultural setting of the destination country.

One area pinpointed for potential enhancement is the curriculum's relevance. Trainers have observed a disparity between the existing training modules and the specific cultural context and work-related expectations prevalent in Arab countries, a primary destination for many trainees. For instance, the current cooking module emphasizes European cooking traditions, which may not be the most immediately applicable skill for domestic workers in the Middle East. Ideally, the curriculum should be adapted to incorporate the destination country's culture and tradition. While the initial curriculum development involved expertise from the Philippines, it is suggested that the inclusion of experts from the destination countries themselves would further enhance its effectiveness. This would ensure a more accurate reflection of the cultural differences and expectations that trainees will encounter in their work. Furthermore, incorporating the practical experiences of former Ethiopian migrant workers who have extensive work experience in the Middle East is also proposed as a valuable addition.

TVET trainer 3 also mentioned other challenges related to class size or number of trainee attending the training, the trainer explains that the training institution established a standard of 25 students per class for effective instruction and individual assessment. However, the TVET frequently exceed this number, sometimes significantly having 40 or more trainees in one class, which makes it difficult to provide adequate attention and evaluate each individual's skills. This is particularly problematic in practical classes, like cooking and house cleaning, where hands-on experience is crucial.

Another challenge reported from a TVET trainer 1 is the learning speeds of trainees. Some trainees are slow learners, while others are fast learners. According to trainer 1, age also seemed to be a factor, with older trainees generally learning more slowly. To address this, trainees who demonstrated competency were promptly processed for the competency test and received their

COC, rather than being held back by slower learners. Furthermore, this disparity in learning speed made it difficult to deliver the training effectively within the fixed timeframe of the training program.

Furthermore, a notable challenge within the TVET program is the scarcity of Arabic-speaking trainers. This deficiency impedes the effective delivery of essential language instruction to potential migrant workers destined for employment in Arab countries. This shortage, combined with the lack English skills presents some barriers to adequately prepare migrant workers for successful overseas employment.

TVET trainer 2 highlighted language barriers as a significant obstacle. Many of these trainees or potential migrant workers are planning to work in Arab countries. Knowing Arabic is very important for them there. However, the program doesn't have enough teachers who can teach basic Arabic. Also, many of the trainees don't speak much English. This makes it even harder to communicate. If the trainees don't know Arabic or English, it can cause problems when they arrive in their new workplaces in Arab countries. They might struggle to talk to their employers, and some employers might also not speak much English. Therefore, the trainer emphasized the importance of ensuring potential migrants possess at least a basic understanding of the Arabic language

Another challenges faced by TVET training provides is the behavior and discipline of the trainee's discipline. TVET trainer 3 and 2 stated that Some trainees exhibit behavioral issues and they are not disciplined they try to bring their home behavior in the class room, which is disrupt during the training process.

According to TVET trainer 2 there are some concerns regarding the trainee's capacity to adapt to the work environment overseas, particularly in cultures that may hold different expectations

concerning behavior and conduct. The Trainers acknowledged that some trainees demonstrate a deficiency in education and discipline, raising questions about their ability to cope with employment in the destination country. Displaying inappropriate behavior towards employers could result in negative consequences once they are in the destination country.

TVET training providers for overseas domestic workers suggest that the trainee selection process itself needs careful review. The woredas need to examine the trainees, such as their age, education, health, language skills, and even mental preparedness. Only because they are unemployed and want to go to the Middle East should they not be registered in the E-LMIS, wanting to work overseas does not mean that they are eligible to work overseas as domestic workers. rather, it brings a high risk of deportation.

Moreover, TVTE trainer 1 stated that there seems to be an emphasis on quantity over quality in recruitment by the woredas. While the government has established requirements for eligibility to work overseas as a domestic worker, the reality on the ground at the woreda level often diverges from these standards. Potential migrant workers may be registered simply because they are unemployed and willing to go abroad, without proper consideration of whether they meet all the necessary criteria.

TVET trainers stated that When these potential migrant workers or trainees arrive at the TVET institutions for training, the trainers often discover different problems. Some are below or above the required age. According to my informants it looks like the government seems to prioritize the number of trainees and deployments over the suitability of those individuals. They rather track how many people are trained and sent abroad, but not necessarily how successful they are.

Moreover, according to TVET trainer 2, Some trainees are simply not mentally prepared for the challenges of working in a foreign country. Their need to be more rigorous and standardized selection process that truly assesses the potential of each candidate and ensures they are equipped for success, rather than simply focusing on meeting quotas. Moreover, the informants provide the experiences of other African countries like people migrate from Kenya and Uganda. According to TVET trainer 2, those migrant workers at least knows English, and they are active, they fully understand about the process and what they need to do, their rights and responsibilities in the destination country and more comparing to the Ethiopians. Furthermore, TVET trainer 3 stated that there are coordination challenges between the woreda-level MOLS workers and TVET, not only this as well as in generally there is lack of coordination for the labor migration process.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. Information Gathering and the Influence of Social Networks.

The study's findings corroborate literature on the significance of social networks as a primary source of information for potential migrant workers, particularly for Ethiopian women migrating to the Middle East. Participants reported relying heavily on family, friends, and returnee migrants for insights into job opportunities, required procedures, and life in destination countries. As noted by Jamie & Tsega (2018), Röthlisberger (2019), and Kodama (2024), these informal networks are crucial in Ethiopia. One participant highlighted how guidance from her sister-in-law, already working in Saudi Arabia, was instrumental in navigating the process and identifying a trustworthy agency. This demonstrates the power of "strong ties" in providing perceived reliable information and support, echoing Kuschminder's (2016) findings that close relationships can lead to better outcomes for migrants.

However, the findings also reveal the significant reliance on brokers. While informal networks like family offer information, brokers are often the first point of contact, especially for potential migrants in rural areas with limited access to formal channels. This heavy dependence on brokers is a critical challenge, aligning with Arayaselassie's (2013) earlier findings on broker deception and exploitation through high commission fees and misleading information about working conditions. The study participants confirmed that brokers sometimes provide misinformation and lack transparency, delaying processes or controlling access to agencies.

This phenomenon can be analyzed through the lens of social network theory. While Granovetter's (1973) 'strength of weak ties' suggests that less close contacts can provide access to new information, Kuschminder's (2016) work in the Ethiopian context specifically found that strong ties (family, close friends) are often perceived as more reliable and risk-reducing for female domestic workers seeking information compared to weak ties like brokers or certain agencies. The study's finding that potential migrants from rural areas heavily rely on brokers due to a lack of accessible formal alternatives highlights a structural gap that pushes individuals towards these riskier "weak ties" for initial information and connections.

This dependence also speaks to feminist theory's focus on gendered power relations, where women, potentially facing limited resources and access to information channels independently, become reliant on intermediaries, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation. Lindquist (2008) and Arayaselassie (2013) observed that women's dependency on others for information, often controlled by brokers or male relatives, increases their exposure to exploitation. These findings align with this study's evidence showing how gender intersects with class and rurality to form multiple axes of disadvantage.

Formal sources, including private overseas employment agencies (POEAs) and the government (MOLS), also disseminate information. POEAs use various methods, including social media, which was identified as a dominant tool. MOLS employs social media, television, radio, and district offices. However, the study indicates that government outreach efforts, while reformed and promoted through initiatives like the E-LMIS platform, are insufficient in reaching rural populations, contributing to the persistence of broker reliance. This points to a need for the government to enhance community-based outreach programs, particularly in rural areas, to provide accurate and accessible information and counter the influence of brokers.

The study also found a lack of sufficient knowledge and information among potential migrant workers generally. This information gap makes them vulnerable to exploitation by intermediaries. Addressing this fundamental challenge requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders to ensure migrants are adequately informed about their rights, responsibilities, destination countries, and the official processes.

4.2.2. The Recruitment, Preparation, and Deployment Process

The study provides a detailed account of the pre-departure process under the current Ethiopian system, highlighting the sequential steps involved, starting from seeking a POEA through to deployment. POEAs are central actors in facilitating the journey, acting as intermediaries between potential migrants and overseas employers. Their role involves recruiting, preparing documents, assisting with administrative procedures, contract signing, visa acquisition, and arranging deployment. This aligns with international literature on the crucial function of recruitment agencies.

The reformed Ethiopian system mandates adherence to the 2016 Overseas Employment Proclamation and utilizes digital platforms like the E-LMIS (Ethiopian Labor Market Information System) to streamline and monitor the process. The E-LMIS requires agencies to upload all relevant documents for government verification, including passports, contracts, insurance, IDs, COC certificates, visas, medical reports, and air tickets. This digitization aims to enhance transparency and accountability and combat illegal practices, a key recommendation in ethical recruitment literature. Government document checkers review these submissions, approving or rejecting them based on validity. Approved documents lead to the generation of a QR code for immigration clearance.

For migration to Saudi Arabia, the process is integrated with destination country systems like Musaned for recruitment and contract management and Wafid for medical examinations. The contract agreement, a critical document, includes details of the migrant worker, origin/destination agencies, and employer, outlining terms such as salary and working hours. While agencies are expected to ensure contracts are understood, language barriers for some migrants remain a challenge.

Pre-departure training is another essential component, primarily provided by government TVET centers under MOLS. This training focuses on service provision, housekeeping, and cooking, as well as basic language skills and cultural familiarization. Obtaining a Certificate of Occupational Competency (COC) is a mandatory requirement. However, the study highlights concerns about the relevance and quality of the curriculum, noting its emphasis on European cooking traditions rather than those prevalent in Arab countries. This echoes findings from studies in other sending countries regarding gaps and challenges in training programs. Suggestions for improvement include adapting the curriculum to destination country contexts and incorporating the experiences of returnee

migrants. Several participants described the sessions as superficial, overly theoretical, or not tailored to the specific challenges they might face abroad. This critique echoes findings from Sultana and Reza (2023), who evaluated pre-departure training centers in Bangladesh and found deficiencies in content relevance, trainer expertise, and adaptability to destination-country norms. Likewise, Aryal and Kharel (2023) reported that orientation programs in Nepal often lacked practical value, casting doubt on their effectiveness in genuinely preparing migrant workers.

Tayah (2016) underscores that effective pre-departure training should go beyond technical skills to include legal rights, cultural sensitivity, language basics, and financial literacy. Participants in this study noted a lack of modules related to workers' rights, handling abuse, and accessing support services abroad. This shortcoming aligns with Kebede's (2002) assertion that inadequate preparation undermines the empowerment of migrant workers, particularly women, and increases their vulnerability.

During the deployment process, the pre-departure orientation session by the POEAs for potential migrants is vital, focusing on the responsibilities and rights of the potential migrant worker, the culture of the destination country, what to do in the event of any abuse or other problems, etc. The final deployment also carries out rigorous document validation through E-LMIS and immigration, culminating in the issuance of the QR code and travel clearance. This entire process, although streamlined by reforms, still presents challenges such as broker intervention and the necessity of strict document verification to enable safe and ethical labor migration.

The findings show a more active and structured government role in the pre-departure phase following the reforms and the reopening of overseas employment in 2018. The 2016 Ethiopian Overseas Employment Proclamation was a game changer for the country's labor migration system,

establishing a framework for greater government control and smoother labor migration through designated institutions. It heavily impacted the current labor migration, which requires Private Overseas Employment Agencies (POEAs), migrant workers, and stakeholders to abide by its provision. The proclamation also vested authority in the government, under MOLS, to effect the regulations and manage the labor migration.

The reformed Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS) has played a significant role in this process by regulating Private Overseas Employment Agencies (POEAs) and monitoring labor migrants in order to have a safe and well-documented labor migration process. Previous studies noted that the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) was primarily involved in licensing and providing orientation to migrant workers (Arayaselassie, 2013). However, this research highlights the broader role of the restructured MOLS, which now actively participates in policy implementation, monitoring of POEAs and prospective migrant workers, and direct engagement at various operational levels. This marks a significant shift toward more comprehensive governmental involvement and oversight.

A key new element identified in this research is the Ethiopian Labor Market Information System (E-LMIS). This centralized digital platform supports the registration and data collection of potential migrant workers, including biometric identification. It also facilitates the tracking of workers and agencies, document submission and review, and approval for deployment. E-LMIS is described as a crucial tool for regulating and monitoring the entire pre-departure process and combating illegal practices. It represents a fundamental transformation in how labor migration is currently managed through a single digital platform.

Additionally, this study finds that brokers are officially prohibited under the 2016 Proclamation, even though they continue to operate, particularly in rural areas. Unlike earlier studies, which acknowledged the negative effects of brokers without noting their legal status, this research emphasizes their current classification as illegal actors in the migration process, despite their ongoing influence.

4.2.3. Main Actors and Their Roles in the Pre-Departure Process

The pre-departure process for labor migration involves several key actors, each with their own roles and influences. These actors include potential migrant workers, POEAs, government institutions such as MOLS, the E-LMIS server and MOLS document checkers, TVET centers, and brokers. Understanding these actors is crucial for comprehending the challenges and opportunities within the labor migration process.

4.2.3.1. Potential Migrant Workers

Potential migrant workers are seen as the main actors in the labor migration process. According to Arayaselassie (2013), migrant workers mostly seek overseas employment to improve their livelihoods. Their decisions and actions can drive the entire process as they aspire to improve their economic standing. My finding shows that potential migrant workers engage with various actors to navigate recruitment, training, and deployment. Potential migrant workers often adopt a limited and somehow passive role in the requirement process. However, potential migrant workers also have an active role in gathering information, preparing documents for starting the process, and engaging in skill training programs. But still, the finding shows that some of these groups or actors might be dependent on different actors like brokers since they don't have that much knowledge and information about the overseas labor migration process, which makes them vulnerable groups.

4.2.3.2. Private Overseas Employment Agencies (POEAs)

whereas POEAs are highly active in the pre-departure process, especially in the recruitment process. According to Arayaselassie (2013), it highlights the key role of private overseas employment agencies in Ethiopia in facilitating the recruitment and deployment process. The findings align with this by showing that POEAs act as intermediaries connecting migrant workers with employers in destination countries. They actively facilitate recruitment by providing job opportunities and screening potential candidates. They function based on the Ethiopian Overseas Employment Proclamation and other legal frameworks. POEAs are responsible for managing the application process, assisting with documentation, facilitating medical examinations and visa applications, and publishing insurance for potential migrant workers. They also provide pre-departure orientation and training, equipping migrants with essential skills and information.

4.2.3.3. Government Institutions

Government institutions play a crucial role in regulating and overseeing labor migration to protect migrant workers. Koser and Martin (2011) emphasize that the recruitment process should adhere to ethical principles and international labor standards. However, Khoda and Akram (2017) and ILO (2017) suggest that a lack of effective oversight and regulation during the recruitment process can lead to unethical practices. The finding shows that MOLS is responsible for enforcing the 2016 Ethiopian overseas employment proclamation, monitoring recruitment agencies, and providing support to migrant workers. The E-LMIS platform, managed by MOLS, streamlines and monitors the labor migration process. Moreover, the role of MOLS extends to the woreda level, where woreda-level MOLS workers proactively identify and register potential migrants in different communities, providing information and opportunities about overseas employment and creating job opportunities for the unemployed. This approach brings government services closer to potential

migrant workers. MOLS document checkers also have a role in reviewing the potential migrant worker's documents submitted through E-LMIS, ensuring compliance with overseas employment regulations, and approving labor migration.

4.2.3.4. Technical and Vocational Education and Training Centers

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers are vital in providing skills training for potential migrant workers who are seeking domestic work overseas and labor migration. TVETs offer training and prepare potential migrants to take an occupational competency test and receive their certificate of occupational competence (COC) from the Ethiopian Competency Certificate Agency. TVETs enhance potential migrant workers with skills, ensuring the potential migrant workers apply for overseas labor migration and also meet the required standards under Ethiopia's overseas employment proclamation.

4.2.3.5. Brokers

Brokers are also significant actors in the pre-departure stage. Even though not all potential migrant workers utilize brokers, some potential migrant workers use them for different reasons. Brokers act as intermediaries, particularly in rural areas, connecting migrant workers and POEAs. Brokers provide information about job opportunities and guide the application process. They assist potential migrant workers with paperwork and logistics, especially for those unfamiliar with urban settings. However, their role is controversial due to concerns about misinformation, exploitation, and fraudulent practices. The government aims to reduce brokers' involvement to ensure a safer, more regulated process. Although brokers are prohibited under the Ethiopian overseas employment proclamations, brokers still exist and are used by potential migrant workers.

4.2.3.6. Interdependencies and Power Dynamics

The influence of each actor varies. potential Migrant workers sometimes rely on POEAs and brokers for overseas labor opportunities. And also the government in protecting their rights in the pre- and post-departure phase. POEAs depend on the government for regulatory frameworks, and MOLS depends on woreda officials to connect them to potential migrant workers. Brokers can expedite processes but may compromise ethical standards. The government aims to reduce and remove the brokers' involvement in labor migration to ensure safer overseas employment. The power dynamics between these actors are complex. Potential migrant workers can be seen as central to the overseas labor migration process. Whereas POEAs are significant for employees and employers in the destination country, and government institutions have a regulatory authority. The controversial role of brokers adds another layer of complexity, as the government thinks they are the problem for unsafe labor migration.

4.2.4. Challenges Faced by Different Stakeholders in the Pre-Departure Phase

In the labor migration pre-departure process, all the major stakeholders have some challenges. They are the would-be migrant workers, POEAs, and government institutions like MOLS and TVET.

One of the key issues identified under the study was the lack of knowledge concerning formal labor migration procedures, documentation required, and the entire process among potential labor migrants. For this reason, they become highly vulnerable to different actors like POEAs and brokers. In the rural regions, brokers control the flow of information to the potential migrant workers, but their intervention leads to misinformation, fraud, and over 20,000 ETB service charges just for the brokers. Moreover, potential migrant workers also have a high reliance on brokers. Arayaselassie (2013) also found that Ethiopian women migrants to the Middle East usually

lack critical pre-migration and post-migration information, hence becoming vulnerable to exploitation. Besides, prospective migrant workers are also at a disadvantage when it comes to the spatial concentration of POEAs, medical examination centers, and training centers in Addis Ababa, which presents a challenge to rural migrants who have to go far and wide to undergo necessary procedures, such as medical examinations. This becomes an added economic burden, charging them for their transport, accommodation, and medical examination fees.

POEAs are faced with a number of challenges from various sources. Prospective migrants are unreliable, lacking necessary documents, demonstrating a lack of commitment, or becoming uncontactable. Furthermore, destination country employers have definite and sometimes discriminatory preferences, necessitating immediate replacement when they encounter issues. External factors like regional conflicts exacerbate these, resulting in travel disruptions. Lastly, these challenges exert pressure on POEAs, migrants, employers, and government institutions, hindering effective and ethical recruitment of overseas workers.

The Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS) is struggling to deal with overseas labor migration, especially illegal brokers. Moreover, the high returnee's labor migrant rate, sometimes due to skills shortages and disputes with employers, highlights the need for improved training and mechanisms for issuing COCs.

Training providers (TVET) for overseas employment encounter a range of challenges that impact the effectiveness of their programs. The diverse ages and learning speeds of trainees create difficulties in delivering trainings. Furthermore, the curriculum often lacks relevance to the cultural context and work expectations of destination countries, hindering the preparation of migrant workers. Resource limitations, such as overcrowded classes and insufficient practical training

opportunities and raw materials, are also seen as huge challenges in providing training to the potential migrant workers. Moreover, language barriers are seen as a challenge, especially the shortage of Arabic-speaking trainers and limited English language skills among the potential migrant workers or trainees, which can pose significant challenges in communicating with their destination employers. Moreover, behavioral and disciplinary issues among trainees raise concerns about their capacity to work in overseas environments. Finally, coordination challenges between woreda-level MOLS workers and TVET institutions create challenges in delivering effective training for the potential domestic migrant workers.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion, Implications for Social Work, and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This research explored the pre-departure processes of overseas labor migration with a particular emphasis on Ethiopian women to the Middle East for domestic work by focusing on ways of gathering information, the process of registration, preparation, recruitment, and deployment. Moreover, by identifying the main key actors in the pre-departure process for overseas labor migration. Furthermore, the study tries to see challenges faced during the process within the context of the recent reformed Ethiopian labor migration governance by MOLS. The study's findings underscore the complexity of this process and the significant interdependencies between various stakeholders.

Following the 2018 reforms and the reopening of overseas employment, the Ethiopian government, particularly the reformed Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS), has adopted a more active and structured role in the pre-departure phase of labor migration, a significant shift from previous studies that noted the former MOLSA's limited involvement primarily to licensing and orientation; this enhanced governmental oversight includes direct engagement in policy implementation, monitoring private overseas employment agencies (POEAs) and potential migrant workers, and the introduction of the Ethiopian Labor Market Information System (E-LMIS), a centralized digital platform for registration, biometric data collection, tracking, document processing, and deployment approvals, which is considered essential for regulation and combating illegal practices.

Social networks play a crucial role in the initial stages of labor migration, with potential migrants relying heavily on family, friends, POEAs, Government institutions and brokers for information and guidance. However, the reliance on brokers, particularly in rural areas, presents significant risks due to misinformation, exploitation, and fraudulent practices. But on the other hand, they also provide guidance and assistance for the potential migrants during the process. However, the study shows that due to lack of POEAs in the rural areas, migrant workers are forced to utilize brokers.

The Ethiopian Labor Market Information System (E-LMIS), plays a huge role in facilitating the pre-departure process and requirements. It is a central component of the new reformed Ethiopian labor migration process. It aims to ensure safe labor migration and combat illegal practices through a controlled system by MOLS.

During the pre-departure process, the COC serves as a vital document confirming that a migrant has completed required training and acquired skills. This training is provided by TVET centers and private schools; however, in Addis Ababa, TVETs are responsible for providing training for the potential migrant workers. This training is considered to be essential for preparing domestic workers to work overseas. However, challenges remain regarding the curriculum's relevance to the specific cultural context and work expectations in Arab countries, as well as the selection process for trainees or potential migrants. Training provided stated that some of the trainees do not fulfill the criteria mentioned in the overseas employment proclamation.

The recruitment process involves administrative procedures, documentation, contract agreement, and pre-departure orientation. POEAs play a crucial role in facilitating this process, assisting migrant workers in obtaining overseas employment, visas, and other legal documents and air tickets. Medical examinations are mandatory and must be conducted at health centers chosen by

both the host country and Ethiopia, facilitated through the Wafid system. However, these health centers are concentrated in the capital city, forcing potential migrant workers from other areas to travel there, incurring additional expenses and challenges. Despite these efforts, challenges persist throughout the pre-departure process. These challenges include Lack of information and knowledge among potential labor migrants, Reliance on brokers, leading to exploitation and misinformation. Selection of potential migrant worker, costs on potential migrants associated with medical examinations, COC, passport fees, and transportation for the rural potential migrant workers. Moreover, Skills and training gap of potential migrant workers, which causes deportation after arriving and starting to work in the destination country and also lack of POEAs in the rural area.

5.2. Implications to Social Work

5.2.1. Implication to Social Work practices

Social workers can play a crucial role in equipping potential migrant workers with comprehensive pre-departure information, including their legal rights, responsibilities, and obligations during the pre- and post-departure and the realities of overseas employment. By ensuring that migrants make informed decisions, social workers help reduce the risk of exploitation during the pre-departure process of labor migration. especially in rural areas where most migrant workers seek overseas labor migration as domestic workers are dependent on brokers.

Additionally, social workers must advocate for ethical recruitment processes and policies that prioritize the safety and preparedness of migrant workers. This includes ensuring access to proper training and education that aligns with the skills required by the international labor market. This study shows that Ethiopian migrant workers often lack competitive skills compared to those from

neighboring countries. Social workers should collaborate with government agencies, private sector actors, civil society, and TVET centers to improve training programs and enhance professional overseas workers.

Moreover, social workers should facilitate logistical support for potential migrants, particularly those traveling to urban centers for medical examinations and pre-departure training. Since most relevant services are concentrated in Addis Ababa, rural migrants often face difficulties navigating the city. Social workers can assist by guiding them through these processes, and advocating for expansion of medical and training centers in rural areas to ensure greater accessibility and encouraging different POEAs and to open their overseas employment agencies in the rural area

Finally, by understanding the whole challenges of labor migration in the pre-departure process, social workers can foster partnerships with different government institutions, private overseas employment agencies (POEAs), and international organizations. These collaborations can be helpful in the development of policies and programs that not only support safe migration but also ensure post-migration protection.

5.2.2. Implications for Policy

To have an effective and ethical labor migration system, policy adjustments need to focus on strengthening the labor migration process. Based on the study findings, the current challenges in Ethiopian labor migration are skill gaps, reliance on brokers, inadequate training programs, low POEAs, and medical examination centers in the rural areas. Therefore, based on these gaps, policies need to be implemented in order to have organized and effective labor migration. stronger enforcement of ethical recruitment policies is essential to protect migrant workers from exploitation. Policies should mandate that all POEAs adhere to the Ethiopian overseas employment

proclamation and the international labor standards. The government must establish stricter licensing and monitoring mechanisms to prevent fraudulent practices that can be caused by brokers or POEAs and enhance transparency in the recruitment process.

Moreover, many Ethiopian migrant workers are getting deported due to lack of skills from the destination country. The government should work on the pre-departure trainings and focus on the potential migrant taking part in these trainings, having a longer duration of training rather than having a training that lasts only for a month. This lack of skill does not only cause deportation; it can create a bad perception that Ethiopians labors are cheap and unskilled in the international labor markets. To address this, policies should require standardized, comprehensive pre-departure training that includes not only technical skills but also language proficiency, financial literacy, and cultural adaptation. Moreover, training centers should be expanded beyond Addis Ababa to ensure accessibility for rural migrant workers.

Policies should focus on forcing POEAs to open their offices in the rural area since most POEAs are concentrated in the capital, making it difficult for rural migrants to access them. Not only this, the Ethiopian government should discuss with the destination countries to expand health centers that potential migrants can do a medical examination, especially expanding it to the rural areas so that potential migrants are not forced to come to the capital for a medical examination purpose.

5.2.3. Implications for Research

Further research is essential to fully understand the complexities of labor migration and improve the policies and practices surrounding it. The findings indicate several key areas that require deeper investigation to enhance the safety, preparedness, and overall well-being of Ethiopian migrant workers.

Based on this study finding, evaluating the effectiveness of training programs is important. The current training programs for migrant workers often fail to adequately prepare them for overseas employment. Studies should assess whether these programs provide relevant skills, language proficiency, and cultural adaptation training. Comparative research between Ethiopia and other labor-exporting countries could help identify best practices to enhance training quality.

Moreover, understanding the challenges faced by rural migrant workers Given that most Ethiopian migrants come from rural areas, research should examine the unique barriers they face in accessing information, lack of POEAs, medical examination centers, pre-departure training, and government services. Understanding these challenges can help develop targeted interventions to ensure equal access to migration-related resources.

Additionally, understanding the post-departure perspective can be helpful in evaluating how the newly reformed labor migration system is functioning. Research should examine how Ethiopian migrant workers experience employment abroad under the revised policies and whether these reforms have led to improved working conditions, rights protection, and contract enforcement. This will provide valuable insights into areas where further policy adjustments are needed.

5.3. Recommendation

The Ethiopian government's promotion of overseas employment presents a significant opportunity to reduce domestic unemployment. According MOLS website, this initiative aims to provide diverse employment opportunities for both men and women, spanning various sectors including domestic work, labor worker, driving, and security. This program caters not only to low-skilled workers but also to semi-skilled and highly skilled individuals.

However, rather than prioritizing the number of workers sent abroad, the government should prioritize the quality of these workers. According to TVET providers, some potential migrant workers are not committed to acquire the skill rather participate to get the COC paper and some bypassing or buying the COC rather than participating in the training programs offered by the TVETs. This skills deficiency leads to detrimental consequences, including deportations due to poor performance and disciplinary issues in the destination country.

MOLS data and officials indicate that Ethiopia is not maximizing its potential for remittance inflows from overseas employment. This is attributed to the low wages Ethiopian domestic migrant workers receive abroad due to a lack of skills compared to higher-earning counterparts from countries like the Philippines and India. Consequently, Ethiopia should prioritize providing well-skilled and trained migrant workers instead of sending unskilled, low-wage labor.

The government must enhance information dissemination to the lowest administrative levels (woredas) across the nation, including rural areas where majority domestic migrant workers are found. This will reduce potential migrants' reliance on brokers for information and guidance. Additionally, Private Overseas Employment Agencies (POEAs) should establish offices in rural regions, where the majority of potential migrant workers reside. Moreover, expanding medical examination centers for overseas potential migrant workers is important to reduce the burden on those who must travel to Addis Ababa.

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Appendix 1

Consent form

Hello, my name is Beakal Kora. I am a student at Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work. I am doing a research study on "Exploring the Pre-Departure Process of Ethiopian Female Youth Domestic Workers for Labor Migration to the Middle East Countries." I am doing this study by myself as a fulfillment of my master's program in social work.

I will be asking you some questions related to the pre-departure process for labor migration, starting with how you recruit migrant workers up to their departure (leaving their origin). The whole of the interview will only last about an hour or less, and you are entirely free not to participate in the study if you are not willing to participate.

You may pick a place, date, and time for the interview; just make sure it is a bit quiet so that we can hear each other without significant disturbance. I can assure you that there are no foreseen dangers associated with your participation in this study; it is only for educational purposes.

After I collect the data, I will keep it only for my personal use and for study purposes. Until the data is processed, I will keep it with me, and I will be the only person who has access to your data. After the completion of the study, only researchers will have access to the study document. Through it all, I will respect the confidentiality of the data, including your name, which will be concealed and codified. Moreover, the overseas employment recruiting agencies Names will not be mentioned in the research paper.

I really appreciate your cooperation. I want to remind you that your response will be of great help for the study. Moreover, signing this consent form indicates that you have read it (or have had it read to you), that your questions have been answered to your satisfaction, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this document.

Beakal Kora

Research Participant

Signature

Signature.....

Date

Date.....

Annex 2

Interview-guiding questions on the pre-departure process for labor migration.

1. In-Depth Interview with Potential Labor Migrants

Interview-guiding questions for labor migrants.

Process record

Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	
Interview start time	
Interview end time	

Background information

Age_____ Sex_____ Place of Birth_____ ethnic group____ Religion_____ Marital status:
_____ Educational status: _____ Occupation before departure: _____ Work
Experience: _____.

I. Ways of gathering information about the opportunities, processes, and social network of migrants
in the pre-departure process for labor migration.

1. Would you tell me about your sources of information related to labor migration?
2. How do you gather information in order to start your process for labor migration?
3. How important is the role of social networks in the pre-departure phase? (Especially its impact on decision-making and preparations for migration)
4. How do you think the availability of information can help your pre-departure process?

5. How do you think access to resources within a migrant worker's network can help your pre-departure process?
6. What challenges do you face in gathering information and building up social networks for labor migration in the pre-departure process?
7. How did you filter the validity of information you gather related to labor migration?

III. Main pre-departure processes for labor migration.

1. Can you give me an overview of the main steps involved in the pre-departure processes for labor migration?
2. What documents are typically required from those of you seeking to migrate to the Middle East? Could you provide some examples?
3. How do you obtain these required documents?
4. What are the key recruitments that those potential labor migrants, like you, are supposed to fulfill to best suit the selection process by the agencies?
5. How do you see the works of the recruiting agencies in terms of ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability in the recruitment process?
6. What benefits do you get from using recruiting agencies for labor migration?
7. By Who and what expenses are covered during the process of oversea employment
8. Are there any specific medical tests or health screenings that applicants of labor migration must undergo before departure? If so, what are they, and why are they necessary?
9. What challenges have you faced in the recruitment process and related to the role of the recruiting agencies and other stakeholders in the pre-departure process for labor migration?
10. What are the contents of the contract agreement and for how long is the contract?

VI. Training and orientation programs

1. Are there any training or orientation programs provided to the potential migrant workers before departure?
2. What are the training and orientation programs given at the pre-departure stage?
3. What benefits did you get from the training and orientation programs during the pre-departure phase?
4. What challenges did you face during the training and orientation programs?
5. How do the training programs and orientations address cultural, language, and other potential challenges that migrant workers may encounter in their destination countries?
6. What do you think about the quality of the training and orientation process? Are you satisfied with the program, and what other initiatives should be added to help you cope up with your overseas employment?

V. Identify the involved actors and their roles in the process of pre-departure.

1. Can you describe the main actors or entities involved in the pre-departure process for labor migration?
2. What are the roles and responsibilities of each actor?
3. Are you satisfied with the roles and responsibilities of each actor?
4. Are local brokers or other bodies involved in the pre-departure process other than recruiting agencies and government institutions? If there is, what is their role?

VI. Challenges faced by potential migrant workers in the pre-departure process for a labor migration.

1. What challenges do you face in the pre-departure stage of information gathering?

2. What challenges do you face in terms of organizing and providing your documents for recruitment?
3. What challenges do you face during the recruitment process?
4. What challenges do you face during the training and orientation program?
5. In generally what problems have you faced during the pre-departure process for labor migration
6. is there anything you would like to add regarding the pre-departure process for labor migration?

2. Key informant Interview with POEAs

Interview-guiding Questions for private oversea employment Recruiting Agencies (POEAs)

I. mission and objective

1. What is the mission of your agency?
2. What are the goals of the agency?
3. License issues (how did you get your license and why your choses those destinations).
4. Policies and visions

I. Ways of providing information to migrant workers.

1. How do you provide information to migrants about overseas employment?
2. What do you think about the dissemination and promotion of false information regarding overseas employment?
3. Is there any national policy or legal framework in which the organizational function of your agency has been grounded?

4. How do you ensure that accurate information is provided to promote ethical labor migration?

II. Pre-departure processes for labor migration (recruitment, preparation, and deployment)

1. How do you recruit labor migrants?
2. Would you please tell me a little more about the procedures you apply in handling the recruitment process?
3. What are the requirements potential applicants for labor migration are supposed to provide?
4. Explain the main processes of recruitment, preparation, and deployment for labor migration in the pre-departure process.
5. What are the roles your agency plays in the pre-departure phase of labor migration?
6. How do you ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in the recruitment process for your clients?
7. What benefits can migrant workers gain POEAs for their overseas employment or labor migration?
8. How do you measure their skill and ability?
9. Is there any working framework that governs the works of those actors involved in the pre-departure process?

III. Training and orientation programs.

1. How do you ensure that the candidates you recruit are well-prepared for their overseas employment, both in terms of skills and cultural adaptation?
2. What specific measures does your agency take to provide pre-departure training and orientation to the selected candidates?

3. Can you describe any initiatives or programs your agency has implemented to educate and inform migrant workers about their rights, responsibilities, and potential risks associated with labor migration?
4. What steps does your agency take to facilitate the integration of migrant workers into their new work environments and host communities during the pre-departure phase?
5. Is there any follow up mechanism that your agency uses in the post-employment period to track the safety and whereabouts of the oversea workers?

IV. Identify the involved actors and their roles in the process of pre-departure.

1. Who do you think are the main actors involved in the pre-departure process?
2. What do you expect from the government in helping you in this process?
3. What do you expect from the migrant workers?
4. Can you explain their roles and responsibilities in the pre-departure process?
5. What do you think are the pros and cons of those involved actors?
6. What is your working relationship with the government exclusively with regard to recruiting and deploying labor migrants?

V. Challenges faced by recruiting agencies in the pre-departure process for a labor migration.

1. What are the main challenges faced by recruiting agencies in the pre-departure process, starting from recruiting migrant workers up to their deployment?
2. Are there any challenges agencies face due to government institutions and regulations?
3. Is there anything you want to add related to challenges in the pre-departure process for labor migration?
4. Do you have any suggestion as a way forward to address the challenges?

3. In-Depth Interview with POEAs Government Institutions and Officials on the Pre-Departure Process for Labor Migration.

Interview-guiding Questions for Government Institutions and Officials

Process record

Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	
Interview start time	
Interview end time	

Interview-guiding questions for the minister of labor and skill.

I. Introduction

1. What are the mission and objective of minister of labor and skill on oversea employment (what is the purpose of oversea employment?)
2. What are the new reform of oversea employment by the minister of labor and skill?
3. Is there any legal framework that govern the process of overseas employment (law, policy or proclamation)? What are the legal frameworks in oversea employment?
4. Does MOLS have a bilateral agreement with other destination countries? What contains do they have related to overseas employment? (specifically Saudi Arabia).
5. How many agencies are currently in Ethiopia including in Addis Ababa and other regional states?
6. Based on current information how many migrant workers are working in the Middle East as a domestic workers and also specifically in Saudi Arabia?

7. Why are most foreign employment agencies concentrated in Addis Ababa or in the cities?

What is the problem of agencies working in the countryside or region?

II. Ways of providing information of labor migration at the pre-departure phase.

1. How does the institution provide information to the citizen about oversea employment?
2. How does the institution regulate and prevent the dissemination of fake news or false information regarding overseas employment?
3. What is the institution doing in order to have safe and descent flow of labor migration?
(oversea employment)

II. Pre-departure processes for labor migration (recruitment, preparation, and deployment)

1. What is the main pre-departure process for labor migration, according to government institutions? (how are they recruited, prepared and deployed)
2. What documents are required from the migrant workers and the agency in the process of oversea employment?
3. Is there any ethical standard that governed the process of oversea employment? (related to agencies and oversea job seekers)
4. How do you ensure that recruitment agencies and employers adhere to ethical standards and comply with the laws and regulations governing labor migration during the pre-departure phase (recruiting, preparation and deployment), How do you control agencies?
5. What measures do the MOLS take to protect the rights and welfare of migrant workers during the pre-departure phase (particularly during recruitment, preparation and deployment)?

6. How the Government does have implemented to enhance the transparency and fairness of the pre-departure process for labor migration?
7. How does the government collaborate with other stakeholders, such as recruitment agencies, civil society organizations, and destination countries, to improve the pre-departure process and safeguard the interests of migrant workers?
8. What thing is the institution doing in order to abolish unethical work in overseas employment?

III. Identify the involved actors and their roles in the process of pre-departure.

1. Who do you think are the main actors involved in the pre-departure process?
2. What are the roles of each actor (e.g. What is the role and responsibility of MOLS, agencies, migrant workers and if there are local brokers.)?

2.2 questions related to brokers

- What do you think are the influence of brokers on the overseas employment at the pre-departure stage?
- Are there any advantages or disadvantages of brokers in participating in the overseas employment process at the pre-departure stage?
- If brokers have bad influences in the process what is the institution doing in order to reduce the participation of brokers in the overseas employment?

3. What do you think are the pros and cons of having those actors involved in this process?

IV. Challenges faced by the government in the pre-departure process for a labor migration.

1. What are the main challenges faced by the government organization in the pre-departure process?
2. What are the challenges that the government faces from migrant workers?
3. What are the challenges that the government face from Agencies?
4. What are the challenges that the government face from broker?
5. What are the challenges that the government faces from other bodies?
6. In order to solving those challenges what is the institution doing to solve those challenges?

Contemporary issue question

1. Why COC centers Stopped giving COC certificate?
2. What is the issue related to the medical examination (most agencies complains that the minister of health is rejecting the worker medical examination after it is approved or passed by hospitals)?
3. What is the issues with the new updated version 2 of E-LMIS (most agencies are complain about the system) and also that the system is going to be the one who give or disturber potential migrants workers to the agencies?
4. Doesn't it affect the migrant worker in terms of finding where the agency is located and the agencies they never heard or know (we can see it related to the role of social network)?

Questions related to E-LMIS

- 1 what is E-LMIS?
2. When did the system was created and why it was needed to create the system?
3. What system does oversea employment process used to use before E-LMIS system?

4. so far what does the system contribute in oversea employment process?
 5. What are the procedure in applying at E-LMIS?
 - .6. what challenges does E-LMIS faced so far in the process of oversea employment?
 7. Is the system inter link with other institutions like immigration, airports, banks, insurance, embassy COC center, medical institution and other bodies or institution?
- Do you any suggest to add?

4. key informant Interview with TVET on the Pre-Departure Process for Labor Migration.

Interview-guiding Questions for TVET

1. What kind of trainings and orientation does MOLS give to potential domestic worker migrants?
2. For how many days/ months are these training is providing?
3. By whom are the trainings are being given?
4. What things does the trainings include?
5. Do you think that this training can make the migrant worker professional to worker overseas?
6. Do the trainings have a services fee?
7. How does government ensure that the migrant workers receive adequate and enough pre-departure training and orientation to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for their overseas employment?

8. How does the institution monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the pre-departure process in terms of preparing migrant workers for their overseas employment and mitigating potential risks or challenges they may face?