



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

**Access to Farmland and Rural Women Livelihood: The Case
of Enemay *Woreda*, East Gojjam Administrative Zone**

By: Meaza Demse

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Social Anthropology
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Degree of Master
of Arts in Social Anthropology**

**September, 2022
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANRS	Amhara National Regional State
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHH	Female Household Head
GAD	Gender and Development
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HH	House Hold
LUAC	Land Use Administration Commission
LUAD	Land Use Administration Desk
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PA	Peasant Associations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
WAD	Women and Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development

GLOSSARY

<i>Abshilo</i>	A local term for leavened flat-bread prepared from barley dough used as local alcoholic beverages
<i>Areke</i>	A distilled local alcoholic beverage made from cereal grains
<i>Belg</i>	[lit. short rain season] A local name given to February to May rainy season
<i>Bikel</i>	[lit. malt] The local name of germinated barley which is main ingredient of alcoholic beverages
<i>Derg</i>	[lit. committee] The name known as a committee of the armed forces, and police, that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991
<i>Derekot</i>	The flour of roasted and grinding grain
<i>Ekub</i>	A traditional means of savings and credit association
<i>Gemed</i>	A local measurement of land, where four <i>Gemed</i> equals to one hectare
<i>Gesho</i>	[<i>Rhamnus prinoides</i>] The shiny leave buckthorn, which is important ingredient for local alcoholic beverages
<i>Gotte</i>	Sub-division of kebele
<i>Gult</i>	An administrative right of landholding during emperor Haileselesie
<i>Idir</i>	A traditional association commonly known for life insurance
<i>Kebele</i>	The smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia lowest from the district/ <i>Woreda</i>
<i>Kiremt</i>	[lit. longest rainfall season] The name referred to June–December rainy season
<i>Macha</i>	A dowry that is offered by bride in terms of money, item or land
<i>Moffer</i>	[lit. Beam] A traditional tools to cultivate the land made from woods and iron

<i>Nuzaze</i>	[lit. testament] The name given to the person transfer the property through orally before passed away
<i>Rist</i>	Landholding right by lineage during emperor Haileselassie
<i>Senbate</i>	A kind of social organization for religious ceremony
<i>Takarcham</i>	When young males come on to the lands of the parents' of the daughters'
<i>Teff</i>	[<i>Eragrostis tef</i>] Widely used in Ethiopia to make staple food (<i>injera</i>)
<i>Tej</i>	A traditional alcoholic beverage prepared from honey and buckthorn
<i>Tella</i>	A traditional alcoholic beverage made from different cereal crop
<i>Tezkar</i>	Commemoration of passed away person by religious services and banquet
<i>Timad</i>	The measurement of land mainly known as in Amhara region of Ethiopia, where four <i>timad</i> is equal to one hectare
<i>Woreda</i>	A local government equal to a district
<i>Zikirt</i>	The tradition of Ethiopian Orthodox Church in which people invites and feed in the name of God and saints.

ABSTRACT

This study deals with the rural women livelihood related to socio-cultural factors undermine social status, power, and decision making in access to farmland in Enemay Woreda, East Gojjam Zone. The study employed mixed method. In carrying out the study, in-depth interview, key informant, focus group discussions (qualitative methods), and household survey (quantitative methods) were employed. Secondary data were collected from secondary sources such as research articles, unpublished document, and books. A total of twenty-eight participants participated in the qualitative study including woreda and kebele officials. In addition, household survey questionnaire was administered to 141 women to collect quantitative data. Qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed based on objective of the study. The results obtained from the study show that farmland is an invaluable resource for women livelihood. During EPRDF land re-distribution (1996/7), most of women obtained a farmland but limited control over resources because their resources usually controlled by husbands. Due to the patriarchal attitudes of the community, men are decision makers, controlled and managed the resource of household, and women are dominated by husband. Lack of educational status of women, deprives their legal rights of manage and control over their resources. Women were restricted to plough their farmland by local community and they forced to give sharecroppers to obtain some production for livelihood. Particularly, FHHs could not manage the households since obtained small production from sharecroppers. They forced to find works for survival and obtain daily consumption such as selling traditional alcoholic beverages, daily laborer, and removing weeds. Thereby, the livelihood of FHHs has a painful living condition. Furthermore, women's health condition is essential to attain income for their livelihood. However, their health condition status low being laborious worker. In general, gender-based discrimination and patriarchal attitudes of the community affected women's access and control over farmland to their livelihood and health condition.

Keywords: Farmland, Rural women, Livelihood, Gender discrimination, Patriarchy

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Equitable gender-based relations vis-à-vis access to and control over resources are critical for women. For the reason that gender roles and socio-cultural norms have to be responsible for ensuring household food security in their community (Guday and Eskinder, 2013). A study by Hussen (2014) revealed that, in Ethiopia, women are the most marginalized in accessing and controlling rural land due to negative attitudes and stereotypes that deny women's land rights and property. In most societies, women are often deprived of customary rights to inherit and control land in marriage. If a marriage breaks down, the land generally becomes the property of their husband. He further argued that land is the main resource for survival and livelihood of both women and men in Ethiopia. Thus, the government has provided legal protection for women's right to hold and control over the land. Most of all, women residing in rural Ethiopia are among the most disadvantaged groups; they are illiterate, poor and face insurmountable challenges because of society's discrimination against women (Hussen, 2014).

Historically, the land tenure system in Ethiopia has passed through numerous reforms. Land relations in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia were both feudal and patriarchal, mediated through heredity and proximity to the crown or church. During the feudal era, Ethiopian women had no access to land or their own rights, and the land tenure system was based on state ownership of land-tenant lord relations. Hadera (2002) argues that women who had the right of inheritance in some parts of the country were discriminated against due to patriarchal socio-cultural factors.

Following the 1974 revolution, the *Derg* (military rule from 1974 to 1991) regime, which took over power, nationalized all rural land and distributed it to peasants. The *Derg* constitution and legislation were progressive, but women did not benefit on equal terms with men since the distribution was focused on household and gender-based practice. Most married women had no control over land, and their decision-making role was minimal. Only female-headed households (FHHs) were able to get access to land and be registered. However, such women received marginal land compared to their male counterparts. In addition, FHHs were also disadvantaged

because they lacked labor and traction resources and, therefore, could not benefit from the land they had access to (Hadera, 2002). The land reform did not consider the gender division of labor in agriculture. This problem was made severe by a lack of productive labor to cultivate the land (Birtukan, 2016). After the downfall of the *Derg* regime, the EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front) government tries to create beneficial environment for women's access to land.

Both married and unmarried women, despite differences in status, could access land. Besides, the introduction of land certificates significantly reduced land disputes and increased the status of women in society. However, women remained disadvantaged in different circumstances. Gender equality has not been achieved, and women do not enjoy equal rights with men in access to land. There is a significant problem in terms of the level of women's control over land. Access and control over land is largely determined by socio-cultural norms, which have a profound impact on gender relations (Almaz, 2007).

Similarly, in *Enemay Woreda*, where women are under pressure to exercise their rights to access and control over the land due to socio-cultural norms and their low status. Furthermore, women who have access to land are not using their rights properly because they produce too much labor force for the household and other productive activities. Lack of oxen, agricultural fertilizers, and labor is also another barrier to cultivate their farmland effectively. Thereby, women are forced to rent land or crop sharing agreements to support their livelihood due to they do not have control over it. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to explore and examine women's livelihood in relation to access to farmland in *Enemay Woreda*, East Gojjam Administrative Zone of Amhara Regional State. It also tried to examine the impact of customary practices on women's land right in order to provide in-depth account of gender inequality in land rights.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Land is one of the most fundamental resources to women's livelihoods, economic empowerment, and their struggle for equality. However, due to economic, legal, social, and cultural factors, women's access, control, and transfer of land is weaker compared to those of men (Teshome, 2015). Women's land rights issues have become serious in developing countries where land is a significant asset for subsistence for most people. Access to and control over land and its products is essential to women since they are responsible for guaranteeing family food security due to

gender-assigned roles in their community (Almaz, 2007). Access to land is a focal issue since it directly affects the livelihood and security of people, predominantly in rural areas.

Land is an invaluable source of security against poverty across the developing world. Unequal rights to land put women at a disadvantage, perpetuate poverty, and entrench gender inequality in Africa. Gender has become a critical issue in women's land rights; thus, there is a direct relationship between accessing land resources, having secured land rights, achieving food security, and overcoming poverty (Gashaw, 2015). Rural women, specifically, are liable for a large portion of the world's food production and produce somewhere in the range of 60–80% of the food in most developing countries. Women produce up to 80% of basic foodstuffs in Sub-Saharan Africa. Rural women in developing countries are almost exclusively responsible for storing, handling, stocking, marketing, and processing food (FAO, 2002).

Like many African countries, Ethiopian women are facing multiple gender inequalities because of their critical gender role. In rural areas, women face the most difficult challenges of obtaining and controlling land, which aggravates poverty and food insecurity. Most Ethiopia's rural women spend their time working in the house. Furthermore, they are engaged in almost all agricultural activities, from land preparation to harvest time (Fenet and Alemayehu, 2019). Despite the significant contribution to the economy, due to customary bias, women are prohibited from exercising their statutory land use rights (Teshome, 2015).

In addition, customary laws of inheritance and marriage determine a woman's relationship to land in the Amhara region. Following marriage, a woman is expected to move to her husband's home, giving her access only to marital land. Widowed or divorced women may have access to land. Even though there is equal access for women to land rights in the current land policy, there is a notable difference in the usage of land due to the division of labor between women and men. In this region, it is common practice for FHHs who do not have grown sons or male family members to enter into agreements for sharecropping or land rent because of the woman's gender role. Thus, it limits women's choice of land use and they are often under pressure from the traditional arbitrator to sharecrop their land with their ex-husband. In addition to the customary laws that deny women access to land, most women are unfamiliar with legal procedures, and therefore, they are under pressure to remain governed by customary norms and to accept fewer benefits than they are formally entitled to (Askale, 2005).

The issue of accessing farmland by women in Ethiopian context has been studied by different researchers including, Almaz (2007), Birtukan (2016), Askale (2005), and Teshome (2015). A study by Birtukan (2016) in East Gojjam emphasized that there is a significant problem towards women's control over farmland due to lack of knowledge about their legal land use right. According to Teshome (2015), because of customary bias women are prohibited from exercising their land use right. Askale (2005), also reveals that customary law of inheritance, marriage, and division of labor affects women's land use right in Amhara region. As Almaz (2007) stated, access to land and control over it essential since women are responsible for guaranteeing family food security due to gender assigned roles in their community and it is largely determined by socio-cultural norms. Previously, researchers have studied customary laws that affects women farmland use right and considering legal procedures increases the status of women. However, the effect of lack of accessing farmland on the entire livelihood has not been adequately studied. Most of the previous studies have not adequately described the lived experiences of rural women related with the factors which affects land use right and devastating consequence and sufferings of limited access to farmland. Furthermore, there is limited anthropological research conducted on all aspects of women's access to farmland, control over it, and lived experiences, particularly in Enemay *Woreda*. The intention of this study, therefore, is to fill the research gap by explore the lived experiences of rural women related to access to farmland.

1.3. Objective of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study was to explore the socio-cultural factors which undermine women's social status, power, and decision making to access farmland and their livelihood experiences in Enemay *Woreda*.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

Based on the above general objective of the study have following specific objectives;

- To examine gender roles in the household and productive activities;
- To examine challenges of women in their struggle to get access to farmland;
- To explore the impacts of customary laws on access to farmland practices;
- To assess the experiences of women livelihood in relation with farmland access.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The study may add to existing literature and help other researchers who intended to conduct research on related topics and areas. Rural Land Administration Office, Land Use Administration Commission, Land Use Administration Desk, Women's Affairs Office, and Kebele Administration Office may use it in addition to its contribution to the academic community sphere to design training to enhance women's access to and ownership of land. The study also demonstrated the impacts on women's livelihoods of equal access to, control, and use of land.

Furthermore, the study provides up-to-date information on women's access to farmland, which can be used to re-assess land policy formulation, implementation, and revision. In addition, the findings of this study may be useful in development plans, and policymakers to become more aware of gender issues, particularly in relation to the condition of rural FHHs, when dealing with access to farmland and rural sustainable livelihood.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This research was limited to *Enemy Woreda* (which include two *kebeles*) located in East Gojjam, Amhara regional state. *Enemy Woreda* has 34 *kebeles*, however, due to time and other resource constraints it was impossible to conduct the study on all 34 *kebeles* of the *Woreda*. The study was also limited to explore rural women's access to and control over farmland, as well as the reasons for their discrimination in gaining access to valuable resource, and their livelihood experiences and survival strategies.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

This research was conducted during the outbreak of a global pandemic (COVID-19), national election and conflict. Due to the government's prohibition on social gatherings following the outbreak of COVID-19, it was difficult to collect data in the study area. In addition, the national election caused delay to conduct research and get research permit from study area. Furthermore, conflict in the Northern part of the country resulted fear among research participant to give information. The above-mentioned issue had a negative impact on the data collection process.

1.7. Organization of the Study

This thesis constitutes five chapters, the first chapter comprised study's background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance, scope, limitations and organization of the

paper. In the second chapter a review of related literature to the issue under study are thoroughly reviewed and presented. On the third chapter research methodology, research design, sources of data and data collection methods, sampling techniques, method of analysis ethical consideration and field personal experience are presented. The fourth chapter presents the findings and analysis of the study, and the last chapter deals with conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter presents the review of related literature. It begins with the concept of access to land, and historical overview of access to land in Ethiopia, history of land registration and certification related with women's right is an important topic related to access to farmland and rural women livelihood. Then it proceeds to other important issues: access to farmland and women livelihood and theoretical framework of the study.

2.1. Concept of Access to Land

Access to land is a process in which people, individually or collectively, use the rights and opportunities to own and use land. This is primarily for production purposes and other economic and social activities, temporarily or permanently. This process includes participation in formal and informal land access through relatives and social networks, transfer of land rights to inheritance and family, and control of land and landholdings by government and other authorities (Julian, 2006).

According to FAO (2002), access to land is governed by land tenure systems. Land tenure is also defined as legal or culturally, the relationship between people, either individually or collectively, in terms of land. Both legal and customary laws governed the ownership of land in many communities. Conflicts between customary norms and formal laws are common in the case of land rights. In rural areas, customary norms are more likely to exist. National laws that provide equal access to national resources are critical for gender equality. However, these rights are assumed to be considered and accepted by the local community. Likewise, acceptance is primarily enhanced by the involvement of the local community in the design and implementation process.

Farmland in Ethiopia is an invaluable resource for rural livelihood development, and most of the farmland is given to agricultural people. Access to farmland refers to a variety of methods, of which purchase, rent, and inheritance are the major ones.

2.1.1. Historical Overview of Access to Land in Ethiopia

Land is a key political, social, and economic resource in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia's history, the struggle for control of the land has played a significant role. The land tenure system and policy of the three regimes (pre-1975, *Derg* from 1975 to 1991, and EPRDF after 1991) differ. Ethiopia's pre-1975 land tenure system was extremely complex and varied. It varies greatly between Northern and Southern parts of the country. In the Northern part of the country, the main form of land ownership was a form of communal tenure known as "*rist*". In the Eastern and Western parts of the country, where Oromia National Regional State is the main form of land tenure, it was known as "*gult*" (Almaz, 2007).

Rist is the right to hereditary, inalienable, and inviolable. Landowners cannot sell their shares outside of their families. The majority of farmers in Ethiopia's northern highlands owned at least one *rist* land. Other types of land tenure are called "*gult*" and they are owned by the emperor or by governors who are authorized to provide land. The *Gult* landowners collected taxes from the farmers until 1974 and took labor from the farmers as payment. This means *gult* rights were a common form of compensation for an official. It was an important tool for the regime to control the farmers through the leaders who held such rights, including the rights granted to members of the dignities relations and church systems (Berhanu and Fayera, 2005).

In the late 1960's the slogan "*Land to the Tiller*" was a political question that sought to stop exploitation of farmers by a few landlords, especially in the Southern part of the country. The social, economic, and political crisis experienced in the country during the reign of Haile Selassie led to the uprising. Finally, after the fall of the regime in 1974, this imperial land tenure system ended (Berhanu and Fayera, 2005). As Dessalegn (1984) pointed out, land reform in 1974 has been criticized for being unequal, inefficient, and a major obstacle to the agricultural sector and the country's overall development.

The *Derg* government issued a proclamation for rural land. The government took control of all rural land, removed land tenants and private ownership of land, and declared it a national asset. The proclamation gave every peasant family right to own up to ten hectares of land. It also prohibited the transfer of any interest in land through sale, rent, or other means. The purpose of

the *Derg* land reform was to address rural land issues in the feudal system by distributing rural land among farmers and providing access to land to the peasantry (Dessaiegn, 2005).

During 1991, EPRDF overthrew the *Derg* government. Land policy is left out of the constitution by the government. The EPRDF government has decided to adopt a free market economy, but land remains public property. As stated in Article 40 of the 1995 constitution, “*The right to own of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the state and the people of Ethiopia;*” affirming that “*Land is a common property of the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia and may not be sold or exchanged.*” If land is needed for public use, the holders must vacate the land in compensation for any investment in the properties, including trees (Berhanu and Fayera, 2005). Besides, women are also given equal rights to use, transfer, control, and inherit land.

2.1.2. History of Land Registration and Certification Related with Women’s Right

Historical records show that land registration began in Ethiopia a hundred years ago, during the reign of Emperor Menelik. The emperor issued a proclamation regarding land registration in the country and ordered cadastral surveys in Addis Ababa. The map showing the boundaries of landowners was issued in Addis Ababa. During the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration was established to create a free tenure system. Until 1974, the ministry worked with rural mapping agency to measure and register rural land. In addition, a land market system was established during the reign of Haile Selassie (Almaz, 2007).

The 1975 *Derg* rural land reform gave a mandate to the newly established Peasant Associations (PAs) to register land and set boundaries in their respective areas. The land was registered in the names of PA members who were entitled to have use rights, and the registry was used for the purpose of tax collection. Land users do not hold any legal documents on their landholdings except the receipt they get upon tax payment (Almaz, 2007).

According to Birtukan (2016), the land certificate program was started in 2003. In this case, the land certificate contains the names of the husband and wife as well as the names of all the plots and family members including monogamous married couples and their children. The certificate’s receipt must be signed by both the husband and wife. The land certificate recognizes women’s

rights when land is transferred through inheritance, renting, or gifting. It also affirmed women's right to get an equal share of the land during a divorce.

This provision has been implemented by registering land as a common property and providing a certificate of co-ownership. Hence, many women have secured landholdings with their husbands or individually. The current land registration and certification process guarantees tenure security. Land registration and certification will reduce land disputes (Assefa, 2010). Single women, disturbed by the lack of a land certificate, are now free from boundary disputes because the plot is clearly on a land certificate. The EPRDF regime's land policies and laws protect women's rights on land. The certificate also reduces divorce rates at the household level (Birtukan, 2016).

Although there were a few divorced men and women before the certification of land, after land certification, there was some degree of tolerance among men and women. However, policies and laws are designed to achieve gender equality. Though, they have not been able to change the traditional and customary laws that have been in place in society. Customary practices, which are considered the dominant factor in the use and management of family resources, cannot change the status of men as owners in the family. This kind of perception is a constant cause of conflict between husband and wife. Therefore, there is still a gap between land ownership and the enjoyment of its benefits. Some women are involved in numerous land disputes and have difficulties controlling and legalizing their land rights (Birtukan, 2016).

As Dessalegn (2009) noted land registration and certification for various reasons did not increase women's equal right to use land. Married women were able to cultivate their land with their husbands, but female-headed households had a significant impact on access to labor, cattle, social and economic resources, as well as family support. Cultural barriers to the farming system (ox-plough) and sowing have affected women's rights on the land, particularly FHHs (Askale, 2005). Thus, FHHs either contract their farmland for cash or exchange their oxen for labor in order to produce agricultural products.

According to the study undertaken by Ojulu (2015), in Gambella, FHHs are poor, especially those who seek help for labor on farms for activities like sowing and ploughing. Consequently, their land is often not ploughed, sown, or harvested in time. Over time, FHHs are in dire need of agricultural resources, and sometimes they have to rent out their land to rent-seekers to obtain a small crop. The lack of male labor causes for many households to fall into poverty, which the farming system requires.

2.2. Access to Farmland and Women Livelihood

According to empirical studies in Africa, farmland is a critical resource for rural women in order to survive and sustain their agricultural livelihoods. Most African people live in rural areas, and they rely on agricultural production as a source of income and household consumption. African countries' economies also rely on the export of agricultural products. In most parts of Africa, women do not have direct access to farmland; they become part of the family or clan holding through marriage and farm it. In particular, widow women get direct access to farmland, though customary and traditional systems affect them in African countries. A case study by Millicent (2013) shows that in Egypt and Libya, women's farmland is managed by male relatives. In Somalia, land belongs to sons, and mothers farm on their sons' land.

In sub-Saharan Africa, women have impediments to accessing farmland due to customary and traditional tenure systems and the implementation of new policies and laws that victimize them. Rural women have played an important role in economic development by contributing 60–80% of the agricultural labor force and managing households, natural resources, and food production. Individuals, on the other hand, own less than 1% of the land. Furthermore, women are farmers, food producers, and providers, but they are frequently overlooked in African tradition, where men are household heads. Rural women are also in sub-Saharan Africa working on household or communal farmland, but they could not decide on farmland (Naadira, 2012).

In Ethiopia, as Birtukan (2016) stated, during the *Derg* period, women had a major role in agricultural productivity that contributed about 40–60% of agricultural labor; however, most of the time, women suffered due to unequal access to farmland. Prior to 1974, women could inherit *rist* land from their parents or deceased husbands. At this time, women's rights were highly subjected to land rights by birth or marital. After the overthrow of the monarchy in 1974, the

Derg regime shifted to a radical nationwide program of nationalization of rural land. According to Hadera (2002), the 1975 proclamation provided public ownership of rural land.

The 1975 land reform granted all peasants and tenants the right to possess and till the land that was formerly farmed and freed from any manipulation by the landlords (Daniel, 2012). As Hadera (2002) studied, after the slogan “*land to the tiller*” a gender-sensitive recognition was made, which recognized the equal rights of both women and men to acquire rural land under proclamation No. 31/1975. Similarly, the government stated for land, “*Without differentiation of sexes, any person who is willing to personally cultivate the land shall be allotted rural land sufficient for his maintenance and that of his family.*” Eventually, the 1975 land policy and proclamations were poorly implemented, particularly the protection of women’s land rights during a divorce and the death of a husband (Birtukan, 2016).

After the overthrow of the *Derg* regime from power in 1991, the 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) constitution declared land to be the property of the state and the people of Ethiopia. According to Anteneh (2008), the proclamation was put into practice in each region of the country. The aim was to change women’s discrimination. The government has initiated too many strategic activities to ensure gender equality and promote women’s land possession rights. FDRE constitution under Article 4 (4) stated that: “*The land administration law of the regions shall confirm the equal rights of women in respect of the use, administration, and control of land as well as in respect of transferring and bequeathing holding rights.*” According to Emily (1999), unfortunately, fair land distribution systems were not in place and women held a rather harder position with regard to land access. This implies that it exacerbated women’s inadequate access to other resources.

In various parts of Ethiopia, customary land distribution systems are pervasive. Customary law limits women’s ownership of land. Besides, if women have the right to inherit land from their families, their rights are much less than those of men. A study conducted by UNECA (1998, cited in Emily, 1999) shows that in some areas of the Oromia region, if a man asks for a divorce, women have to give a share of the land in the divorce agreement. The man is forced to pay her dowry. In addition, if a woman requests a divorce, she would be required to relinquish any claim on the land and pay compensation for the divorce. However, if a man seeks a divorce, instead of

asking for one, he makes the woman sad. She forced to seek a divorce. As a result, she could lose assets as well as must make compensation pay.

In the Amhara region, land is distributed after the design of the constitution by the local *kebele* administration to any individual woman over 18 years old or a man over 24 years old (Birtukan, 2016). In this distribution, Zenebwork and Yared (2000) study revealed that former *Derg* bureaucrats took fertile and wet land for themselves in the 1975 land distribution. Other landless farmers, FHHs, married and unmarried women with children, and other scarce land households received at least four *timads* (equal to one hectare) of land depending on the availability of land in the rural *kebele*.

Local elders argued that in the distribution of land, cultural assumptions and community insights are widespread, and thereby women have less than men. In addition, women generally did not know their land rights in divorce settlements and often had inadequate representation (Emily, 1999). According to Birtukan (2016), the first land distribution in Gojjam during the *Derg* period took place three years later, after the 1975 land reform. Although the amendment allows FHHs to have equal access according to their family size, unproductive, swampy, and marginal lands have been allocated by patriarchal social norms, customary practices, and poor legal services. However, since 1991, women's land ownership status has been gradually changing. Despite differences in marital status, all women have the right to land with a certificate in the event of divorce or land dispute. Many rural women face challenges related with access to farmland through statutory or customary laws. Access to farmland is a key resource for rural women and is often highly gendered. There is limited study using a holistic approach to dig out rural women's problems with access to farmland and their livelihoods.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

Gender has become an influential analytical tool in the discourse on women's rights and social and material rights. Gender development challenges and developmental barriers have begun to emerge (Parpart et al., 1989, cited in Almaz, 2007). There have been approaches to women and development since the 1970s, such as Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD).

Women in Development (WID) were the first gender policy approach that focused on meeting practical gender needs. After publication of book *“Women’s Role in Economic Development”* by Ester Boserup, the word “WID” came into use in the early 1970s. Boserup’s insight confirms WID’s role as a powerful advocacy group for women. The approach introduced a conceptual change in development thinking; in the past, women were the main recipients of health and social welfare programs, and WID arguments contributed to women’s economic development as active but unaffected. WID supports women’s empowerment in the economic context by highlighting the economic contribution between men and women in terms of status and power (Ahling, 2018). Though the WID approach improved opportunities for women, it did not address the aspect of power and division of power (Almaz, 2007). Therefore, gender and development programs need to be further transformed.

Women and Development (WAD) was another approach to gender development. It was raised in the 1970s. There is no obvious difference between the two approaches (WID and WAD). WAD argues that focusing only on women’s economic integration supports global inequalities that promote patriarchal interests. Besides, they argue that WAD’s approach to global gender power-sharing and labor systematically undermines women’s labor. However, it does not provide an in-depth study of the relationship between different modes of production, men-superior, and women’s subordination. According to WAD, women’s status is primarily understood in the context of economic and class inequality and will move forward when international structures become more equal. Meanwhile, making fundamental changes in gender-based relationships and carefully designed development strategies are considered the keys to addressing gender inequality at all levels of society (Addison, 2015 and Griffin, 2009; cited in Sangeeta, 2013).

In the 1980s, an alternative approach was developed in the form of Gender and Development (GAD). GAD takes a holistic view of women and development as a starting point; how women view oppression differently, focusing on gender, class, race, and their social or economic context. As a result, GAD’s approach began to integrate gender issues into the design and implementation of development programs. As Almaz (2007) points out, the overall goal of the GAD approach is to empower women. Empowering women is very critical to increase their access to knowledge, resources, and decision-making power to change their affected areas as a way of taking control over their own lives (Parpart et al., 1989).

Similarly, another effective approach was developed, the gender mainstreaming strategy, which aimed to achieve gender equality in development activities. An imperative part of the gender mainstreaming approach is the desire to focus on gender equality in the early stages of the processes, so it has the potential to influence aims, plans, and resource allocation and make real changes in policies and programs (Sivakumar, 2016).

As the ECOSOC (1997) stated, gender mainstreaming is a gender perspective that evaluates the impact on women and men of any planned action, including programs or policies. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to address the concerns and experiences of women and men as an essential measurement of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs to ensure equal access, which means gender equality does exist but does not perpetuate gender inequalities (Sivakumar, 2016). The purpose of gender mainstreaming is not just to eliminate inequalities or reinforce them, because that can have adverse effects on both women and men. It also refers to the analysis of the existing situation in order to identify inequality and formulate policies that aim to correct it and address the resulting strategies (EIGE, 2016).

Women emerged to struggle for equality and change in women's lives, and the result was the birth of feminism. Feminism is a social movement aimed at achieving gender equality in the economic, political, and social spheres (Almaz, 2007). Radical feminism is one of the concepts of feminist theory that has been established in all spheres of society since the social system is based on patriarchy, making women disadvantaged. The root cause of the oppression of women is patriarchal gender relations. Radical feminists are used as a means of power, as is their application in current society. Power is the force that is used to influence another action or, as a matter of fact, the nature of an object or body. In the first sense, it includes the use of physical force and the acquisition or control of access to necessary resources (such as land, food, or water). Radical feminists aim to change the way they use force, and they devise strategies to do so (Ruth, 1990). The main characteristic of this feminist view is that in the study, it is pertinent to reconsider the source of power and the need for oppression, based on complex and natural, and non-essential social factors (Jelena, 2013).

Radical feminist theory emphasizes the distinction between men and women in almost every aspect of life. Radical feminism shows that gender differences in society involve men and

women in different activities and different social interactions (Jaggar, 1983). Radical feminists struggle against the oppression women face and argue that women are governed by gender norms, reproductive obligations, and traditional women's center values (Robb, 2015). Radical feminists also argue that male power is not limited to political and paid employment but extends to private life, which is why traditional power and political concepts are challenged because they are seen as tools of patriarchal dominance (Bryson, 1992). Radical feminism asserted that gender inequality was primarily example of gender oppression in history. In addition, radical feminists argue that gender oppression is inevitable in every woman's life. Oppressive gender roles are deeply rooted in the traditions and ideas of society. Gender in society is the most powerful factor in social structure and cultural control systems, and gender roles continue to be the main form of organizing, controlling, and ultimately oppressing women (Robb, 2015).

Methodologies of radical feminists do not predict extreme methods of changing the patriarchal system. The most significant aspect of these methods is that it requires that individuals be understood, and that members of oppressed groups are encouraged to draw conclusions and make decisions based on their feelings and thoughts, regardless of whether they conform to the patriarchal system or not. Only with this development of individual consciousness can the nature of social interactions contained within the patriarchal system be changed. The "*revolution of ideas*," in which one model of thought is replaced by another, is the only way to break the patriarchal system and establish a social system based on human relations that is not inferior and oppressive. In this way, radical feminists have considered not only women but also men, and their self-affirmation is no longer based on the inferiority of other groups (Marylin, 1985).

In this study, radical feminism is used as a framework and method of analysis. Radical feminism, as seen in theory, methodology, and practice in the agriculture sector, gives a clear picture of the gender aspects of the livelihood system. For the purpose of analyzing the situations in the study area, the method of analyzing access to farmland and socio-economic factors affecting rural women's livelihoods was used.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Method

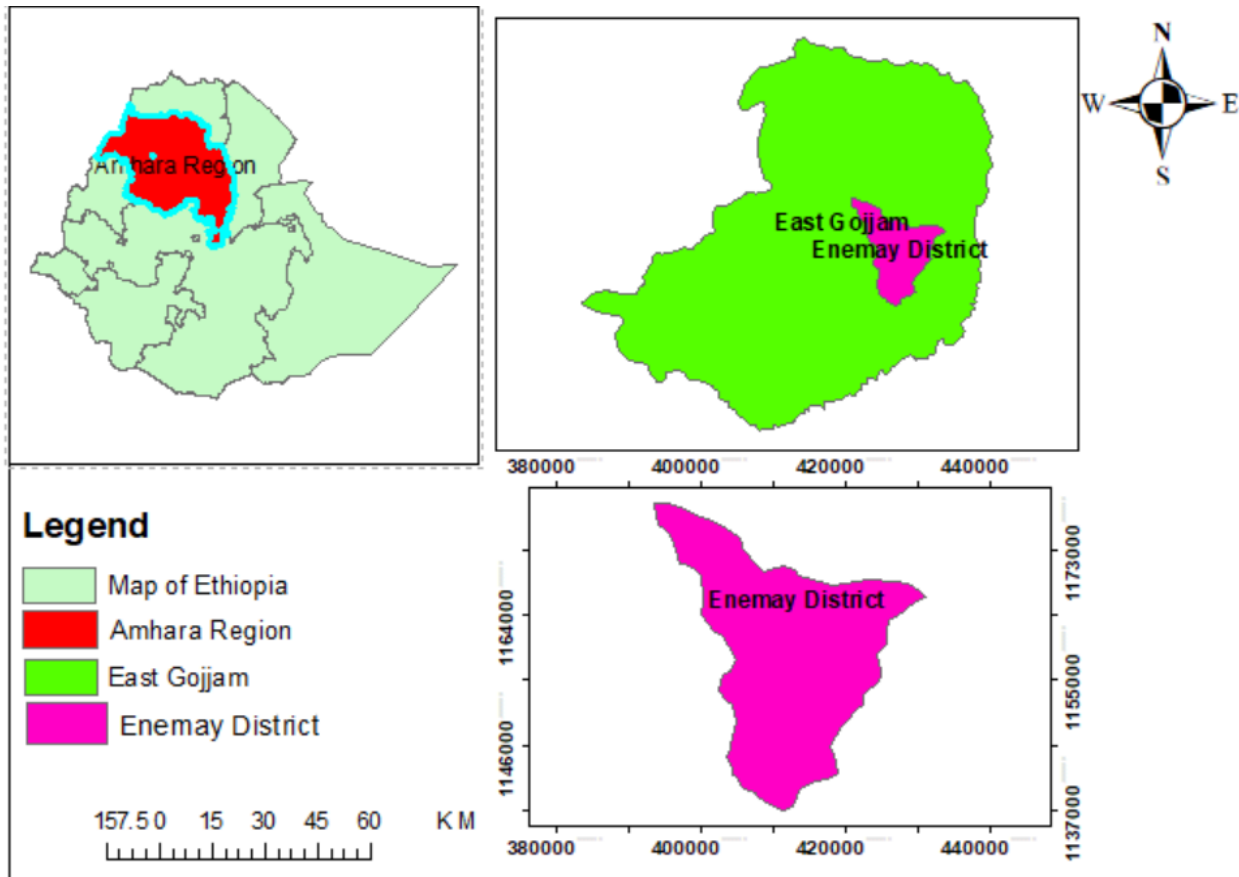
Introduction

This chapter portrays the research method used to conduct this study. It contains a description of the research area, sources of data, data collection method, sampling techniques, method of data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1. Description of the Study Area

The study was carried out in a specific area of the Enemay *Woreda* of East Gojjam. Enemay *Woreda* is found in East Gojjam, Amhara regional state of Ethiopia and is located 265 km Northeast of Addis Ababa, capital city of Ethiopia. The *Woreda* geographically located at 100 39' 59.99" N latitude and 38000' 0.00" E longitudes. Agro-ecologically, the *Woreda* categorized as midland (88%), highland (7%), lowland (5%). The annual rainfall is 1100mm, ranging from 997mm to 1203mm. It is immutable, falling during June-September (*kiremt*). However, there is a small amount of rain falling between April and May (*belg*) (Ayalew and Abatenhe, 2018). The *Woreda* contains 27 rural and 7 urban *kebeles*. In this *Woreda*, agriculture is main source of livelihood for most of the rural people. I purposely selected the Enemay *Woreda* since I was born and raised in Bichena town which is the capital town of Enemay *Woreda* and I know very well the study area and the experiences of women livelihood in related to their farmland use right.

Figure1. Location Map of Enemy Woreda



Source: Researcher

3.2. Research Approach and Methods

To produce more reliable and valuable information, this study employed mixed method. According to Creswell and Poth (2016), using mixed approach; the study will provide a better considering of the problem than those using either quantitative or qualitative methods. In addition, combining these methods gives strength that compromises the weaknesses of both methods. This study used predominantly qualitative method and supported by some quantitative data. In carrying out the study, in-depth interview, key informant, focus group discussions, case study (qualitative methods), and household survey (quantitative approach) were employed.

3.2.1. Sources of Data and Data Collection Methods

Both primary and secondary sources were used. Primary data was collected through in-depth interview, key-informant interview, FGDs, and case study from April 18 to June 21, 2021. Secondary data were gathered from books, journal, published and unpublished thesis.

3.2.1.1. In-depth Interview

According to Rahel (2011), in-depth interview is important to get uncover experiences particularly to know livelihood experiences, living conditions and coping mechanisms. In-depth-interview was conducted with women in both FHHs and MHHs about challenged and discriminated in accessing, controlling, and utilization of farmland and customary laws. In-depth interview also explore the lived experiences and health status of women's. Twenty women includes married, divorced, widowed, and single women were interviewed from *Weyra* and *Bichenadebr Kebeles* through the help of Agricultural Development Office Experts, *Kebele* officials. They were selected purposefully based on their age and sex.

3.2.1.2. Key-informant Interview

Key informants interview were conducted with *Woreda* (2) and kebeles officials (3) about means of obtaining farmland and impacts of lack access to farmland in women livelihood. Key informant interview is an interview involving a group of selected individuals who are likely to provide better information, ideas, and knowledge on particular issue (Kumar, 1989).

3.2.1.3. Focus Group Discussion

The study was conducted two focus group discussions and each group consist eight participants. The first FGDs were held with women about general information of the community perception against women on farmland right and their socio-economic status. The second FGDs were conducted with male about gender roles of the community. Focus group discussion is important to gain detailed understanding of social issues and obtain information purposively selected group of individuals (Nyumba et al., 2018).

3.2.1.4. Household Survey

To generate primary quantitative data in line with the research's objective, a questionnaire with open-ended and closed-ended questions was developed and distributed to sample respondents. A household survey was conducted to obtain basic data to supplement the qualitative data. The

questionnaires were administered 141 women to collect data about means of acquiring farmland, size of farmland, and other basic data. Questionnaire is a form containing a series of questions and providing space for their replies to be filled in by respondents on their own. It contains self-administered survey (Parajuli, 2004).

The research questionnaire was written in English. It was carefully crafted to ensure clarity, prevent bias, and obtain accurate data. The questionnaire was translated into Amharic, the local language, so that respondents would be able to express clearly. The content and structure of translated version of questionnaire were carefully cross-checked to original English version. This was done to avoid errors.

3.3. Sampling Techniques

The study was employed two different sampling methods: purposive sampling (qualitative) and random sampling (quantitative). For the qualitative method, sites and participants of the study were selected purposively to obtain the necessary information. Out of 34 *kebeles* in the *Woreda*, two *kebeles* were selected based on their agro-ecological and transport accessibility. The study was conducted in two *kebeles* of the *Woreda* named: *Bichena debr* and *Weyra*.

Furthermore, random sampling technique was employed to conduct quantitative data collection method. The total number of HHs was 1474, in which *Bichena debr* has 630 and *Weyra* kebele has 844 HHs. The sample size for collecting quantitative data for this study is determined using formula proposed by Yamane (1967). Inserting the number in the formula, the total sample selected for this study was 141 households. The minimum level of precision level is acceptable at 10% (Dessie et al., 2018). However, in this study the researcher assumed 8% precision level considering the available resources to conduct the study:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- n designates the sample size the research uses;
- N designates total number of households in both *Kebeles*;
- e designates maximum variability or margin of error 8% (.08);
- 1 designates the probability of the event occurring.

3.4. Method of Data Analysis

As study mixed design, both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis was employed. Predominantly, the qualitative data gathered from in-depth interview, key informant interview, FGDs and case studies were organized, transcribed, displayed, and categorized systematically for the purpose of thematic analysis and presentation and drawing conclusion and verification. Data obtained from household survey were organized, coded, entered data and analyzed quantitatively by using descriptive statistics. Quantitative data were presented and described in tabular form using tables, and percentage. Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) was used to present the quantitative data. Eventually, both qualitative and quantitative data were integrated and analyzed together.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

In social research, there are ethical issues that should have to be considered. Implication and consequences of the research on participants psychological, social, political, religious, cultural, and economic life should be seriously reflected (Punch, 1994). Below this the researcher tried to explain some of the ethical issues that the researcher was followed while conducting this study. These principles were: “voluntary participation” (i.e. respondents were participated voluntarily and by their own free will); “informed consent” (i.e. the research participants agreed to take part in the study and got the consent of the subject); “data utilization” (i.e. that the raw data was only available for the involved researcher and used for research purpose), “confidentially” (i.e. that the presentation of data preserved the research subjects anonymity or identity of the respondents; because of all names have been changed to protect the study participants identities).

As introduce above ethical requirements participants of study, all participants first were received information about the nature and purpose of the research, and the information that obtain through the interviews would only be used for research purposes, if a person choose not to respond to questions during an interview without having reveal the reason they allowed to stop. All this information repeated orally at the start of each interview.

3.6. Field Personal Experience

This study was conducted in Weyra and Bichenadeber *kebeles* of Enemay *Woreda* in East Gojjam Administrative Zone of Amhara National Regional State from 18 April 2021 to 10 June 2021. Based on a letter of support from Addis Ababa university, Enemay *Woreda* administration office gave me a permission to conduct the study. The first one week, I stayed in Bichena town, the *Woreda's* capital town, and I had met the head of Enemay *Woreda* Land Disk to collect preliminary data about land certification and number of landholdings by women and men. After that, the head of Enemay *Woreda* Administrative office wrote a support letter for both Weyra and Bichenadeber *kebeles* administrators to granted me during field work activities. Then, I went to these *kebeles* with the help of the development agents.

In the field, my first activity was identifying key informants from *Woreda* and *Kebele* officials, in-depth interviews and FGD participants with the help of development agents and *kebele* officials. I have interviewed women based on their age, social status and farmland use right. Two FGDs was conducted with women and local people. And I distributed questionnaires. I interviewed my informants in Amharic language and I was recording the entire conversation. During my field work, I have faced some challenges and opportunities. Some of these include:

1. My field work was conducted during national political election thus I was challenged for a days by local police (locally called *millisha*) in Weyra *kebele*, they said that you came to the area for a political campaign, not for data collection. In addition to this, the study communities considered me as spy for other political position, not a researcher. Through time, they realized my intension and accept as a researcher with the support of Weyra *kebele* officials by giving clear understanding for the polices and study communities.
2. Fortunately, the presence of my family in Bichena town has benefited me. Firstly, I had no problem with food and housing, so I was not vulnerable to health problem associated with food and water contamination. In order to facilitate and communicate study participants and key informants, my uncle have a significant role to assisted me since he lives in Bichena town. Additionally, my uncle helped me in many ways by being with me during data collection. He assisted me to complete my field work on the ground.
3. When I moved around the household of the study communities, some members of a village challenged me considering as a government official, thus they were reluctant to

provide the actual information. This was because the government would take away from their farmland. However, the presence of kebele officials support me to convince them. Towards the end they provide important information.

4. Most of the community members who participated in the study had a good relationship with me. Therefore, if they have a question they did not understand, without frustration they asked me and responded to in a better way.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with analysis of data on the basis of data gathered through an in-depth interview, key informant interview, focus group discussions, case studies, and household survey. The presentation of findings aimed to answer the research objectives and questions outlined in the previous section. By and large, it synthesizes field data pertaining access to farmland and rural women livelihood in study *Woreda*.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section depicts the field data related to demographic characteristics of the respondents. It appears important to study the background of respondents such as age and marital status, family size, and educational level.

4.1.1. Distribution of Respondents by Age Groups

Based on the survey result, respondents' age ranges from 15-80. About 4% of respondents are between the ages of 15–19, 14% are between the ages of 20–29, 21% are between the ages of 30–39, 26% are between the ages of 40–49, 16% are between the ages of 50–59, 9% are between the ages of 60–69, 6% are between the ages of 70–79, and 4% of respondents are above 80. Respondents between the age of 40 and 49 constitute the larger percentile (26%). This implies that the research focused on people in mid-adulthood (middle age) stage.

Table 1: Age of the respondent

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15-19	5	4
20-29	20	14
30-39	30	21
40-49	36	26
50-59	23	16
60-69	12	9
70-79	9	6

80 and above	6	4
Total	141	100

Source: Survey data

4.1.2. Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

According to the results of the study, 44% of the respondents are divorced, 28% are married, 22% are widowed, and 6% are unmarried. In this study, most respondents were divorced (44%) and the study emphasized on divorced women. There are also some factors that push women in to separation, such as abuse, spouse relationship, disrespect, conflict, infertility and reproduction health problem, and interference of relatives. Most of these women live in poverty or near poverty due to low income, poor utilization of resources like farmland, the customary practice, and the prejudice as well as stereotyping of FHHs. As a result, women have no sustainable livelihood and the same is true for widowed women. Therefore, women and their family most probably exposed for food insecurity, starvation, psychological and health problems, and their children also have low well-being due to inconvenient living and learning environment.

Table 2: Marital status of the respondent

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	39	28
Unmarried	9	6
Divorced	62	44
Widowed	31	22
Total	141	100

Source: Survey data

4.1.3. Distribution of Respondents' Family Size

The family size of a household refers to the entire number of persons in that household. Based on survey result, 45%, 35%, 11%, 9% of respondents have 1-3, 4-6, 7 and above family members in households and live alone, respectively. Some women live alone for a variety of reasons, including divorce, deceased of family members, and marriage of their children, or infertility. The majority of the respondents have 1-3 (46%) family members.

Table 3: Family size of the respondent

Family size	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-3 members	64	45
4-6 members	50	35

7 and above	15	11
None	12	9
Total	141	100

Source: Survey data

4.1.4. Distribution of Respondents Level of Education

About 60% of respondents are illiterate, 18% of respondents are educated formal primary cycle (grade 1-8), 16% of respondents have non-formal education (only read and write) and 6% of respondents are educated formal secondary cycle (grade 9-12). The study found that the educational status of respondents reflects a high rate of illiteracy. The hassle with ownership right to productive resources of women is crucial, most of women especially the illiterate ones had no clue about their legal rights and the unfair distribution of resources in the study area. Their bargaining power within the society is very low and they are aloof from major resources.

Table 4: Educational status of respondents

Educational status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	85	60
Read and write	22	16
1-8 grade	25	18
9-12 grade	9	6
Total	141	100

Source: Survey data

4.2. Rights to Control and Access to Farmland

This section deals with the rights to control and access to key resources of women. Examining the women access to key resources in the study area is essential because it shows controlling, power and decision making. Several questions were included in a household survey and qualitative tools to collect data on rights to control and access key resources. In addition, the study also focuses on important topics such as the mechanisms of acquiring and controlling farmland and women's size of farmland.

In the study area women have limited control of key resources as compared to men especially with regards to farmland. Even though women now and then allowed to access farmlands they are deprived of their rights to control and manage it. Data obtained from in-depth interviews shows most women have no equal rights on the use and control of farmland because of socio-cultural norms, like gender-based division of labor. Furthermore, women excluded from

controlling key resources, including decision-making due to customary practice. Single, divorced, and widowed women not participated in land administrator committees. The study unveiled that patriarchal attitude plays an increasingly crucial role in women's society. Hence, the issue directly related with gender relation in the society and contributes significantly to gender inequality.

Decision making and controlling resources is essential at household level. However, in the study area women's decision-making and controlling resources is negligible. These are a significant impact on poverty and food insecurity. Gender-based division of labor goes along with decision-making in the household. A study undertaken by Elfinesh (2020) in Gamo, women's rights on land were limited and woman's role was to provide food for the family. Therefore, women only use the land for this purpose but they are not allowed to have complete control over the land. As a result, women, as a HH members or HH head have difficulty accessing and managing land and other valuables. Traditional practices related to women's land use and management has exacerbated this situation.

Registered and certificated farmland provides ownership security for women. The study found that, women have registered to control their farmland. Based on sample survey, 94.5% of women have registered and certified farmland and 5.5% have no registered and certificated farmland. Hence, this shows land registration and certification brought some opportunities and it assures their landholding right. However, they could not directly control it. The in-depth interview revealed that although women in MHHs legally own farmland in their households, it is usually controlled by their husbands. Usually, women do not have a say, for example, decide to sell the yield or animals such as sheep, cows, or oxen. They are forced to accept their husband's decision and have limited control over their household assets. Likewise, in Sinan, Gozamen and Dejen *Woredas* of East Gojjam, socially disadvantaged groups, such as women, unhealthy people, and children, hardly benefited from the land entitlement policy. The majorities of these were not represented in the certification process and often were not given the opportunity to participate. As a result, most of these social groups have negative opinions towards the policy. Those who appear to have been successful in acquiring land have begun using it differently from how they had previously used it. Land transfer techniques as their main method of land use. In this regard, most women who do not have any male relatives or children at home transfer their lands to a

third party on a sharecropping basis. Such land transfer techniques eventually result in most of the land being owned by better-off households. Land entitlement policies increased land transfers, accelerated land use change, and mostly benefited the better-off. However, they did not enhance the lives of the poor as anticipated (Takele, 2021).

According to Elfinesh (2020), women's land acquisition and management have a positive impact on family nutrition, and well-being. Equal access and equity for all women will enable them to have place in household and communities. Knowledge and understanding of women's equal land ownership is essential to understand women's rights on land. In the study area, access to knowledge and information these rights are limited. In line with this, a study conducted by Takele (2022) shows, during the process of land registration and certification, sharecroppers registered women's lands as their own property and received certificates in East Gojjam. These men reasoned that if they registered the land as their own, they could evict the legitimate landowners because women and elderly do not expect to receive information about land registration and certification. Knowledge and information are important for women because they need to know the laws and their legal rights to make claims and resist denial of opportunities and rights. In general, the data shows that there is lack of awareness, information, and education on the rights to control and access to key resources in the study area.

Yenatfenta, a 38 years old woman and the mother of three children, who live in Woyra Kebele disclosed that:

I live with my husband and three children, when I got married, I had 0.5 ha farmland and my husband has less than what I had. However, I do not have the right to choose what to produce as well as what to sell from our agricultural produces. I am not the beneficiary of the farmland. My husband always makes all decision of our house, but burden is on my shoulder. During the farming season, I have been engaged in preparing the farmland way up to removing weeds. Afterwards, when I came home, I did all the housework. I worked from house to farm without rest. One day, I asked my husband about my intention to participate in the household decision making, but he scorns and despises me as if he does not care about what I have asked. I got a fight with him, almost on daily basis. The local community and even my family support him due to patriarchal attitude of the local area. Eventually, I am saying that, we

must separate if I cannot decide on my farmland. However, there is no one who hears me and can solve my problem, even if my father wants to stay silent. The local people always support him and they always consider all things is my fault, but I was asking only my rights. That is all about my life. In general, women live under the pressure of men. We are tormented by farming and domestic work; we do not live in the right way at all.

As the above case story shows, legally government officials emphasize only on the distribution of farmland and ensuring women land rights by giving certificates assuming would improve living condition through agriculture production. In so doing gave less attention to women's unfavorable living and working conditions; and decision-making. In addition to these, they are marginalized from the use and control of farmland. Women contribute both in the domestic workforce and farm activities. However, they are not beneficiaries of the farming production and their husbands have an absolute power over the income generated out of the produce. This makes them economically dependent. With regards to the control and management of farmlands local customary laws prioritize husbands to have much power over their wives. In the study area, particularly at the *Gotte* (hamlet) level elected community representatives are tasked with completing the land registration process. At the *kebele* level, these committees were formed. The delegates on the *kebele* level committee are the chairperson and secretary of this group. The *Gotte* committee validates the registration done by *kebele* committee and shows to public to enable for any irregularities to be corrected. The certificated document indicates a map of each household's land holdings. The *Woreda* land use administration desk (LUAD), formed under the authority of Natural Resource and Land Use Administration Bureau receives this document. Eventually, the *Woreda* LUAD issues legal certificates for land rights to each landholder.

According to the land administration officer;

Farmers in this Woreda have given their right to a farmland to be certified in two rounds. Women also benefited from this opportunity. Land registration and ratification are used to ensure that farmland is owned by them which endowed them the right to transfer for another person. It aims to protect and achieve household land security.

The above information revealed that women registered their farmland to ensure the household land security. However, have registered and certified farmland women did not use and access their farmland properly and unable to utilize, plough, and make decisions about their farmland due to customary practices. In the event of titling, the names of the landowners must be listed on the registration form, and their photos must be attached to the certificate.

4.2.1. Mechanisms of Acquiring Farmland

Means of farmland acquisition of women in the study area reflected that out of the total respondents, 59% are accessed farmland through land distribution, 21% are accessed through inheritance, 11% are accessed through gift, and 9% are accessed through marriage.

Table 5: Means of acquiring farmland

Means of Acquiring a Farmland	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inheritance	30	21
Land distribution	83	59
Gift	15	11
Marriage	13	9
Total	141	100

Source: Survey data

4.2.1.1. Land Distribution

As above Table 5 showed that the majority of farmland acquisition by women was done carried out through land distribution (59%). Women have been able to acquire land from different governments. About 67% of women's acquired farmland during the EPRDF (1991-2018), about 15% of women's acquired farmland through the *Derg* regime (1974-1991), about 10% through Emperor Haile Selassie (pre-1994) and about 8% through the current government (since 2018). Based on sample survey, most of women obtained farmland during EPRDF through land distribution. The EPRDF government issued the rural land administration policy in 1996/97. The federal rural administration proclamation regulations and guidelines were prepared and implemented. In this policy under sub article 4 declared, "*The land administration of law of the regions shall ensure the equal rights of women in respect of the use, administration and control of land as well as respect of transferring and bequeathing holding rights.*" According to

declared policy, during the redistribution of land, women were given priority than men on farmland.

During EPRDF administration the land redistribution mainly made landless FHHs to have obtained higher priority. Though there are several reasons divorced women obtained much of the distributed farmland. Through land redistribution, landlessness has decreased (Getachew, 2003). Askale (2005) further explains that the 1996 land redistribution changed women's status from secondary rights to primary right holders. However, the study found that land redistribution during EPRDF does not increase the status of women in the society; rather it allows women to obtain some plot of land and own them. Even though, they are landholders, but practically they do not effectively use their farmland. Currently, women live under the subordination of men, and they have land, but they are the poorest segments of society due to the patriarchal attitudes. The land redistribution does not consider the gender-specific discrimination in farming activities and the social norm that makes women homesteaders without regard to decision-making, income, or power. Thus, they are receivers of men, victims of hunger, health-related issues, and low physical and emotional well-being.

According to Alemnesh, an informant who lives in Bichena Debr Kebele, she has three children and her husband is not alive and she raised her children without any support. She raised issues during in-depth interview, she said:

During the second farmland redistribution in 1996/97, I received two Gemed of farmland. The farmland which I was given is not productive. Currently, I have a sharecropping agreement with my cousin. However, each year he told me, there is no good production because the farmland is rocky and infertile. I spent more money to chemical fertilizer. Thus, I try to find an alternative work as a daily laborer and my sons also do the same. When I go to work, my biggest problem is my daughter because her leg is swollen, and urinates blood. She cannot move from place to place. I could not cure her. The local elder says her problem is a bad spirit and no one can help me to go to hospital. Our home has multiple problems because we do not have better farmland, oxen, or sustainable income. In addition, I have health problems, and my eyes are hurt by firewood. I spend much of my time mowing, peeling onions, removing weeds and my two sons plough a farmland for other farmers. When

farmland goes into the land desk, we ask to get fertile farmland. The kebele officials respond that there are poorer individuals than you, so we give priority to them. But for those of us who are poor, who can sympathize with our problems, hunger, and thirst. Rural life is too hard. If we have fertile farmland, we will obtain good yield from sharecropping, and my sons will plough their own land.

Alemnesh still wants another fertile land because the land she acquired during distribution does not free her family from poverty and hunger. Her physical condition and her house tell more than her words. She lives in the collapsed house with suffering. Land distribution has brought her nothing. Furthermore, during focus group discussion, other women emphasized that, during land redistribution they obtain small size of farmland. This is mainly due to few people inherited and own large tracts of arable land and there is a disproportionate amount of farmland. As a result, they do not have enough farmland. Even on this small plot of farmland, no one offers practical solutions to women and the entire community. According to Takele (2022), in East Gojjam, there were complaints about the redistribution approach used in 1997. First, unlike the *Derg*, most recipients of land at the time were younger members of the ruling party, indicating that the number of household members was not considered. Second, because the land women received was very small, they were unable to support themselves. Later, most fields are less fertile, or unproductive land, making it impossible for them to produce what was desired. Due to this, sharecroppers minimized the amount of land that women had been given. As a result, the amount of grain that women used to make from sharecropping remained small and insufficient to sustain household consumption.

4.2.1.2. Inheritance and Gift

Another means of farmland acquisition in the study area was through inheritance. The Land Use Rights Proclamation (No. 46/96, 2000) allows to persons who have legal rights of land to pass it down. The study found that, individuals can transmit their rights while living through a testament (*Nuzaze*), according to the *kebele* land use administration commission (LUAC). The transfer will be allowed by the *kebele* LUAC, if the individual who is entitled to inherit owns land or if there is a landless member in the family. Women inherit farmland from their parents, which is their parents transfer farmland to them and they own that land. They inherit farmland, when their parents are no longer alive, when they get married, or bequeathing when a parent is old. Besides,

women get farmland through gifts; in study area most of the time women get farmland from parents. Unlike inherited farmland, it is not permanent, yet it is not short-term unlike leased farmland. In addition, there is no written contract to farmland while the giver can decide how to use the farmland.

During in-depth interview in Weyra Kebele women prohibited from taking over inherited farmland by their brothers and other men relatives. One of the respondents in this study claimed that, the reality as follows,

My husband and I inherited farmland from our family but neither of us got the land. My husband grew up with his grandparents when they died; they inherited plots of land for him. Nevertheless, his uncles said, the land belongs to us you will not get it, if you want to get it you have to cultivate our land. He refused and left home and starting daily laborer. In the same way, my brothers have denied me any farmland that my mother inherited. My brothers do not want me to own the land, while they want me to be their servant and babysitter. Then I left their home with nothing, there was no one who solve my problem. Even if I accused them, they will win the case because they have power and money. So, to support our lives most of time I worked as baking bread, injera, washing clothes for government employees (teacher and health professionals), weeding, and cultivating onions. Almost most of time, I have spent doing all this work. Apparently, our home has full of problems. If we do not have work today, we will not be able to eat tomorrow. While if we had a farmland, we would be able to produce good food, and then we will be educating our children.

The above case shows that, the scarcity of farmland and farm-landlessness, women do not use their inherited land because of their brothers or other male relatives deprive their right to use the resource. Most women do not know the legal framework that ensures their land rights due to their low educational background and illiteracy, so they are not able to benefit from their land. Besides, during focus group discussions, women emphasized that, they inherited land with a certificate of green book, but their brothers intimidate them in such a way that they cannot utilize it. They say that, *“This resource is our family, not yours, and you are weak and you cannot plough the land.”* Thus, they control the land. Therefore, this situation provokes in low living standard of women and lead to poverty. Traditional practices also did not protect and work

properly for women's right to inheritance. Takele (2022) identified three factors that affect women systematically excluded from inheritance and gift in East Gojjam. One of the issues has to do with how important male labor is for managing the land of households. The availability of male labor in a household is widely believed to be essential for the success of a livelihood, particularly for the purpose of animal traction. Male labor is thus more readily available, which boosts household confidence and helps them secure their livelihoods. The second issue is the post-marriage residency of newlywed couples, which forces women to leave their birthplace while men frequently remain at their parents' house or in the neighborhood. This patrilocal residency structure frequently results in men controlling family property while alienating women from it. Thirdly, families worry that if they give their daughters their land, their son-in-law may eventually inherit it. This is because, according to a local expression known as *takarcham* (when young males come on to the lands of the parents' of the daughters'), the land may eventually pass to an alien son who may claim it as his joint property. There is a worry that this circumstance will ultimately force them to leave their sources of livelihoods.

4.2.1.3. Marriage

Marriage is one of the women's means of acquiring farmland in the study area. At the time of their marriage, they acquired resources from their parents. During marriage men and women are often required to offer a farmland. Both couples contribute to marital property, which is referred to as *Macha* in the study area. Women used to contribute equal portions of property, either in cash or in kind, previously. Nowadays, women are more likely to offer farmland, oxen, or cattle, but men are more likely to offer money, home, and farmland.

In legal terms, women acquire farmland through marriage, in which women have equal land ownership after marriage. According to the 1999/2000 family code, women can have equal rights on farmland during marriage. Under this law, women are entitled to equal rights to farmland within marriage and share equally when the marriage ends up with divorce. For example, when talking about common property of spouses under this family code "*All property acquired by the spouses during marriage by onerous title shall be common property unless declared personal.*" However, in the study area, women are title landowners rather than beneficiaries, even if they own land before marriage. After marriage, their husband will control the land. In addition, a

woman faces many challenges during divorce in asserting their land use rights. The primary problem stems from the fact that their husband opposes the right to use the land.

According to Askalech, an informant from Bichena Debr *Kebele*, she faced problems during the time of divorce,

I got married at the age of 19 and I have two children. But now I am divorced. The reason was that he was getting drunk at night and beating me up a lot. The more we got in to argument, the more he threatened me. So, I left home with my children and went to my mother's house. After that, I faced a lot of problems in raising my children. The first and biggest problem is that I do not have farmland. When I asked my husband to share farmland with me, he told me that I would not get any of it. Then, I sued him, but I could not bring anything before the court because he bribed the judges, testified falsely, and most of the time threatened to kill me. As a result, I could not win the case, and no one helped me. Furthermore, when I asked the local elder for a solution, they said that you are the one who left your house. So, what will he do to you? Then I gave up and left everything because there was no solution.

This data shows that, as most of the respondents know nothing about legal system, and the procedure on how to get the share of their farmland when they are divorced. Even if they go to court, the system being so corrupt, usually violate their land use rights. Customary law and division of labor have an effect. Therefore, lack of awareness and capacity to get justice is the primary problem for divorced women; thus, they bear the burden of single parenthood without getting a share of their farmland. According to the study undertaken by Filipos (2020), in Hadiya Zone, customary divorce law allows women to take only their clothes with them when they leave their homes upon divorce. Married women rarely have access to marital land when they divorce. As divorced women are hardly offered justice through customary dispute resolution processes and lack easy access to legal systems, it does not affect their ability to share marital land through legal right.

4.2.2. Women's Farmland Size

In study area, farmland is measured by a traditional unit called *Gemed* (4 *Gemed* equals to one hectare). Among the research participants who have a farmland, 57% of them have 1-2 *Gemed* of

farmland (0.25-0.5 hectare), 28% 3-4 *Gemed* of farmland (0.75-1 hectare), 9% have 5-6 *Gemed* of farmland (1.25-1.5 hectare), and 6% women have 7-8 *Gemed* of farmland (1.75-2 hectare). Majority of women in the study area have 1-2 *Gemed* (57%) size of farmland (0.25-0.5 hectare) due to land distribution and inheritance.

Table 6: Size of farmland

Size of farmland holding	Frequency	Percentage
1-2 <i>Gemed</i> (0.25-0.5 hectare)	81	57
3-4 <i>Gemed</i> (0.75-1 hectare)	39	28
5-6 <i>Gemed</i> (1.25-1.5 hectare)	12	9
7-8 <i>Gemed</i> (1.75-2 hectare)	9	6
Total	141	100

Source: Survey data

From the total number of landholdings in the *Woreda* (44,006), 72.3% (31,827) are held by men, and 27.67% (12,179) are held by FHHs. In addition, of the total farmland size of the *Woreda* (55,299ha), in which 45,429.5ha (82.2%) held by men and 9869.5ha (17.8%) held by women landholdings. Therefore, this indicates that women have less landholding compared to men landholdings.

Women's small size of farmland in the *Woreda* is disadvantageous compared to men landholdings. As the result, women could not able to feed, teach, and meet their children needs. In addition, the small size of farmland is also small yield, which is the yield not enough to feed their household. Thus, women are engaged in various forms of exhausting works to support their household. However, they are unable to feed their families three times per day and living in low standard conditions. The problem is especially acute for widowed women. According to Elfinesh (2020), the size of farmland owned by women who are widowed and their family size did not match. Among FHHs land holdings are very small and lack of yields leads to low productivity.

Women's size of farmland decreases year after year. There are reasons to decreases the size of farmland. According to sample survey, 54% decrease farmland size by giving up to children, 25% decrease farmland size by taking under distribution of land, and 21% decrease farmland

size taken by the government (lease). Majority of women decrease farmland due to giving part of their land to their children (54%).

For different reasons to decrease the size of farmland is given to children. When women give farmland to their children when they are weak and old, or when their children get married. As a result, the size of their farmland gradually decreased. One of the women respondents Yetnayet, suggested that,

I have five children, three of whom are girls. Three of them are married and I gave some plot of farmland when they are married because nowadays men do not want to marry a woman who has no farmland. When I gave them a farmland, they were able to get married. Then, when I got older, I gave the remaining farmland to my eldest son for sharecropping and I began living with him. That is why my size of farmland has decreased. Currently, I cannot work and have no say on my farmland because I am old and live with him.

Furthermore, decrease of farmland is with government lease system. The government lease farmland for a long or short period of time. The Amhara national regional state land policy reflected the federal proclamation on land access rights of the local community under its rural land proclamation no. 133/2006. According to (ANRS, 2006) the first land policy regime proclamation no. 133/2006, the right to ownership of land is vested under the state and the public with no time limit individual holding right. Hence, it is not allowed to transfer the holding right in sale or exchange. Meanwhile, it allowed the right to rent holding rights to others and use their holding right as collateral with a time limit of 25 years. Regarding the right to access land, any person who lives in the regional state with the age of above 18 and needs to engage in agriculture have a right to get land free of charge either in time of land redistribution or through inheritance of holding rights from his/her ancestors or families. Besides, the law ensures the right of investors to get rural land from farmers who had land holding right and the government for agricultural investment in lease basis. As a result, some women their farmland has decreased through lease. Abebech, an older woman, participated in this study claimed that;

My husband and I own seven Gemed, four of which are leased to the government for ten years. We rented our farmland to the government by a contractual agreement to

be renewed every five years. As a result, our farmland size decreased, and the money we earn from the leased farmland is not used to me. Instead, my husband rented some farmland from many farmers, which he cultivated and obtain a lot of yield. However, I could not benefit from the yield, and I do not know what he did to sell the grain. In this area, we women are only being men's servants. I could not make any decisions in my house; I asked my husband why he has not consulted me before selling agricultural yield? Then he answered me, what is your contribution to the farm? I am only one who work and exhaust. Even though, I am doing all the farming work until the yield is harvested. Though, every day my morals is touched by him when he says, you are so weak that you cannot manage your home and responsibilities, and you only eat with children what I bring to you. In fact, I have work hard and suffer with him until we obtain agricultural yield.

The above testament shows that women do much of the agricultural and domestic work. They oversee household responsibilities such as cooking, gathering firewood, looking after children and elderly and cleaning animal muck. In addition, they do all work except ploughing the farm. However, they do not have the right to manage and control the income from farmland, and men have the authority to do so over farm production, livestock, and income from renting land. Unfortunately, women strive to bring economic development for households while do not have equal opportunities to income with men. Therefore, this condition deprives them for growth within household and economic development. oversee

Similarly, another participants' farmland taken by government needed for development projects and she narrated her issue as follows,

The government needs it for development in return gives us alternative farmland but it was smaller and less productive than we had before. Besides, the land was far from my village, and the land was rocky, unsuitable for production, and small size. Thereby, the size of farmland and my standard of living condition have decreased. It is well known that women do not plough farmland; we just use it as sharecropping or hiring labor to plough our farmland. Previously, my farmland cultivates twice a year, but now I do not even obtain enough yield every year from the land given to me as

replacement. As a result, I and my family forced to look for other works such as, buying and selling corn from farmers.

As the above quote reveals, if women acquire infertile farmland, it will aggravate their problem since they receive yield from sharecropper leads to engage other off-farm activities. Therefore, women's farmland taken through development by government, it should be providing productive farmland as their previous holding. A case study undertaken by Takele, (2022) shows, young women in East Gojjam typically rent land for the twenty-five-year package if they have unproductive land and do not have access to male or drought-resistant animal labor to plow their field. They frequently decide to move to a new location in search of a 'better life' since the grain they receive from a given plot of land (sharecropper) is insufficient to allow them to survive for an extended period of time. Therefore, lack of cultivable land for commercial farming (soil fertility) can have a profound effect on livelihood. According to the new proclamation, if the length of land rent is for ten or twenty-five years, the agreement must be formalized in writing, which is the agreement must be made in written form. The Woreda office land administration, which is in charge of overseeing the agreement's process, should be visited by the two parties in this regard. Officials advise the kebele land administration office can handle it if the rent is agreed for a period of three years or less. However, because most property transfers are informal and some of them include land sales, the majority of landowners do not want to adhere to the laws outlined in the proclamations. Since most of these informal agreements result in disputes, and they are often busy with the cases of land conflicts in the local courts.

Later, land redistribution was another means of decreases size of farmland in study area. During in-depth interview, participants claimed that, "*The government took a farmland when the land was redistributed in 1996/97 by accusing us were the son of a bureaucrat.*" This is because they have been accused by controlling huge land. They were forcibly taken from their mothers' and fathers' farmland. Since their farmland sizes have been decreased. Thereby, government gave a farmland to landless farmers. Moreover, like the case of Gozamin Woreda, East Gojjam (Getachew, 2003), EPRDF officials reduced the size of farmland owned by the *Derg* regime's party and security members by half because that land was heavily controlled and taken away from them. It has a negative impact to the so-called 'bureaucrats' children, who lost half of their parents' landholding in 1997 redistribution. According to Takele (2022), 'bureaucrats' took their

lands away from them, because of women were unable to contribute to the Agriculture Market Corporation. This was due to the corporation's role as the *Derg's* agent for collecting grains from agricultural output and its need that all farm households contribute grain production at a low price. Women's inability to contribute the sufficient grain was primarily since they do not plow to avoid producing an excess.

4.3. Women Livelihood Strategies

This chapter deals with the analysis of data related to the livelihood strategies of women in the study area. It begins with the lived experiences of married, widowed, or divorced women. Then it proceeds to other important subjects, including socio-cultural perceptions that affect women's land rights and health issues of women.

Subsistence agriculture is the basis of the livelihood schemes for most rural farmers in the study area. Although agriculture is a major livelihood strategy, there is no mechanized farming; they still use traditional *moffer* (beam), yoke, plough shaft, plough share, and oxen to plough their fields, and a sickle and labor force to collect their production. They mainly produce crops like *teff*, wheat, barley, chickpeas, peas, beans, and corn, as well as vegetables like potatoes, beetroot, cabbage, tomatoes, and occasionally grow onions through an irrigation system. These products are produced mainly for consumption and some for sale. Along with farming, they are involved in animal husbandry and keeping bees. Due to the lack of modern agriculture, small-scale farmers are dependent on low inputs, production, and conventional technologies. Thus, they are unable to accumulate wealth and income, and their living strategies are inadequate.

A study by Takele (2016) in East Gojjam, elucidates that livelihood activities basically based on human asset, which is about division of labor founded on gender, age, and the health status of the household head. Being a woman or a man determines the success of the household and there are various factors which hinder gender-based roles. Of which, the socio-cultural norms of the society divided men's and women's work. The other factor is that determine the role of gender in the headship of the household. Accessibility of environmental assets such as land forests and the way women and men generate income from the resources are important in gender-based success in livelihood activities. The finding of study revealed that accessing and controlling farmland is regarded as the most essential economic source for livelihood and the primary source of food at

the HH level. Women in the study *Woreda* participated in both farm and non-farm economic activities to sustain their family's livelihood. Women participated in off-farm activities, which included working as wage laborers on other farm fields, selling traditional alcoholic beverages and petty trade. Women who engage in off-farm occupations are also associated with poverty, food insecurity, and inadequate access to resources. Rural livelihood is strange itself in that most farmers live hand to mouth and women are primarily vulnerable to many problems since they are discriminated against and limited from using resources that are crucial for their livelihood.

Based on a sample survey, 50% of them participated in off-farm activities to support their livelihood, 38% engaged moderately in off-farm activities to support their livelihood along with farming and 12% did not participate in off-farm activities. This data shows that if they have farmland, they cannot control it directly due to the gender-based division of labor. Therefore, most women participate in off-farm activities to support their livelihood and fulfill household consumption. If they have no farmland, they also spend most of their time on off-farm activities. Additionally, most women who do not participate in off-farm activities are married women, in which case they are under the control of their husband.

Besides, because of the strange nature of rural livelihood in the *Enemay Woreda*, women are exposed to poor living conditions and other related problems like health problems, exclusion from social life, living under low status, and eating disorders. The customary law of community gives a much more fervent position to men in which they are decision-makers in all economic, political, and social concerns since they control all resources, whereas women are simply the receivers of all issues governed by men. Furthermore, the majority of respondents in the study area have poor living conditions as a result of limited enrollment in education, marital status, gender-defined inequality, and socio-cultural perceptions of women. Therefore, to ascertain the livelihood of women either in FHHs or MHHs, it is crucial to explicitly understand the living conditions of women along with societal values, beliefs, and perceptions against women who are married, divorced, and widowed.

4.3.1. Married Women Land Rights and Lived Experiences

According to the study's findings, men have the right to control and direct access to all resources in the household, including farmland, production, cash income, ox, cow, horse, donkey, mule,

and domestic animals, as well as decision-making. During FGDs, women emphasized that a man can sell livestock or exchange any product without the consent of his wife, but a woman cannot sell anything without permission of the husband. Conversely, if a woman sells crops, vegetables, and domestic animals without the permission of her husband, there will be serious conflict; she may be abused by her husband with physical violence (beatings), moral abuse, disrespect, and warnings to leave home. Hence, their marital status does not give them adequate livelihood owing to the fact that every aspect of their life depends on a man's will. The following quote show the reality,

I got married at the age of 17 because I could not concur with my stepmother. I have no farmland while my husband has. When we got married, he promised to utilize all the products equally that we produced together. After we started living together, he did not keep his word. I work from home on the farm, except ploughing. However, I cannot sell any product without his permission, and he can sell everything and do whatever he wants. We could not manage our household properly because of unbalanced decision-making. To cover various expenses, such as ingredients for cooking (food oil, tomatoes, potatoes, and onion), and children's exercise books, uniforms, and clothing, I collect firewood and muck and sell them in the market. Additionally, I sell butter and cheese, and occasionally I sell vegetables. Though, I do not have the right to sell cash crops; maybe I sell it, he insults me and even beats me.

The above quote shows that women do not have the right to control cash crops and animals in their household; rather, they have the right to control animal dairy, muck, and market gardens. Furthermore, this situation prevents them from managing their household as they do not conduct all home activities properly and they cannot cover their household expenses independently. Therefore, women live under the subordination of their husbands. The same is true in Halaba, husband has control and decides all agriculture production without the involvement of the wife (Messay, 2012). However, women bear the burden of production, reproduction, and community. Since they do not have the right to make decisions with resources, their husbands do not consult about produce. Men control all resources, and make decisions on economic, political, and social issues. Moreover, societal problems and illiteracy exacerbated the inequality between women's rights and economic development.

Farm activities and household responsibilities have not been separated along with gender line. Women are not permitted to plough farmland since the role is entirely a men's activity and it is a cultural taboo for women. Aside from ploughing, women perform a variety of tasks in the home and on the farm. To begin with the role of women at home: preparing the family food, childbirth, and breast feeding, caring for and raising children, collecting firewood, fetching water, and cleaning animal dung from the barn, which is used as firewood. Furthermore, they engaged in farm activities such as preparing farmland to sow, sowing seeds, removing weeds, and harvesting.

Harvest season is the most difficult and unbreakable time for women. Aside from the responsibilities of women at home, they prepare additional food and traditional alcoholic beverages called *tella* and *areke* for hired labor and those who help with harvesting. In addition, they engage in all activities until the harvest is collected. However, their role is undermined owing to the men-supremacy of community. During an in-depth interview, respondents elucidate that the preparation of *tella and areke* has its own arduous process, and it takes time, labor force, and crops. The process of making *tella* starts initially by preparing *bikel* (malt) from wheat, in which the wheat is soaked in water for three days and then dried by sunlight. Additionally, traditional *gesho* (traditional hop or buckthorn) is prepared. Then, grind malt and buckthorn in a traditional mill and mix them with water. Besides, after seven days, they prepared *abshilo* (thin-flat bread made from barley) from the mixture of sorghum, small millet, barley, *teff*, and wheat flour and added it to the mix of malt. Finally, prepare *derekot* (roasted and grinding grain) from boiled and dried corn, wheat, or barley. Then, it is roasted and grinding, and the flour is added to the previous mixture. This also creates *tella*. Preparing *areke* also has a similar process, except it does not need *derekot*. Unlike with *tella*, during the final stage of preparation, the mix of malt, buckthorn, and *abshilo* is boiled in a pot. The top of the pot is tied up with bamboo pipe, and the edge of the tube is tied up with condenser tub and the steam from the mix flows into the condenser tub, it may extract about 12 liters of alcohol during a day. This process is done at least every two months, especially the preparation of *tella*.

Consequently, women are putting all this effort into managing their households; if there is no *tella* or *areke* and sufficient food at the time of harvest, the hired workers, family members, and other involved are not considered to work effectively; if these things are not fulfilled, it is so

embarrassing for the women and she considered indolent and weak. As a result, women do exponentially difficult and daunting work in the home and on the farm while their right to control and access cash crops is not secured in the household. The above statement is emphasized by participant woman during FGDs,

My husband always tells me he is ashamed of me; you do not like work, you are lazy, and you do not help me on the field. Instead, I say let us reduce the expense of preparing tella. Thus, it seems that I am not reluctant to prepare this beverage. I conduct all my work more than he does. If he does not have a farm activity, he always sits and drinks tella or areke. As a result of tella, our crops are run out while in the end of year, and we have a hard time to feeding ourselves until new production arrives. In addition, he said that I screwed up when I married you because you had made no contribution to change our lives. Then, I will not tolerate this talk. I scream in anger, and there is a dispute between us.

The above interpretation shows that women have an immense contribution to their household. However, their efforts are not considered by their husbands. In the MHHs, only men are considered to be working hard and solving the family problems. Conversely, women are more optimistic than men and they strive year after year to change their household by socially and economically.

Based on the result of the study, along with daily household commitment, women are tied up by large commemoration such as *Tezkar*. *Tezkar* is a traditional religious practice in which an individual passed away. The family prepares a memorial program along with feasts to enjoy with their relatives or beloved and feed the needy people. In addition, wedding ceremonies either within their household, a day when spouses start living with their family institution. Both necessitate extensive preparation, which requires money, slaughtered animals, labor force, food ingredients and traditional beverages, as well as large number of invited guests. Women have vibrant role in ceremonies, among their responsibilities being preparing traditional beverages (*tella*, *areke*, and *tej*), *injera* (traditional-thin flat bread), cooking food, and serving invited guests. They also work all these things not for a single household but for the entire community. Therefore, these activities have a great impact on entire livelihood of the household, and

particularly women who are victims of consequences of these ceremonies, either economically or socially. According to Alemnesh, a younger woman, who participated in this study,

In our community, it is common to conduct commemorations; our yield is depleted by this activity. Many farmers borrow money to prepare for these ceremonies, and when they fail to repay the loan, they may lose their farmland or oxen that they used to repay. Once upon a time, I argued my husband about how we should conduct a commemoration for his deceased father because we could not afford to prepare a large feast, so we had to make do with what we had. However, my husband was upset by considered my thoughts disrespecting his father.

Consequently, extravagant ceremonies (weddings and commemorations) have a great influence on poor living conditions since women are responsible for feeding the family and other household tasks. They are exposed to a lot of problems with unsecured livelihoods. Most married respondents reflect that rural life is difficult for women, whether they have farmland or not. They cannot have ‘direct’ access to farmland and livestock at the household level since their husband controls it dominantly. As a result, women were unable to determine which crops should be produced and sold, as well as whether domestic animals (cow, ox, sheep, and goat) should be sold or not. In addition to the dominance of men in the entire household, women could not participate in social organizations like *idir*, *ekub*, *zikirt*, *senbate* without the approval of men. On the contrary, men could make all the crucial decisions at the HH level. Nevertheless, women are following the men’s decisions. Hence, it is not feasible to control HH cash income by gender. Beyond the intra-household problems, women are not able to cover the expenses of social, religious, and cultural obligations and their health service expenses.

4.3.2. Widowed or Divorced Women Land Rights and Lived Experiences

Widowed or divorced women in the study area have no right to control or access farmland. Their livelihood depends on labor work like, removing weeds, mowing, and small business activities such as preparing traditional alcoholic beverages (*areke* and *tella*). Based on sample survey results about 54% of their livelihood depends on selling traditional alcoholic beverages and other off-farm activities, about 33% depends on selling agricultural product, and 13% depends on labor work. In addition, some of them purchase corn, wheat, and buckthorn from farmers and sell them to consumers to their livelihood. If a woman has a plot of farmland and does not have a

husband or son to cultivate it, they give it for sharecropping. Nevertheless, during harvest time, women obtain a small yield because the sharecroppers share equally with them. Hence, women do not sell a yield in the market but instead use it for household consumption. As Elfinesh (2020) study in Gamo revealed that widowed or divorced women participated in laborious work for their livelihood. The communities recognized women's farmland as not fertile land, and not cultivated on time. Therefore, widowed, or divorced women are deprived access to and management of farmland and due to cultural practice, women cannot plough well, which leads to food insecurity.

Moreover, widowed, or divorced women initially participate in unsuitable occupations to access food for their households. They do not have a sustainable livelihood that ensures their household food security and better livelihood. Their livelihood experience is miserable because of farm landlessness; being unable to control and utilize farmland, and the cultural practices that society adopts to prejudice women. Therefore, they do not have any permanent livelihood other than agriculture and women are the most disadvantageous members of society. They struggled to survive and not go hungry; they worked hard to meet household consumption; however, they lived in poverty, food insecurity, and were unable to meet their household needs. Most FHHs reported that having access to and control over critical livelihood assets such as farmland and labor makes them feel confident in a community; however, they are unable to do so due to the community's gender bias. The same is true for FHHs who have less access to and control over land due to the gender bias of the community in Gamo (Elfinesh, 2020). Their household production is less as a result of lack of a farmland, oxen, labor, and other key resources. In addition, they participated in a variety of agricultural activities, although they are not supposed to engage traditionally, which put women in a more inopportune and vulnerable position.

According to the *Woreda* officials, the government encouraged women in rural areas to improve their living conditions and access to farmland. Ayalew, one of the officials who worked in the *Woreda*, participated in this study claimed that,

To improve and enhance the living conditions of women, the government gave priority over men during land distribution under the 1989 proclamation. Hence, women in various rural kebeles in the Woreda are supported to access farmland. The government also encouraged women to be involved in any development activity and irrigation to ensure productivity. Furthermore, organize women into development

teams and provide support from extension professionals. This increases their awareness and empowers women to develop their standard of living conditions.

The above data shows it is clear that from the perspective of government land redistribution, women are permitted to be self-sufficient on their own farmland and ownership. On the contrary, as a *Woreda*, there is a severe shortage of farmland, and women are less likely to access farmland. They may have access to registered land, but it is not the primary source of their income due to societal division of labor and discrimination. It is initially imperative to recognize the cultural practices and customary law that deprive women of land rights. In addition to providing certified farmland, the government needs to modernize agriculture and turn it into mechanized farming. This has a significant contribution to increasing productivity for female landowners because they do not need a man to plough their field. Moreover, in the *Woreda*, there is no alternative development program that ensures sustainable livelihoods for rural women. Currently, most women live in extreme and painful poverty. They do exhaustive work to obtain daily food. If they have not work during a day, they will have difficulty feeding their family. Currently, most women live in painful situations and extreme poverty.

Meseret live in *Weyra Kebele* and she lives with her mother and son. They do not have farmland, and their livelihood depends on small business activities. She begins her story by asking why various researchers and government officials gather information from us. They raised questions regarding to our problems. However, no one can bring us out of poverty. Furthermore, she explained her life experience from the beginning.

My mother prepared local areke, and then I sell it in our tea house. In addition to this, my mother works during weeding and harvest time. Additionally, she prepares a traditional drink tella twice a week. Conversely, I did not work daily labor because I had multiple reproductive health problems. When my mother and father separated, my father took over the farmland, and my mother took the house where we live now by customary law. As a result, my mother suffered from laborious works and then I moved to an Arab country when I was 14 years old to help my mother. On the contrary, when I went there, I did not find what I was looking for. I suffered a lot; I could not get food on time and I worked long hours during a day. In this situation I

stayed for two years. As the problem worsened, I became ill and was stayed for 6 months in hospital in Saudi Arabia. Then, my employers sent me home with nothing; they claimed that, we spent a lot of money on your treatment at hospital so you have not any money. As a result, I was mentally ill, unable to help my mother, and I was disgusted. The society consider me as mad but they are not willing to help me. One day I went to the chairperson of kebele to ask how I can get farm land, he said, we are registering returnees from the Arab world to provide some aid. Then I got registered, a month after this chairperson, if so after one month this person come to my home and said “farmland is scare and it is difficult to get this resource so I want to marry you because I have farm land.” I agreed and got married and I gave birth after a year. However, I had serious birth defects due to medical error. As a result, I could not urinate, sit and, move. Then I went to Tikur Anbesa specialized hospital at the capital city of Addis Ababa and they helped me a lot, while they told me not to have sexual intercourse with my husband. When I told this to him, he did not give a good response rather he throws me and my child like a trash with nothing. Now I am divorced and live in extreme poverty with overlapping problems.

As the above story illustrates, when a woman gets divorced, she is exposed to a host of problems. To begin with their initial suffering, they do not get their property fairly with their spouses due to the traditional divorce practice. Then they became economically weak with lower social status. Furthermore, they will not have a sustainable livelihood and at the end of the day they will live in extreme poverty. The cultural notions of study area are biased against women’s participation to the extent of development activities. Consequently, women are discriminated against in key resources and economic benefits. This situation worsened the women’s entire socio-economic condition.

Another widowed woman also faces the same problem as mentioned above. As they live in a patriarchal and male-dominated society, when their husband dies, their life will be worsened because they will become the head of the household. Belaynesh, a younger woman who lives in Bichena Debr Kebele, claimed that,

I got married at the age of 16, and my husband was much older than me. Now he is no longer alive, and I live with my three daughters. The basis of our livelihood is preparing local alcoholic beverages and selling them in the market. Additionally, we work as daily laborers, and my children are students in grades 6, 8, and 10; so, they work after school and at the weekend. My husband has a large plot of farmland; however, he has six children from other women. Consequently, when we divided it, I received a small plot of farmland and I gave it for sharecropping because I do not have a son who ploughs the farmland. Therefore, the yield is so small and used for household consumption and I do other work to cover additional expenses.

Based on the small size of farmland and the problem of not being productive, widowed women have many constraints. For instance, if FHHs own farmland, they usually give it to sharecroppers who plough the farmland. After harvesting, they will keep half of the yield, and the farmer will keep the other half of the yield. The study found that FHHs are motivated to give up their small farmland due to a lack of labor. The production that they obtain from sharecroppers is not sufficient for their household consumption. Hence, they engaged in other jobs like laborious work to fulfill basic household needs.

The right to use farmland is crucial to achieving food security through production. Increased food availability, income, and improved nutritional status are indicators of food security. Though in the study area, most respondents reported that they could not fulfill measurements of the food security. Consequently, they are the victims of malnutrition, mainly FHHs. Their causes of food insecurity problems are farm landlessness, poor access to and control over farmland, small farmland, less fertile farmland, and lack of labor. Due to the customary law, they have fewer use rights on farmland since plough is taboo for women and lack of labor leads to sharecroppers, thus, obtaining a small amount of production, while if their farmland is unfertile, they may not obtain any production. Hence, they have serious food deficiencies and are unable to feed their household adequately due to the scarcity of production. Elfinesh (2020) stated that women's access to farmland and small plot of farmland are the major factors in women's food production. Through reducing factors that affect women's access to farmland and the size of farmland, access to farmland could be improved and increase women's food production.

According to Fereye, a young woman who participated in this study,

I take care of my three daughters and my mother, and my husband passed away eight years ago. I have farmland but the size of my farmland is small. I gave it to sharecroppers because I had no sons who would cultivate the land. When harvesting, I can get an average of five sacks of yield, so it is not sufficient for our household consumption. After 4-5 months, the yield that I obtain will be decrease and the whole family will be starving. We will even have trouble eating twice per day. During this time, I became very anxious about what to feed my children. For survival, I collect firewood and manure for sell to feed children.

Another participant also claimed that,

I have farmland, but I am very poor and I could not meet my household's basic needs. My children are students, and it has been a long time since my husband died, so I gave farmland to sharecroppers, but the yield that I received is too small. We are exposed to starvation and shortage of food. Therefore, I work as daily labor and sometimes I beg peoples to feed my children and cover our household expenses.

Most participants in the study area are living in painful conditions that are so hard that they have ended up with lower living standards. They are economically weak as well as living with suffering because they unable to obtain better yield due to the farm size is small and gave to sharecroppers. Furthermore, their precious adulthood is characterized by suffering on shortage of food and malnutrition, and being unable to meet their household consumption. Therefore, they suffered from severe depression because of unable to feed their families, children, hunger, and loss of resistance and weight.

4.3.3. Socio-Cultural Perceptions and Women's Land Right

Due to the patriarchal nature of their society and the roles they play in it, women have low social and economic status in the study area. The societal gender-defined role decreases the status of women since they are deprived of direct control of farmland and other resources. Thus, women's status in society is weak. Marriage customs are a testament to the fact that men usually dominate the area. Wives are expected to take on the roles of the subordinates in their families. A husband has full control of all the possessions and manages the household. Furthermore, the husband is likely to provide for his family by cultivating the crop and is reflected as the sole head of the

household. Therefore, wives and children should be obeyed. According to Hirschon (1984), people in all human societies adore their own culture, traditions, and beliefs. These structures give women and men different opportunities and rights. In many societies, women are subjected to various forms of discrimination and harassment. As men control all wealth, they make decisions in all social, economic, and political spheres, whereas women are the receivers of all affairs led by men.

Women make a significant contribution to both subsistence farming and commercial farming. Most women go to the farm and do household chores such as cleaning the barn and the house, milking cows, preparing breakfast, lunch, dinner, coffee, and fetching water, brewing traditional beverages, and visiting the market to buy or sell. According to a World Bank report (2007 cited in Messay, 2012), poverty in Africa cannot be reduced without women's access to education, employment, wealth, property rights, and equal political and social participation. As mentioned above, unpaid household chores are not considered economic activities similar to community and volunteer services.

Gender is constructed by masculinity and femininity behavior in the study area. Initially, when children are growing up, women support their mothers and men support their fathers. Thus, this essentially allows men to experience high decision power and women experience subordination from an early age. In addition, fathers provide numerous opportunities to strengthen their sons economically, socially, and politically, but they prefer that their daughters marry strong and genuine husbands. Therefore, men develop the strength to make decisions in every aspect of life, including controlling resources at the household level. A study undertaken by Messay (2012) found that in the Halaba social context, men have dominance over women. A patriarchal gender system provides for men to gain economic and political rights over women. Subjugation of another by oppression and exploitation is an unfair advantage of human rights. Factors affecting women's agricultural roles include dependence on their husbands, illiteracy, ignorance, and cultural dominance, low social, political, and economic status.

Women are considered incapable of managing their households without the support of men. The community expresses their perceptions towards women by adding their cautious metaphors. To decrease the decision-making power in the household, they used the following phrase: *“ከጎ ምን ብተወቅ በወንድ ያልቅ/Set min betawek be wend yalk”* [lit., no matter how much a woman knows, but

a man does]. This saying expresses the exclusion of women at the final stage of decision making, in which their contribution is negligible and keeps their position in no feasible way to decide. Thus, this type of saying permits males to retain their vested rights to ignore the vital role of women and influence them with the pre-determined perception of society. Furthermore, they used proverbs “የ ወንድ አሰፈታይ የ ሴት አሳራሽ የ ለ ወግግሃው wend asefetay ye’set asarash yelem” [lit., there is no women master farmer, as there is no male traditional spin weaver]. To limit women’s land use rights and reflect their weakness and inability engage farming activities. The meaning of this saying is that women are strictly prohibited from ploughing farmland and men do not conduct any activities that are considered women’s roles in the household. This perception has several negative consequences, including the disempowerment of women in exercising their farmland rights. For example, if a woman does not have a husband or son to plough land, she looking sharecropping agreement, and rarely hires male laborers. Moreover, it is well-known that rural women conduct more exhausting activities either in the household or in the farm field than just ploughing, along with the reproductive nature of women and biological factors. Thus, women do not find it difficult to cultivate their fields. However, the notion of society deprives women of their land rights by encircling them with taboo.

Society used expressions like “ሴት ብትወፍር አቁማኛ አታሰር/Set betwefer akumada atasir” [lit., no matter how fat a woman is she is worth nothing/serves no good purpose] to express their views on women’s weakness and incapability. This saying implies that women cannot perform intensive work such as ploughing, only men can do things because they are stronger than women. Such attitudes reflect women’s dependence, and the inclusion of women in farming activities has no benefit in the household. Conversely, women spend most of their time on household and farm activities since they are the most productive portion of society. Moreover, women are the most oppressed group within the community. They have poor social status and society is not concerned about their rights; rather they believe society underestimates them. In addition, married and divorced or widowed women do not have equal social status. Relatively, married women have better representation than others. However, gender-defined roles, which lead to their marital status does allowing women to use and control household resources at will. Hence, power relations between husband and wife in the household have an adverse effect on

decision-making, and livelihood. At the same time, the societal perception of women affects them in ways that locals appreciate that men should govern women.

The societal attitudes towards the divorced or widowed are stigmatized. They also have poor social status and low living condition. In the study area a woman who have divorced or widowed is known as “ሴት አዳሪ /*Sete adari*” [lit., living without husband due to divorced or widowed] This perception reflects that low status of women in society since farming is considered as a male’s commitment. Therefore, women are encouraged to marry again unless their value will be diminished if they refuse.

According to the informant, the societal attitude about women affects their control and utilization of resources. She claimed that as follows,

When my first marriage failed, I returned to my family home. However, they did not want me to live with them because the local perception of divorced women is not good. Thus, my relatives pushed me to marry another man, and I got married. Now I am not happy with my life. Our household resources are dominantly under the control of my husband, including my own farmland. I have no power to decide on our assets, and nothing can be done without his approval. We are having a disagreement because of unequal power relations and decision-making, and when I inquire about my right to our resources, he shows disdain for me. Therefore, I realized that the societal perception against women not only gave privileges to men, but it destroyed the whole aspects of women’s life.

The above information about respondent experience reveals that the locals’ norms, beliefs, and values put women in a disadvantageous position in which they violate their legal land use rights. There are clear distinctions between men’s and women’s tasks, since women’s tasks are more tiresome than men’s. The customary law allows men to focus on more valuable and profitable agricultural activities and control all agricultural and livestock production. Though, women do heavy work for their household’s livelihood and do much more than meet their expectations the local community considers women worthless in farm activities. The locals abandoned the role of women rather than look down on them and the locals’ perceptions are the primary barriers to

excluding women from access to and control of farmland. In addition, divorced or widowed women have limited interaction with family members, neighbors, and the community at large. Most of them do not participate in social, economic, and political activities. They were not self-sufficient, isolated, and spent most of their time doing heavy work due to the societal perception of women.

4.3.4. Health Issues of Women

Women's access to farmland and key resources are linked to improved living conditions, better nutrition, food sovereignty and income. In the study area, lack of secure rights to land associated with health issues. Over a long time, various definitions of health have been created and improved by researchers and scholars. According to WHO (1948, cited in Bickenbach, 2015), health is a "*state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.*" The study's findings show that women's health and well-being are important factors. Their health circumstances are shaped by their livelihood, socio-economic status, and access to food and health services. According to the survey results, about 61% of women are highly exposed to various health problems, such as reproductive health problems, eye problems, and transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS, about 26% are slightly exposed to chronic and non-chronic diseases, and about 13% are not exposed to health problems. Most of the study participants had limited access to farmland and economic resources, unsecured livelihoods, and live in poverty. Health is a critical issue that affects all aspects of life.

The findings of the study reveal that women are more vulnerable to health-related problems than men. Their living and working conditions greatly to the health risk. The culturally constructed roles of women do not foster a healthy environment. Most women prepare household food and traditional alcoholic beverages (*tella* and *areke*) by using muck and firewood. They are exposed to eye problems like being blindfolded because there is limited access to electricity. In addition, they are vulnerable to reproductive health problems due to limited access to health services nearby and they do not have time to be treated when they have health problems because of heavy workloads both in HH and farming. Therefore, this leads to aggravated women's health problems.

Dejitu, a younger woman who participated in this study, describes the pain as follows:

I was seriously injured during childbirth. There was no health center or workers in the area. I was bleeding profusely until I got medical treatment in the town. Suddenly, my baby died in my womb, and paramedics performed an operation to remove it. I have not been able to stay healthy since then. Due to my health problem, I want to divorce my husband. However, I must live with him because I do not have farmland and I cannot do any other work.

Women in the study area have limited access to health services, and there are no improved health extension services that enable them to live in misfortune. Furthermore, their health status is affected by access to health services due to unfavorable conditions in their working environment.

Women's health conditions are needed for their livelihood. According to the survey results, most women have lower living standards, both socially and economically. About 45% are very low, about 39% are low, and 16% are medium. Women in MHHs typically do not benefit directly from agricultural production, and gender relations and customary law have a significant impact on their livelihood. Thus, low income is one of the constraints to covering their health expenses and it is the triggering factor for health problems in women.

According to Webalem, an older woman, who participated in this study:

My sons and I live in Bichenadebr kebele. My sons are 17 and 10 years old. My elder son and I work as daily laborer to meet our needs since we do not have farmland. Unfortunately, my son injured his leg when he was falling from the truck. I took him to a Woreda hospital, but they said we could not treat him. Then they give us a referral letter to get a better treatment. However, I cannot afford the expenses of his treatment. I borrowed some money, but it is not enough to cure my child. As a result of our poverty, the locals consider us to have a low social status, and when I ask for help, they label me as a panhandler.

The above interpretation shows that women are unable to cover their household health expenses due to poverty and economic problems. Their status has a negative effect on their means of livelihood since they are dispossessed of key economic resources. Usually, they engage in different activities for their daily consumption. Moreover, women are exposed to poor health due to a lack of alternative economic opportunities and income disparities between men and women. They

have poor health and sanitation because of their way of life, where they spend much of their time in unfavorable working environments. Therefore, mainly FHHs are characterized by the number of health problems that have a negative impact on their livelihood.

Kasanesh, lives in Bechena Debr *Kebele* and she is HIV/AIDS positive. She elucidates her tragic story with tears.

I married my husband in 1996. When we got married, I had farmland, three sheep and one cow, which I inherited from my parents. My husband also had farmland, three oxen, two horses, and four donkeys. After we started living together, we made wealth and had five children. Even though we are wealthy, we could not live properly. He sold our property without my permission, like cows, sheep, and crops. Then he goes to town to drink alcohol. However, he wanted me to work at home, even though he was upset when I met my family. Moreover, he made matters worse by beginning to stay overnight outside with another woman, and I got perplexed about this, everyone taking my husband's impertinence. While in this condition, my health became critical and my resistance became low, then I went to a health center to be examined because I did not find myself in circumstances that potentially allowed me to do different activities previously. Then, when I was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, I told my husband that he too should be examined. Upon examination, he was told to be free from HIV/AIDS. Consequently, he warned me to evacuate the house owing to my disease. However, I have no relationship with anyone other than him. When I required him to give me my property, he said it is my children's. Then, I told him that it would be all right if they just took it. Currently, I have rented a house to live in with my three children and sell tea, bread, and traditional beverages. I never told anyone about my illness because I have a low social status because of my divorce, and I was afraid that if they knew I have HIV/AIDS, they would discriminate against me. Additionally, they will not purchase anything from my sales. As I live with HIV/AIDS, I have atrocious conditions physically, economically, and mentally.

Moreover, the fact that local culture excludes women from agricultural activities when women suffer from diseases like HIV/AIDS, means they are psychologically, emotionally, socially,

economically, and physically impaired. With low income, their health status became critical, and it accelerated extreme poverty and affected their working conditions. Even when women are infected with a contagious disease, they are socially unacceptable and face discrimination due to their femininity. They are more likely to be stigmatized, and their exclusion from productive activities increases, forcing them to live in poverty and in poor health conditions. Being healthy and getting adequate health care is one of the measurements of better living condition. Hence, it has vigorously affected women's livelihoods.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This research focuses on rural women's livelihood experiences related to access to farmland in Enemay *Woreda*, Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia. The study's findings revealed that farmland is regarded as the most essential economic and food source of livelihood at the household level. During EPRDF administration most of women obtained a land, though, it does not increase a status of women in the community. As a result of patriarchy attitudes of the community, women live under the subordination of men and they could not manage key resource like farmland. Women's farmland size decrease year after year through giving up to children, taking under distribution of land in 1996/97, and the government lease system.

In the legal context, women have registered and certified farmland. Thereby, women have farmland owners, however, they do not have direct access to and control over this key resource. It seems clear gender distinction in the access to and control over farmland. While the legal law provides for equal access to resources for both men and women, but customary law has a significant impact on access to farmland, control income, production and decision making in the household. Most of women do not have equal rights regarding the use and management of farmland due to customary practices, socio-cultural norms, and gender-based distribution of labor of community. Customary law of the community suppress by force women could not plough their farmland and they bear all labor force in household and agricultural activities such as weeding and mowing. In contrary, men hold a dominant position in the household and decision makers in all economic, political, and social concerns. Hence, they compelled to offer their entire life for the household and agriculture labor work without exercising their right.

The findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents have limited educational enrollment, and they have no awareness about their legal rights to control and access to key resources. Thus, societal practice deprives them of their legal right because of lack of knowledge and information. Knowledge and information are the main challenges of women struggle to access farmland. This leads to poor living conditions due to their limited educational level, gender discrimination, and socio-cultural perceptions of the community. Women lived

experience has suffering, poverty, and unable to feed their families three times per day because of customary law provide to men to manage and control income and production without consent wives.

Married women do not have the right to make decisions on farm and HHs, however, the husband have the right to control and decide all key resources such as farmland, agricultural production, and cash income. Their marital status does not give them equal right. Therefore, they are dependent on a man. In addition, FHHs forced to engage off-farm activities for survival and to obtain daily food and often engage in extensive and laborious work to support their household and not go hungry, such as daily laborer, removing weeds, and preparing and selling local alcoholic beverages, however, they lived in miserable with poverty and food insecurity. For the reason that farm landlessness, unable control and utilize farmland due to the cultural practice unable women to plough their farmland. Their initial suffering caused by gender-based division of labor, that is biased against women's participation in the scope of productive activities. These leads women to highly work load exposed to various health problems mainly by reproductive health problems. As a result of women have heavy workloads in HH, farm and off-farm activities vulnerable to health problems.

Moreover, stakeholder needs to empower women to participate in development through provide skill training and productive activities either farm or off-farm that strengthen their economic and social status. For equal access to resources, stakeholders also must acknowledge the cultural practice and customary law that deprive women from land rights. Besides, women needed alternative development programs that enhance their livelihood. Gender-based perceptions of the community has several negative consequences includes, the decommissioning of women to use their farmland. Therefore, gender-defined role must be considered in any development program. Women should be encouraged to make decisions in every aspect of life to improve their livelihood. Furthermore, raise local community's awareness about the contribution of women through social extension services to involve women in all economic activities and give them the opportunity to generate income.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Photos from the study area



Fig1. A woman baked *abshilo*



Fig2. A woman baked *injera* (thin-flat bread)



Fig3. A woman collects a firewood



Fig4. A woman preparing food

Source: Researcher

Appendix II: Interview Guide

Addis Ababa University

Department of Social Anthropology

Focus Group Discussion Guides for Female-Headed Households

Introduction

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information on access to farmland and rural women livelihood: the case of Enemay *Woreda*, East Gojjam Administrative Zone. Hence, your answers to the questions are critical for the research, and I can assure you that your responses are only used for academic purposes. Could you please respond honestly to the questions raised? It is highly appreciated that you responded patiently to the questions.

Thank you very much!

1. Questions Related With Demographic Aspects.

- Address: *Woreda* _____ *Kebele* _____
- Age: _____
- Marital status: _____
- Educational status: _____
- Family size: Total _____ (Male _____ and Female _____).

2. Questions for Focus Group Discussion

- What are the major problems in terms of land right system in the community?
- What are the socio-cultural constraints do women faced by being female-headed household?
- Do women have adequate access to land?
- Do you think that women have changed their life if they have access to land and control over it?
- What are the socio-cultural perceptions of women's status and role in land holding system?
- How customary law and division of labor affects women's land right?
- How landless rural women survive their livelihood?
- Do you think that access to land has raised the socio-economic status of rural women?

Addis Ababa University

Department of Social Anthropology

Interview Guides for Female-Headed Households

Introduction

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Thank you very much!

1. Questions Related With Demographic Aspects.

- Address: *Woreda* _____ *Kebele* _____
- Age: _____
- Marital status: _____
- Educational status: _____
- Family size: Total _____ (Male _____ and Female _____).

2. Questions for In-depth Interview

- What rights do you have on farmland?
- What problems are there in exercising those rights?
- Do you have equal access to land with men as wives, widowed, divorced, and Unmarried women?
- What are the major problems that you face in terms of access to land, use, and control of land?
- Do you think that right to access and control over farm land increases your bargaining power in the society and household?
- As a land holder together with your husband, do you decide together with your husband what to do to your land?

- As a land less women, what challenges do you have faced in your social, political, and economical life?
- What is the perception of the community to towards women being equal land owners with men?
- How customary laws affect your land right and livelihood?
- What are experiences of your livelihood as a landlessness woman?
- In what activities do you engage in the household and other productive activities?
- If you have access to land do you plough your land by yourself?
- If your answer is no, what are the mechanism to utilize your farm land and how you sustain your livelihood?
- Do you participate other economic activities to support your livelihood?
- Do you suffer from the multiple challenges of food insecurity, reproductive and other health problems, and poverty?
- What is your social status within the community because of your landlessness?

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Interview Guides for Key Informant

Introduction

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information on access to farmland and rural women livelihood: the case of Enemay *Woreda*, East Gojjam Administrative Zone. Hence, your answers to the questions are critical for the research, and I can assure you that your responses are only used for academic purposes. Could you please respond honestly to the questions raised? It is highly appreciated that you responded patiently to the questions.

Thank you very much!

1. Questions Related With Demographic Aspects.

- Address: *Woreda* _____ *Kebele* _____
- Age: _____
- Marital status: _____
- Educational status: _____
- Work: _____

2. Questions for Key Informants

- Do you think that the farm land distribution is adequate for women to utilize and ensure food security at household level?
- What is the total number of women having access to land under cultivation? Are this women FHD or married?
- Are there rural women who do not have access to land? If yes, what is their number and how do they earn their living?
- Is there any support provided to rural women to enable them increase agricultural production?
- Do you have any long-term programs that are intended to benefit women farmers? If yes, how?

- What are other economic activities in this *Woreda* to support the livelihood of disadvantaged rural women?
- What is the extent of food insecurity and poverty in the *Woreda* related to landlessness?

Addis Ababa University
Department of Social Anthropology
Household Survey Questionnaire

Introduction

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information on access to farmland and rural women livelihood: the case of Enemay *Woreda*, East Gojjam Administrative Zone. Hence, your answers to the questions are critical for the research, and I can assure you that your responses are only used for academic purposes. Could you please respond honestly to the questions raised? It is highly appreciated that you responded patiently to the questions.

Thank you very much!

Part I: General Background Information

1. Name_____
2. Age
A. 15-19 B. 20-29 C. 30-39 D. 40-49 E. 50-59 F. 60-69 G. 70-79
H. 80 and above
3. Gender: A. Female B. Male
4. Marital status
A. Married B. Unmarried C. Divorce D. Widowed
5. Educational status
A. Illiterate B. Read and write C. 1-9 grade D. 9-12 grade E. Degree
6. Who is the head of your household?
A. Men household headed B. Female household headed
7. Family size
7.1. What is your family size_____
- 7.2. How many men and female are there in your family_____? Female____Male_____
8. What is your source of income?
A. Selling agricultural product B. Selling livestock and those product
C. Renting farm land and selling agricultural product

D. Small business activities and labor work E. If any (specify)_____

9. Annual income

- A. 1000-3000 B. 3000-5000 C. 5000-7000
D. 7000-10000 E. Above 10000

Part II. Questions related to farmland

1. Do you have farmland?
A. Yes B. No
2. If your answer is yes, when did you get your farmland?
A. During Haile Selassie B. During *Derg* C. During EPRDF
D. During current government
3. At what years did you acquire your farmland_____
4. What are the different mechanisms of access to farmland?
A. Redistribution B. Inheritance C. Gift D. Renting E. If any (specify)_____
5. What is the total size of your landholding at present?
In hectare_____ or in local unit_____
6. What happened to the size of your landholding through time?
A. Decrease B. Increase C. No change
7. If decreased, reason for decreasing?
A. Giving to sons/daughters B. Given to other family members C. Taken
away by redistribution D. Taken away by the government for other purpose
8. If increased, reason for increasing?
A. Obtained through redistribution B. Obtained through inheritance
C. Obtained through gifts D. If any (specify)_____
9. What land rights do you have in the land you hold? (Multiple answers possible)
A. Ownership
B. Inherent to family member
C. Renting it out
D. Sharecropping it out

- E. If any (specify)-----
10. Do you think, have you enough farmland to production and better income?
A. Yes B. No
11. How much farmland do you think will be enough for your household? _____
12. What problems do you have in terms of farmland?
A. My holding farm size is small B. Unequal proportion of land distribution
C. My holding farmland is not fertile D. If any (specify)_____
13. What factors are deprived you from getting another farmland?
A. Lack of farmland B. Small size of farmland owned by my parents
C. Absence of farmland redistribution D. Customary law E. Other (specify)____
14. Do you think your farmland enough to you and your family livelihood?
A. Yes B. Just enough a little bit C. Not enough

Part III: Questions related to livelihood

1. Do you have an off-farm income to improve and support in your life?
A. Yes, well B. Yes, a little bit C. I have not
2. How your farmland supports your livelihood?
A. Source of food B. Source of income C. Source of food and income
3. What is your status in the community?
A. Low B. Very low C. High D. I do not know
4. Do you need enough farmland to build your capacity in the community?
A. Yes, I need it well B. I need a little C. I do not need anything
D. I have enough farmland
5. What is your overall standard of living?
A. Low B. Very low C. Moderate D. High
6. Are you exposed to health problems due to your low standard of living condition?
A. Yes, well B. I am slightly exposed C. Not exposed
7. Are you happy by your current standard of living?
A. Yes B. No
8. Do you have enough food products?
A. Yes, I have B. No, I have not

9. Have you borrowed money from credit and saving institutions on your farmland to support your livelihood?

A. Yes, well B. I have never borrowed C. Credit conditions are not comfortable

10. If yes, how much money do you borrow per year_____

11. Explain how you will use the loan money?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

12. List the problems in your livelihood as a whole?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

DECLARATION

Undersigned student Meaza Demse declares that this thesis entitled: “*Access to Farmland and Rural Women Livelihood: The Case of Enemay Woreda, East Gojjam Administrative Zone*” is original work and has not been submitted for a degree at any other university, and that all sources of materials relied upon for this thesis have been properly cited.

Name of student _____

Signature _____

Date _____

As an advisor, I have approved the submission of this thesis for examination.

Name of advisor _____

Signature _____

Date _____