

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE  
CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Women's Participation in Micro and Small Enterprises in Debremarkos City and  
Implication on their Right in Household Decision Making: A Qualitative Study from the  
Human Rights Perspective**

**By**

**Yesewlik Asmamaw**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**October, 2014**

*Addis Ababa*  
*University*  
*(Since 1950)*



**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**  
**College of Law and Governance**  
**Center for Human Rights**

**Women's Participation in Micro and Small Enterprises in Debreworkos City and  
Implication on their Right in Household Decision Making: A Qualitative Study from the  
Human Rights Perspective**

**By**

**Yesewlik Asmamaw**

**To**

**Yitayew Alemayehu (PhD.) (Advisor)**

**A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Addis Ababa University, a Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts in Human Rights**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**October, 2014**

**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**  
**Center for Human Rights**

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Yesewlik Asmamaw entitled: “Women’s Participation in Micro and Small Enterprises in Debreworkos City and Implication on their Right in Household Decision Making: A Qualitative Study from the Human Rights Perspective ” and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master for Human Rights complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the Examining Committee:

Examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Declaration**

I the undersigned declare that this study entitled: “Women’s Participation in Micro and Small Enterprises in Debremarkos City and Implication on their Right in Household Decision Making: A Qualitative Study from the Human Rights Perspective ” is my own work. This study has not submitted for any degree or diploma program in this or any other institutions and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have duly acknowledged. I have undertaken the research work independently with the guidance and support of the research advisor.

Declared by

Name: Yesewlik Asmamaw

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmed by

Advisor: Yitayew Alemayehu (PhD.)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Table of Contents

| <b>Titles</b>  | <b>Pages</b> |
|--|--------------|
| Declaration .....  | I            |
| Table of Contents .....  | II           |
| Acknowledgments .....  | V            |
| List of Acronyms and Abbreviations .....   | VI           |
| Abstract .....   | VII          |
| <b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>   |              |
| 1.1 Background of the Study.....   | 1            |
| 1.2. Statement of the Problem.....   | 8            |
| 1.3. Objectives of the Study .....   | 11           |
| 1.4. Significance of the Study.....  | 12           |
| 1.5. Methodology .....   | 12           |
| 1.6. Validity and Reliability .....  | 16           |
| 1.7. Limitation of the Study .....   | 17           |
| 1.8. Ethical Consideration .....   | 18           |
| 1.9. Organization of the Study .....   | 18           |
| 1.10.Scope of the Study .....  | 19           |
| <b>Chapter. 2. Literature Review</b>   |              |
| 2.1. Concept of Economic Empowerment .....   | 20           |
| 2.2. Women's Involvement in the Labour Market and its Effect on their Household Decision Making..... | 24           |
| 2.2.1. General Effect .....  | 24           |
| 2.2.2. Economic Effect .....   | 27           |
| 2.2.3. Socio-Cultural Effect .....   | 28           |
| 2.3. The Challenge of Gender Norms .....   | 29           |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 2.3.1. The Concept of Gender Norms.....       | 29 |
| 2.3.2. Institutional Level Gender Norms ..... | 33 |
| 2.3.3. Household Level Gender Norms .....     | 35 |
| 2.3.4. Individual Level Gender Norms .....    | 36 |

### **Chapter.3. Legal and Policy Frameworks on Women's Economic**

#### **Empowerment and Decision Making**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 3.1. International Legal and Policy Frameworks .....  | 38 |
| 3.1.1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination<br>Against Women (CEDAW)..... | 38 |
| 3.1.2. Regional Human Rights Instruments .....  | 42 |
| 3.1.3. International Policy Frameworks .....  | 45 |
| 3.2. National Legal and Policy Frameworks .....   | 47 |
| 3.2.1. FDRE Constitution and Other National Legal Instruments .....                                   | 47 |
| 3.2.2. National Policy Frameworks .....   | 50 |

### **Chapter.4. Women in MSEs in Debremarkos City**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 4.1. Overviews of the Study Area and Subjects.....   | 55 |
| 4.1.1. Description of Study Area. ....   | 55 |
| 4.1.2. Location of the Study Area .....  | 56 |
| 4.1.3. Women's Participation in MSEs in the city .....   | 56 |
| 4.2. Decision Making Experience of the Participant before their<br>Engagement on MSE .....                                 | 57 |
| 4.3. Terms and Ways of Enhancement of Household Decision Making<br>Power of Women through their Participation in MSE ..... | 59 |
| 4.3.1. Enhancement of Women's Power in the Administration and<br>Control of Household Property .....                       | 59 |
| 4.3.2. Access to Micro Credit and Financial Institution .....  | 62 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 4.3.3. Women's Involvement in Different Group Association; and Access to Education, Information, and Training .....             | 63 |
| 4.3.4. The Situation of Women's Household Decision's Making to Decide on their Future Occupational Choice .....                 | 66 |
| 4.3.5. Enhancement of Women's Freedom and Dignity to Participate in Household Decision-Making .....                             | 67 |
| 4.3.6. The Level of Transformation of Traditional Hierarchical Power Relation.....  | 68 |
| 4.3.7. Women's Right to Decide on their Reproductive and Health Rights .....  | 69 |
| 4.4.Constraints that Prevent the Enhancement of Women's Household Decision Making Right through their Participation in MSE..... | 72 |
| 4.4.1. Low Level of Income Obtained from the Sector .....   | 72 |
| 4.4.2. Traditional Norms Found in the City .....  | 73 |
| 4.4.3. Low Access to Awareness Creation, Training, and Gender Mainstreaming in the Sector .....                                 | 74 |
| 4.5.Measures that are Supposed to be or are Undertaken to Improve the Decision Making Rights of the Participant Women.....      | 75 |
| <b>Chapter.5. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation</b>   |    |
| 5.1.Summary.....  | 80 |
| 5.2.Conclusion and Recommendation.....  | 84 |
| References .....  | 87 |
| Appendix.....   | 93 |

## **Acknowledgments**

First, I want to give my thanks to the Almighty God for the encouragement that enables me to finish this work. Then, I also want to express my gratitude to my advisor of this thesis, Dr. Yitayew Alemayehu, without his encouragement and guidance; the completion of this work may not have been possible. Thus, I am very much indebted to him for all his support and willingness to advise me on my all efforts to successfully finalize the thesis. Successful accomplishment of this study would have been very difficult without his generous devotion from the early design of the research proposal and questionnaire to the final write-up of the thesis.

Then, thanks has given to DebreMarko's City Administration office staff members giving all the necessary documents and information within an affordable time in the field study. Special appreciation has given for their encouragement, which enables me to easily and smoothly conduct interview and collect documentary sources.

I also indebted to individual participants who live in DebreMarkos city for devotion of their precious time for the fruitfulness of this thesis. I, also really want to appreciate all others who directly or indirectly helped me in making my effort successful.

## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

CSA-Central Statistical Authority

EDHS- Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey

FAO-Food and Agricultural Organization

FDRE-Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GAD-Gender and Development

GTP- Growth and Transformation Plan

MDGs- Millennium Development Goals

MOFED-Minister of Finance and Economic Development

MOWA- Ministry of Women's Affairs

MSEs-Micro and Small Scale Enterprises

NAP-GE-National Action Plan for Gender Equality

NEPSE -National Employment Policy and Strategy of Ethiopia

OECD- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

SAP- Structural Adjustment Program

SIDA- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

TVED- Technical and Vocational Enterprise Development

WCYLAO- Women's, Children's, Youths', and Laborers' Affairs Office

WID-Women in Development

## Abstract

*This thesis aims to verify first whether women's involvement in MSEs improves their household decision-making power from the human rights perspective. Then, it also tries to show the means that women's involvement in MSEs improves their household decision making power from the perspectives of human rights. In addition, it also tries to show the limitations that retards the positive human rights influence of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision-making. In addition, it tries to investigate the ways that those constraints affect the positive human rights impacts of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision-making power. In addition, it also presents the appropriate solutions that augment the decision making right of women in the household through their involvement in MSEs.*

*The research shows that women's involvement in MSEs improves their household decision making right. It also asserts the existence of a variety of factors and constraints that retards the positive human rights implications of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision making power. For example, it affirms the shortage of income acquired from the sector as one major constraint. It also states the existing cultural outlooks and patriarchal gender relation as other constraints. It also asserts the existing low access to information and training and less gender mainstreaming perspective as factor for the advancement of women's household decision-making through their involvement in MSEs. The level of the improvement of their rights is also varies from the participants marital status, nature of MSEs, and other socio- economic environment of the household.*

*It also presents the measures that is undertaken or is suggested to be undertaken by the sampled participant that can boost household decision-making rights of women through their involvement in MSEs. For instance, increasing their source of income, deep-rooted training with follow up mechanism by government officials, change in traditional attitude towards women by others and women themselves are the most considerable one. Finally, the research is recommended the need to find out alternative mechanisms for the following targets. To increase the level of income of the participant; to change different traditional and cultural norms found at different level of the society; and to ensure access to training, information, and gender mainstreaming.*

Key words: Decision Making, Micro and Small Enterprises, Debreworkos city, Level of Income

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

This study examines the human rights implication of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision-making power.

In Ethiopia, women share almost half of the population, which numerically account for 49.54% according to the May 2007 Population and Housing Census (NEPSE, 2009, p. 2). Although they represent 49.54 % of the population and contribute mainly to food production and other, they have not shared the fruits of development equally with their male counterpart (Prime Minister Office, 2004, P. 2). In spite of their contributions to the well-being of their family and community affairs, women experience lower socio-economic status in general and hence is marginalized from making decisions at all levels (Country Gender Profile, 2006, P. 5). Women represent close to half of the labor market, but are more likely to be employed part-time, seasonally or in the informal sector (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 1). Further, they do not enjoy due acknowledgment for their labor contribution particularly in agriculture and do not have decision-making power (Haregewoin and Emebet, 2002, p. xi).

Women in Ethiopia occupy low status in the society (Haregewoin and Emebet, 2002, p. xi; Prime Minister Office, 2004, P. 2; Country Gender Profile, 2006, P. 5). Ethiopia is a patriarchal society that keeps women at subordinate position using religion and culture as an excuse (Haregewoin and Emebet, 2002, p. xi). The main cause of the low status of women is that deep-rooted patriarchal culture and other gender related norms attached to women in all dimensions (Ethiopian society of population studies, 2008, p. 53). Those religious and cultural barriers have for many years been reinforced by laws and legislations that uphold patriarchy and women's subordination (Haregewoin and Emebet, 2002, p. xi).

Women in Ethiopia are also found at disadvantageous position in terms of the realization of their basic human rights. The majority of women's rights have well documented on paper but little in terms of application and enforcement (MOWA, 2006, p. 4). For instance, women's rights to involve in decision making at all levels is low (Haregewoin and Emebet, 2002, p. viii; MOWA,

2006, p. 7). Further, mostly women in the country have the power to make decisions on issues related to the routine daily life of their family (Ethiopian society of population studies, 2008, p. 18).

In Ethiopia rights such as access to land, credit, and other productive resources are difficult for women to attain (Ogato, 2013, p. 359; Prime Minister Office, 2004, P. 2). Women hold only 18.7% of land and head 20.1% of poor rural households (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 1). Agricultural activities continue to be divided into culturally ascribed gender roles; women receive 38.22% of the benefits from extension services (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 1). Overall women lack education, access to resources such as land, time, capital, and financial services (Ogato, 2013, p. 363). Poverty is rampant in the country with 45% (47% of the rural and 33% of the urban) of the population not meeting basic food needs, in which women affected more than men (Haregewoin and Emebet, 2003, p. 7).

The level of protection of women's reproductive and health rights in Ethiopia is low (MOWA, 2006, p. 9). The Maternal Mortality Rate is 470 out of 100,000 births (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 1). Maternal health care services do not reach the majority of Ethiopian women; who are constrained by distance, lack of financial resources, and decision-making on use of family planning, mismatch between demand and supply, particularly contraception of choice, heavy workload; and cultural attitudes (MOWA, 2006, p. 9). The low rate of skilled birth attendance (18 percent), low contraceptive use, and high numbers of unsafe abortions are also some of the reproductive and health situation of women in Ethiopia (CEDAW concluding observation 2011, paragraph 34). Special health needs of women have not yet considered with the exception of the reproductive health issues (Haregewoin and Emebet, 2003, p. 6). Owing to the fact that in Ethiopia 1.5 million people have HIV/AIDS; more women than men are infected (5% vs. 3.8%) (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p.1).

Gender gap in education prevails at all levels of the system (MOWA, 2006, p. 8). There is a significant gender gap in literacy that is 18% for women vs. 42% for men particularly in rural areas (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 1). Primary education enrolment has been improving (80% of girls; 85% of boys) and is close to gender parity (0.94) (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012,

p. 1). Where as secondary enrolment is 11% of females, 17% of males (0.66 ratios) and tertiary enrolment is 2% of females; 5% of males (0.31 ratio) (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 1). Despite the fact that great progress have been made in access to primary education, improving access to secondary education remains a challenge (World Bank, 2009, p. 8).

In addition, women have subjected to violence unique to their sex that is widely prevalent (MOWA, 2006, p. 10). Violence against women including domestic violence, rape, marriage by abduction, and early marriage are quite widespread (World Bank, 2009, p. 9). FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) is still widely practiced (62.1% of 15-19 year olds) though awareness is growing about the associated harms (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 2). In addition, 49% of Ethiopian women experience physical violence and 59% experience sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 2).

Women's position in political and public sector is low. Women represent 27.8% (152 out of 547 seats) of the national legislature or House of People's Representative (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 1). In 2010, women made up 10% of Cabinet Ministers (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 1). Woman's opposition candidate was not elected to the House of Peoples' Representatives in the 2010 national election and that women continue to be underrepresented in senior positions in the government, the judiciary, and the diplomatic service; and only three out of 23 ministers of the current government are women (CEDAW Committee concluding observation, 2011, paragraph 26). As stated on CEDAW Committee concluding observation, 2011, paragraph 26, there are different factors for the low involvement of women in political life. For instance, as stated by CEDAW committee, "negative cultural attitudes, doubts about women's leadership capabilities, insufficient affirmative action in the form of quotas for women and capacity-building of potential candidates, women's limited interest due to lack of logistic support and limited financial resources are some of the most important one"(CEDAW Committee concluding observation, 2011, paragraph 26).

Women's access to information technology is minimal; with no access even to the radio, the most widely available information source for the majority of the rural population (Haregewoin and Emebet, 2003, p. 7). For example, in both 1995 and 2005 men were about twice as likely as

women to listen to radio although overall radio penetration remained very low (World Bank, 2009, p. 10).

From the general point of view, women in Ethiopia are found at disadvantageous position in the society and their rights were not well respected by the concerned body. Here, there is a connection between less progress in the promotion of their rights and their level of economic empowerment. For example, factors related to economic empowerment such as the highest poverty rate for women or “feminization of poverty”, their involvement in unpaid or low paid household chores, their share in the highest unemployment rate in comparison to their male counterparts all have their own implications for the observance of their fundamental rights. Specifically poverty has diverse impacts on the human rights of women. In line with this the 1995 Beijing platform of action in its paragraph 51 asserts that, “women’s lack of access to economic opportunities and autonomy; access to economic resources such as credit, land ownership, and inheritance; and access to education and support services are all closely associated with poverty”. The platform in the above mentioned specific paragraph also considers poverty as one factor which leads women to be vulnerable to sexual exploitation and also it is one of the factors for their less involvement in decision-making.

In addition to poverty, women’s disadvantageous position in the area of employment and job an opportunity has adverse effect on the realization of women’s rights. Women’s activity mostly attached to the household have its adverse impact on the realization of their basic rights. For instance, due to the gender division of labor in the family “by and large women remain responsible for great deal of unpaid work that ensure the survival and care of their families over time in addition to their involvement in paid employment”(Kabeer, 2012, p. 16). “Those unpaid work encompasses the care of children, the elderly, and the sick; domestic activities such as preparation of food and collection of fuel and water along with expenditure saving activities such as food production, livestock care, homestead farming, and so on” (Kabeer, 2012, p. 16). This situation forced women to work longer hours and exposing them to ‘time poverty’ (Kabeer, 2012, p. 16; SIDA, 2009, p. 6). Previously in Ethiopia, this overburden of unpaid housework or the phenomenon of time poverty affects for example, their political involvement and access to healthcare services (MOWA, 2006, p. 9). In addition, it affects women’s access to micro credit

services and other financial institutions; and infringes their rights to leisure time or results longer working days for women (UN, 2009, p. 31). It also restricts their ability to involve in paid and formal work (SIDA, 2009, p. 19; FAO et al, 2010, p. 84; Elsebeth Krogh et al, 2009, p. 137).

However, when women involved in labor market it has its possible contribution for the advancement of women's rights. Their involvement in paid employment is considered as one crucial issue that economically and socially empower women. It is also considered as a solution for the deprivation of their basic rights. Specifically, women's involvement in the labor market has also its own effect on the rights of women related with their household decision-making in terms of different ways (Sikod, 2007, p. 61; Bilisuma, 2011, p. 10). It is through increasing women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property, other productive assets, skills development, and market information (OECD, 2012). This is also in terms of changing the existing gender relation and gender roles in the household (Sikod, 2007, p. 61). Improvement in women's involvement in paid labor is also considered as one effective mechanism of "shifting the traditional terms of marital negotiation" or changing the existing hierarchical gender relation in the household (Braunstein, 2008, p. 7). Women's involvement in the labor force also creates an opportunity to have a close interaction with household property, which leads to greater equity in the dispensation of household resources in which such situations has its implication in their household decision-making (Sikod, 2007, p. 63). "Increased access to economic resources such as land and property will also give for women greater economic security" that enables women to involve in household decision particularly related to financial decision-making (SIDA, 2009, p. 19).

Additionally, women's involvement in labor force also improves women's decision-making power through improving their freedom and autonomy to involve in decision-making. Sen supports this idea which stated that when women involve in income earning activity, the situation supplements their freedom to involve in household decision making particularly decisions related to their home affairs including education, healthcare, reproductive control, and other social life (Christine M. Koggel, 2003, p. 164). For instance, women's involvement in income earning activity entails an expansion of women's choices in the domain of sexual and reproductive health including the reduction of gender-based violence, increases women's family-

planning possibilities, and slows the spread of HIV/AIDS (SIDA, 2009, p. 6). Women who involve in paid labor also enjoyed higher level of freedom to make decisions in most of their home affairs in comparison to those who do not involve in paid labor (Gopal and etal, 2012, p. 37). Women's involvement in wage employment allows women to gain self-esteem and confidence to take part in the area of household decision-making (Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2005, p. 8).

In addition, women's involvement in income generating activity improves their household decision making power in terms of "exposing women to external world; and helping them to develop new outlook towards life, new aspirations and awareness about their place in society" (Gopal and etal, 2012, p. 373-377). This shows that, women's involvement in income earning activities improves their access to information and increases their social interaction that helps women to compete in household decision-making.

In addition to those theoretical remarks, issues related to women's economic empowerment and women's rights to involve in decision making have legal and policy backgrounds. Various national polices of Ethiopia also assert that women's economic empowerment is one mechanism of achieving the government's policy and strategy of gender equality. Decision making rights of women at all levels including private level is an issue of national policies. Women's economic empowerment and the advancement of women's rights are the most relevant issues that are take in to consideration by those policies (MOWA, 2006, p. 1). The development of MSEs is also the major government's concern to achieve its aims of expanding medium and large-scale industries, open opportunities for employment generation, expansion of urban development, empowering women, and provide close support for further agricultural development (FDRE, GTP, Volume, 1. p. 24).

As it is mentioned earlier, women's involvement in income earning activity has its implication on their household decision-making power. However, there is a range of factors that affects the role of women's involvement in paid labor to improve their household decision-making. For example, those major constraints might be related to poverty. In addition, the influence of patriarchy and social norms are also the major constraints that retards the positive impacts of

women's involvement in the labor force to augment their decision-making right in the household (Braunstein, 2008, p. 6).

Various empirical evidences also made their own remarks about the limitations imposed by those factors and influences. For example, a study made in Ethiopia on women who involve in paid agricultural coffee plantation affirmed the existance of different economic, social, cultural, and other barriers (Sara Horrel et al, 2008, p. 99-100). These factores includes the seasonalty of the work, factros related to microeconomic polices or market forces, poverty, and social normes related to women's household provsioning responsibility (Sara Horrel et al, 2008, p. 99-100). Oyediran etal study also shows the situation that structural adjustment policy in the form of women's involvement in employment is hindered by increased poverty level which thereby reducing women's contribution to household resources which hindering the decision making power of women in the household (Oyediran et al, p. 137).

Owning to the above facts, there is the need to investigate appropriate strategies and ways in order to encounter the previously mentioned problems and create constructive opportunity for improvement of women's decision-making power in the household through their economic participation. There is the need to create an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment in order to achieve its objectives of poverty reduction, gender equality, and pro-poor growth (UN, 2009, p. 24). And those an enabling environment for the economic empowerment of women to achieve its objective including gender equality in the area of household decision-making could be achieved through different ways. For example, women's access to range of productive resources including land, housing, natural resources, infrastructure, and services is one critical issue, which resulted gender-equitable outcomes in the area of economic empowerment (UN, 2009, p. 24). In addition, there is the need to reduce gender discriminatory norms and practices through public participation and ensure that public institutions are accountable for putting gender rights into practice to overcome the obstacles that women face throughout the process of realization of women's economic empowerment (SIDA, 2009, p. 10).

This study tries to evaluate the impacts of women's involvement in paid labor on their household decision-making from the perspective of human rights by focusing on women who are involving in MSEs in DebreMarkos city found in Ethiopia. This is on the bases of the previously mentioned level of protection of women's rights in Ethiopia. In addition, it is based on the above theoretically stated implication of economic empowerment of women on the advancement of women's rights particularly in the area of household decision-making.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Women share almost half of the Ethiopian population. They also are being actively participating in different economic activities. However, compared with men, women in Ethiopia are still found at disadvantageous position in all respects; and they participate less in the country's economic, political, social, and cultural affairs (Economic Commission for Africa, 2009, p. 9). That gender inequalities presented in all sections represent violations of women's human rights (MOWA, 2006, P. 10). Women in Ethiopia are found also at low status and hierarchy in the society. Their rights were not well recognized, respected, and enforced by the concerned body.

Women's economic empowerment is one crucial issue as it is recognizes by various national and international policies and programs to achieve gender equality; and it is a human rights and social justice issue (SIDA, 2009, p. 6-7). "Women's economic empowerment is the single most important factor contributing to gender equality with its key indicator of entrepreneurship and private sector development" (SIDA, 2009, p. 6).

In terms of development approach, there was a change from WID to GAD approach. WID approach tended to view women as passive recipients of development assistance rather than as active agents in transforming their own economic, social, political, and cultural realities (Unit for the Promotion of the Status of Women and Gender Equality, 2000, p. 6). In WID approach, women's concerns have viewed in isolation as separate issues, which perpetuate women's marginalization in the state system and other social structures (Unit for the Promotion of the Status of Women and Gender Equality, 2000, p. 6). According to March et al, WID approach aims to include women in development projects in order to make the latter more effective;

whereas GAD approach aims to address inequalities in women's and men's social roles in relation to development (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008, p. 19). From the above we conceived that the GAD approach aims to make women more beneficial from development activities through struggling the existing gender gaps and social norms attached to women's and men's roles in development activities.

Different international and national policies, laws, and programs which are subscribed by Ethiopia are also assert that economic empowerment of women as the most relevant mechanism for the advancement of women's rights and the achievement of government's policy of gender equality. Despite such progress in policy formation and the increase number of women who involve in income earning activity, women in Ethiopia are still found be in a disadvantageous position in the country in terms of the realization of their basic rights. For example, despite the fact that women in the country have constitutional and conventional right to involve in decision-making, their involvement is limited at all levels (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008, p. 18). Mostly women in the country have the power to make decisions on issues related to the daily life of their family, but decisions related to large household purchases, social activities, and reproductive health issues are dominated by men (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008, p . 18).

It is stated that, women's involvement in the labor market have its own effect on the decision making power of women in the household (Sikod, 2007, p. 61; Bilisuma, 2011, p. 10). Access to resources or materials is one influential factor for the bargaining power of women in the household (Bilisuma, 2011, p. 10). Women's involvement in paid work has the power to alter the existing gender relation and women's position in the household (Sara Horrel and et al, 2008, p. 82). Women's access to resources, employment, household assets, and contribution to household property have its own implication for their decision making power in the household (Braunstein, 2008, p. 3; Sultana, 2011, p. 21). It believed that, economic stability is a powerful tool to increase an individual's options and choices in life (SIDA, 2009, p. 9).

Women's involvement in income earning activities improves their household decision-making power in various ways. For instance, diverse aspects of women's empowerment challenge

traditional sources of male power and the existing hierarchical gender relation (Braunstein, 2008, p. 12). According to Amartya Sen, women's involvement in paid labor has its implication on their household decision making in terms of increasing their freedom in domains such as the home, healthcare, education, reproductive control, and social and political life (Christine M. Koggel, 2003, p. 164). Economic Empowerment entails an expansion of women's choices, including those in the domain of sexual and reproductive health (SIDA, 2009, p. 15). "Increased access to economic resources such as land and property gives for women greater economic security" that enables them to make independent financial decision (SIDA, 2009, p. 19). Women's involvement in paid work also exposes women to external world and makes them to develop new outlook towards life, new aspirations, and awareness about their place in society that makes women to be competitive in decision-making (Gopal and etal, 2012, p. 373-377).

Women's involvement in income earning activities has its own implication in their household decision-making in terms of different ways. However, this is influenced by diverse factors. Among those factors, traditional norm found at the individual, household, or institutional level is the most important one. In relation to the influences of those norms, Kabeer on the bases of the feminist economist agenda more explain that individuals and groups make choices and exercise agency, but they do so within the limits imposed by the structural distribution of rules, norms, assets, and identities in their society (Kabeer, 2012, p. 11). Access to and control over the most income flowing into the household is always conceived as the most important factors which determine the bargaining positions that an individual have in the household (Hallward-Driemeier and Gajigo, 2011, p. 29). However, there are institutional environments that play considerable role in shaping power and consequently the bargaining position of individuals within the household (Hallward-Driemeier and Gajigo, 2011, p. 29).

Poverty is also another major factor for the possible role of economic involvement of women from achieving its objectives of gender equality particularly in the area of decision-making. The increase level of poverty that reduces women's contribution to household resources is one challenge that hinders the possible role that economic empowerment of women play to improve their household decision making power (Oyediran & Odusola, p. 137). In addition, the nature of the household is also another factor which determine the possible role of women's involvement

in income earning activity on their household decision making power. For instance, bargaining positions in the family is diverse from those households that are patriarchal in nature, which are commonly less than for those single female-headed household kinds, which has relatively better bargaining position in the family (Braunstein, 2008, p. 5). Therefore, this paper tries to see the above theoretically mentioned issue on women's involvement in income earning activity and its implication on their household decision-making power by focusing on women who involve in MSEs.

So far, no study has conducted on the human rights implications of women's involvement in MSEs in DebreMarkos city on their household decision making power. Therefore, this paper aims to address this research gap and tries to see empirically the human rights impact of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision making rights to help planners and government officials as well as future researchers.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to evaluate the human rights implications of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision-making power.

The study has also the following Specific objectives:

- To understand the way that women's involvement in MSEs improves their household decision making power from the perspectives of human right;
- To understand the challenges that prevent the positive human rights implications of women's participation on MSEs on their household decision making power;
- To understand that how those challenges affect the positive human rights implications of women's participation in MSE on their household decision making power;
- To examine the available mechanisms for the better promotion of women's rights related to household decision-making through their participation in MSE.

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

It is believed that this study contributes to our understanding of women's involvement in MSEs and its human rights impact on their household decision-making.

In short, the research is expected to:

- create awareness about the human rights implications of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision making power;
- create awareness about the impact of the dominant economic, social, cultural, and gender related challenges which affect positive human rights impact of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision-making power;
- help policy makers and human rights practitioners or planners who are concerned about the human rights implication of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision-making power of women at the regional or country level;
- stimulate further research in the area.

## **1.5. Methodology**

### **Source of the Data**

The study used both primary and secondary types of data collection methods. In-depth interview is used as predominate primary source of data collection method.

According to Kothari, "an interview method involves presentation of oral or verbal stimuli and replay in terms of oral or verbal responses" (Kothari, 2004, p. 997). Specifically in-depth interview is employed to gain rich qualitative data on a particular subject from the perspectives of selected individuals (Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2011, P.95). So, in this particular study Semi- structured interview was employed in order to acquire more detail answer from the respondent by raising exploratory questions. Therefore, in order to have deep understanding about the way that women's involvement in MSEs can enhance their household decision making rights by directly considering the the participants' voices in the study, in-depth interview is necessary.

In addition, key informant interview was conducted with three top government officials in Debremarkos city administration office. They were the officials of Debremarkos City Gender Office, Debremarkos City Labor and Social Affairs Office, and Debremrkos City TVED Office. These are selected purposively according to their familiarity with the case and with the assumption that they can properly answer the research question.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, the researcher also gathers information through personal observation and experience. The prior knowledge and facts that come after certain observation will use the researcher as one source of data collection. According to Kothari, “observational method is particularly suitable in studies that deal with subjects that have respondents who are not capable of giving verbal reports of their feelings for one reason or other” (Kothari, 2004, p. 96). But, the researcher in this study used observational method in order to uncover what the participants were not clearly remarks on their own voice; and what the researcher understands from the feeling of the participants which was considered as necessary to answer the research question. In addition, because of factors related to norms or cultures the participants were unable to make their own feelings on their voice. Further, the views’ of the participants sometimes have another connotation when it is understood through observation.

Unstructured observation was used which is relatively appropriate for exploratory study; and the observation is also uncontrolled which takes place in the natural setting without pre-arranged plans involving experimental procedures and representative criteria’s (Kothari, 2004, p. 96-97).

## **Method of Data Analysis**

The researcher in the process of the study employed qualitative method. The qualitative method uses to discover concepts and theories after data has collected. The social meaning people attributed to their experience, circumstance, and situation is the focus of qualitative research” (Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber etal, 2011, P. 4). Therefore, the researcher after collecting the data used qualitative method to uncover how women’s involvement in MSE affects their household decision-making power from the perspectives of human rights. Specifically, an inductive kind of data analysis was employed.

Coding is the main categorizing strategy in qualitative research (Maxwell, 2005, p. 96). However, Maxwell clearly stipulated that coding in qualitative research is different from coding in quantitative research, which more explained as follows:

*Coding in qualitative research is not applying a pre-established set of categories to the data according to explicit, unambiguous, rules, with the primary goal being to generate frequently count of items in each category like in quantitative research kind. Rather, it is the process of 'fracturing' the data and rearranging them in to categories. This is for facilitating the comparison between things in the same categories and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts. Additionally, organizing the data in to broader themes and issues is another form of categorizing analysis in qualitative research (Maxwell, 2005, p. 96).*

Creswell also stated that "the qualitative research, build their patterns, categories, and themes, from the bottom up by organizing the data in to increasingly more abstract unities of information and also the participants have a chance to shape the themes or abstractions that emerge from the process" (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). Therefore, in qualitative analysis, themes, and categories were developed after the data and information is collected from the field research, which is also, what the researcher employed. Martyn Hammersley also explained the nature of qualitative study which do not simply render reality in sense of capturing and displaying, rather it selectively collect and interpret data and formulating what is observed and organizing it under categories (Hammersley, 2010, p. 44)

### **Sampling Technique**

According to Maxwell, despite the fact that sampling is problematic in a qualitative study because the term sampling implies the purpose of representing the population sampled, purposeful sampling, or criterion based selection is the appropriate typical sampling method in qualitative research that has more explained as follows:

*In a qualitative research, the typical ways of selecting settings and individuals is neither probability sampling nor convenience sampling. Rather it falls in to third category, which*

*called purposeful sampling, or criterion based selection. These are strategies in which a particular settings, person's, or activities are selected deliberately in order; to gain information that cannot be gotten as well from other choices and to gain information that can answer the research question (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88)*

Owing to the above facts, the study used non-probability sampling techniques particularly purposive or judgmental sampling method. This kind of sampling method was used for the researcher to select the most important and representative samples, which are relevant to answer the research questions.

In terms of approaches or strategies of inquiry, Case Study method was utilized to explore data from the participant's point of view. According to Creswell, "case study method is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a program, event, activity, processes or one or more individuals" (Creswell, 2009, p. 13). In this particular study, the case that has analyzed is the situation or activity of participating in MSEs in terms of advancing the rights of women related to household decision making.

### **Sampling Design**

DebreMarkos city was purposively selected as research site. This is with the assumption that the availability of considerable amount of subjects in the study area.

In terms of data collection procedures, the views of a total number of 20 women and three stakeholders from government official in the city were organized. In addition, some participants specifically those 1 and 2 women who involve in Hen Husbandry and Construction (*Couple Stone Nitaf*) respectively were interviewed at their home. This is for protecting the participants' safety; more accessibility of their home in comparison to their working space; and by considering the situation of over burden of work at their working space. One woman who involve on Hen Husbandry also interviewed around Debremarkos city administration office in her stay to consult gender office official about her business. In spite of this, the majority of the participants have been interviewed at their working space.

Assistants for the data collection for individual participant and key stakeholder or government official were available. Specifically, one assistant who is a staff member of Debreworkos city administration office supported the researcher to collect documents and information's from main key stakeholders. Despite, the availability of those assistants the main data is collected by the researcher herself. In line with qualitative procedures about who collect the data, Creswell asserts that, the researchers themselves are key instruments for collecting the data through examining documents; observing behaviors or interviewing participants (Creswell, 2009, p. 175; Maxwell, 2005, p. 88).

## **1.6. Validity and Reliability**

According to Gibbs, "qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researchers approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects" as cited on Creswell (Creswell, 2009, p. 190).

"Triangulate of multiple source of information by examining evidences from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes" is one means of validating the finding according to Creswell (Creswell, 2009, p. 191). Whereas another means of validating the data is that "the use of member checking through taking the final report or specific description or themes to the participants, or case analyses, findings, and determining whether those participants feel that they are accurate" (Creswell, 2009, p. 191). Therefore, the researcher tried to ensure validity by using multiple source of information such as interview, personal observation, and document analysis. In addition, the researcher uses follow up mechanisms by remembering some important generalized issues or themes on the bases of previous interview and asking them to make their own outlooks towards that issue. Use of rich or thick description to convey the finding; clarify the bias; present negative information; spend prolonged time in the field; and cross check finding with previous literature; are some of the most important instruments of validity according to Creswell(Creswell, 2009, p. 191-192). Therefore, the researcher of this study also tried to apply the above-mentioned mechanisms to ensure the validity of the study. According to Maxwell, long-term involvement, intensive interview, and rich data provide to

collect more complete data about specific situation (Maxwell, 2005, p. 110). In short, the following methods are the most considerable instruments of validity in which the researcher take in to consideration:

*Respondent validation that ruling out the possibilities of participants misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspectives they have on and what is going on is one mechanism of ensuring validity. Whereas, identifying the researcher own biases and misunderstanding of what he/she has observed are also important mechanism of ensuring validity. Searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases; and triangulation that is collecting information from diverse range of individuals and settings, and using a variety of methods are also additional instruments of validity (Maxwell, 2005, p. 111-112).*

According to Gibbs, “careful transcription, consistency in meaning of codes before and during the process of coding, and crosschecking codes developed by other researcher are some of procedures that ensure reliability of the data” as cited on Creswell (Creswell, 2009, p. 190), and what the researcher was take in to consideration.

## **1.7. Limitation of the Study**

The major limitation of the study was the time constraint given in order to answer the given research questions. Since the kind of data analyses is qualitative method, it needs a long amount of time to get deep understanding about the issue. Another limitation of the study is that the unwillingness of some participants to actively participate and share real life situation during the interview because of level of literacy and cultural constraint. Since the medium of communication used during data collection stage was Amharic local language, the researcher faces difficulty in translating participants own direct terms in to English. Owing to those limitations, the researcher arranged assistants for the data collection and used simple kinds of data categorization, coding, and interpretation to overcome time limitation. The researcher also asked the full consent of the participant and tried to make them familiar with the issue before interview to avoid their unwillingness to participate and share real life situation on the interview. In addition, the researcher tried to carefully transcribe and record the data during interview.

## **1.8. Ethical Considerations**

The researcher tried to respect the honor and dignity of the participant. According to Creswell, making sure that any participants should not put at risk and respect the vulnerable participants are the most relevant ethical issues in data collection (Creswell, 2009, p. 89). In all stages of the research, a high emphasis was given for ethical consideration. The researcher tried to clarify the purpose of the research and asked the participants willingness to participate on the interview. Priori verbal consultation of the participant to know their full willingness has considered before the data has being collected from each participant. Making informed consent form for participants to certify their agreement before their involvement in the research is one of the ethical issues by which the researcher also takes in to consideration (Creswell, 2009, p. 89). By considering this issue, the researcher of this paper also checked the full consent of the participants to convey information through verbal agreement. No interview has been conducted without the full agreement of the each participant. The purpose of the study as an academic research that have not used for any other purpose has clearly disclosed for the participants. The researcher also honestly stated for the participants that their names or other personality is anonymous. The researcher has been also tried to present the participants' own concepts, quotes without ignorance of the voices' of the participants. The researcher tried to make the participants more beneficial, rather than rising treat to the participants.

## **1.9. Organization of the Study**

The paper includes five chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction part in which it deals with statement of the problem, objectives of the study, limitation of the study, scope of the study, and methodology of the study, and validity and reliability of the study. Whereas, chapter 2 discusses conceptual framework and reviews of related literature in relation to the issue of women's participation in MSEs and its impact on the rights of women in decision-making power in the household. Chapter 3 discusses about the legal and policy frameworks on the issue. Chapter 4 tries to deal with data presentation and analysis. Chapter 5 includes summary and conclusion and finally shows recommendation.

### **1.10. Scope of the Study**

The study has its own specific scope in terms of its subject, time, and geographical area. The theoretical focus of the study covered women's involvement in income earning activity and its impact on their household decision-making power. In terms of terminology, women are considered as they participate in decision making if they usually make that decision alone or jointly with their husbands. This is by considering the report of the CSA that has based on 2011 EDHS. Consequently the finding focused only on the human rights impact of women's participation in MSE and implication on the decision making power of women in the household. So, diverse literatures and empirical investigation of the study are only confined to the subjects mentioned above. In terms of geographical focus, DebreMarkos city has selected as a research site. The time scope of the study was delimited to participants' experience before their involvement in MSE, and after their involvement in the sector.

## Chapter.2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Concept of Economic Empowerment

Diverse literatures defined economic empowerment in different ways. For example, SIDA working paper defined women's economic empowerment "as a process that increases women's real power over economic decisions that influences their lives and priorities in society" (SIDA, 2009, p. 7). Others for instance kidist et al also assert the need to re-conceptualize women's economic empowerment in terms of its quality rather than merely considering women's economic participation as an economic empowerment of women (kidist et al, 2012, p. 14). They conceptualize women's economic empowerment as "women's ability to become employed or start and grow businesses; of whether women earn enough to allow them to satisfy basic needs and access services; and their ability to take decisions about wider matters, for instance, about how they spend their earnings and other household decisions" (kidist et al, 2012, p. 14).

Different writers also argue that women's economic empowerment is not the merely aspect of women's access to economic resources; rather it also includes women's ability to change their own social, economic, cultural, and other experience.

Kabeer tried to conceptualize women's empowerment based on feminist scholars such as Sen and Grown (1988); Moser (1989); Batliwala (1993), Kabeer (1994), Rowlands (1997) and Agarwal (1994), in which those of the above added their own efforts to move the concerns of women's empowerment onto GAD agenda (Kabeer, 2012, p. 5). According to kabeer, "the above feminist scholars contributions drew attention to the unequal power relations which blocked women's capacity to participate in and help to influence development processes and highlighted the nature of the changes that might serve to promote this capacity at both individual and collective level"(Kabeer, 2012, p. 5). She mentioned several features that distinguished the contributions of previously mentioned feminist scholars that have broadly stated as follows:

*First, there was a focus on women's subjectivity and consciousness ('the power within') as a critical aspect of the processes of change. Secondly, they emphasized the importance*

*of valued resources (material, human as well as social) to women's capacity to exercise greater control over key aspects of their lives and to participate in the wider societies ('the power to'). Thirdly, these contributions attached a great deal of significance to the need for women to come together collectively as women, both to acquire a shared understanding of the institutionalized (rather than individual and idiosyncratic) nature of the injustices they faced and to act collectively to tackle these injustices, a challenge beyond the capacity of uncoordinated individual action. Processes of empowerment were seen to have a strong collective dimension ('the power with'). Finally, these contributions recognized that women did not form a homogenous group. Gender inequalities intersected with other forms of socio-economic inequality, including class, caste, race, ethnicity, location and so on, frequently exacerbating the injustices associated with them (Kabeer, 2012, p. 5-6).*

Therefore, economic empowerment of women could be understood in the context of the fulfillment and coordinated effects of the above preconditions and standards. As discussed earlier, Kabeer's definition of economic empowerment of women "gives more emphasis on women's ability to exercise choice which incorporates three interrelated dimensions; resources, agency, and achievements" (Sara Noreen, 2011, 318).

In addition to the above, Kabeer tries to conceptualize the term economic empowerment by drawing attention to the importance of analyzing it based on the terms of engagement in to the labor market, which focus on the existence of the other side of the role of market forces in perpetuating rather than mitigating inequality (Kabeer, 2012, p. 8). The above remark is based on the emerged criticism which argued that purely market-generated growth could not on its own generate theoretically mentioned definition of economic empowerment in which the terms of involvement of poor women and men integrated to market force is different from other rich one (Kabeer, 2012, p. 8). This leads to one to conclude that, within the free market economic system; there is the need to further policy intervention in terms of access to market in land, labor, and capital for investments in basic social services, social protection, and infrastructure to address the theoretically agreed concept of economic empowerment in the real live situation (Kabeer, 2012, p. 9).

(Ackerly, 1995) and (Kishor, 2000a) suggest that empowerment as a process cannot be measured directly but only through proxies such as health, educational level, knowledge, and employment as cited on Malhotra et al (Malhotra et al, 2002, p. 19). That is conceptualizing women's empowerment is explained through women's progress and level of wellbeing in the area of education, employment, or health status. In addition as stated on the SIDA working paper, "economic empowerment of women as a process is contingent upon available resources and whether women have the skills to use them; access to economic opportunities; and control over economic benefits that can be used to achieve positive change" (SIDA, 2009, p. 6). Therefore, women's economic empowerment is explained and determined through a change in social, economic, and other status of women.

For others, empowerment of women means "to let women survive and let them live a life with dignity, humanity, respect, self-esteem, and self-reliance" (Sara Noreen, 2011, 318). Women's economic empowerment is also "multidimensional concept, which includes women's ability to control resources, her ability to choose and control different outcomes, and level of women's self-esteem" (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008, P. 10). In addition, it has been believed as a powerful tool to change the overall social, economic, and cultural lives of the women. As stated on SIDA working paper, "economic empowerment puts women in a stronger position and gives them the power to participate together with men in shaping of society, to influence development at all levels of society, and to make decisions that promote their families and their own well-being"(SIDA, 2009, p. 9). The economic empowerment of women is a human rights and social justice issue; it reduces poverty; it strengthens economic growth; and it can achieve development (SIDA, 2009, p. 13).

According to OECD-DAC report, "women's economic empowerment is a prerequisite for sustainable development, pro-poor growth and the achievement of all the MDGs and it is about rights and equitable societies" (OECD, 2012). Women's economic empowerment is conceived as the most important mechanism, which can achieve gender equality and ensure equitable distribution of resources in which the Ethiopian government also tries to take policy measures to achieve this goal (Ogato, 2013, p. 359). Women's economic empowerment is both a right and

“smart economics” (OECD, 2012). So the issue of economic empowerment of women is not only the concern of development or mechanism of ensuring the economic opportunity of women, rather it is also the rights and social justice issue. This is in the way “economic empowerment increases women’s access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property, and other productive assets, skills development and market information” (OECD, 2012).

To sum up, having the complexities of influences, economic empowerment of women through their involvement in the labor market may not fully empower women in the real life situation. This is because of the fact that, merely increasing access to labor markets does not necessarily address the terms on which poor women and men enter different market arenas or their ability to negotiate a fairer deal for themselves (Kabeer, 2012, p. 8). This is also because of the existence of the complex influential factors such as the market forces and the existing traditional norms, which encumbered the possible role of women’s involvement in economic activity from socially and economically empowering them. Those factors should also be taken in to account in the analysis of the progress of women’s rights or improvement of their status through their involvement in the labor market. There is also a need to investigate new opportunities that can achieve the theoretically agreed concept of economic empowerment of women through their involvement in the labor market. For instance, “women’s economic empowerment could be achieved through equal access to and control over critical economic resources and opportunities, and the elimination of structural gender inequalities in the labor market including a better sharing of unpaid care work” (SIDA, 2009, p. 6). In addition, it can be achieved through “facilitating the increase in supply of gender-sensitive business development opportunities; and increasing and diversifying access to finance for women including microfinance” (Elsebeth Krogh et al, 2009, p. 133). Further, there is the need to “support organizations that promote women entrepreneurs in informal and formal economy and non-state actors in sensitizing governments to the need for tackling cultural and social barriers” (Elsebeth Krogh et al, 2009, p. 133).

## **2.2. Women's Involvement in the Labor Market and Its Effect on Their Household Decision Making**

### **2.2.1. General Effect**

Employment has its influence on the decision-making power of women in the household. Education and employment have been commonly considered as most important mechanisms of achieving women's empowerment and women's autonomy (Ethiopian society of population studies, 2008, p. 11). Education and employment have considered as indirect indicators of empowerment, which have the characteristics of influencing women's access to and control over resources (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008, p. 37). Mahmuda on the bases of multiple regression analyses also found out that education and employment have a positive effect on women's involvement in family decision-making as cited on Sultana (Sultana, 2011, p. 21). Braunstein also asserts that one's involvement in a job and income provisioning capacity for the household is the most important determinant factor that influences once decision-making power in the household (Braunstein, 2008, p. 3). In other words, decision-making within the household depends on the endowments of the parties, resources, or materials (Sikod, 2007, p. 61; Bilisuma, 2011, p. 10). "Asset is the most important indicators found in the household that has seen as important elements of household or individual ownership and means of empowerment" (Bilisuma, 2011, p. 10). Others also evidenced the fact that "when women undertake paid work or devote their time to childcare and housework for other household members for certain benefit this altered role have consequences for women's position in the household" (Sara Horrel et al, 2008, p. 82).

Women's involvement in paid labor improves their household decision-making in different ways. It ranges from challenging the traditional gender norms up to improving the different kinds of decision making in the household. For instance, employment has conceived as more effective in shifting the traditional terms of marital negotiation in comparison to other variables like education (Braunstein, 2008, p. 7). Further, "different aspects of women's economic empowerment confront traditional sources of male power in different ways" (Braunstein, 2008, p. 12), which have its implication on the decision making power of women in the household. As

proxies of women's empowerment "women who are educated, employed, and exposed to the media are likely to be better equipped with the information and the means needed to function effectively in the modern world "(Ethiopian society of population studies, 2008, p. 10-11). The above factors have expected to influence women's independent choices, abilities, status, as well as their attitudes towards the traditional gender relations and roles (Ethiopian society of population studies, 2008, p. 11).

Another term of improvement of women's household decision-making through their participation in paid labor is that their involvement in paid labor creates a certain sort of freedom for women to involve in decision-making. In line with this, the works of Amartya Sen also used as another explanation which supports the idea that "increasing women's freedom to work outside the home is crucial for increasing their freedom in domains such as the home, healthcare, education, reproductive control, social, and political life" (Christine M. Koggel, 2003, p. 164). On the reverse Sen argues that "women's long and continued exclusion from the workforce has limited their freedom " (Christine M. Koggel, 2003, p. 164). Here, Christine M. Koggel expresses Sen's idea of interpreting women's involvement in outside jobs as one mechanism of enlarging women's freedom and choice to involve in household decision-making process. Economic stability increases an individual's options and choices in life (SIDA, 2009, p. 9).

Lin Lhibin, based on survey of households conducted in two townships; on capacity or opportunity; women's role in decision-making in the household and the community; case studies in China also find out that as women's income increased, their role to involve in household decision-making also increased as cited on UN Secretariat General Report (Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2005, p.8). Lin Lhibin's study as stated on report of UN secretariat general revealed that:

*When the contribution of women to the purchase of agricultural inputs increased, their share in decision-making increased from 25 to 29 per cent and when the labor input of women to marketing increased from 47 to 56 per cent, their share in related decision-making increased from 53 to 61 percent (Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2005, p. 8).*

The above quantitative explanation revealed that as women's involvement in marketable labor or their contribution in the share of household expenditure is being increasing, their decision making power in the household is also being increasing.

In specific country context in Ethiopia, the report of the CSA based on EDHS also revealed that lack of assets is the major responsible factor which makes women to be vulnerable to various forms of violence and affects their decision making power in the family (CSA, 2012, p. 252). The above report also shows that, women who have employed for cash income are more likely than women who have not employed to involve in decision-making (CSA, 2012, p. 255). Women's economic involvement and enhancement of their socio-economic life experience is also being taken in to consideration in the planning of different national policies of Ethiopia. For example, Ethiopia GTP remarks the need to implement development packages of women and youth in a way to guarantee socio economic and political involvement and benefit of women and youths (FDRE GTP, 2010, p. 12). According to this, women's involvement in development activities should advances the social, economic, cultural, political, and other status of women.

However, diverse literatures also acknowledged the existence of constraints which limited the possible role of women's involvement in paid labor on the decision making power of women in the household. For instance, the study of Sara Horrel et al evidenced the existence of constraints that restricted the role of women's involvement in the labor market to alter the existing gender relation found in the household (Sara Horrel et al, 2008, p. 100). Kabeer, also believed that, "formal regular waged work has the greatest transformative potential for women, but she argues that this potential has remained limited because of the lack of creation of decent jobs and because of segmentation of labor markets" (Kabeer, 2012, p. 3). She more explained the feminist economists critics that "individuals and groups make choices and exercise agency, but suggest that they do so within the limits imposed by the structural distribution of rules, norms, assets, and identities between different in their society in which these constraints contribute to the gendered pattern of labor market outcomes "(Kabeer, 2012, p. 12).

Study made in Nigeria also supposed that as a more women are involved in income earning activities, the situation has its effect on the decision making power of women in the household

(Oyediran & Odusola, p. 115). But, according to Oyediran and etal, the data do not support the above hypotheses because of the fact that, after the introduction of SAP, poverty level has increased thereby reducing women's contribution to household resources which hinder the decision making power of women in the household (Oyediran & Odusola, p. 137). Poverty also resulted a self-perpetuating cycle that paves an opportunity for the solidification of already existing gender biases which restricted the possible role of women's involvement in the labor market to improve their decision making power in the household (FAO et al, 2010, P. 88). Poverty also prevents women to have an access to credit to purchase property and productive inputs that prevents women from making financial decisions in the household (FAO et al, 2010, P. 88).

The above Oyediran & Odusola study believed that, despite the constraints of poverty, women's involvement in income earning activities improves their decision making power in the household. The authors also recommend the need of some policy considerations such as the need to mainstream gender targeting in poverty eradication, ensure gender responsive budgeting in development management, promotion of improved women's education, and women's gainful employment in higher income generation sectors (Oyediran & Odusola, p. 137). Here, the study shows the positive correlation between women's involvement in income earning activity and decision-making power. However, according to Oyediran et al, the low level of income gained from those activities is hindrance that retards women from participating in household decision-making.

### **2.2.2. Economic Effect**

Women's involvement in income earning activities has its economic implication to improve their household decision-making. For instance, "women who are participating in income earning activities are more consulted in decision making in the household particularly in financial decisions" (2007, Skoid, p. 70). In addition, according to Sultana "women's economic contribution to the household financial expenditure makes it more evident for themselves and for their husbands that they should have a say in how the money is spent" (Sultana, 2011, p. 21). Women's involvement in paid labor ensures their ownership of property and role to contribute in

household expenditure that makes women to be agents of economic decision making in the household.

This is also in the way that “increased access to economic resources such as land and property will give for women greater economic security” (SIDA, 2009, p. 19). That means as much as women have an access to resources; they have a better choice to make financial decision.

### **2.2.3. Socio-Cultural Effect**

Women’s involvement in labor market has its own social and cultural implication to improve women’s household decision making right. For instance, a study made in India stated that:

*Women’s involvement in income earning activities helped women to realize their potential, broaden their outlook, create a new meaning in their lives, and play a crucial role in the family by shouldering the responsibilities of the family. In addition, it exposes women to external world, and it makes women to be liable to develop new outlook towards life, new aspirations, and awareness about their place in society (Gopal and etal, 2012, p. 373-377).*

The above study revealed that when women involve in income generating activities, the situation broadens their social interaction outside the home and increases their sense of accountability for household matters which by implication augments their decision making power in the household. The study also revealed based on its quantitative analyses that, women who involve in paid labor enjoyed a higher level of freedom to make decisions in most of their home affairs when compared to those who are not joined the labor market (Gopal and etal, 2012, p. 378). When women join in paid labor, the situation improves their freedom and autonomy to involve in household decision-making.

Women’s involvement in income earning activities also creates a better opportunity for them to decide in household social matters like decision related to reproductive health and family planning, which is more explain as follows:

*Empowerment entails an expansion of women’s choices, including those in the domain of sexual and reproductive health like the reduction of gender-based violence, increases*

*women's family-planning possibilities, and slows the spread of HIV/Aids (SIDA, 2009, p. 6).*

Wage employment augments self-confidence of the participant women that have its contribution for improving the women's right to involve in decision-making in the household. For example, the report of the UN Secretary-General stated that "wage employment allows women to get out of the relative isolation of the home or their small rural communities and gain self-esteem and confidence" (UN Secretary-General, 2005, p. 8). The report supported this by considering quantitative empirical research made by Paul-Majumder and Begum, on garment and textile manufacturing in the Dhaka Export Processing Zone in Bangladesh, which stated based on the interview conducted that more than 90 per cent of female garment workers interviewed had high self-esteem (UN Secretary-General, 2005, p. 8).

## **2.3. The Challenge of Gender Norms**

### **2.3.1. The Concept of Gender Norms**

According to Braunstein, "gender norms are the traditional structures of gender and kinship that constitute the meaning and social expectations of women and men in the household" (Braunstein, 2008, p. 3). Those norms are not constant rather they change from time to time and they typically change throughout the course of women's or household's life cycle (Braunstein, 2008, p. 3). Gender-specific structures of constraints or gender norms have generally conceptualized as follows:

*Gender-specific structures of constraints refer to the social norms, values, and practices that define inequalities between women and men in a society. It also means that allocating different roles and responsibilities and assigning a lower value to those aptitudes, capabilities, and activities conventionally associated with women (UN, 2009, p. 5).*

Those norms have their own influences to shape the conduct, behavior, and expectation of man and women. In addition, they have their own impositions in the observance of fundamental rights of women. For example, the CEDAW Committee in its general recommendation number 21

obligates for the States parties to recognize “the importance of culture and tradition in shaping the thinking and behavior of men and women and the significant part they play in restricting the exercise of basic rights by women”.

Gender related norms can express in a variety of ways. For example, there is the general pattern that women have less personal autonomy, fewer resources at their disposal, and limited influence over the decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives (OECD, 2012). There exist also norms, which makes restrictions on women’s movement in the public domain (UN, 2009, p. 6). Such traditional norms or expectations about attributes or behaviors appropriate to women or men would develop from tradition, religion, history, and culture (OECD, 2012). According to the authors for OECD 2009 report, those cultural and traditional based beliefs and norms might totally prevent women from participating in the labor market (Elsebeth Krogh et al, 2009, p. 137). For instance, according to them, in many cultures, there is little or no acceptance of women taking up employment in society, in families, among employers and even among women themselves (Elsebeth Krogh et al, 2009, p. 137). In addition, although women participate in wage labor; their labor force contribution is not used to develop their own socio-economic and other personal status because of the existence of patriarchal gender norms. For instance, “in extremely patriarchal societies where women have no voice, working for a wage contributes only to family income and purchases as controlled by the male household head”(Kabeer, 2012, p. 5).

In addition, those norms exist at the individual, household, and institutional level. However, those norms found in the above different level have also reinforced each other in which one may developed from the other. For example, the norms, values, and practices associated with the intrinsically gendered relations of family, kinship, and community have further reinforced through public domains of states and markets or other institutions (Kabeer, 2012, p. 13).

Those norms have their own deep-rooted consequences even in the area of economic empowerment of women. Feminist economics more broadly focuses and criticizes the agendas of women’s empowerment in terms of its failure to address the issues of the existing gender norms found in different level. Kabeer argument here is closely associated with the feminist economics

drawing attention to “the existing unequal power relations that blocked women’s ability to participate in development process to change their own social, economic, and cultural experience” (Kabeer, 2012, p. 5). According to Kabeer, “feminist economists acknowledges that individuals and groups make choices and exercise agency, but suggest that they do so within the limits imposed by the structural distribution of rules, norms, assets, and identities between different in their societies”(Kabeer, 2012, p. 11). The main argument of feminist economics is that women’s empowerment has the possible role to change the social, cultural, and other aspect of the women themselves, but that possible role is restricted to existing structural gender norms found in the household (Kabeer, 2012, p. 12).

The influence of those norms and the existing patriarchal gender relations on women’s economic empowerment is also common in Ethiopia. One of the outstanding common and root cause of low status of women is also deep-rooted patriarchal culture that ascribes low status to women in Ethiopian (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008, p. 53).

The decision-making right of women in the household is also influenced by those norms. That is, the decision-making by itself is not neutral to such societal norms; rather it is a socially determined concept that is determined by a variety of factors including the existing gender relation found in the household. According to Braunstein, voice is the socially determined capability women have to transmit a given bargaining position into power in the family; and it ranges between zero (for social norms that completely prohibit women from expressing themselves and their wants and needs) and one indicating a single female-headed household (Braunstein, 2008, p. 5).

Those traditional norms which may be gender related or other have their own influence on women’s involvement in paid labor to augment their decision making power in the household. For instance, “those gendered power structures and social norms might lock women’s productivity and their ability to choose the lives they want to live” (SIDA, 2009, p. 8). In addition, “tradition gives for women less decision-making power, and less control over assets than for men” (Sikod, 2007, p. 65). In addition, “women’s opportunities to involve in remunerative activities and to acquire their own assets are more limited” (Sikod, 2007, p. 65).

The above situation limited women's ability in access to and control over economic resources that retards women to involve in financial and other household decision making.

Therefore, in order to ensure the advancement of women's decision-making power in the household through their involvement in income earning activities, there is a need to question those norms. A recommendation made by report of the UN Secretary-General also affirms "the need to dismantle those values, structures, and processes that maintain women's subordination and that are used to justify inequality in access to political, social, and economic resources to fully empower women"(Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2005, p. 8). Particularly in countries like Ethiopia that has characterized as patriarchal society (Haregewoin and Emebet, 2003, p. 10), there is the need to question those norms and traditions for the advancement of women's rights.

The CEDAW Committee also affirms the existence of those norms in Ethiopia despite the fact that efforts made by the States parties to eliminate discriminatory attitudes and harmful practices affecting women. It acknowledges the existence of adverse cultural norms, practices, and traditions as well as patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities, and identities of women and men in all spheres of life (CEDAW concluding observation, 2011, paragraph 18). The Committee in this concluding observation also concerned about the fact that, "those customs and practices perpetuate discrimination against women and are reflected in women's disadvantageous and unequal status in many areas including in public life and decision-making, economic life, sexual and reproductive health, and in marriage and family relations". The Committee also expresses the failure of States parties to take sufficient, sustained, and systematic action to modify or eliminate stereotypes and negative cultural values and harmful practices.

The CEDAW Committee also in its concluding observation obligates the States parties to take a comprehensive strategy to eliminate harmful practices and stereotypes that discriminate against women. For instance, it obligates for the States parties "to include more concerted efforts in collaboration with civil society to educate and raise awareness about this subject targeting women and men at all levels of society especially at the Woreda and Keble levels; and

community and religious leaders’’(CEDAW concluding observation, 2011, paragraph 19). It also recommends for the States parties to use innovative measures for the aim of strengthening the understanding of the equality of women and men including their equal rights to participate in public life and decision-making. The Committee also obligates the States parties ‘‘to strengthen women’s right related to own land and livestock, freely make their sexual and reproductive health choices; and freely choose a spouse and enter into marriage; and continue to work with the media to enhance a positive and non-stereotypical portrayal of women’’. The CEDAW Committee in this concluding observation also obligates States parties to undertake an assessment of the impact of those measures in order to identify shortcomings and improve them accordingly.

### **2.3.2. Institutional Level Gender Norms**

There are norms that exist at the institutional level, which present on the market, state, religious organization, and financial institution, which are not guided by single individual. According to Kabeer, ‘‘unlike the relations of family and kinship, the norms related to institutions of states and markets are purportedly impersonal’’ (Kabeer, 2012, p. 13). Those institutional level gender norms become ‘bearers of gender’ according to Whitehead, 1979 ‘‘when they reflect and reproduce preconceived notions about masculinity and femininity as routine aspects of their rules, procedures, and practices’’ as cited on Kabeer (Kabeer, 2012, p. 13). In addition ‘‘when institutions’ principal actors reflect and reinforce consciously or unconsciously gender-specific constraints, discriminatory norms and values which impose restrictions on women’s choices, institutions become bearers of patriarchy’’(UN, 2009, p. 6). For instance, ‘‘discriminatory state laws, policies, and programs can reproduce gender inequalities through the assumptions that men’s primary wage-earning roles and women’s domestic roles which often bear no resemblance to reality’’(UN, 2009, p. 6). In addition, according to Kabeer, ‘‘the resilience of gender-related constraints on women’s labor market choices also partly reflected the fact that formal regulations frequently reproduced and reinforced the gender-specific constraints rooted in the inherently gendered relations of family and kinship’’(Kabeer, 2012, p. 39).

Given the dominance of patriarchal ideologies that laws and regulations often remain gender unequal (FAO et al, 2010, p. 85). There for, in addition to those social and cultural based

structural barriers to women's employment, the extent to which political and legal frameworks are conducive for women's employment are key influential factors which determine women's labor market choices (Elsebeth Krogh et al, 2009, p. 137). Thus, beyond restricting by cultural expectations and ideologies regarding their activities, women are also disadvantageous in the existence of laws that preclude or constrain their access to land, livestock, productive inputs and finance (FAO et al, 2010, p. 85).

Institutional level gender norms have its own limitations on the decision making power of women who involve in income earning activities. Hallward-Driemeier et al explanation also asserts that, although women's positions in intra-household income contribution have its role on their right in household bargaining power in Ethiopia, but it is restricted by the existing institutional challenges, which has explained as follows:

*While bargaining positions have traditionally viewed from by whom the most income flowing into the household controls, the institutional environment can also play a significant role in shaping power and consequently the bargaining position of individuals within households (Hallward-Driemeier and Gajigo, 2011, p. 29).*

This is so for example, although women were allowed to involve in income earning activities, they have a less link to social institutions like the bank and other informal financial institutions. In addition, saving money and social interaction outside the household are considered as traditionally the role of household head that is commonly a man. This traditional assumption constraints women to have less control and access to economic resources like finance and lets women to have less social awareness outside the household which have its own implication on the decision making power of women in the household.

Therefore, in order to promote women's rights particularly related to household decision making through economic empowerment, there is the need to question those norms found at the institutional level. One of a precondition for the effective economic empowerment of women to promote gender equality and protection of women's rights is increased accountability by the concerned body and systematic transformation of institutions that is "institutions questioning and changing their goals, strategies, and working processes" (SIDA, 2009, p. 12).

### 2.3.3. Household Level Gender Norms

There are also norms at the household level that restricted the possible role of economic empowerment of women to augment their decision-making power in the household. An economic empowerment of women may not have significant positive influence on their household decision making, if there exist gender norms in the household. On the contrary “ economic empowerment is more likely to have strong empowerment effect where there is less gender inequality and gender norms to begin” (Braunstein, 2008, p. 12).

Although women’s involvement on paid employment has its own contribution on the decision making power of women in the household, those who are participating were influenced by other norms related to women’s ability to pass their voice in the household. There are also household level norms about women’s consumption and intra-household income distribution. Even though men earn higher incomes than women do, they tend to use their incomes for various individualistic purposes; they can decide when, where, and how to spend their incomes, but women’s income is mostly used for household consumption (Tena, 2006, p. 19). The above situations are preventing women from making decisions related to their personal health, from broadening their future occupational choice, and from making decision on large-scale household purchase.

In addition, the existence of power gaps that are evident within the household has implication for both women’s economic decision-making and resource allocation in the household (Sikod, 2007, p. 69). Another household level gender norm is the fact that, the major decision maker in the household has conceived as the function of household head that is commonly men in the case of those male-headed kinds of families. Such kinds of norms that have a diverse impact for women to involve in decision-making are also common in Ethiopia. A study based on in-depth analysis of the Ethiopian demographic and health survey of 2005 broadly discusses the existing gender related norms at the household level found in Ethiopia as a hindrance that limited women from participating in household decision-making, which stated as follows:

*Since in most cases the major “bread winner” of the household is the man of the house and the contribution of the woman in maintaining the family is not counted as income*

*generating work and thus less important, the final decision regarding use of household resources has made by men. In addition, in many of the cultures it has expected that men make the decisions and women follow them without any question. In extreme cases, women have not even permitted to give their opinion regarding important economic decisions. It has considered that it is not their place to participate in such matters. Their role is limited to raising children and maintaining the family. In some cultures where dowry is paid by men as bride money for marriage, it is perceived that women are owned by husbands and all decision making rights in the household are that of husbands in which Gambella is a case in point (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008, p. 51).*

Norms that have been explained earlier have also manifested in the case of women who are being involving in income earning activities. Even though they contribute for household expenditure or play the role of household breadwinning activity, their contribution is not well recognized and has less significant to improve their status. Therefore, intervention that improves the power relation within the family is needed. In other words, addressing gender norms and practices limiting women and men's choices will be essential to achieve women's economic empowerment (SIDA, 2009, p. 12).

#### **2.3.4. Individual Level Gender Norms**

Gender norms have also been found at the individual level in which women are considered themselves as inferior to other household members. When women internalize their subordinate status and view themselves as persons of lesser value, their sense of their own rights and entitlements are diminish (Malhotra, 2002, p. 10). Women themselves also accept the existing patriarchal power relations, which has maintained by the society (Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, 2008, p. 53).

Given power that women give for them that might be an extension of and influenced by the social norms found in specific area have its implication for a women to involve in household decision-making. Those individual level gender norms which have a variety of sources and backgrounds is one major restricting factor for women's involvement in decision-making. In

relation to this idea, Braunstein more clarify Sen's perception that "women might make decisions about their livelihood or 'exercising agency' or 'desire fulfillment'; but this is limited by self-perception, what individuals' value, and what choices they perceive as possible which is basically constituted by their social world" (Braunstein, 2008, p. 2). Braunstein also stated that the presumed preferences that underlie an individual's objectives and decision-making power in the household depends on those norms found at the individual level (Braunstein, 2008, p. 2).

## **Chapter.3. Legal and Policy Frameworks on Women’s Economic Empowerment and Decision Making**

### **3.1. International Legal and Policy Frameworks**

#### **3.1.1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

The UN General Assembly adopted the CEDAW Convention on 19 December 1979. The substance of the Convention has based on three interrelated core principles: equality, non-discrimination, and State obligation.

The CEDAW in article 5 also obligates the States parties to take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women. This is with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices, customary, and all other practices that are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

CEDAW also in article 10 (c) obligates for the States parties to take appropriate measures to achieve the goal of elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education. On the bases of the above specifically mentioned article, this could be achieved through encouraging coeducation, and other types of education; revision of textbooks and school programmers; and the adaptation of teaching methods. CEDAW in its article 11 sub-articles 1 (c) also obligates the States parties to eliminate discrimination against women to ensure women’s right to free choice of profession and employment. This provision shows that women have the right to make decision about her profession and employment. CEDAW also in article 15 sub-articles 2 obligates States parties to accord women in civil matters, and entitles a legal capacity identical to that of men. It also entitles the same opportunities with men to exercise that capacity. In particular, it obligates States to give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and assert that the concerned body should treat them equally in all stages of procedures in courts and tribunals. CEDAW in article 16 also gives the same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition,

management, administration, enjoyment, and disposition of property whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

In addition to the above specific article mentioned earlier, the CEDAW Committee also used as legal framework for the States parties about issues relevant to economic empowerment and its implication on the rights of women in the household decision-making through its general recommendation. For instance, the CEDAW Committee in its General Recommendation 21 about equality in marriage and family relations in its Thirteenth Session broadly discusses issues relevant to gender equality and family relations. In this general recommendation, it recalls the inalienable rights of women and obligates the States parties to recognize the importance of culture and tradition in shaping the thinking and behavior of men and women and the significant part they play in restricting the exercise of basic rights by women.

General recommendation 21 also shows the ways that restricts women from participating in decision making particularly decision related to holding, controlling, and management of property as follows:

*When a woman cannot enter into a contract at all, or have access to financial credit, or can do so only with her husband's or a male relatives' concurrence or guarantee, she has denied legal autonomy. Any such restriction prevents her from holding property as the sole owner and precludes her from the legal management of her own business or from entering into any other form of contract. Such restrictions seriously limit the woman's ability to provide for herself and her dependants (CEDAW, 2009, P. 43).*

The above General Recommendation also acknowledges for the States parties about the influence of laws that perpetuate customs and traditions on women's rights related to management, access to, control over resources, and their status that is more explained as follows:

*A woman's right to bring litigation is limited in some countries by law or by her access to legal advice and her ability to seek redress from the courts. In others, her status as a witness or her evidence has accorded less respect or weight than that of a man. Such*

*laws or customs limit the woman's right effectively to pursue or retain her equal share of property and diminish her standing as an independent, responsible, and valued member of her community. When countries limit a woman's legal capacity by their laws, or permit individuals or institutions to do the same, they are denying women their rights to be equal with men and restricting women's ability to provide for themselves and their dependants (CEDAW, 2009, P. 43).*

The CEDAW Committee also in its General Recommendation 21 states that “human activity in public and private life has been viewed differently and regulated accordingly and in all societies; and also women who have traditionally performed their roles in the private or domestic sphere have long been carrying out those activities treated as inferior”. However, when women are being participated in income earning activity, it paves an opportunity for them to participate in public life. This situation has its altered role to enhance their status through changing their traditional roles as private and the attached values for such roles. In the same general recommendation CEDAW Committee also acknowledged the fact that “women are being prevented from having equal access to resources and from enjoying equality of status in the family and society, and where de jure equality exists, all societies assign different roles, which are regarded as inferior to women”. Even if women participate in decision-making, their voices have not been considered as final and relevant because of the inferior status given for women. The CEDAW Committee also in its Concluding Observation (2004) paragraph 251, also concerned about “the continuing persistence of entrenched traditional discriminatory practices including strong stereotypical attitudes in respect of the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society, which negatively affect women’s enjoyment of their human rights”.

The CEDAW Committee also in its General Recommendation 21 based on the States parties’ reports clarifies the fact that, “ many countries in their legal systems provides for the rights, and responsibilities of married partners by relying on the application of common law principles, religious or customary law, rather than by complying with the principles contained in the Convention”. In addition, according to this Recommendation, “these variations in law and practice relating to marriage have wide-ranging consequences for women, they invariably

restricting their rights to equal status and responsibility within marriage''. According to the above General Recommendation, the above situation have its own limitations which often results in the husband being accorded the status of head of household and primary decision-maker that contravene the provisions of the CEDAW Convention. This is also a problem in the Ethiopian legal system. This is because of the fact that, the Ethiopian Constitution in its article 34(4) recognizes the enactment of those laws, which are giving recognition to marriage concluded under systems of religious or customary laws in accordance with provisions that has specified by law.

The CEDAW Committee also in its Concluding Observation for Ethiopia in 2011, Forty-Ninth Sessions in its paragraph 12 notes that article 9 of the Federal constitution provides that international agreements ratified by the State party form an integral part of its domestic law. Further, it acknowledges the fact that the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission translated the core international human rights treaties including the convention in to Amharic, Oromo, and Tigrinya. In addition, it recommends and expresses its concern that the CEDAW Convention did not yet officially translated and published in the Federal Negarit Gazeta.

Under this Concluding Observation, the CEDAW Committee is further concerns that women themselves especially those in rural and remote areas, are not aware of their rights under the convention and thus lack the capacity to claim them. The above Concluding Observation also in its paragraph 13 states its recommendation for the States parties to officially translate, and publish the full text of the convention in the Federal Negarit Gazeta in order to make it accessible to the public and to enable judges to apply it under conditions of legal certainty. It also calls up on State parties to take all appropriate measures to ensure the convention, and Committee's general recommendations have sufficiently known and applied by all branches of government and the judiciary at federal, regional, and local levels as a framework for all laws, court decisions, and policies on gender equality and the advancement of women's rights. The committee in this observation also farther recommends for the government of Ethiopia to make sure that whether the convention and related domestic legislation were given better emphasis in the legal education and training of judges, prosecutors, and lawyers including those working in Sharia courts. In addition, it obligates the government of Ethiopia to ensure the creation of a

legal culture supportive of women's equality with men and non-discrimination based on sex has firmly established in the State party. It also recommends the State party to enhance women's awareness of their rights and the means to enforce them through, inter alia, legal literacy programs, and to ensure that information on the Convention has provided to women in all regional states through all appropriate means, including the media.

### **3.1.2. Regional Human Rights Instruments**

African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) adopted 27 June 1981 and entered in to force 21 October 1986 is one of regional human rights instrument, which stipulates and uses as legal policy framework about the rights of women. For instance, it presents on the preamble that freedom, equality, justice, and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspiration of the African people. It in the preamble asserts the need to pay a particular attention to the right to development. It also stated that civil and political rights should not been dissociated from economic, social, and cultural rights in their conception as well as universality. It also supplements that the satisfaction of economic, social, and cultural rights is a guarantee for the enjoyment of civil and political rights. It also in article 5 entitles every individual the right to respect of dignity inherent in a human being and to the recognition of his legal status. Further, it in article 9 (1) and 10 (1) also entitles for every individual the right to receive information and to free association respectively. It in article 12 (1) recognizes for every individual the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of a state provided by the law. It in its article 18 ( 1, 2, and 3) recognizes the family as the natural unit and the basis of society. In addition, it states that the family should protected by the State. For instance, according to the above article, the state shall take care of its physical health and moral; and the state shall has the duty to assist the family; ensure the elimination of any discrimination against women; and ensure the protection of the rights of woman. It also in its article 25 obligates States parties to promote and ensure through teaching, education, and publication, the respect of the rights and freedoms contained in the charter, and to see to it that these freedoms and rights as well as corresponding obligations and duties have been understood. It also in article (30) states the necessity for the establishment of an African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

within the Organization of African Unity to promote human and peoples' rights and ensure their protection in Africa as a measure of safeguard.

Another regional human rights instrument is that the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. This protocol was ratified to supplement the provisions of the African Charter, and by that the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity meeting in its Thirty-First ordinary session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in June 1995.

That protocol to the ACHPR (African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights) of Women in Africa in its article 2(1) obligates the States parties to combat all forms of discrimination against women through appropriate legislative, institutional, and other measures. Specifically, it in its article 2(1) a, c, d, and e obligates the States parties to take measures on the following things:

*It obligates the States parties, to include in their national constitutions and other legislative instruments, if not already done, the principle of equality between women and men and ensure its effective application. It also obligates the States parties to integrate a gender perspective in their policy decisions, legislation, development plans, programs, and activities and in all other spheres of life. In addition, it also obligates the States parties to take corrective and positive action in those areas where discrimination against women in law and in fact continues to exist. In addition, it obligates the States parties to support the local, national, regional, and continental initiatives directed at eradicating all forms of discrimination against women.*

It also in its article 2 affirms for the States parties to commit themselves to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men through public education, information, education, and communication strategies. This is to achieve the objectives of elimination of harmful cultural and traditional practices and all other practices, which has based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of the sexes, or on stereotyped roles for women and men.

It also in its article 3, recognize for every woman the right to dignity inherent in a human being and recalls States parties to adopt and implement appropriate measures to ensure the protection

of every woman's right to respect for her dignity. It also in its article 6 states about the equal rights of women to: decide to enter in to marriage; jointly contribute to safeguarding the interests of the family; protecting, and educating their children; acquire and own property; and administer and manage it freely.

Rights of Women Protocol on ACHPR, article 9 also states the fact that women are equal partners with men at all levels of development. In addition, it in this article recommends for the States parties to implement their respective policies and development programmers in line with the principle of gender equality. In addition, it recommends for the States parties to ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making. It also in article 13 obligates the States parties to promote equality of access to employment and to create conditions to promote and support the occupations and economic activities of women, in particular, within the informal sector. In addition, it in this article obligates the States parties to establish a system of protection and social insurance for women working in the informal sector and sensitizes them to adhere to it.

It also in its article 14 recognizes for women the right to control their fertility. It also in above article recognizes for women the right to decide whether to have children, the number of children, and the spacing of children as health and reproductive rights of women. It also in its article 19 recalls the States parties to introduce the gender perspective in their national development planning procedures. It also in the above article obligates the States parties to ensure participation of women at all levels in the conceptualization, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of development policies and programs. In addition, the protocol in the previously mentioned article also obligates the States parties to promote women's access to, control over productive resources such as land, and guarantee their right to property. It also asserts the States parties' obligation to promote women's access to credit, training, skills development, and extension services at rural and urban levels. This is to provide women with a higher quality of life; and to reduce the level of poverty among women; to ensure the negative effects of globalization. In addition, the above article acknowledges for the States parties that any adverse effects of the implementation of trade and economic policies, and programs should reduced to the minimum for women.

### 3.1.3. International Policy Frameworks

Ethiopia is also signed, the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) and the 2000 Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document (NAP-GE, 2006, p. 1). In order to implement the above-mentioned declaration and MDGs, the government of Ethiopia also made National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE, 2006, p. 1). Specifically, 1995 Beijing Platform for Action has a broad based objective on women's empowerment and decision-making power of women in the household. The Platform in (paragraph 13, p. 3), clearly stipulates that "women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including involvement in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development, and peace"(Beijing Platform of Action, 1995, p. 3). It also in its paragraph 14 recognizes women's rights as a human rights issue. The platform also in its article g, paragraph 181 on the issues under women in power and decision-making mentioned that:

*Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but has also seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to take into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved (Beijing Platform of Action, 1995, p. 80).*

The platform also asserts the need to promote and support women's self-employment. In addition, it also asserts the necessity of the development of small enterprises and strengthening of women's access to credit and capital in the same manner with those of men. According to the platform, this could be achieved through scaling-up of institutions dedicated to promoting women's entrepreneurship including as appropriate non-traditional and mutual credit schemes as well as innovative linkages with financial institutions. It also appreciates some of the actions that have taken by the government in order to facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets, and trade.

The platform in its paragraph 189 also recommends for governments and other actors to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming gender perspective in all policies and programs to

address the problem of the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels (Beijing Platform of Action, 1995, p. 80).

Beijing Platform for Action in chapter IV, paragraph 156 also affirms the existence of continuing obstacles that have hindered women's ability to achieve economic autonomy and to ensure sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their dependants although many women have advanced in economic structures. Multiple international instruments verify that women's economic empowerment can ensure to advance the social and economic rights of women including decision-making power. However, those instruments are make their own remarks about the existence of obstacles that constraint the possible role of women's economic empowerment to enhance the social, economic, and other rights of women, and let the States parties to more investigate those constraints.

After the Beijing conference of 1995, Ethiopia government also identified seven priority areas that needs to be tackled in order to ensure gender-equitable development as it is presented on the Ethiopia's National Action Plan for Gender Equality. Among those priority areas poverty and economic empowerment of women and girls; and empowering women in decision-making are two of those seven priority areas (NAP-GE, 2006, p. 1).

UN MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) is also another international policy framework in which the Ethiopian government is committed to achieve in the year 2015. Gender equality and women's empowerment is also Third Millennium Development Goal with its indicator on the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector that has used as one benchmark to achieve women's empowerment and gender equality. To achieve that international policy agreement in the domestic level, growing attention is given to increasing women's participation in the wage labor market for instance in MSEs. Achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all including women and young people is also one of the target towards which the achievement of the first MDGs of Ethiopia (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) is being directed (Ethiopia MDGs Report, 2012, P. 3-5).

In the way to achieve MDGs, data based on recent labor survey shows that urban employment increased from 42.6% in April 2004 to 48.2% in May 2010 whereas women's employment rate increased from 49.9% to 53.1%. A large part of the increase in employment figures for women has attributed to the increase in self-employment and unpaid family labor (Ethiopia MDGs Report 2012, P. 5). It is also suggested that the high unemployment levels especially among the youth needs to be tackled by boosting the capacity of micro and small businesses to create jobs by among other thing enhancing the provision of targeted entrepreneurial skills training, business development advisory services, expanding access to credit market, and technology and innovation (Ethiopia MDGs Report 2012, P. 5).

The economic empowerment of women has also broad based policy implications. According to the OECD report, the economic empowerment of women could uses as one precondition for sustainable development and pro-poor growth (OECD, 2012). In addition, it could also helps for the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (OECD, 2012). "Gender equality and empowered women are catalysts for multiplying development efforts" (OECD, 2012)

## **3.2. National Legal and Policy Frameworks**

### **3.2.1. FDRE Constitution and Other National Legal Instruments**

The 1995 FDRE Constitution serves as one grantee that has its implication in the way to achieve gender equality. It in its article 24 recognizes for everyone the right to respect of his human dignity, reputation, and honor. In addition, it in the above article entitles for everyone the right to the free development of his personality. It also under article 34 sub- article 2 stipulates the need to the free and full consent of the intending spouses to enter into marriage.

The FDRE Constitution under article 35 calls upon to the concerned body to ensure the better protection of women's rights in the same manner with men. In addition, the Constitution in this article 35 (3) entitles women to be beneficial to affirmative measures for the purpose of providing special attention to women to enable them to compete and participate based on equality with men in political, social, and economic life as well as in public and private

institutions. It also in its article 35(4) obligates the State to enforce the rights of women to eliminate the influences of harmful customs. It also in its article 35 ( 7 & 8) gives a woman the right to acquire, administer, control, use, and transfer property; and the right to equality in employment, promotion, pay, and the transfer of pension entitlements, respectively. Article 40(1) of the FDRE constitution also provides for the State party for every citizen the right to the ownership of private property, which includes the right to acquire, use and, dispose of such property by sale or bequest or to transfer it. The FDRE constitution under article 41(6 and 7) also obligate the State to pursue policies which aim to expand job opportunities for the unemployed and the poor and shall accordingly undertake programs and public work projects; and undertake all measures necessary to increase opportunities for citizens to find gainful employment, respectively.

Ethiopian government also revised its Family Code (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2000) that came into effect in July 2000 by updating the 1960 Family Code. This is despite the fact that not all Regional States have adopted regional family laws in conformity with the Federal Family Code (2000), and some Regional States continue to apply their previous discriminatory family laws (CEDAW Committee concluding observation, 2011, paragraph 14; Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 1). The CEDAW Committee in the above concluding observation also notes the fact that the Federal Constitution does not preclude the adjudication of disputes relating to personal and family laws in accordance with religious and customary laws and but authorizes the House of Peoples' Representatives and Regional Councils to establish or give official recognition to religious and customary courts. On the bases of this fact, the Committee in this concluding observation, paragraph 15 also calls up on the States parties to ensure that all Regional States adopt family laws in conformity with the Federal Family Code and the CEDAW convention. Further, the CEDAW Committee in this concluding observation also obligates the States parties to take measures including awareness raising and training to sensitize the population and to enable public officials to enforce the Revised Family Code. This is particularly focus on equal right of women and men to enter into marriage, the equal rights, and responsibilities of spouses during marriage and its dissolution, and the minimum age of marriage of 18 years. All the above have their own influence on the advancement of economic empowerment of women and its implication on their right to participate in household decision-

making. In addition, the Committee in the above-mentioned concluding observation calls upon the States parties to ensure that federal, regional, customary, and religious laws were harmonized in line with the convention.

Despite the above challenges, the Family Code has used as a bases in terms of entitling women's fundamental rights on the bases of equality and human dignity. It also gives larger role to courts rather than traditional arbiters in family matters such as divorce that have its role for the better protection of women's rights in particular to administration, access to, and control over household property. For instance, article 50(1) gives equal right for the spouses, in the management of the family. The Family Code also in its article 59 ( 1 and 2) gives a woman the right to administer her personal property and receive the income there of and to freely disposes of her personal property. In addition to that Federal Family Code, the Amhara National Regional State also issued its Regional Family Code 2003 through Proclamation number 79/2003. This Regional Family Code in its article 70 entitles equal opportunity for spouses to administer and receive their own respective income. The above article also gives spouses equal opportunity to make decision on their personal property. In addition, the Amhara Regional State Family Code in its article 77 entitles equal opportunity both spouses to administer their common property.

According to Braunstein, "property rights and family law are crucial determinants of the relationship between women's labor market decisions and their empowerment, because the law can buttress male authority in the household" (Braunstein, 2008, p. 3). OECD-DAC report also assert that "women's economic rights can be strengthen by improving national administrative and legal frameworks relating to land, inheritance, and property rights" (OECD, 2012). Therefore, improvement in the above legal frameworks is important mechanisms of ensuring the effectiveness of economic empowerment of women to enhance the social and economic rights of women particularly related to household decision-making.

Hallward-Driemeier et al in 2011, also tries to analyze the connection between individual empowerment as provided in the Family Code of Ethiopia and intra-household bargaining. According to them new Family Code open an opportunity for women through the following

mechanism in which all of such opportunities have an implication on the economic empowerment to enhance women's bargaining power as stated as follows:

*It is through rising the minimum age of marriage for women. In addition, it is through removing the ability of the husband to deny permission for the wife to work outside the home and requiring both spouses consent in the administration of marital property. (Hallward-Driemeier et al, 2011, p. 11-12).*

However, Hallward-Driemeier et al acknowledges the fact that effect of the law has heterogeneous effect on different groups of women, which seems strongest for young and single women (Hallward-Driemeier et al, 2011, p). In addition, they suggest that the increase in age of marriage may have helped to delay marriage and allowed women greater opportunity to employ in paid work" (Hallward-Driemeier et al, 2011, p. 18-20; kabeer, 2011, p. 39). The above study of Hallward- Driemeier and Gajigo (2011) also shows that "the reform had a strong effect in increasing women's share in paid work, in increasing access to occupations that are non-home based, in year-round employment that had higher educational requirements and hence were likely to be of better quality" as cited on kabeer (kabeer, 2011, p. 39).

The change in regulatory framework is also used as a powerful tool to alleviate the problem of the existing gender related norms that women encounter in their labor market participation (Kabeer, 2012, p. 39). Simplification of legislative frameworks are also believed as mechanism which have immediate impacts to increase the share of women in high value added sectors both within the formal and informal sector (Elsebeth Krogh et al, 2009, p. 139).

### **3.2.2. National Policy Frameworks**

To implement its international agreement in domestic arena and better enforcement of women's rights, the government of Ethiopia adopted various national policies. For example, by considering women's disadvantageous position in the society and as show of commitment to gender equality, it announced the national policy on women in 1993 (Prime Minister Office, 2004, p. 2; NAP-GE, 2006, p. 1). "Eliminating step by step prejudices as well as customary and

other practices that are based on the idea of male supremacy and enabling women to hold public office and to participate in the decision making process at all levels is one of the main objective of the 1993 national policy on women''(Prime Minister Office, 2004, p. 3). And, ''the incorporation of gender issues in different national policies including in education and training, health, HIV/AIDS, and population are also taken in to consideration in 1993 National Policy on Women'' (NAP-GE, 2006, p. 1).

National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE), 2006-2010 is also another national policy that have an objective of achieving gender equality. This policy frameworks aims ''towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and to achieve the objectives of gender equality expressed in the 1995 Ethiopian constitution; the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) and the 2000 Beijing+5 political declaration and outcome document''(NAP-GE, 2006, p. 1). Empowering women in decision making is also one of seven priority areas presented in NAP-GE that need to be tackled in order to ensure gender-equitable development in which Ethiopian government also taken into consideration following the Beijing conference of 1995 (NAP-GE, 2006, p. 2).

Ethiopian government also made the National Employment Policy and Strategy in 2009 in which mainstreaming gender and youth in its policy of employment generation is one of its crosscutting policy action areas of the labor market (NEPSE, 2009, p. 15). Promoting MSEs is high on the agenda of the Ethiopian government in terms of its policy framework for private sector development (NEPSE, 2009, p. 16). The National Employment Policy and Strategy also consider the gender aspects of human rights in terms of women's access to economic power and decision making as one area of focus by the government (NEPSE, 2009, p. 4).

Ethiopian government also made Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) in which promote gender and youth empowerment; and equitable benefits is one of pillar strategies of the plan. The plan aims to implement development packages of women and youth to ensure socio-economic and political participation, and benefit of women and youth (GTP, 2010, P. 12). The plan also aims to enhance the power of girls and women, which has a profound effect on the speed, equity, and sustainability of Ethiopia's growth and development (GTP, 2010, 12).

Among the supposed target areas for further progress of the GTP, ensuring the economic empowerment of women is one of the targets whereas increase the participation of women in decision making process is also another target to be achieved (IMF country report on GTP, 2011, p. 112). Therefore, women's empowerment particularly in MSEs and gender equality in specific reference to women's decision making power in the household have been got a better recognition by various Ethiopian national policy frameworks. In addition, women's empowerment through their participation in MSE is one of the major key priority areas that can achieve the objectives of gender equality.

Comprehensive national machinery for the advancement of women's rights comprising the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs (MOWCYA); Women's Affairs Departments in all Federal Ministries; Regional Women Affairs Bureaus; and similar structures at the Zonal, Woreda, and Kebele levels were previously established. However according to CEDAW Committee Concluding Observation 2011, paragraph 16 'the capacity, resources, and efficiency of the national machinery have not been adequately strengthened to ensure the effective implementation of relevant laws and policies'. The Committee also in the above Concluding Observation recommends for the States Parties some of the necessary measures that should be undertaken by the national machinery for their effective functioning on the advancement of women's rights, which are stated as follows:

*The condition of the existing national machinery at all levels should be strengthened the provision of the adequate human, technical, and financial resources. The existing national machinery should increase its effectiveness in formulating, implementing, providing advice, coordinating and overseeing the preparation and implementation of legislation and policy measures in the field of gender equality and in mainstreaming gender perspectives in all laws and policies. A further a short-term training on women's rights should be given to women, and men working in the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, the women affairs departments in each federal ministry, regional women affairs bureaus, and zonal, Woreda and Kebele women affairs offices, as well as to those working in other government offices at the federal and regional levels (CEDAW Committee Concluding Observation, 2011, paragraph, 17).*

The role of Civil Society and NGOs is immense for the better promotion of women's rights. The role of civil society organizations particularly non-governmental organizations working on women's rights are essential to the realization and the goal of achieving gender equality and in the promotion or protection of women's rights at all levels of society (Amnesty International, 2011, p. 5). CEDAW Committee in its Concluding Observation 2011, paragraph, 28-29 also recognizes the crucial role of NGOs in empowering Ethiopian women through awareness raising and advocacy, victim assistance and rehabilitation, and legal and other supports that enable women to claim their rights. However, the Committee is also seriously concerned about Proclamation No. 621/2009 of Ethiopia for the Registration of Charities and Societies. According to CEDAW Committee concluding observation 2011, the government of Ethiopia argues that the above proclamation will enhance the contribution of domestic organizations to Ethiopia's development, ensure transparency, and avoid dependence on foreign funds and the influence of foreign donors (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 10). Despite this argument by the government of Ethiopia, this proclamation bars foreign NGOs and local NGOs that receive more than 10 % of their funding from foreign sources from working on human rights and gender equality. It also obstructed the capacity of local women's rights organizations on providing legal aid and other support to women who were victims of human rights violations (CEDAW Concluding Observation, 2011, paragraph, 28-29; Amnesty International, 2011, p. 5).

Because of Charities and Societies Proclamation national organizations have also been inhibited from working on the rights of women and girls that includes monitoring and documenting violations of those rights by state and non-state actors, and holding the government to account for their performance and adherence to commitments for the rights of women and girls (Amnesty International, 2011, p. 5). There are reports of organizations closing their doors as a result of this policy, including two major human rights organizations, the Ethiopian Human Rights Council and the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (Country Profile Ethiopia, 2012, p. 2). According to CEDAW Concluding Observation 2011 and report made by Amnesty International specifically the major local women's rights organization in Ethiopia, which is focusing exclusively on women's rights at the national level that is Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) has unable to appealed to court. In addition, on the grounds of this

proclamation, EWLA has been forced to downsize their staff and number of regional offices and to suspend legal aid and hotline services for women.

The underlying impacts of the Charities and Societies Proclamation are still further entrenched through institutionalizing the climate of fear that prevents the human rights defenders and women's rights activists in Ethiopia (Amnesty International, 2011, p. 7). The previously mentioned Concluding Observation also obligates the Ethiopian government to devise strategies to mitigate the adverse impact of the CSO (civil society organization) law on the capacity of local human rights NGOs such as women's rights NGOs. In addition, it obligates the government of Ethiopia to fill the gap resulting from NGOs limited ability to provide legal and other services to women including outside Addis Ababa in consultation with international partners.

## **Chapter.4. Women in MSEs in Debremarkos City**

### **4.1. Overviews of the Study Area and Subjects**

#### **4.1.1. Description of Study Area.**

DebreMarkos is a town found in Amhara National Regional State (Region 3) in Ethiopia. It is found 295 kilometers North West of Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia and 265 kilometers Southeast of Bahir Dar, capital city of the Amhara National Regional State. It is also a city in East Central Ethiopia located in East Gojjam Zone of the Amhara Region. It has latitude and longitude of 10<sup>0</sup>20' N 37<sup>0</sup>43' E and its total municipal area is about 60 kilometers square and an elevation of 2, 446 meters. The weather condition, in most of the time is *Weinadega*. Based on the 2007 National Census conducted by the CSA, the town comprises of a total population of 62, 497, of whom 29, 921 are men and 32, 576 are women. However, according to the year 2013 report, the town has a total population of 83,858, of whom 40,148 are men and 43,710 are women on the bases of document analysis from DebreMarkos City Administration Communication Office

#### **4.1.2. Location of the Study Area.**



#### 4.1.3. Women's Participation in MSEs in the City

For the purpose of clarification, according to the definition used by Ministry of Trade and Industry:

*Micro enterprises are those businesses enterprises in the formal and informal sector, with a paid up capital not exceeding Birr 20,000 and excluding high technological consultancy firms and other high technological establishments. And Small enterprises are those business enterprises with a paid up capital of above Birr 20,000 and not exceeding Birr 500,000 and excluding high technological consultancy firms and other high technological establishments (Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, 2006, p.*

14)

Table.1. Number and level of capital of MSEs found in DebreMarkos City

| Type of MSEs in Branch | Number of Enterprises | Number of Member Participant |       |       | Capital   |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------|-----------------|
|                        |                       | Men                          | Women | Total | Starting  | Present Capital |
| Manufacturing          | 354                   | 214                          | 285   | 499   | 2,102,075 | 14,283,603      |
| Construction           | 68                    | 223                          | 111   | 334   | 1898230   | 16,072,660      |
| Town's Agriculture     | 63                    | 164                          | 274   | 438   | 1038175   | 6,413,051       |
| Service                | 620                   | 412                          | 479   | 900   | 1024230   | 1,194,050       |
| Trading                | 1590                  | 799                          | 795   | 1594  |           | 59,653,000      |
| Total                  | 2529                  | 1812                         | 1944  | 3756  |           | 95,827,307      |

Source, Information from DebreMarkos City Communication Office

As it has described by the above table, the number of women who are involving in different branch of MSEs in the city of DebreMarkos is high. From a total number of 3756 individuals who involve on MSEs in the city, 1812 are Men and 1944 are Women. This shows that, the majority numbers of individuals who join in the sector in the city are women.

#### **4.2. Decision Making Experience of the Participants before their Engagement on MSE**

On the interview, the situation of decision-making power of the participant's women in the household before their involvement in MSEs was diverse. In addition, it has affected by a range of factors. Most participants informed that their decision-making right in the household before their involvement in MSEs has been affected by the nature of household incomes, their ways of life, and their prior income generating capacity. For instance, interview with one unmarried woman who involves on 'tea and coffee' enterprise and lives with her parents shows that;

*Before she joined this job, she was working in one of Middle East countries. At that time her decision making power in the household was better respected. She was saving the money that is used as background for present business work. However, other members of the household were being depended on her income. This retards her saving status, which could have increased her decision making right in the household. Other than this, the*

*income that came from her work overseas has helped her to improve her household decision-making power particularly decision related to how and for what purpose to spend her income (Interview with 25 years old woman, informant 4, Tuesday, April 08-2014).*

Other divorced participant woman also describes that:

*Before I started this job, I was working in one of Arab countries. However, during that time, I was supporting my parents; the income obtained from overseas did not help me to enhance decision. My income has been under the total control of my mothers and brothers. I was unable to decide on issues like helping my child who was attending his education under the help of orphan's aid organization. Furthermore, my mother did not want to join MSEs and I have not a full flagged power to decide on issues like working outside the household (Interview with informant 16, on Friday, April-11- 2014)*

Decision making experience of the participant women before their involvement in MSEs has also been affected by their ways of life and the nature of household. For instance, one unmarried participant women who live individually stated that:

*Before I joined this work, I was working as a daily laborer like preparing ingredient of food in DebreMarkos University student café. At that time, that job was not helping me much for improving the decision making right in the household. However, since I was managing my life as a single household head and live in individually, this paves a better opportunity to involve in household decision-making (Interview with informant 9, Tuesday, 08-April-2014).*

From the above, it is very difficult to conclude that only shortage of income is the merely limitation that restricted them from involving in household decision-making before their involvement in MSEs. A case story mentioned earlier shows that, despite her low income acquired through her involvement in the labor market her decision-making power in the household before she involved MSEs was better. This is because she is a single household head

who leads her life individually. For most of the participants who were single household head, they have a better decision-making power in the household before their involvement in MSEs.

On the other stream, there were also individuals who were students and lived with their parents before their involvement in MSEs. For such kinds of participants, it is possible to conclude that they hardly had decision-making power in the household. For example, interview with informant 10 in April-08-2014 revealed that prior to joining such economic activity, she was a student and was living with her parents, in which she was economically reliant on them. She has not any opportunity to take part in decision-making process in the household. All decision has mostly made by her parents.

### **4.3. Terms and Ways of Enhancement of Household Decision Making Power of Women through their Participation in MSEs**

#### **4.3.1. Enhancement of Women's Power in the Administration and Control of Household Property**

Data on the interview shows that, women's involvement in MSEs improves their household decision-making. On the bases of the participants' point of view, women's right to take part in the administration and management of household property is one of the relevant one among those household decision making rights. Different national and international laws and policies also entitle women the right to administer and manage household property. For example, the CEDAW in its article 1(h) gives for the women equal opportunity with men with respect to the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment, and disposition of property. It also in its article 15(2) obligates States parties to give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property. It in the above article also obligates the States parties to treat women equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals. Protocol to the ACHPR (African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights) of Women in Africa in its article 6 also entitles women the right to acquire their own property and to administer and manage it freely. The FDRE constitution also in its article 35 (7) entitles women the right to acquire, administer, control, use, and transfer property. The Ethiopian New Revised Family Code 2000 also in its article 59 ( 1 and

2) entitles women the right to administer their personal property and to receive the income there of and to freely dispose of personal property.

Data from the participants also revealed that women's involvement in MSEs improves their decision making power on administration, management, and control of household property. For instance, one married woman who lives with her spouse and engages on "tea and coffee service" enterprise stated that:

*My involvement in such activities creates freedom to decide on household purchasing. For example, if my husband decides on some large scale purchasing like buying 'Teff' and other large-scale products, I also have the power to decide on daily purchasing power like buying 'sugar'. Although he decide on so many issues, My participation creates an opportunity to make independent decision of my own as well as to reach in to mutual agreement during decision making through discussion and negotiation (Interview with informant 1, 08-April-2014).*

The above point shows that women's involvement in MSEs improves their household decision making power by giving an opportunity to make independent financial decision. In addition, their involvement in MSEs also helps them to reach in to mutual agreement and negotiation during decision-making in the household.

An interview with married woman who involves in 'tea and coffee' enterprises also informs that her involvement in MSEs improves her household decision-making power particularly those related to large household purchasing and controlling other family income and expenditure. She supports her argument that the similarity of the level of income of the two spouses adds value to improve her household decision-making power in terms of creating peaceful negotiation during decision making and reinforcing the equality of the spouses in the household which clarifies as follow:

*Since mine and my husband's income is relatively similar, this helps me to involve in household decision-making. We know one another's level of daily income and we decide and share ideas about household consumption and intra-household income distribution.*

*This is because we believe in mutual agreement* (Interview with informant 5, Tuesday, 08-April-2014)

The above point revealed by the participant shows that the similarity of the level of income of the spouses has its contribution for the better promotion of decision-making power of women through their involvement in MSEs. Nevertheless, if there is broad variance in level of income, it creates an obstacle which retards the decision making power of women in the household. In addition to the influence of the similarity of the spouse's income, the decision making power of the participants is also influenced by the existing patriarchal power relation found in the household. Therefore, it is impossible to conclude that women's involvement in MSEs is necessarily enhancing their household decision-making rights particularly those related to the administration and control of household property. This is because, the role of women's involvement in MSEs to augment their household decision-making power is determined by a variety of factors including the existing traditional hierarchical power relation found in the household.

Interview with government official also revealed that women's involvement in MSEs augments their household decision making power particularly those related to purchasing for household consumption, investing for children development, and investing for their personal development.

Another government official from women's, children's, and youth office directorate (particularly gender office main directorate) also stated that women's involvement in MSEs serves as guarantee for women to be an owner of property in the household. According to her, this situation expands their freedom to make independent decision.

However, on the bases of the participants' point of view, it is impossible to conclude that women's involvement in MSEs always improves their household decision making power. For example, some participants believed that their involvement does not add significant value to advance their decision making power in the household. In relation to this idea, a married woman in the interview revealed that:

*The economic activity I joined did not bring me any significant income that could alter the previous status that I have in household decision-making. It is poverty that lets me to join such a job and that poverty still has its limitation to broadly play a part in household decision making particularly those related to large purchasing power and personal consumption. I have only very limited opportunity to actively participate in household decision making which is not much different from what I have before joining such a job* (Interview with informant 3, April-08- 2014)

#### **4.3.2. Access to Micro Credit and Financial Institutions**

Access to micro credit and financial institution is the human rights of women and it is one mechanism for the advancement of women's rights as it is clearly stipulated by various policies and laws. For instance, the Protocol to ACHPR on the Rights of Women in its article 19 obligates the States parties to ensure women's rights as the fundamental rights of women. The CEDAW Committee also in its General Recommendation 21 considers that denial of women's right to access to credit as denial of women's legal autonomy. The 1995 Beijing platform of action also asserts the need to ensure women's equal access to economic resources including land, credit, science and technology, vocational training, information communication, and markets as a means for further empowerment of women and girls.

Different literatures have also made its own remarks about the role of access to micro credit and financial institution to encourage their economic empowerment as well as advancement of women's rights. "Microfinance including micro credit has often considered as an instrument that promotes empowerment" (OECD, 2012). It is also believed that women's access to micro credit and finance: "be able to stabilize livelihoods, broaden choices, provide start-up funds for productive investment, help poor people to smooth consumption flows and send children to school" (OECD 2012). Access to financial services is conceived as a powerful tool "to facilitate the inter-temporal management of money for the achievement of a variety of goals such as saving for future consumption or investment, insurance against contingencies, loans for current consumption, investment, or emergencies" (UN, 2009, p. 55). Women's access to those services is essential to allow them to benefit fully from economic opportunities (UN, 2009, p. 55). Access to financial institution is also essential "to graduate women's income-generating activities from

survival level into strong and viable businesses and to develop their productive assets and their businesses“ (OECD, 2012). More importantly, it has believed that supporting development of new financial products, such as longer-term loans, could assist women in expanding their businesses (Elsebeth Krogh et al, 2009, p. 140).

Data gathered through an interview also exposed that one ways of improvement of household decision-making power of women through their involvement in MSEs is that their involvement in MSEs paves an opportunity for women to access to micro credit and financial institution that has its contribution to augment their household decision-making.

Based on interview with some participants, the nature of MSEs helps women who involve in MSE to take part in financial decision-making. This is so when women involve in MSE, the situation paves the way to have more access to micro credit and other financial institutions, which have its contribution to broaden the choice and preference of women to involve in household decision. On the interview, the participants bear out that their involvement in MSEs paves an opportunity to join in financial institutions like *Iqub, Idir, and Mehaber* which have its contribution to involve in household decision making. This is in line with other qualitative study through multiple regression analysis that stated that “women’s amount of loan increases by 1 unit will increases women’s decision-making at domestic level by .00012” (Sara Noreen, 2011. P. 321). The situation of women’s involvement in MSEs improves their access to financial institution that by implication has at list its own minimum partial contribution to augment their household decision-making. On the interview, the participants’ opportunity to have an access to financial institution because of their involvement in MSEs is supporting women to augment their source of income that has its contribution to augment their household decision-making.

#### **4.3.3. Women’s Involvement in Different Group Association; and Access to Education, Information, and Training**

Women’s involvement in different enterprise group association for economic, social, cultural, and other purpose is the human rights of women; and on the bases of interview, it is one means of augmentation of household decision-making power of women through their involvement in

MSEs. For instance the ICESCR in its article 8 (1) (a) entitles every one the right to form trade unions and join the trade union of his or her choice. This is subject only to the rules of the organization concerned for the promotion and protection of his or her economic and social interests. Article 22 (1) of the ICCPR also entitles everyone the right to freedom of association with others including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests. It is believed that, women's associations and civil society groups have the potential to increase the voice and visibility of women and can provide many services and benefits to their members, which are more explain as follows:

*Through collective action, women's associations are able to reach out to government and private sector organizations and to seek institutional support for women's income generating activities. They are well placed to negotiate collective loans and micro leasing for their membership (OECD, 2012).*

The above-mentioned potential role of women's associations and civil society groups allows women to broaden their source of income and to get other support service. This situation has its own implication for women to involve in household decision-making.

Women are also entitling the right to access to information. Access to information, training, and public education are believed as the most relevant instruments, which have their role for the advancement of human rights. CEDAW also in article 10 (c) acknowledges the value of coeducation and other types of education in order to achieve the goal of elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women which is used to overcome the obstacles that hinder women from actively participating in household decision making.

The CEDAW Committee also in its General Recommendation 3 on education and public information campaigns, conclude existence of stereotyped conceptions of women, owing to socio-cultural factors, that perpetuate discrimination based on sex. In this general recommendation, it urges all States parties to effectively adopt education and public information programs, which will help to eliminate prejudices and current practices that hinder the full operation of the principle of the social equality of women. The CEDAW committee also in its

concluding observation for Ethiopian state in 2011, Forty-Ninth Session recommends for government of Ethiopia to further improve women's awareness of their rights and the means to enforce them through, inter alia, legal literacy programs. It also in this general recommendation obligates the States parties to disseminate information on the convention in all Regional states through all appropriate means including the media.

The protocol to the ACHPR of the rights of women in its article 2(2) obligates the States parties to consider and take action regarding the possible role of public education, information, education, and communication strategies to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men. The 1995 Beijing platform of action in its paragraph 35 also asserts the need to ensure women's equal access to economic resources, including science and technology, vocational training, information, communication, and markets. This is for the purpose to further advance and empower women and girls, including through the enhancement of their capacities to enjoy the benefits of equal access to these resources.

Different national machineries for the advancement of women's rights in Ethiopia are proposed that access to information has its role for the advancement of women's rights. Information dissemination on gender issues using the media and other mechanisms has presented as one of cross cutting policy issues that each responsible body needs to undertake in Ethiopia (MOWA, 2006, P. 3). In addition, capacity building through training and skill development is also another cross cutting policy issues that has been taken by the government designates together with the related private or NGO sector entities (MOWA, 2006, P. 3). The role of education, such as post primary education, vocational and technical education, and training is immense in terms of its positive effect on women's labor force participation and on job opportunities (Kabeer, 2012, p. 44).

Data on the interview also exposed that women after they involved in MSE have a better opportunity in access to training; have a better awareness about outside information, have a better social interaction through their involvement in different civic association. On the bases of the interview, the above-mentioned situations enable women who involve in MSEs to compete in household decision-making. For instance, interview with one married woman revealed that:

*There exist 1 to 5 group saving association system, which helps us to be a member of 'equib' and 'mahiber'. Through such traditional saving institution, we develop the relevant skill and information, which enables us to make independent decision to save and use our income. This situation expands our access to finance which broadens our economic decision-making like in decision related to large purchasing power and broadening our business opportunity. In addition, because of the close interaction of the market, we have better information to decide what things are appropriate to purchase, consume, sell-out over a given time (Interview with a married 28 years old woman, informant 6, Tuesday 08-April- 2014)*

#### **4.3.4. The Situation of Women's Household Decision's Making to Decide on their Future Occupational Choice**

On the bases of interview, women's involvement in MSEs is used to augment women's household decision making particularly those decisions related to broadening their future occupational choice. Women are entitling the rights to decide on matters related with their occupation. For instance, UDHR in article 23 (1) entitles everyone the right to work and free choice of employment. ICESCR in article 6 also recognizes the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts and obligates the State to take appropriate steps to safeguard this right. CEDAW also in article 11 sub-articles 1 (c) obligates the States parties to eliminate discrimination against women to ensure women's right to free choice of profession and employment. This particular provision also entitles women the right to make decision about their profession and employment.

ILO Conventions numbers 100, 111, 156 and 183, also obligate the States parties to adopt and enforce the principles of full and productive employment and decent work for all in both the formal and informal sectors (United Nation, 2009, p. 89). In addition, giving due consideration to gender-equality in the implementation of the above convention is another area of focus that the States parties should take in to consideration (United Nation, 2009, p. 89).

The data on the bases of interview also revealed that women's involvement in MSE enables them to expand their future occupational choice and sources of income. On the interview, one stakeholder from Labor and Social Affair Office main directorate in the city asserts that women's involvement in MSEs enables them to make decision like investing in a better job for the future through the help of saving institution and association. Another main stakeholder from Gender Office official in the city revealed that women's involvement in MSE expands their option to make decisions related to developing their future means of economic system.

#### **4.3.5. Enhancement of Women's Freedom and Dignity to Participate in Household Decision-Making**

On the bases of the participants' point of view on the interview, another ways of augmentation of women's household decision making power through their involvement in MSEs is that their involvement in MSEs increases their freedom and autonomy to involve in household decision making. Therefore, when women involve in MSEs, it has its impact on the advancement of their household decision-making through enhancing their dignity and freedom to involve in household decision-making.

The data obtained through interview also revealed that women's involvement in MSEs augments their household decision making power through creating a certain sort of freedom and autonomy to involve in household decision-making. For instance, women's involvement in MSEs enables them to have more self-confidence and self-esteem to involve in household decision-making. In relation to this, a married woman who lives with her spouse and has HIV /ADDIS virus in her blood stated that:

*Joining such a job makes me to have more self-confidence and self-esteem. I am happy by my occupation. Like every health individuals, I can make decision in the household. Even, My participation helps me to have confidence to lead a life with full consultation and discussion with my partner. I can decide on issues independently with full freedom. My spouse and I believe in equality in the household (Interview with informant 13, Thursday, 10-April-2014).*

#### **4.3.6. The Level of Transformation of Traditional Hierarchical Power Relation**

Different national and international human rights instruments recognize the existence of traditional norms, which are barriers to the promotion and protection of human rights of women. They also obligate the States parties to take measures to eliminate those traditional norms for the better promotion of the human rights of individuals. For example, the CEDAW in article 5 and 10 recognizes the existence of the hierarchical power relation found in the society. In addition, it obligates the States parties to take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women. This is on the view to achieve the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices, which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

The data from interview also revealed that one ways of improvement of women's decision-making right through their involvement in MSEs is that the situation challenges traditional norms found at different levels of the society. Therefore, transformation of traditional hierarchical power relation in conformity with women's rights is one mechanism of enhancing women's participation in household decision-making through their involvement in MSE.

Interview with individual participant revealed that women's involvement in MSE enhances their decision making power in the household by challenging the traditional hierarchical power relation found at different levels of the society. Information found from a husband of informant number 15 explained that the reason he did give the autonomy to his wife to partake in household decision-making is that history or tradition did not fully allow the women to go outside the house. However, her involvement in MSE broke that all. According to him, he now gives her a better respect not because of the fact that she plays a role in intra-household income contribution through her involvement in MSE. Rather it is because of the fact that she is one role model that showed that women like men can develop social relation with other people and she can lead their economic and social life as a separate entity. According to him, all above-mentioned factors change the given dignity that he provides for her before her involvement in to MSE; and are the reason behind he currently agrees with decision made by her at home.

#### **4.3.7. Women's Right to Decide on their Reproductive and Health Rights**

Another term of the improvement of women's rights related to household decision making through their involvement in MSE is that their involvement in MSE improves their household decision making related to their reproductive and health status that is basically a human rights of women. For instance, CEDAW in its sub-article 16, 1(a) obligates the States parties to avoid discrimination in marriage and family relation. In this particular article 16 1(e), it also obligates the States parties to ensure women's right to ensure same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education, and means to enable them to exercise these rights. The CEDAW also in its general recommendation 21 by taking in to consideration the different factors, it recommends for the States parties to enforce women's right to decide on the number and spacing of their children. It also adds the necessity of access to information for women about contraceptive measures and their use. In addition, it guaranteed access to sex education and family planning services in order to make an informed decision about safe and reliable contraceptive measures.

The protocol to the ACHPR of women also in its article 14 (1) a and b recognizes for women the right to control their fertility; and the right to decide whether to have children, the number of children and the spacing of children as health and reproductive rights of women.

Interview with government official also asserts the view that women who involve in MSE have a better opportunity to decide on matters related to their reproductive and health rights that is explains as follows:

*As their income augments, their decision-making right in the household such as in specifying the number of children they have and their access to health care services increases. Such enhancement of freedom to deciding on their reproductive and health rights may come from the nature of job by itself. For, example women who involve in MSEs have a better awareness towards family planning because the nature of job is not compatible to childcare service at home. This paves a better situation for women to*

*decide or to specify the number of children they have. In addition, women who involve in the MSEs have a better access to information about family planning. In addition, they have a better access to finance and have a better opportunity to invest on the protection of their personal health* (Interview with TVED office main directorate, Wednesday, April- 9-2006).

In relation to the above idea, CEDAW Committee in its general recommendation number 21 affirms that the responsibility that women have to bear and raise children affects their right of access to education, employment, and other activities related to their personal development, women are entitle to decide on the number and spacing of their children. This general recommendation also stated about the necessity of access to information for women about contraceptive measures and their use and guaranteed access to sex education and family planning services in order to make an informed decision about safe and reliable contraceptive measures. Hence, when women partake in MSEs, the situation improves their access to information on issues related to family planning because of their close interaction with outside world and better opportunity to have an access to various education and training about their reproductive rights.

To sum up, almost the majority of the participants affirmed that women's involvement in MSE augments their household decision making power. However, this varies from the nature of the household (female-headed or male headed), similarity of level of income of the two spouses, nature of patriarchy in the home, the level of income obtained from specific MSE sector branch, kinds of decision by itself, and other variables. Literatures have also revealed the diversity of factors, which influence women's power in household decision-making. For example, according to the report made by CSA on 2011 EDHS stated that the strength of the role of women in decision-making varies with the type of decision (CSA, 2012, P. 253). Personal observation from the participants' point of view on the interview shows that those who are female-headed have a greatest decision-making power than other types of households. Particularly, female headed with single household have a better decision making right in the household. The above point is in line with different literatures. For example, UN Secretariat General Analyses reports that "female-headed households without a link to males because women are unmarried, widowed, or divorced have better decision-making power and the full social and economic responsibility for the well-

being of household members'' (Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2005, p. 10-11). Another study which used beta coefficient to measure the influence of marital status on decision-making power of women in the household concluded that:

*If Widow and divorced female in society increase by 1 unit, improvement in the female decision making at domestic level will increase on average by 1.23 units, when the other variables are held constant. Power to take basic decisions at domestic level are much more of widow and divorced as compared to married while unmarried has no power to take any decisions* (Sara Noreen, 2011, p. 321).

Data based on interview also shows that, those who are unmarried and live with their parents have less social decision-making power in the household in comparison to other interviewees. Because, the main decision maker in the household in such kinds of household is the household head. One unmarried interviewee who works at a hair salon with her sister stated:

*I live with my parents. The major decision maker at home is my father and followed by my mother. As a daughter, mostly I accept and agree with what my parents say. Even decisions related to my individual life like to work outside, to move freely outside the household, to visit relatives are all based on the perception and willingness of my parents. So it is impossible to say that my involvement in such job improves my decision making power in the household* (Interview with informant 17, April -04- 2014)

In addition, the household decision making power of the participant women who involve in MSEs also varies based on the circumstances of patriarchal gender relation found in the society . For those households that are more liberal in kind and have less patriarchal gender relation, mostly decision are made through negotiation. For these kinds of households, women are more consulted during household decision-making. In addition, they have autonomy to express their choice and make a remark in major decision-making process in the household. Nevertheless, if there is strong patriarchal gender relation at home, their involvement in MSEs has less contribution for the improvement of their household decision making power.

#### **4.4. Constraints that Prevent the Enhancement of Women's Household Decision Making Rights through their Participation in MSE.**

##### **4.4.1. Low Level of Income Obtained from the Sector**

The situation that women's involvement in MSEs improves their household decision making through ensuring their access to information, association, training, household property, and financial institution. However, the above situation is retarded by shortage of income obtained through once involvement in MSEs. The problem of shortage of income is also more aggravated because of the increasing number of unemployed people who join MSEs. In relation to this idea, one unmarried woman who lives individually stated that:

*My income is becoming increasing through my involvement in MSEs. This paves for me an opportunity to decide to save and use my income. I saved more when my income had boosted. However, because of the increasing number of the unemployed, there is an ever-increasing competition in our job. This reduced My daily income that restraints me to involve in household decision making particularly financial decision (Interview with informant 10, 08-April-2014).*

Data on the interview is evidence that shortage of income generated by MSEs is the major constraint that diminishes the advancement of the participants' household decision-making power through their involvement in MSEs. One interviewee from TVED office main directorate on Wednesday, 9- April-2004 revealed that shortage of income obtained from involving in MSEs is the major limitation, which retards the possible role of women's involvement in MSEs to improve their household decision-making power.

The majority of the participants on the interview revealed that shortage of income acquired through their involvement in MSEs prevents them from broadening their participation in household decision making through their involvement in MSEs. The majority of participants on the interview revealed that their involvement in MSEs supported them to have an opportunity to

partake in household decision-making. However, they also evidenced that shortage of income acquired through their involvement in MSEs restricted them from expanding their future saving. According to them, this situation has its own limitation to involve in household decisions specifically related to large households' purchasing power.

#### **4.4.2. Traditional Norms Found in the City**

The participants on the interview revealed that, another major constraint which diminished the role of women's involvement in MSEs to improve their household decision making power is that traditional norms found at different level of the society in the city. Among those traditional norms, the cultural attitude that women see themselves as inferior to other male counter parts is the most considerable one that prevents women to improve their household decision-making through their involvement in MSEs . One participant more clarifies this as follows:

*We traditionally believe that women are inferior to men. Culture obligates women to be obedient and under the control of men especially their husband, brothers, fathers or other male relatives. Although they involve in MSEs, these norms influenced women to view themselves under men. This attitude perpetuates women to be passive in partaking household decision-making* (Interview with Informant 1, Tuesday, 08-April-2014)

In an interview a key informant from TVED office main directorate on Wednesday, 9- April-2004 also believed that negative attitudes conceived by women who involve in the MSEs towards themselves is the major challenge that imposes limitation on their improvement to involve in household decision making through their involvement in MSEs .

Further, norms related to women's consumption and their contributions to household expenditure have its influence on their household decision making power. For example, interview with government official from Labor and Social Affairs Office main directorate on Wednesday, April-9-2014, revealed that women who involve in MSEs mostly used their income for household expenditure in comparison to their male counterparts and the final decision maker on their income is conceived as the head of the household which is commonly a man. The above key

informant also revealed that those women who involve in MSEs did not mostly use their income to build up their social interaction and choice of relationship outside the home: and broaden their personal consumption that all linked to norms of women's consumption and intra household income distribution. On the bases of the above key informant, culture does not allow women to prioritize the use of their income for personal consumption. This situation perpetuates the inferior status of women in decision-making power in the household. For example, the above situation may limit women to make decision on their reproductive and health rights.

#### **4.4.3. Low Access to Awareness Creation, Training, and Gender Mainstreaming in the Sector**

Diverse policies and strategies concede the inseparability of gender mainstreaming from the governments development agenda. In addition, education, skill, and training have their positive effect on women's labor force participation, which already acknowledged by policy makers and development practitioners (Kabeer, 2012, p. 43). Integrating the gender perspective into planning and budgetary processes is believed as one mechanism of facilitating the achievement of women's economic empowerment goals in national strategies (SIDA, 2009, p. 32). The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in its article 21(c) also obligates the States parties to integrate the gender perspective in their policy formation, legislation, development plans, programs, activities, and in all other spheres of life. CEDAW Committee also in its concluding observation (2004) paragraph 260 obligates the States Parties to expand its specific programs aimed at enhancing the socio-economic well-being of women and step up its efforts to integrate gender perspectives in its sustainable development and poverty reduction programs. Gender mainstreaming in all aspect of a country is considered as one of the priority objective of achieving the goal of gender equality in Ethiopia (MOWA, 2006, p. 3).

In spite of the above theoretical and legal backgrounds, the data in the interview and personal observation shows the non-existence of much progress in achieving gender-mainstreaming objective in development process to make certain the advancement of women's rights principally

related to household decision making. Data gathered in the course of interview shows that the issues of women's right and gender mainstreaming is not well take in to consideration with in women's economic empowerment agenda particularly in case of MSEs in the city.

The challenge of low access to gender mainstreaming, training, and education is reflected in different ways during an interview. For instance, interview with WCYLAO specifically Gender Office main directorate at the city on 11-April-2014 brought up the problem found in the sector as one of the challenges, which hinders the role of women's involvement on MSEs on their household decision-making power. She stated that within the enterprise there exist a range of entrepreneurship associations, credit associations, and 1 to 5 group enterprise associations. However, according to her most of the participants in the sector are not voluntary to join those associations and to take part in awareness creation training and discussions. According to her explanation, there is a difficulty of including all embarrassing issues like gender equality in the organization of training on the government side. She also adds that largely awareness creation have focused on issues like HIV/AIDS, financial organization, and performance of the sector. Gender equality in the household particularly decision-making is not yet well considered and it is usually assume as private matter.

#### **4.5. Measures that are Supposed to be or are Undertaken to Improve the Decision Making Rights of the Participant Women**

On the interview, the most common alternative suggestions made by the participants to augment their decision-making right in the household are broadening their source of income side by side with MSEs and improving the income generating capacity of the existing MSEs itself. Creating opportunities for the women so that they overcome those challenges of shortage of income to promote their human rights is also an obligation of the state. For example, the UDHR in its article (2) recognizes for workers the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity and supplemented if necessary, this can be brought by other means of social protection. One participant on the interview also stated that:

*If I obtained other supplementary job in addition to this, my income would raise to more advance my household decision-making right. Various training regarding how we change our economic and social life has given through 1 to 5 group enterprise association. Previously, training to save money independently and improving one's own socio-economic status has given. However, because of shortage of income it is impossible to realize it (Interview with informant 10, Tuesday, 08-April-2014).*

As mentioned above, through MSEs women are being integrating in to 1 to 5 group association. Women's involvement in different financial institution also ensures their access to different trainings which makes them to be beneficial from financial institution and other social organization. These situations have their possibly role to augment women's household decision-making power through their involvement in MSEs.

Based on document analysis from the government office in the city donors and NGOs play a role providing both financial support and facilitating training mostly on issues related to HIV/AIDS, their daily performance and their involvement in financial institutions. However, data gathered through personal observation on the bases of majority of participants' point of view shows the existence of less consideration about the advancement of women's rights particularly in household decision-making through their involvement in MSEs. Based on the point of view of the majority of participants and key informants on the interview matters related to transformation of other socio-cultural aspect of women is not yet taken in to consideration. Based on document analyses from the city, attitudinal and skill related training is previously given for unemployed parents, disabled parents, participants, and the society.

In addition, on the bases of document analyses, the concerned officials in the city from the top government office up to the enterprise are being made follow up support services and evaluation mechanism. However, some participants during the interview revealed the existence of a weak follow up mechanism by the concerned government official. Based on in-depth interview, various government officials do not crosscheck the impacts of discussion and training given on transforming the different status of women in the real live situation. Data gathered through personal observation on the bases of the views of one main stakeholder particularly from gender

office in the city revealed the existence of less progress in mainstreaming the gender perspective in development agendas and various approaches of women's economic empowerment for the better promotion of women's rights. Based on personal observation from the point of view of the interviewees, mostly managing the issues of women's involvement in MSEs is considered as a matter of TEVD and its focus is mostly the economic aspect of the sector. Further, the social and cultural implication of their involvement in MSEs has not been taken in to consideration. In addition, measures to improve the social and cultural aspect of their involvement in MSEs have not yet been undertaken particularly on matters related to household decision-making.

On the bases of document analysis from government office in the city, improving the lives of women through their involvement in MSE (for instance increasing this from 44% to 50%) is also one of government's objectives of the development of MSEs at Debremarkos city. This objective is also been realized beyond 50 % for some and below 50% for others. Nevertheless, data gathered through an interview and observation shows the existence of less consideration of the gender issue and advancement of women's rights particularly at household level in the sector. So creating more links between TVED official with gender office official in the city is essential to achieve the government's objective of achieving gender equality and advancement of women's rights through economic empowerment of women.

Different stakeholders also revealed appropriate suggestions and measures that have been previously undertaken or ought to be undertaken to improve the decision-making rights of the women who involve in MSEs. One stakeholder from TVED office affirmed that enabling women in MSEs to involve in different women's enterprise associations and broadening their source of income could supplement their household decision-making. Organizing them to form financial institutions, 1 to 5 group associations, organizing them to join small and micro financial institution like Amhara Loan and Saving Institution are some of the measures that have been undertaken previously. In addition, some implementation techniques were previously been undertaken by the government to broaden the participants' business opportunity and source of income. However, because of different barriers such as stiff rules of integration in to those financial institutions, shortage income, and less access to information about financial institutions the participants are unable to benefit from those opportunities. Therefore, there is the need to do

more to ensure the profitability of those institutions to alter the existing level of improvement of women's household decision making through their involvement in MSEs.

Interview with government stakeholder from Labor and Social Affair Office main directorate on April-9-2014 also point out the need to undertake special measures that can boost their source of income as a solution to augment the decision-making rights of women through their involvement in MSEs.

Interview with government official from Gender Office main directorate also pointed out the need to undertake consciousness creation training on gender equality in household decision-making. The above official has also recommended establishing revolutionary dialogue to enable them to make discussion through women's enterprise group association. Capacity buildings of government official is also another appropriate suggestion that is being and is supposed to be undertaken as an appropriate instrument which can augment the household decision making rights of women through their involvement in MSEs in DebreMarkos city.

Literature on Economic Commission for Africa also point out the need for capacity building for gender mainstreaming in all the sectors across all institutions and at all levels (Economic Commission for Africa, 2009, p. 13). In specific reference to the study area, practical measures of capacity building of government officials to improve the service delivery have been undertaken according to the annual report made by TVED officials. Based on document analysis from government office in the city, measures of capacity building of government officials in the city particularly for the purpose of the development of MSEs are previously undertaken by the government. Among those measures facilitating information technology systems; trying to ensure access to information; and making financial support on the bases of necessity are some of them. On the bases of document analysis of the report made by government official in the city, despite the above progress, the problem of lack of all enabling working environment and terms of capacity building still exist in the sector.

There is less intervention by the government body in the city in the promotion and protection of women's rights at the household level. On the bases of personal observation, women's right particularly related to household decision making right is considered as a private matter. Those

traditions, customs, religions, and household level gender norms prevail than those laws and policy frameworks related to women's rights to involve in household decision-making. There is not much awareness about the fact that decision-making right of women at home as fundamental right of women. Therefore, the concerned body should design strategy to enforce such rights. In addition, there is the need to do more in creating awareness about the fact that women have a fundamental right to participate in household decision-making.

## **Chapter. 5. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation**

### **5.1. Summary**

Different international and national human rights instruments clearly make their remarks about the equality of women and men to involve in the social, economic, cultural, and other affairs both at the public and private level. They also affirm women's involvement in decision-making power in the household as the fundamental rights of women. Different international and national policy frameworks have been put in place in Ethiopia to enforce such rights. Those national and international policy frameworks also consider the role of economic empowerment of women as the most important mechanism of the advancement of women's rights. Further, the concept of economic empowerment is also a human right and social justice issue (SIDA, 2009, p. 13).

Diverse literatures also try to analyze the link between women's involvement in income earning activity and its impact on their household decision-making. Most literatures pointed out that women's involvement in income earning activity has significant role to improve their household decision-making power. However, they also tried to remember the diversity of factors, influences, constraints, situations by which women's involvement in income earning activity can augments their household decision making power. On the bases of those theoretical frame works, this study has tried to analyze the human rights implication of women's involvement in MSE on their household decision making power. It also tried to find out the opportunities and challenges behind the issue and how those opportunities and challenges affect the positive human rights implication of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision-making power.

To achieve its objective, the researcher employed qualitative methods of data analysis. She selected informants through purposive sampling methods. In addition, the case study was specifically limited to Debremarkos city, which is a zonal city found in Amhara Regional State in Ethiopia.

To achieve its objective and to comprehend whether their involvement in MSEs is improving their household decision-making, the study also tried to discover the prior experience of decision

making right of the participant women before their involvement in MSEs. Based on the interview, such priori decision-making experience of the participant depends on many factors. For example, those who were taking part in another income generating activities such as in daily labor, they have at least minimum level of household decision-making power. However, that decision-making power in the household is not as such relevant in comparison to the present or after they join MSEs. Most of participants particularly those who were living with their parents hardly have household decision-making power before their involvement in MSEs. For others who were participating in a better income opportunity like who were working in overseas before their involvement on MSE, their household decision making power was better respected despite the existence of others who were working abroad but have hardly household decision making power in the home. Those who were students and under the total control of their parents, they have not relevant household decision-making power before their involvement in MSEs. For such kinds of participants, it is possible to conclude that they were living under the total control and choice of other household members with having insignificant household decision-making power before their involvement in MSEs.

The study also tried to show the situation of women's household decision-making power after their involvement on MSEs. Based on the interview, most of the participants bare that women's involvement in MSEs improves their household decision making power. But, the above situation varies as the relative level of the spouse's income, the level of the existing patriarichical gender norms found in the household, the divergence in specific MSEs in terms of income generating capacity, the nature of the household (weather being female headed or male headed), and other situations varies across each participant.

The study also shows that their involvement in MSE improves their household decision-making rights such as control, management, and administration of household property; decision related to broadening their future occupation; and decision related to their reproductive and health rights. This is in the case that their involvement in MSEs enhances their freedom and autonomy to involve in household decision-making. On the bases of data gathered through an interview, their involvement improves their confidence and self-esteem that ultimately adds value to broaden

their position in household decision-making. As women involve in MSE, the women themselves and other individuals within family give better position for them.

In addition, when women are involving in MSEs, it paves the way to participate in different financial organization and association. This situation augments for example their access to property, which helps them to participate in household decisions related to large-scale purchasing, intra household income distribution, and decision for personal consumption. When women involve on MSEs, they have a better likelihood to be the owner of household property. In addition, their involvement in MSEs also creates an opportunity to have a close interaction with the outside social institution like the market, financial institution, etc, which enables them to broaden their level of income and future business opportunity. Women's involvement in MSEs also increases their access to information and training which have its implication to augment their household decision making power. Their involvement in MSEs also creates an opportunity to reach in to mutual agreement during decision through negotiation.

The data also shows that even if women's involvement in MSEs improves their household decision making power, but this situation has limited by varieties of factors and constraints. The main constraint that diminishes the positive human rights impact of women's involvement in MSE on their household decision-making power is that shortage of income generated through involving in MSE. Most of the participants avowed that shortage of income generated by MSE constraints women from taking part in household decision-making. On the bases of the participants' point of view, low level of income for instance prevented them from making household level financial decision.

Another major constraint that prevents women to augment their household decision-making through their involvement in MSEs is that the cultural attitude that women conceived themselves as inferior to other male counter parts. There are also norms found at various level of the society in the city, which restricted women to augment their household decision-making through their involvement in MSEs.

The study exposes that the major constraint that hinders the positive impact of women's involvement in MSE to augment their household decision-making power is that the shortage of income obtained from the sector. Owing to this major problem, the alternative suggestion depicted by the participants on the interview to augment their household decision-making power is that operating other source of income side by side with MSE or improving the income generating capacity of the existing MSEs itself. Other participants also suggest the need to question and take measures regarding government policy that support the free-market economic system gives priority to private investor who have better startup business. According to them, this situation is diminishing their level of income and demand for their labor market to promote their decision making right in the household.

Other participants also propose that, enabling them to actively partake in various women's enterprise association and enhancing their source of income can realize their decision making power in the household. In addition, other participants on the interview also suggest the necessity of training related to gender equality in the household; and empowerment or capacity building of those government officials so that they properly administer and follow up the progress of women's economic empowerment to achieve the government's goal of gender equality and the advancement of women's human rights.

## 5.2. Conclusion and Recommendation

On the bases of the data, the research makes its conclusion and recommendation that expressed as follows:

-The study reveals that women's involvement in MSE has a positive human rights implication to improve their household decision-making. However, this possible role is restricted by shortage of income generated by MSE. Therefore, it is recommended that the government or the concerned body particularly the officials of TVED in the city should try to find alternative mechanisms to improve the level of income of the participant women in MSEs. The study also shows that their access to different financial institutions like *Ekub*, *Edir*, and *Mahber* paves a better opportunity to improve their access to finance. However, because of inability to meet down payment requirements or inability to repay the previous loan they are unable to use different financial institutions to broaden their business opportunities. Therefore, it is recommended that the concerned body in the city specifically the officials of TVED should try to increase the link between those who involve in MSE with financial institutions through regulating the terms of integration in to financial institution. The study also revealed that the free market economic system enables those who have more money to monopolize the economic benefit of trade. Because of this those who involve on MSE were unable be competitive to broaden their business work in comparison to others who involve in large-scale business. Previously various governmental supports such as giving working and marketing space for those who involve in the sector were made. In addition, the government official in the city particularly the TVED officials were tried to organize the participant in the sector to join different financial institutions including small and micro finance institution. For example, with the support of the government official in the city, Amhara Loan and Saving Institution (ALSI) is available to assist them to develop their business work and increase their level of income. However, there is the need for the concerned body particularly the officials of TVED in the city to look into alternative mechanisms that can better economically or financially improve the participant women to augment their household decision making rights. For example, enabling them to renovate their business in to large and more formal sector will be one mechanism of improving their source of income to improve their household decision making power. This will be true through providing social protection

mechanisms like providing adequate working space and start-up capital for their large-scale business, shifting the existing restricted terms of commitment in to financial institutions, and collaborating with other sources of income such as donors and private investors.

-Previously different training particularly related to access to finance and attitudinal and skill related training has been given for the participants, government official, and society. However, there is the need to give more broad training about the rights of women that is related to household decision-making. The concerned body particularly the officials of TVED and WCYLAO should prepare training and capacity building for those government officials to improve the positive human rights implications of women's involvement in MSEs on their household decision-making power. On the bases of the data, there is no enough progress in mainstreaming the gender perspective in development agendas and different approaches of women's economic empowerment for the advancement of their human rights particularly related with women's rights in household decision-making in the city. Mostly, managing the issues of women's involvement in MSEs in the city is considered as a matter of TEVD and its focus is mostly the economic aspect of the sector. Therefore, it is recommended for the concerned body that there is the need to create a much more link between TVED official with gender office official in the city to realize the government's objective of achieving gender equality and promotion of women's rights through economic empowerment of women particularly through their involvement in MSEs.

- Further, the study shows that the existing patriarchal gender relation found in the household is another major constraint on the advancement of women's rights related to household decision-making through their involvement in MSEs. The sources of the development of those patriarchal gender relations are religious dogma, customs, and traditions. Therefore, it is recommended that the concerned body in the city particularly the officials of TVED and WCYLAO in collaboration with other officials should organize and provide broad based training for the society about the rights of women to involve in household decision-making. This will allow in improving those traditions and cultures that allow the inferior status of women at home. In addition, attitudinal change training for the women is needed to collapse the inferior status that women give for themselves. These will have its appropriate impact to avoid the assumption that

women have inferior status in the household. In addition, it could be used to improve the idea that the major decision maker in the household is men particularly in a male-headed household type. So governmental, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector such as Women's, Children's, and Youth Bureau; and private institutions should strengthen the efforts through education and training program by supporting strategies, mobilizing communities and building collisions so as to increase awareness creation to achieve the goal of transformation of patriarchal gender relation.

## References

A.M. Sultana: Factors Effect on Women Autonomy and Decision-Making Power within the Household in Rural Communities in Bangladesh, Sultan Idris Education University, Department of Social Studies and Citizenship, Faculty of Human Sciences 35900, Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia; Journal of Applied Sciences Research, ISSN 1819-544X, 7(1): 18-22, 2011

Amnesty International: Briefing to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 49th Session, July 2011, Amnesty International Publications, London, United Kingdom, 2011

Anju Malhotra, Sidney Ruth Schuler, Carol Boender: Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development, Background Paper Prepared for the World Bank Workshop on Poverty and Gender: New Perspectives ,Final Version: June 28, 2002

Bilisuma Bushie Dito: Essays on Women's Bargaining Power and Intra-Household Resource Allocation in Rural Ethiopia, Degree of Doctor, Erasmus University Rotterdam, International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), printed in Netherlands, 2011

C.R. Kothari: Research Methodology, Methods, and Techniques, Second Edition, New Age International, Private Limited, India, 2004

Christine M. Koggel: Globalization and Women's Paid Work: Expanding Freedom? Feminist Economics 9(2 – 3), 163 – 183, Routholage, Taylour, and Francis Group, 2003

Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP): Background Issue Paper on Legal Empowerment of the Poor: Entrepreneurship, Addis Ababa, and November 11, 2006

CSA:Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ICF International, Calverton, Maryland, USA, March 2012

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA): Compendium of Emerging Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming: Volume I, African Center for Gender and Social Development, Published by ECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2009

Elissa Braunstein: Women's Employment, Empowerment and Globalization: An Economic Perspective: United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women Expert Consultation on

the 2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, Bangkok, Thailand, November, 2008

Elsebeth Krogh, and Thomas Nikolaj Hansen (COWI Consult), Susanne Wendt and Morten Elkjaer (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs): Promoting Employment for Women as a Strategy for Poverty Reduction, p. 133-147, published by, OECD, 2009

Ethiopia MDGs Report 2012: Government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT): Assessing Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, December 2012

Ethiopia: Country Gender Profile 2006, WABEKBON Development Consultant PLC, December 2006

Ethiopia: Country Profile 2012, Oxfam Canada, December 2012

Ethiopian Society of Population Studies: In-depth Analysis of the Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey 2005: Gender Inequality and Women's Empowerment, Ethiopian Society of Population Studies, Addis Ababa, October 2008

FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), IFAD (the International Fund for Agricultural Development), and ILO (the International Labor Office): Gender Dimensions of Agricultural and Rural Employment: Differentiated Pathways out of Poverty: Status, trends and gaps, published by FAO, IFAD and ILO, Rome, 2010.

FDRE: Growth and Transformation Plan, 2010/11-2014/15 volume I, October 2011: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: IMF country report number 11/304/, publisher IMF, Washington, D.C, 2011

Federal Civil Service Commission: Survey on the Status of Men and Women Employees and Strategies for Gender Equality, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2005

Fondo Sikod: Gender Division of Labor and Women's Decision-Making Power in Rural Households in Cameroon, Africa Development, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, 2007, pp. 58-71, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (ISSN 0850-3907), 2007

G. S. Ogato: The Quest for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Least Developed Countries: Policy and Strategy Implications for Achieving Millennium Development Goals in Ethiopia, *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, Academic Journal*, Vol. 5(9), Pp. 358-372, December, 2013

Haregewoin Cherinet and Emebet Mulugeta: A Profile on Gender Relations: Towards Gender Equality in Ethiopia: Division for Policy and Socio-Economic Analysis, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), 2003

Haregewoin Cherinet and Emebet Mulugeta: Country Gender Profile Ethiopia, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Addis Ababa, May 2002

John W. Creswell: *Research Design; Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Approaches*: SAGE Publication, Inc, 2009

Joseph A. Maxwell: *Qualitative Research Design, an Interactive Approach, Second Edition*, Applied Social Science Research Methods Series Volume 41, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi, 2005

Kidist Gebreselassie, Bamlaku Alamirew and Aragaw Yimmer: Tracking Trends in Ethiopia's Civil Society Sector: CSOs (Civil Societies) Supporting Women's Economic Empowerment in Ethiopia: Mapping and Case Studies, Final Report, A Research Conducted through the Partnership Between Forum for Social Studies (FSS) and Atos Consulting, Development Assistant Group in Ethiopia, October 2012

Kola' A. Oyediran, and Ayodele F. Odusola, Poverty and the Dynamics of Women's Participation in Household Decision-Making in Nigeria, *African Population Studies Supplement A to vol 19*, Nigeria

Martyn Hammersley: *Questioning Qualitative Inquiry, Critical Essay*, Sage Publication, 2010

Mary Hallward-Driemeier and Ousman Gajigo: *Strengthening Economic Rights and Women's Occupational Choice, The Impact of Reforming Ethiopia's Family Law*, World Bank, Washington DC., March 2011

Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA): National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE), 2006-2010, Addis Ababa, 2006

MOFED: FDRE, Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), 2010/11-2014/15, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED), Addis Ababa, September 2010

Naila Kabeer: Women's Economic Empowerment and Inclusive Growth: Labor Markets and Enterprise Development, School of Oriental and African Studies, SIG Working Paper , UK, 2012

National Employment Policy and Strategy of Ethiopia: November 2009, Addis Ababa

OECD: Women's Economic Empowerment, the OECD- DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET), Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: The Role of Empowerment, OECD 2012

Parveen S., Hossain M. R., Kausar A. K. M. G., Shibli M. M. A., Rahhan M. M., Ahmed J. U.: An Assessment of Women's Participation in Farm Household Income: A Study in Some Selected Areas of Mymensingh District of Bangladesh, IRJALS (International Journal of Applied Life Science), 2(4), p. 16 – 26, 2013

Prime Minister Office/Women's Affairs Sub Sector: A National Report on, Progress Made in the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, (Beijing + 10), Ethiopia, March 2004

Report of the UN Secretary-General: Sixtieth session, Item 66 of the provisional agenda, Second Committee, Advancement of women, Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, Agenda A/60/165, 27 July 2005

Sara Horrel, Hazel Johnson, and Paul Mosley (Eds): Work, Female Empowerment, and Economic Development, Rutledge Studies in Development Economics, Rutledge, Taylor, and Francis Group, London and New York, Rutledge, 2008

Sara Noreen: Role of Microfinance in Empowerment of Female Population of Bahawalpur District, Presented on 2011 International Conference on Economics and Finance Research: Department of Economics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur, Pakistan, IPEDR Vol. 4, pp. 318-324, 2011, IACSIT Press, Singapore, 2011

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavey: The Practice of Qualitative Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, SAGE publications. inc. 2011

SIDA: SIDA Working Paper, Women's Economic Empowerment: Scope for SIDA's Engagement, SIDA, December 30, 2009.

Tena Yigezu: Effects of Gender Disparity on the Lives of Women: The Case of Kibet Town of Silti Woreda in SNNPR: A Thesis Submitted to School of Graduate Program of Addis Ababa University, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Social Work (MSW), June, 2006

UN: 2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women's Control over Economic Resources and Access to Financial Resources, including Microfinance, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations, New York, 2009

UNDP: Capacity Development Resource: Applying a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation and Programming: Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP (United Nation Development Program), September 2006

Vennila Gopal and K. Shobha, Women in Informal Sector – A Probit Analytical Study, IJPSS (International Journal of Physical and Social Sciences), Volume 2, Issue 9, p. 372-381, ISSN: 2249-5894, Open Access International e-Journal, and available in the website <http://www.ijmra.us>, September, 2012

World Bank: Unleashing the Potential of Ethiopian Women, Trends and Options for Economic Empowerment, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management 2, Africa Region, Report No. 49366-E, Ethiopia, World Bank Document, World Bank, June 2009

### **Legal Documents**

African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Adopted 27 June 1981, OAU Doc. Cab/Leg/67/3 Rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), Entered Into Force 21 October 1986

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: the Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, September 1995

[Beijing Platform for Action, Chapter IV, F. Women, and the Economy: Strategic Objectives and Actions](#), UN Documents, Gathering a body of global agreements

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: 1995 Constitution, Adopted, On 8 December 1994

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: 2000, the Revised Family Code Proclamation No. 213/2000” Federal Negarit Gazetta of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Issue 1/2000, July 2000.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Proclamation Number 79/2003, the Amahra National Regional State Family Code Approval Proclamation, Issued under the Auspices of the Council of the Amhara National Regional State, Bahir Dar, June 2003

UN, 1948: Universal Declaration of Human Rights: G.A.res.217A,at71,U.N.GAOR,U.N.Doc A/810

UN, 1966: International Convent on Civil and Political Rights: Adopted and Open for Signature, Ratification and Accession by General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) of December 16, 1966, U.N.Doc.A/6316) 999UNTS. 171, Entered in to Force March 23, 1976

UN, 1976: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Adopted and Opened for Signature, Ratification, and Accession by General Assembly Resolution, 2200A (XXI) of December 16, 1966, Entered in to Force January 3, 1976

UN, 1979: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women: G. Adopted and Opened for Signature, Ratification and Accession by General Assembly Resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 Entry Into Force 3 September 1981

UN, CEDAW, Concluding Observation, on the bases of the combined Fourth and Fifth periodic report of Ethiopia (CEDAW/C/ETH/4-5) at its 646th and 647th meetings, held on 26 and 30 January 2004.

UN, CEDAW, Concluding Observations on the bases of combined Sixth to Seventh periodic report of Ethiopia (CEDAW/C/ETH/6-7) at its 984th and 985th meetings on 15 July 2011, Forty-Ninth sessions, 11 – 29, July 2011

## **Appendix**

### **Appendix 1-Interview Guide Line**

#### **Introduction**

Dear respondent,

I am a graduate student in the Center for Human Rights, Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am undertaking a research entitled ‘Women’s Participation in Micro and Small Enterprises in DebreMarkos City and Implication on their Right in Household Decision Making: A Qualitative Study from the Human Rights Perspective’. You are one of the respondents selected to participate on this study. Please assist me in giving correct and complete information to present a representative finding on the household decision making power of women who involve in MSEs in DebreMarkos City. Your involvement is voluntary and any question and discussion is completely anonymous.

Finally, I affirm for you that the information that you share me will be kept confidential and only used for the academic purpose. No individual’s responses have identified as such and the identity of persons responding has not published or released to anyone. All information has used for academic purposes only. Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation and dedicating your time.

#### **1. Interview Guide Line for Interview with the Participant**

##### **General background**

Sex -----

Age -----

Educational status: -----

Martial statues: -----

Type of occupation: -----

##### **Interview Guide Question**

Before your involvement on small and micro enterprise, what was it like your household decision making power? Can you more elaborate it?

Before your involvement on such kind of jobs, do you think that one reason which constraint your decision making power in the household is absence of your participation in income earning activities?

Do you think that your involvement in MSE can enhances your household decision making power? If your answer is yes, how so? If no; why?

What kinds of household decision-making were improved because of your involvement in MSE?

What are the main challenges that retard the positive enhancement of your household decision making rights through your involvement in MSE?

How those challenges influence your household decision making power? Can you more elaborate it?

Do you take any measures that can augment the positive effect of your involvement in MSE on your household decision-making power? If your answer is yes, more elaborate it.

## **2. Interview Guideline for Government Office and Key Stakeholders (Informants)**

### **General Background**

1. Sex-----
2. Age -----
3. Level of education-----
4. Name of office that you work-----
5. Position at work -----

### **Interview Guide Question**

Do you think that women's involvement in MSEs in DebreMarkos city can augments their household decision making power?

If your answer for the above question is yes, explain how it enhances? More elaborate it. If your answer is no, why? Can you suggest the kinds of household decision-making that were enhanced through their involvement in MSEs?

What are the most important challenges that retard the positive enhancement of their involvement in MSE on their household decision making power according to your believe?

How those challenges influence their household decision making power are you believe? Can you more elaborate it?

Do you know any measure that has been undertaken by the participant women or by yourselves which can augment their household decision-making power through their participation in MSE? If your answer is yes, more elaborate it.

### 3. List of Informants

#### List of In-Depth Interview Informants

| Number | Name         | Age | Place of Work at the Time of Interview/Keble | Type of Specific Enterprise                               | Educational Level(Grade) |
|--------|--------------|-----|--|---|--------------------------|
| 1      | Informant 1  | 22  | 03   | Tea and Coffee Service                                    | 10+3                     |
| 2      | Informant 2  | 29  | 03   | Breakfast House, Café and Restaurant                      | 10+3                     |
| 3      | Informant 3  | 32  | 03   | Tea and Coffee Service                                    | 10+3                     |
| 4      | Informant 4  | 25  | 03   | Tea and Coffee Service                                    | 8                        |
| 5      | Informant 5  | 22  | 03   | Tea and Coffee Service                                    | 10                       |
| 6      | Informant 6  | 28  | 03   | <i>Balitina</i> ( selling of product of <i>Balitina</i> ) | 10                       |
| 7      | Informant 7  | 20  | 03   | Tea and Coffee Service                                    | 10+3                     |
| 8      | Informant 8  | 45  | 03   | Breakfast House, Café And Restaurant                      | 12                       |
| 9      | Informant 9  | 24  | 04   | (Construction) <i>Cople Stone Nitaf</i>                   | 8                        |
| 10     | Informant 10 | 24  | 04   | (Construction) <i>Cople Stone Nitaf</i>                   | 10                       |
| 11     | Informant 11 | 20  | 01   | Trading in Textile  | 10                       |
| 12     | Informant 12 | 30  | 02   | <i>Balitina</i> ( Selling of Product of <i>Balitina</i> ) | 10                       |
| 13     | Informant 13 | 30  | 02   | Tailoring   | 7                        |
| 14     | Informant 14 | 22  | 02   | Beauty Salon  | 10                       |
| 15     | Informant 15 | 27  | 04   | Hen Husbandry   | 10                       |

|    |              |    |    |   |    |
|----|--------------|----|----|---|----|
| 16 | Informant 16 | 28 | 01 | Hen Husbandry   | 8  |
| 17 | Informant 17 | 23 | 02 | Beauty Salon  | 10 |
| 18 | Informant 18 | 35 | 02 | Service (cleanliness<br>Protection Service)             | 10 |
| 19 | Informant 19 | 33 | 02 | Trading in Textile                                      | 9  |
| 20 | Informant 20 | 28 | 01 | Textile and Fabric<br>Manufacturing ( <i>Idetibeb</i> ) | 10 |

### List of in-Depth-Interview Key Informants

| Institutions Name   | Age | Sex    | Educational<br>Level | Position<br>/Status  |
|---|-----|--------|----------------------|--|
| Debre markos city<br>TEVD office  | 38  | Female | 12+4                 | TVED,<br>Supportive<br>Office Main<br>Directorate            |
| Debre markos city<br>Women's, Children's,<br>Youths', Laborers'<br>and Social Affairs<br>Office | 59  | Male   | 12+4                 | Laborers' and<br>Social Affair<br>Office Main<br>Directorate |
| Debre markos City<br>Women's, Children's,<br>Youths', Laborers'<br>and Social Affairs<br>Office | 30  | Female | 12+4                 | Women's<br>Affairs/Gender<br>Office Main<br>Directorate      |