

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATING STUDIES

WOMEN'S DECISION-MAKING IN THE HOUSEHOLD:
THE CASE OF WOMEN PETTY TRADERS
IN 'GULELLE' SUB-CITY, Addis Ababa

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By Darare Yohannes

**A Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis
Ababa University, Institute of Gender Studies**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Masters in Arts in Gender Studies

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| CAS | Central Statistics Authority |
| ECA | Economic Commission for Africa |
| FDRE | Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| GO | Governmental Organization |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organization |
| MOLSA | Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNECA | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |

Abstract

The present study examines the impact of income earning on the decision-making power of women in the household and its contribution to the well being of children as well as other household members. The study participants are 16 women petty traders from 'Gullell Sub-city of Addis Ababa Administrative zone, who are at wedlock, within the age range of 25-55 and who have at list one child residing with them. Feminist research approach is applied guided by the gender stratification theory. Data was collected through participant observation, interviews and a focus group discussion informed by critical feminist ethnographer's principles.

The study reveals that the income earning of women petty traders has contributed to their decision-making power in the household. It further discloses that income earning of the women has complex and contradictory effect. Although it has improved the status of the women, in some instances it has created burden on the live of women. The study reveals that income and the gendered ideologies matters in the household decision-making. The less important household matters such as house management (gender roles of women) are left to the exclusive decisions of women where as, in the important household matters such as control of household resources (capital, assets) etc. the negotiating power of women in the decision-making processes is influenced by the gendered ideologies in addition to their income contribution.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

The gender relation between women and men is influenced by the prominent socio-cultural, socio-economic, and political factors. In all the institutions the patriarchal ideology is pertinent. Gittins (1992) noted that patriarchal ideology is embedded in our socio-economic and political institutions. She further explained that it influences the very language we use, and as such encourages, persuade and pressurizes people to follow certain paths. However, the present study focuses basically on the socio-economic aspects of gender relations in decision-making at household level.

Women are socialized from early age to be excluded from decision-making in the public spheres (Corner, 1997). In most cultures, from childhood girls/women are made to be confined at home and serve the men. When the son is schooled and encouraged to study and succeed, the daughter is made to help her mother in household chores. When she grows up, she is given to a man to serve him sexually and also work for him. Due to the above reasons, women lack the experience and knowledge to participate in decision-making especially at managerial and leadership positions.

Studies reveal that women's lack of access to economic resources, education, information, etc. hinder them from deciding on their own body and their lives (Corner, 1997). Where as, women who got opportunity to access economic resources, education, information, etc. and have control over those opportunities are participating in the decision-making processes regarding their own life. Few of those women are at manager and leadership positions, even if the strongholds of culture and traditions are still present to be challenged.

Since the time of civilization and industrialization, in most cases, women are excluded from productive activities that are paid for. They are pushed back to the non-paid household chores and service giving. However, those women who managed to involve in paid productive activities have registered success. Studies have indicated that poor women who are involved in the lower productive activities, such as petty trading contribute income to their households and are able to improve the lives of their household members (Hayat, 1997; Selamawit, 1994).

The present study would like to investigate how women petty traders' income contributes to their negotiating power in decision-making in their households and how it contributes to the well being of the children in the family. The decision-making power of the women petty traders in their households is examined in the traditionally women sphere activities (gender roles of women), i.e: house chores, childcare, nurturing the family, etc.; male sphere activities (the gender roles of men) such as providing income to the household, control of the household resources (assets, labor, income, etc.), and purchase of furniture, etc.... The effect of their income earning in their status in the household and the community is also examined from the women's point of view.

This chapter consists of brief background information about the lives of women in Ethiopia, Statements of the problem and objectives of the study. It will also present the theoretical framework of the study and the significance of the study.

1.1. Brief Background

Women are disadvantaged when compared to men in virtually all aspects of life because of the gender differences pertinent in the society (Haregwoin & Emebet, 2002). They are deprived of equal access to education, health care, capital and decision-making power in political, social and economic sectors. In developing countries although men are credited

with performing three quarters of all economic activities, women actually perform 53 percent of the work. Out of the estimated \$16 trillion 'invisible' global output, the \$11 trillion was estimated to be produced by women (United Nations Human Development Report (1995). It is estimated that women in Africa represent 52 percent of the total population and they contribute approximately 75 percent of the agricultural work, and produce 60-80 percent of the food. Yet they earn only 10 percent of African incomes and own just 1 percent of the continent's assets (UNDP, 1995).

In Ethiopia, women constitute nearly half of the population. They are significantly contributing to the well being of the family as well as the country. According to studies undertaken by NGOs and GOs it is estimated that Ethiopian women work for an average of 12-14 hours a day (Haregwoin & Emebet, 2002). Especially rural women suffer from heavy workload since agriculture is the main economic base for Ethiopia. In rural areas, Ethiopian women spend up to 10 hours per day in the field in the peak agricultural seasons in addition to the house works (Habtamu, Hirut, Yosuf, & Konjit 2004). But, since plough is designated to men except female headed households, women have minimal role in decisions related to land distribution and agricultural production. They have less or no control over the assets and no access to modern technologies.

In urban areas, women are underrepresented in the formal employment. In 1999/2000 only around 31 % of female are formal government employees (this is a national picture while the ratio is very low when it is measured in the earning rates and the distribution in the different regions). Government employee women are mostly engaged in clerical and fiscal administrative positions (secretaries, genitors, cashier, etc.), which are categorized in the low earning. The percentage of women in professional positions is only around 29%, compared to men of 71%, this is due to the fact that their educational attainment is also low (Federal Service Commission, 1999/2000). Women are mainly engaged in the informal sector, which is characterized by insecurity and low earning.

Haregewoin and Emebet (2002:13) stated that Ethiopian women hold lower status in relation to men because of the gender difference:

- 1) They are generally poorer than men because they have less control over resource and they earn less;
- 2) They are less educated especially as the education ladder goes higher;
- 3) They are increasingly becoming heads of households, with no resources to support their dependents;
- 4) They do not enjoy due acknowledgement for their labor contribution at public and private spheres;
- 5) They do have less/no decision-making power at private and public spheres;

In general, women in Ethiopia are at subordinate position in relation to men when measured in terms of educational attainment, employment and remuneration, occupational type, access to services and benefits, opportunities to participate in decision-making and politics. Although they are involved in the social, economic, cultural and political spheres, when they are compared with their male counterparts, they benefit less from their contribution and are less involved in decision-making levels (Etsegenet et. al,1999 & Tihitina, 2001).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In developing countries like Ethiopia, the informal sector absorbs the majority of the urban unemployed growing labor force. It creates a wide employment opportunity for the marginalized groups especially women who are excluded from the formal sector due to various reasons. Women in the informal sector could either be employed by other people or self-employed. According to a survey carried out by CSA in 1996, 64.93% of those engaged in the informal sectors were women (this figure included women who were operators and those who were owners).

Women dominate the informal sector for a number of reasons: a) The majority of women are uneducated: - they cannot be employed in the formal sector as easily as men do since their multiple roles make it difficult for them to take time off for training and formal education; b) women are assigned to carry out multiple roles in the household: - they have to combine earning with the other roles of a mother and a wife (Hayat, 1997).

As studies indicated, the majority of women in the informal sector such as petty trading joined the sector as a means of survival. They turn to the informal business due to low level of economic support from husbands/partners, which forces them to find a means of supplementing their low income in order to support the family. The second reason is divorce and separation: female-heads of households join the informal employment to look after their family members. The third reason is lack of education that leads them to operate with the traditional skills they acquire (ILO, 2002).

Ethiopian women are mostly engaged in the informal sectors that are neither capital intensive nor requiring skills acquired through formal education. These are selling perishable and non-perishable food items in the open market, residence based eating or drinking places where indigenous food and/or beverages such as 'injera', 'tej', 'katikala' are retailed in fresh form. Others include home-based workshops of traditional artisans in weaving, wood carrying, carpet making, pottery, basketry and embroidery (Selamawit, 1994).

Women in the informal sector of Ethiopia especially those engaged in petty trade operate under arduous condition. They face several difficulties such as lack of capital, absence of sufficient and secure space and location; harassment and confiscations of

goods by officials especially the police, lack/absence of infrastructure such as health care and hygiene, etc. (Hayat, 1997; Selamawit, 1994; ILO, 2002).

According to studies undertaken regarding the expenditure patterns of women in the informal sector such as petty trading, income earned by women are most likely to go toward filling the basic needs of children and other household members (Zenebework, 2002). Grasmuck & Espinal (2000) also confirmed that women devote a higher proportion of income to family well being especially children's nutrition rather than to personal expenditures when compared to men.

In our country, in most cases, women are seen as dependent on their partners and have no or less decision-making power. Women who are at home taking care of their children and holding the responsibility of house management are seen as housewives who are not considered as non-productive even though they are engaged in the productive and reproductive roles. However, in the case of women petty traders who are self-employed and earning income to the household, it is important to understand the effect of income earning on the lives and status of the women in the household and the community.

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the impact of women petty traders' income earning on their decision-making power in the household and its contribution to the well being of their children as well as other members of the household.

The specific objectives are:

- To look into the income contribution of women petty traders to their household compared to that of their partners/husbands.
- To analyze how they expend their income.

- To look at how decisions are made in the households in traditionally female sphere activities (women's gender roles) and male sphere activities (men's gender roles).
- To study how their income generating activities improved the social status of the women petty trader's in the household and the community.

1.4. Research Questions

The study sets out to find answers to the following basic questions.

The major research questions are:

1. Does women petty traders' income earning improve their decision-making power in their households?
2. How do the women petty traders' income earning contribute to the well being of their children as well as other members of their household?

More specifically the following questions are addressed in this thesis.

- 1) What are the economic contributions of women petty traders to the household?
- 2) How much is their economic contribution when compared to that of their partner? and how do the women (and men) spend their income?
- 3) How far is the negotiating power of women petty trader's in decision-making in the traditionally female sphere (women's gender roles) and male sphere activities (men's gender roles) of the household?
- 4) What is the effect of the women petty traders income earning on the status they hold in the household and at the community level?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The present study is expected to have contribution in understanding the importance of income earning in women's decision-making in the households. So far studies undertaken by the concerned bodies have not properly addressed the condition of women petty traders who are operating at lower level (on the roadside, outdoor, etc). In addition, the few conducted on the specified group has not analyzed the relationship between their income earning and decision-making power in the households. The present study feeds information to any attempt intended to enhance and improve the socio-economic status of women petty traders. Further, the result could inform planners and development workers the deferential effect of providing resources to women and men in improving the live of the household members.

1.6. Theoretical and Conceptual framework

This study is located in the postmodern feminist research framework guided by gender theories. According to feminist perspective, the existing inequality between women and men are non-natural, it is rather the result of the discriminatory social constructions that are propagated through cultural and religious ideologies pertinent in the society. This gender inequality is influenced by the socio-economic, socio-cultural and political factors within the given society, in a given time and location. In every society women are discriminated as secondary citizens in access to economic resources, education, information, decision-making and leadership, etc.

1.6.1. Theoretical Orientation

Although there are various factors for gender inequality in every society, for this particular study I use Rea Lesser Blumberg's theory of **Gender Stratification**. Her general theory of gender stratification posts that relative economic power, specified as

control of strategic resources such as income and property, is the key factor affecting gender stratification at a variety of "nested levels" ranging from the household to the state level (Lesser, 1991:122).

Lesser (1991) argues that the key variable predicting the degree of gender inequality in a society is women's economic power relative to men's. Similarly, supporting this idea, Safa (1995) and Thicker (1976) said, as women's potential to paid work and economic resource increases their dependence on male partner decrease and their social role in the household and the community improves (referred in Grasmuck & Espinal, 2000).

Based on her general theories of *Gender Stratification* and *Gender and Development*, Lesser stated that "with greater economic power, women gain more say in household decisions and tend to promote – and spend their own money disproportionately on – the nutrition, health and education of daughters as well as sons" (Lesser, 2005: 2).

According to her explanations, women with economic power i.e.: in control of income and other key economic resources (land, capital, assets, etc...) gain more equality and control over their own lives (Lesser, B. 1984). It also contributes directly to their children's human capital (nutrition, health and education) and to their nation's income growth. It also directly contributes to the wealth and well-being of their nations; and indirectly to their country's national income growth through the women's own and their educated daughters' lower fertility (Lesser, 1989 a referred in Lesser 2005).

From gender stratification theory, what I found important is Lesser's assertion that economic earning of women improves the decision-making power of women in the household and contributes to the well being of the household. From the time of industrialization, due to the gender division of labour, women were excluded from the

paid work and economic resources. They were made to be confined at home and wait for their husbands' earning. Due to lack of financial power, women were unwillingly made to accept the decision made by their parents, husband or others. This trend latter became the norm supported by culture and tradition. But as women get access to economic resources and have control over, it helps them to develop self-confidence that enables them to obtain voice and vote in household decisions.

In the 2005 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey, it is found out that women who believe they earn more or the same amount as their partner have claimed dominant or equal decision-making power in the household respectively while those believe that their partner earn more admitted that their partner dominate the decision-making in the household.

1.6.2. Women's Decision-making in the Household

Women are seen, in most cases, as dependent on men and denied the right to decision-making and leadership. In the existing structure, be it social, cultural, economical and political, men are granted with the authority to make decisions on behalf of women. Several researches have identified that the level of women's participation in decision-making is insignificant especially in the social and political administrative and managerial positions (Tihitina, 2001; Haregwoin & Emebet, 2002).

Women are marginalized in decision-making and leadership by a variety of processes that begin in infancy. In most societies, women lack experience of decision-making and leadership in the public arena because girls, in contrast to boys, are socialized to play passive roles and given little opportunity to make decisions or develop leadership skills outside the family context. In most traditional societies girls are kept largely within the confines of the household and family where they are protected and taught to accept the decisions that others, parents, teachers, brothers make on their

behalf. As a result of this lack of experience in a public context, girls tend to lack self-confidence and skills needed to function effectively in positions of formal leadership. An added handicap for many women is their lack of capacity due to discrimination in access to education and training: in most countries, women have higher levels of illiteracy and fewer years of schooling than men (Corner, 1997).

Women have relatively high decision-making power in the household on the traditionally assigned roles to them. Roles women and men play in the household and the society is assigned to them by their gender rather than by sex. Gender roles, more or less, are familiar all over the world. Women are socialized into lower status roles and dependency due to the differential positions of power either groups hold in society. In most societies, men tend to hold positions of power and to distribute available resources, they frequently have the opportunity to define social roles for both women & men (Gardiner, 2002).

In almost all societies, women take primary responsibility for childrearing and housework, while men are responsible for work outside of home to bring additional income. During industrial revolution (mid 19th century) the recognized productivity of women was replaced by the paid labor of men outside home. Because of this industrialization, women are pushed back home to childrearing and home works (Lloyd, 1996 referred in Giddens, 2001).

Due to the gender division of labour, Ethiopian women have primary responsibilities for household management, child rearing, food preparation, care of the sick and elderly and family health and welfare. According to Dessalegn (2001) in urban Ethiopia, specifically in Addis Ababa the responsibility of the women in the household is preparing food and drinks, preparing coffee, washing and cleaning, childcare, caring for visitors, caring for the sick in the household. In addition to house chores women also participate in income generating activities. In poor households

women are not confined at home, rather operate in 'Gulet' or as daily labourer to bring additional income to their households.

The same study found out that the responsibility of the men in the household is they are the head of the household; they are responsible to provide economic support to the family, to build and repair house and fence, and sometimes assist the women in childcare (Dessaegn,2001).

Regarding decision-making at household, it was found out that in Addis Ababa women and men consult each other to reach on consensus agreement to decide in important matters. In less important matters, women decide on all household matters such as buying foodstuffs and furniture. Budgeting the household expense is women's decision. Men leave the less important matters to women and control the most important matters in the community (Dessaegn, 2001).

The 2005 CSA Demographic and Health Survey report also found out that the role of women in decision-making varies with the type of decision. The study assess women's decision-making autonomy in four types of household decisions: respondent's own health care, making large household purchases; making household purchases for daily needs; and visit to family or relatives. The finding is that almost 53 percent of currently married women reported that they alone made the final decision about daily household purchases. Although 15 percent of currently married women make sole decisions on their own health care, one-third say that their husband make such decisions without consulting them. Decisions on large household purchases are most likely to be made by the husband or partner alone (42 percent) or jointly with the wife or partner (45 percent). More than two-thirds of women say that decisions to visit family or relatives are made jointly with their husband or partner.

The above study also finds out that the women's decision-making autonomy is influenced by age group of the women, educational levels, wealth quintile, urban or rural reside. According to this study, older women are more likely than younger women to have a say in all the specified decisions as are women who have at least a secondary education compared with women with lower levels of education. Women who are in the highest wealth quintile, urban women especially women who reside in Addis Ababa have higher participation in decision-making when compared with poor women and rural women (2005 CSA Demographic & Health Survey report).

1.7. Delimitation of the Study

The study is conducted on women petty traders in 'Gullelle' sub-city of Addis Ababa Administrative Zone. It may not represent the experience of women petty traders in other parts of Addis Ababa. In addition, the present study only focuses on the views and opinion of the women petty traders.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

Although I have noticed some limitations in the course of conducting the current study, the major one I found during analysis is that I didn't obtain the views and opinion of the husbands of the women petty traders. I felt that it would have been better if I have interviewed the husbands and incorporated their views and opinions in the analysis of women's decision-making power in the household.

1.9. Operational Definitions of Terms

Household:- a group of persons (husband, wife, children, relatives, etc.) who often live in the same housing unit or in connected premises and have common arrangement for cooking and eating their foods.

Petty trading;- is trade undertaken with very low capital with traditionally acquired skills, that is the sale and retail of perishable and non-perishable food items in the open market, the sale of home-prepared food items such as 'injera', 'tej', 'katikala', etc.

Women petty traders:- Women involved in the petty trading businesses to generate income.

'Gulet':- is a piece of land in an open market used for sale of marketable items.

'Kebele':- Urban dwellers association

'Injera':- A pancake made of 'teff' or cereal the traditional staple food in most households

'Tela':- local beer made of barley and other cereals

'Tej':- local drink mainly made of honey

'Equb':- a communal type of saving arrangement whereby people raise capital

'Barbare':- a hot red pepper prepared with different kind of spices.

'Ambasha':- a traditional home made bread made of wheat.

Decision-making power:- having influential voice and final say on things that are decided on.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

African women are directly or indirectly involved in all sectors. Especially, women contribute enormously in the economic development of a household and further the nation. In their reproductive roles they economically contribute to the human development capital by raising and educating their children. They are also actively involved in the productive and community management roles directly or indirectly (Boserup, 1970). However, their contributions in the household as well as the nation are made invisible and unrewarding. They are counted as mere consumers rather than producers.

In economic analyses undertaken in our country as well as in other parts of the world, the majority of the contribution of women are neglected and made invisible for many years. Women engaged in the economically rewarding activities concentrate in the informal micro economic activities, which is insignificant in the calculation of the country's GDP. Thanks to the 1972 UN conference where women's issue was made an agenda. The UN Decade for women (1976-1985) has played a crucial part in highlighting and publicizing the important role of women in the economic development of their countries and the 'plight' of low-income women in the developing countries economies. As member of UN through its arm in Africa, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Ethiopia has signed a number of conventions to attain gender equity and equality although the implementations of the gender equality strategies are still demanding great effort from the Government and NGOs and individual practitioners.

In this chapter, the concept of the informal sector, informal sector in Ethiopia, review of previous works on women in the informal sector and few critical remarks on the previous work are presented.

2.1. Concept and Definition of the Informal Sector

Large numbers of the growing labor force in developing countries are engaged in the non-formal activities to earn their living. In developed countries also wage earners are working in the non-formal sector to raise additional income. Those activities undertaken out of the formal economic sector is called the 'informal sector'. This informal sector refers to the part of the economy that does not fall under the purview of organized economic activities (Hayat, 1997; Charmes, 2001).

Although the unemployed groups have undertaken different economic activities earlier, the concept of the informal or non-structured sector first appeared in the early 1970's with the launching of the world employment program by ILO with the publication of the report on employment, income and inequality in Kenya (ILO, 1972). The report stated that the informal sector is an outlet for the unemployed people in the formal sector to earn their living. It explained the fact that rural depopulation and the resultant urban growth did not give rise to high open unemployment, but rather to the development of small scale activities which provided rural migrants and urban dwellers that were unable to gain employment in modern sectors with a means of living and survival (OECD, 1990 referred in Hayat, 1997).

Charmes (2000) described as follows the main features of the informal economic sector based on the surveys undertaken for more than two decades;

ease of entry; small scale of the activity; self-employment, with a high proportion of family workers and apprentices; little capital and equipment;

labor intensive technologies; low skills; low level of organization with no access to organized markets, to formal credit, to education and training or services and amenities; cheap provision of goods and services or provision of goods and services otherwise unavailable; low productivity and low incomes according to some analysts, or, on the contrary, incomes that are notably higher than in the public sector, especially during the recent period and in the context of structural adjustment policies, for other observers(Charmes 2000:3).

Hayat (1997) also point out that the informal sector is a mixture of diverse activities that its operations consist of

1. non-farm activities in rural areas, such as handicrafts, retail trade, services and the like;
2. urban small-scale trade, services and manufacturing activities;
3. they usually but not always operate outside the formal economic framework in the sense that they may not be regulated by government.

The informal sector is a very complex sector and its concept is loose that until now it has not been possible to reach to an international agreement on a definition covering the variety of analytical purposes adopted by data users. For this reason labor statisticians have decided to distinguish the several definitions that may vary according to the need of users and the purpose of the data collection (ILO, 1993 a and b referred in Charmes, 2000).

However, Charmes (2000) defined the informal sector, irrespective of the kind of workplace, the extent of fixed capital assets, the duration of the activity of the enterprise and its operation as a main or secondary activity, as comprising:

- a) informal self-owned enterprises which may employ family workers, and employees on an occasional basis

- b) enterprises of informal employers which may employ one or more employees on a continuous basis and which comply with one or both of the following criteria:
 - size of the establishment below a specified level of employment (defined on the basis of minimum size requirements embodied in relevant national legislation or other empirical practices: the choice of the upper size limit taking account of the coverage of statistical enquiries in order to avoid an overlap),
 - non – registration of the enterprise or its employees.

Furthermore, professionals and domestic workers are included in the informal sector as far as they comply with the definitional characteristics or criteria. Home-based workers are included if they are sub-contracting with other informal sector units (Charmes, 2000).

2.2. The Informal Sector in the Ethiopian Context

In the case of Ethiopia, the 2003 Central Statistics Authority (CSA) explained the concept of the informal sector as that refers to home-based or individual establishment/ activity operated by the owner with few or no employees. They are for the most part unregistered and operating on a very small scale and with a low level of organization. Most of them have very low level of productivity and income. They tend to have little or no access to organized markets, to credit institutions, to modern technology, to formal training and to many public services and amenities. A large number of them are carried out without fixed location or in places such as small shops, outlets or home based activities. Majority of them are not recognized, supported or regulated by the government. They are beyond social protection, labour legislation and protective measures at the work place.

Major activities categorized in the Informal sector in Ethiopia include manufacturing, processing (beverage, wear), trading and services (hotel and restaurants) (ILO, 2003). The 2003 CSA report of the urban informal sector stated the distribution of the informal sector operators as: 43.29 percent are in Manufacturing, 37.78 percent are in informal trade, hotel and restaurants, and the remaining 18.93 percent of the operator are distributed among the other sectors.

In Ethiopia like other African countries, the informal sector is increasingly becoming the employer of the majority of the urban labour force. It is estimated that this sector accounts for about 20% of GDP and over 20% of the total labour force in Africa and these figures are expected to rise over time (UNECA/ ATRCW, 1988 referred in Hayat 1997).

2.3. Women in the informal sector of urban Ethiopia: Brief Research Review

The informal sector became the way out of unemployment for majority of Ethiopian women. Women account for the majority of the labor force in the micro-enterprises sector of Ethiopia. According to the survey conducted by CSA in 1997 on the informal sector operators it is estimated that 65 per cent of urban micro-enterprise operators were women, while the report of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (1997) pointed out that high participation of women and youth in the rural areas.

Several studies revealed that large numbers of women operate in the informal sector than the formal employment due to lack of education, lack of information and gender based division of roles. The CAS report (1997) indicate that out of the informal sector operators in Ethiopia, 59% of the women entrepreneurs were illiterate, while nearly 20 percent had only elementary education (1-6 grade) background. The majority of the women entrepreneurs joined this sector due to the household responsibilities. The

survey revealed that 87 percent of women entrepreneurs are those either married, divorced or widowed. Women in the informal sector are mostly engaged as a means of survival. The survey revealed that 56 percent of the women entrepreneurs are heads of household, while 32 percent are housewives. Concerning the age category of the informal sector operator, the same survey shows that 60 percent are in the 20-44 year age group, indicating that most of the women became entrepreneurs during the time when they are assuming household responsibility as married women and as mothers.

The MOLSA report (1997) indicated that women entrepreneurs largely engage in activities that are in the domain of traditional household related activities such as preparation of foods and drinks; and handicrafts. Women are more likely engaged in activities that are less risky and consequently in activities which normally produce low returns. Thus, women find it difficult to engage in profit making and highly rewarding activities.

2.3.1. Research on specific groups

In Ethiopia, large numbers of literature are available on women entrepreneurs conducted for specific purposes by NGOs and donor agencies. However, the most comprehensive one is that undertaken by CAS (1997). Although there are some studies, I selected and reviewed two academic research works that dealt with the life of women petty traders. The first one was undertaken by Hayat Abdulah (1997) under the title *Constraints to Women Entrepreneurship in the Informal Sector: The Case of Women Traders in Addis Ababa Markets* and the second conducted by Selamawit Abebe (1994) titled *Women in the Urban Informal Sector of Ethiopia's Economy: the case of 'Mercato' in Addis Ababa*. Both researches have investigated the life of women in the informal sector and both mostly focused on women petty traders. According to their findings, the majority of women petty traders join these

activities as a means of survival. Their initial capital is from own saving and help of relatives as loan/contribution. They have also identified the constraints of women petty traders, and suggested possible recommendations to policy makers, GOs and NGOs. Some of their findings are described below.

Women in the informal sector dominate activities that do not require high capital and sophisticated skills. Hayat (1997) found out that women dominate the informal sector activities like petty trade, selling food items, selling fire wood, etc. These activities are less capital intensive and do not require any sophisticated skills acquired through formal education and those offer greater flexibility in terms of time management to harmonize the double burden of household activity and income generation.

Women petty traders in urban Ethiopia are engaged in the selling of second hand clothes, fire wood, food stuffs, brewing and selling traditional beer ('xela', 'xeji'), making and selling handcrafts ('shema', baskets, table mats, table clothes), processing and selling dry foods such as 'baltina' ('shiro', 'barbare', 'besso', 'haxmit'), processing and selling local cooked food stuffs ('injera', 'ambasha', boiled potatoes), retailing fruits and vegetables in the open markets or 'Gulet' (Hayat, 1997; Selamawit, 1994).

Women in the informal sector contribute enormously to their household as well as to the country's economic growth. These women like other women in the formal sector are contributing in their triple roles: household chores, reproductive roles and income generating activities. However, their contribution is treated as an invisible and unaccountable. Hayat (1997) has identified specific methodological problems, which marginalized women's work as: lack of available data due to women's statistical invisibility and fragmentation of women's work in terms of time and task performed, which influences own perception of their activities.

Within the informal sector itself, women operate at disadvantaged condition compared to men. They operate under unsanitary, extremely difficult, full of harassment and hostile environments, which make them vulnerable to various types of diseases, etc. (Selamawit, 1994).

According Hayat (1997) women engaged in the informal sector encounter a variety of problems. These are lack of working capital and business skills, unavailability of convenient working place, low demand, and harassment by the police for doing business in the streets. However, lack of working capital was identified to be the most serious problem by more than 80% of the respondents.

Another study by Zenebework (2001) outlines the constraints women entrepreneurs face as follows:

- ◆ absence of sufficient and secure space and location;
- ◆ absence of clearly defined municipal policy resulting in inconsistency of regulations and licensing;
- ◆ poor urban management of street vending;
- ◆ harassment and confiscation of goods by officials especially the police;
- ◆ lack of infrastructure and services; *and*
- ◆ lack of representation and voice in urban planning.

In conclusion, studies have indicated that a number of NGOs, UN organizations and Governmental bodies are working to improve the life of women and change the wrong perception on women's work through awareness creation, launching several programs as poverty reduction strategies and women's empowerment. However, from my observation and ruff assessment I made on the governmental launched project for Micro and small enterprises in Gullelle Sub-city, majority of the women beneficiaries are organized into their traditional activities such as processing and selling of food

items, food catering, etc. which mainly server the poor community and access low benefits. Men are found to be still the major beneficiaries in this project.

2.3.2. Few critical remarks on previous studies

The comprehensive survey undertaken by CSA on women in the informal sector of Ethiopia in 1997 is outdated. The recent researches are conducted on specific groups for particular purposes of NGOs and donor agencies. Thus, it is difficult to get a clear picture of the current status of women in the informal sector since most of the poor women who are in the informal sector operating as petty traders on the streets, corners and outdoors or home based are still not addressed for a number of reasons.

The other point is that the impact of micro-finances on the life of women is being continuously analyzed. In most studies, it is found out that most women entrepreneurs have control over their income; they deiced how to expend it. However, the impact of the income generating activities on the strategic gender needs, for instance on their negotiating power with their husband/partner on decision-making in the household is not adequately analyzed.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As stated in the introduction chapter, the main objective of this research is to investigate whether income earning of women petty traders has effect on their decision-making power in their households and if it contributes to the well being of the children as well as other household members. The decision making power is examined in the gender roles played by women and men in the household. The level of economic contribution of women petty traders to the household and their expenditure pattern were also examined. In addition, the effect of income earning on the status of the women is examined from the women's point of view.

I found the research topic a bit sensitive in our context. Ethiopians are, in most cases, religious who acknowledge the headship of the men in a household. Thus, it is seen as abnormal to challenge the status quo. Even if there is conflict between the couples, most Ethiopian women do not want to expose their private life except critical. However, as an insider, living in the community and sharing similar culture, and also as a married woman and holding the responsibility of house management, I was able to probe and access the views of the participants.

In this research I adopt the critical feminist ethnographer's stance in collecting data, analysis and interpretation. Feminist ethnographers' claim is to document the lives and activities of women; to understand the experience of women from their own point of view; and to conceptualize women's behavior as an expression of social contexts. I used qualitative research methods. Hence, the employed data collection methods are participant observation, in-depth interviews (& focus group discussion) and archival analysis.

This chapter consists of five subsections. The first section deals with the study site and the informants. The data collection strategy, analysis and interpretation are presented in the subsequent sessions. The last session discusses about the challenges faced during fieldwork.

3.1. The Study Site and the participants

This research is conducted in 'Gullelle' Sub-city in Addis Ababa Administrative Zone. Gullelle Sub-city is selected because of my prolonged observation that was developed into concern and sympathy since I lived in this area for more than ten years. In 1999 when I began to work on gender as civic education expert in one local NGO, we were using Harvard analytical framework to analyze the contribution of women/ activity of women/ and their access to and control over their household resources. The NGO was operating in the rural side of the country with rural women; however, beginning from that time, I was interested in understanding the lives of poor women in my community whom I see when I pass by while they were selling items on the roadside.

Gullelle Sub-city has 10 kebeles, with the current estimated population of over 400,000 according to the information taken from the sub-city. It is estimated that over 175,000 of the total population in the sub-city are engaged in the informal sector although the data is not gender disaggregated (2006 documents of *Gullelle* Sub-city). Currently, the sub-city has identified and legalized five centers for women petty trader operation. In each center a 1 sq. meter space, traditionally called 'Gulet', is provided to each individual. According to the data obtained from the sub-city project expert for poverty reduction and job opportunity creation program, the centers are located in kebeles 01/02; 06; 09/15 (Rufa'el market); 08/16 (Igzaber Abbi); and 13/14. In each kebele there are a minimum of 20 and maximum of 340 'Gulets' that are provided to petty traders. As per the information obtained from the experts, even though the data is not gender disaggregated women petty traders own majority of the

Gulet. The operation of women petty traders is not limited to the formally known *Gulet*. They operate at home, outdoors, on the roadside, etc. Since most of the informal sectors where women dominate are out of social protection and the seen of the government, it was difficult to estimate the number of women who were engaged in petty trading.

Poverty reduction and job opportunity creation program works with petty traders, metal work, woodwork, handcrafts, hotel, construction work, etc. This project organizes the job-seeking people and those already individually operating into cooperative or groups and provides them with training (such as business management, basic business skills, women entrepreneurship, human resource management, etc); with working places and capital in the form of loan.

According to data gathered from this informal sector coordinating section, the number of women operators in the informal sector is high in the petty trading activities such as preparation of dry foods such as 'barbare', 'shiro', 'besso', different kinds of spices, 'injera', 'ambasa'; sale of fruits and vegetables on *Gulet*; catering for sale: preparing and selling tea and bread, 'injera' with 'wat'; on retail of charcoal and fire wood, etc. The representation of women in other informal sectors that needs skills acquired through formal education or outside home such as metal work, woodwork, construction technologies, etc is very minimal.

3.2. The Study Sample and Sampling Procedure

The participants of this study are 16 women petty traders operating in groups and/or individually at home, out door, on the roadside, in '*Gulet*' or under shade. The study participants are selected using purposive sampling method.

The participants for this study are selected from two categories. The first group consists of women petty traders organized by the kebele/ sub-city as beneficiaries of the program. The second group of women petty traders are selected among women petty traders operating individually by themselves on the road side or outdoor without acquiring any training or financial assistance.

The first group of women is selected with the assistance of experts and extension workers in the sub-city and the kebeles. The officials formally introduced me with the group of women cooperatives in the kebeles engaged in different activities such as food processing and selling ('injera', tea and bread (ambasha), pasta, etc.), dry food preparation ('barbar', 'shiro', 'besso', 'injera') individually and also in groups. I selected the women participants from the groups as per selection criteria stated below (i.e: age, marital status, reproductive status). The second group of women petty traders is selected from open markets, roadside, and outdoor operators.

All the study participants are selected based on the following socio demography criteria:

- a) Age:- The study participants are within the age range of 25-55. Age is one of the factors that determine the kind of activities one could engage in, and the decision making power of a person.
- b) Marital status: The study participants are women at wedlock since women petty traders living alone are exclusive decision-makers in their household.
- c) Reproductive status:- The study participants are women who have at list one child living with them.

3.3. Data collection strategy

For the present study, I sought to adopt critical feminist stance in collecting data. Feminists (Dyck, 1993; Reinharz, 1992; Roman, 1993) have identified field work or ethnographic methods (participant observation, interviewing and archival analysis) as being more *amendable to reading the 'mundane' and 'commonsense' ... small human actions that make up and change our lives and our analytic categories* (Dyck, 1993, p.53 referred in Efosi, 2004: 66). This helps in building woman centered knowledge.

The fieldwork for this study lasted 3 months, from mid February – Mid May 2007. The fieldwork consists of participant observation, in-depth interview and focus group discussion.

3.2.1. Participant observation

Actually I began observation long ago before the commencement of the present study. But for the purpose of this research, I began in February 2007, one month ahead before interview. During this time, I have gone to the 'Shola' and 'Rufael' markets, and to those operating on the roadsides to buy some items. While purchasing foodstuffs from women petty traders, I informally chatted with them about work, life, etc. Thus, I made informed selection of participants. The other group of women petty traders is selected with the assistance of kebele officials in similar manner.

Through out the data collection, I observed the women petty traders on job (on 'gulet', roadside, shade) and at home. I mainly focused on the role of the women in the household, their economic activities and their interaction with the household members. These enabled me to understand the role and responsibility of women petty traders in a household, the type of economic activities the women are involved in, the condition under which the women operate.

The participant observation continued till I establish rapport with the participants and earned their trust as we over come issues of diversity, social class in our interaction.

3.2.2. Interview and focus group discussion

Interviewing was the major method of data collection. I conducted individual interview with 16 women petty traders. The in-depth interview was conducted in Amharic, because Amharic is the common language of communication in the study site. My observation section helped me to understand the meaning of terms, and style of communication of the women petty traders. I was also asking for clarification whenever I felt that I didn't understand their points. Before beginning interview I repeatedly reminded the purpose of the research and continually assured them that the recording is only used for the purpose of the research. I promised to keep their identity confidential which encouraged them to be free to reveal things. Interview was chosen because I sought to understand the women petty trader's perspectives of their life experience and their decision-making in the household. Reinharz (1992) explains that interviewing offers researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher.

The interview session was arranged with the women as per their convenience. While talking with the research participants informally, I knew that these women, especially those who are very poor, are busy that they should use each minute to earn their living. Thus, I conducted the in-depth interviews with some of the women while they work in the market place being interrupted by customers. It was inconvenient to concentrate and obtain all the information required. Therefore, I was obliged to contact them two or more times for the interview. With some of the participants I conducted interview in the morning or late in the after noon. I tried to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

The interview covered three general topic areas

i) Economic situation of the household. We discussed the economic sources of the household; the activities of the woman petty traders and her partner/husband; and the level of their contribution to the household. We have also talked about how she spends her money, compared to her husband/partner, which helped to identify the main economic provider to the household

ii) Decision-making power of woman petty traders in the household: To analyze the decision making power of women in the households, we first identified roles and responsibilities of woman and her husband/ partner's in the household. Then we discussed about the level of the participation of the women in decision-making in those roles and responsibilities.

iii) The social status of woman petty traders: we discussed the status of the women in the household and the society; and whether her income earning has effect on the status she holds in the household and at the community level.

Two focus group discussions were planned for the women in the two categories (women in the cooperative and women operating individually); however, only one was conducted with women petty trader in cooperatives. I found it difficult to call together women who are busy to earn their daily living individually. The very poor women operating on the roadsides and corners are engaged in several economic activities to access income.

In the focus group discussion conducted with the women in cooperative, issues raised were how income earning affect the decision making power of women in the household; the impact of earning on their status; and how it contribute to the well being of the household members. The women's reflection was focused on the success and problems they encounter as a group rather than reflecting their individual

experiences. I felt that the discussion was not as fruitful as the individual interview. As I said earlier, the women were not comfortable to talk about their individual life experiences among group members for fear of exposing their private life. Thus, I realized that focus group discussion is not the best method for such a sensitive topic.

The third method for data collection is document analysis. Most of the available documents on the area under the study were reviewed. These are research papers in the library, official documents and other relevant works.

3.3.Data Analysis and Interpretation

In the interpretation of my research data, although I tried to sufficiently represent the complexities of the experiences of the women in this study, I am well aware as a researcher the limitations in interpreting and shaping the final account. According to critical feminist ethnographic standpoint, the researcher must be able to keep a balance between her experiences as source of understanding, and the participants' construction so that her life experiences do not engulf the inquiry (Nielson, 1993; Roman, 1993; Stack, 1996 referred in Efosi, 2004). To keep this balance I tried to create 'multivocal' presentation method, to give voice to the participants. What I mean by multivocal is that the voice of the study participants are directly quoted and then accompanied with my own interpretation.

The tapes are transcribed during the data collection process. When I read and reread the transcript, I was able to identify patterns of relationships. I clustered, categorized and interpreted the data to construct a coherent account of the influence of income earning on the decision-making power of women in the household.

As a researcher, my journey is a choice making process beginning from choice of research site, the data collection methods, and decisions on how to analyze and write the final account. On this point, Scholfield has argued that

At the heart of qualitative approach is the assumption that a piece of qualitative research is very much influenced by the researcher's individual attributes and perspectives. The goal is not to produce a standardized set of results that any other careful researcher in the same situation or studying the same issues would have produced. Rather it is to produce a coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation that is based on and consistent with detailed study of that situation (referred in Mulumebet 2006:72)

Thus, I do not claim that this account represents the experiences of all women petty traders in Addis Ababa. However, I hope that it will be able to overview the experiences of women petty traders' decision-making in their households in Addis Ababa. I believe that the study will be able to show the relationship between women's economic earning and their decision-making power in the household.

3.4. Challenges of the fieldwork

During data collection on the field I faced some challenges starting from entry. While I was on the process of selecting research participants in the market place, roadside and outdoor some of the women petty traders thought I was a journalist or government official who came to supervise them for tax. Some considered me as religious preacher, etc... Once I remember how a woman mistreated me assuming that I was to preach her religion. She said, "you are a 'Johova' witness and I want you to go away from me." Later, with great persistence and patience I managed to create

friendly relationship. At the end, she was one of the research participants with whom I shared a lot of information.

The second challenge is lack of interest from the women participants to provide me with the required information. Even though I explained that I am a student, they couldn't easily trust me to setup their mind. They continued to consider me as journalist or a government official. They reserved themselves from giving me detailed information about themselves and their lives. Some of the women ignored my request. To change this mood, before going to the actual work, I had to go round the bush chatting with the women about the increasing rate of living expenses and other hot issues of discussion. Then I shared them the experiences of some married women and that of myself to develop trust and friendly environment. This time, the women began to feel comfortable to discuss personal issues with me viewing me as a helpful sister. As the women shared with me their sorrows and challenges of life it led me to assist some of them by providing them information and connecting them to legal advisors.

The other challenge was the difference in socio-economic status that created the sense of an outsider. As stated earlier, the majority of the participants are very poor women with low education, and operating in unhygienic condition. Thus, the participant observation method for data collection enabled me to get acquainted with their life style; way of communication and meaning development; and interpretation before conducting the interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the views and voices of women petty traders on the relationship between their income earning and their decision-making power in their households.

During conversation with the women petty traders it was found out that their income earning has complex and contradictory effect. The income generating activities have improved the live of the women and the household members. The majority of the study participants have explained that they are the major income contributor for the survival of the households. As main income provider the women have acquired status and have exercised decision-making power in the household. The income generating activities enabled the women to have better status and say in the household. However, although the women decide how to expend their money, and due to their income contributions they were able to participate in some decisions regarding the household matters, there are still some issues that could not be influenced only by income contribution.

The research findings are presented in three sections. The first section shows the economic contribution of women to the household. Here the major economic provider to the household was identified. To understand this, discussions were undertaken on how the women expend their earnings and how they view the expenditure pattern of their husbands/partners. The second section deals with the decision-making power of the women petty traders in their households. To analyze the decision-making power, the roles and the responsibilities of both partners in the household was identified. Then the decision-making power of the women is examined in those roles. The third section discusses the contribution of the income earning activities on the status the women hold in their households and in the community.

4.1. Economic Sources of the women petty traders' household

Under this section the income sources of the households; the main economic provider to the households; monthly income contribution of women and men in the households and the expenditure pattern of women in the households are analyzed.

4.1.1. Income sources of the household

The study participants were women at wedlock where both partners pull income to the household. However, the level of income contribution of women and their partners differs between households. According to the data obtained during interview, the study participants can be categorized into two groups. The first category consists of very poor households who depend on the daily income both partners earn from petty trading and daily labor. The second category consists of relatively better households where the husbands have permanent daily or monthly income.

The poor households constitute the majority (ten) of the study participants. Out of the ten participants in this category only 2 participants lived in their own residence (participants 3 &12). The majority of them lived in rented room either from Kebele's house (participants 4,7,10) or rented a small quarter from individuals (participants 11,13,15,16). Participant 14 said that her family lived in a room given to them from relative. The women in this group joined the petty trading to earn a living for their families. In this group the monthly income of women petty traders ranges from Birr 150 to 650. The economic contribution of the women was critical for the existence of these households.

The second category consists of relatively better households where the husbands were the breadwinners. The income earned by the women petty traders was an additional economic source to the households. This group constitutes six of the study

participants. These households have relatively secured residence. They lived in their own house (Participants 1, 2, & 5) or in rented room from kebele's house (Participants 6, 8, & 9). The women joined the petty trading to raise additional income to the households. In this group the monthly income of women petty traders ranges from Birr 200 to 1000.

To conclude, all the study participant women were the economic providers to their households. But the difference was that the women in the poor households were shouldering heavy responsibilities since their households do not have permanent monthly or daily income compared to the relatively better households where the husbands had permanent monthly or daily income.

4.1.2. Main economic provider to the household

In the very poor households (ten participants) where the family depends on the daily earning of both partners, women were found to be the main income contributors to the households. A woman who was 28 years old and nurturing two young children (a girl and a boy) explained:

My husband is a daily laborer, he some times earn 10 Birr per day. He doesn't work all days of the week. He works for maximum of 5 days a week. There are times when he stays at home with out work. Thus his average earning is about 150-200 per month. Since he drinks, chew chat and smokes, he gives me less than half of his earning (participant 4).

The income contribution of the husband is low and since he has addictions he spends some amount of his earning on alcohol and cigarette. Thus, the woman was obliged to earn a living to her household. While explaining how she suffered to earn a living to the household, she said:

Every morning before going to the market, I prepare 'ambasha and tea and sell for breakfast of daily laborer who live around my home. At the end of the week I benefit more than 25 Birr. After that around 10:00 a.m. in the morning, I go to my "Gulet" where I retail vegetables. At the end of the week without calculating our consumption I benefit at least 25 Birr. Back from the market, each night I sew 5-10 baskets till midnight with the assistance of my two children that I earn 1.5 Birr per each of it (Participant 4).

This woman was engaged in different activities to earn income. She toils from early morning to mid night. Where as, the husband even does not assist her in the basket sewing that she undertakes at home in the night. According to her ruff estimation she contributes more than 300 Birr per month.

Similarly, a woman who was 38 years old, have built a house and was nurturing 5 children (a girl & 4 boys) discussed that she was the main economic provider to the household. She said:

Both of us are engaged in the same activity. We sell 'barbare' and spices. We used to work together at the same 'gulet'. He often expends a lot of money for alcohol. After a lot of struggle we built a small house. Afterwards, he began to discourage me not to work spending our working capital. Then I decided to operate alone. This time he stopped working, and began extra marital affair. He contributes nothing to the household rather forcefully take money from me (Participant 3).

In this household the woman was the main income provider. She was the only responsible individual to maintain the household. She covers all the costs of nutrition,

education and health of her 5 children. The contribution of the husband was not significant. As she said, instead of contributing income he rather expends income of the household something that negatively affected the household.

A 48 years old woman who contributes about 400 Birr per month to her household was also the main income provider to the household. While explaining her case she stated:

Both of us were working hard till we built our house. He was a daily laborer and I was retailing vegetables in Rufa'el market. After we finished building our house, he was employed in Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation being a guard earning monthly salary of Birr 150. Now he is earning more than Birr 800 per month. After being employed, he used to contribute only 200 Birr per month urged by elders. But now days, he even refused to contribute the 200 Birr, thus I am the only provider of income for food and clothing of the younger children (Participant 12).

In this case, even though the husband was earning more than 800 Birr per month the woman was found to be the main income contributor to the household. As quoted above, while they were on equal status as daily laborer and petty trader, there was no conflict. But as the husband got promotion and better earning, he minimized his contribution, which he refused to provide latter on.

The rest of the women in this category were the main income providers to the households either due to the fact that their husbands were earning less or contributing less to the household. As main economic provider women in this category were involved in several economic activities to sustain their households. In addition to the petty trading they also work many other things to earn income to their households.

Some of the study participant said that they do spinning, embroidery, basket making, etc. at home during the night (participants 4,7,10). Some said they work as daily laborers, as domestic servants in other peoples house engaged in baking 'injera', preparing 'Tella', 'tej', 'barbare', 'shiro', washing clothes, etc.(participants 7, 10, 15).

Women in the second category also contribute income to the household. But the burden was relatively less. The husband/partner brings income for the subsistence of the household and their additional income helps to improve the lives of their households. Women in this category were relatively operating in secured conditions and better rewarding activities. Most of them were engaged in the petty trading activities such as preparation of dry foods at home or in cooperative and embroidery.

In category two (relatively better households) a woman who joined the petty business to earn additional income has also become the major economic provider to her households. She explained her case as:

Earlier I was a housewife who was waiting for my husband's earning. But since I began working, I have not asked him for money. Earlier he used to give me 200 Birr per month for the household expenses, which was not enough to cover the household costs. Since four years, while I started working, I began to cover majority of the household expenses. We consume from the dry food I prepare for sale. I am also working embroidery and pay 50 Birr per week for saving 'equb'. I borrowed money from my relative and build 2 rooms for rent. Now I am earning 400 Birr pre month renting the two rooms. Since two years my husband stopped giving me the 200 Birr per month. We only see his money during holydays (Participant 2).

The husband used to be the main income provider to the household although his contribution was insufficient to maintain the household. As the result this household was living under poverty. But as the woman joined the petty business, she started to earn more than what her husband was contributing. Now she is earning about 1000 Birr per month with which she changed the live of the household.

To conclude, the majority of women in the very poor households were the major income providers to their households. Women in the relatively better households were not shouldering such a heavy responsibility; however, their contribution to the household was significant that it has changed the live of the household members.

4.1.3. Expenditure pattern of the women and men in the household

From the in-depth interview and focus group discussion, it was found out that women expend the majority of their income for the well being of the household. All of the women petty traders testified that they have dedicated their lives for their children. However, women in the poor household and the relatively better household expend their money differently. Women in the very poor household, expend almost all their money on the children's nutrition, house rent, children schooling and utilities. They noted that the majority of their income goes for food since the contributions of their husbands were insignificant. A woman who was nurturing 5 children (a girl & 4 boys) said:

Each month I expend 600 Birr for the household consumption. Since I am illiterate, even I do not calculate the small expenses for children schooling (pen, pencil, exercise books), and foodstuffs such as coffee, sugar, salt, etc. Each month I pay Birr 50 for 'equb' (saving). There is nothing I expend on my self except my second hand cloth that I buy once or twice a year (Participant 3).

This woman invests almost all her earning on the nutrition, health and education of her children. When I ask her how much she expends for herself, for insistence for cosmetics, she replied that "her beauty comes after her offspring." She said that she uses the same Vaseline or oil she buys for her children. The 50 Birr monthly saving was accumulated for working capital.

A 38 years old woman who earns more than 270 Birr per month noted that:

My husband has a good business. But daily he gives me only 7 Birr for the household nutrition. He expects me to prepare breakfast, lunch and dinner with this 7 Birr for 4 members of the household, which is far from the truth. Even he wants me to serve him delicious food. Otherwise, he bombs me with insult and sometimes biting. Thus, I expend most of my earning on food. On the contrary, he spends not less than 20 Birr for his 'chatt' and soft drink per day. Some times even he eats 'kitfo' for his lunch from hotel (Participant 14).

This household consists of 4 persons (a daughter and a young girl whom they adopted to help the woman in the household chores). For the nutrition of the household members the husband contributed only 7 Birr per day where as he expended 20 Birr for his addictions. According to the calculation of the woman, she spends 4 Birr for breakfast, about 12 Birr for lunch and dinner. In addition there are extra time foods such as coffee, tea, etc... Thus, the woman expends most of her earning on the nutrition of the household.

The majority of women in this category (very poor households) remarked that they did not calculate how much they expend on the nutrition of their households since their income was daily and they expend it daily. Some of them even did not know

how much they expend in the house especially for food stuffs such as coffee, sugar, oil, etc. With the daily income they purchase the food stuffs as per the capacity of their money (participants 7,10,12,15,16).

In the relatively better households, although the burden on the women as income provider was less, they also expended the majority of their income for the betterment of their children and other household members. The big household nutritional consumption such as teff, wheat, etc. was covered by the income brought by their husbands. The women were responsible to cover the "small" expenses of coffee, sugar, oil, spices, etc. (participants 1,6,8,9). The rest income of the women was invested for the education, clothing and medication of the children.

Women in the second category (relatively better households) discussed that they hold heavy responsibility in maintaining the household. In almost all households, management of the household budget was the responsibility of the women. However, women in this category stressed that they holds heavy responsibility. As they said, even if the husband cannot bring income for a month, he expects the woman to feed the members of the household. Thus, the woman shoulders the responsibility of feeding members of the household, with or without the husband's contribution. It is up to the woman to save money to feed the household at times when there was no job for the husband to earn income.

Most of the women in both categories who earn above 400 Birr per month said they are committed to educate their children. Participant 1, 3, 4, & 5 stressed the importance of education for the life of their children. They condemn culture and tradition for their being uneducated. They felt that lack of education made them to be dominated by their husbands. A 42 years old Muslim woman who dropped school from 7th grade said

I was in grade 7 when I was unwillingly get married to my husband. My parents forced me to marry even if I had interest to learn. They said 'what is the use of education for a girl? After all she is going to be some bodies wife'. My husband has also similar opinion. But I insist to educate my daughters and I rejected requests for marriage saying let them finish with their education. I am educating my two daughters in private college covering their expenses. I have rented two rooms for 500 Birr per month. The other cost is covered by the income I earn from the petty trading (Participant 1).

This woman has understood the importance of education for girls/women. Although she was informed from tradition that the role of women was to be a housewife, she resisted that ideology and committed herself to invest money on her daughters' education. As she said the husband was not interested in the education of the girls he rather prefers that they got married to a rich man. Thus, he was not contributing finance for their education except consenting to rent two rooms that belonged to the girls to raise income.

Another woman who was abducted while she was 8th grade student regretted for dropping out of school. She stressed the importance of education especially for girls/women. She compared herself with other women who are employees of GOs and NGOs, who hold managerial positions and testified that lack of education forced her to hold the current living standard. She said if she were educated she would have been among the elite women who are earning a lot leading comfortable life. She noted that:

I am one of the top students from our school. While I was 8th grade student, on the way back from school my husband kidnapped me and brought me to Addis Ababa. I gave birth to my two children. Since my

husband is dormant person, now I am responsible to take care of them. I do not want my daughter to face similar problem. I want my children to be educated and become productive citizens (Participant 4).

This woman was a young lady who was only 28 years old. When I asked her if she wants to continue her education attending night school, she said that she has a plan in the future. Since she was the main income earner for the household subsistence, she couldn't make it now. The woman underlined the importance of education especially for a girl, before being engaged in household responsibility.

To conclude, women in both categories expend the majority of their income to the well being of the children (nutrition, health, school, clothing) and other household members. According to the women, most husbands expend majority of their income to entertain themselves.

4.2. Women Petty Traders' Decision-making power in their households

There are roles played by women and men in a household. In addition to the biological roles, in most cases both are expected to play roles that are socially assigned to them. Thus, in this section the role and responsibility of women and men in the household was identified; and then the decision-making power of women petty traders were analyzed in the roles played by women and men in the household.

4.2.1. Roles and responsibilities of women and men in the household

All the study participant women were found to be responsible for house management as well as income generation. Their income contribution was found to be significant and has improved the live of the household. Below the roles and responsibilities of women petty traders and that of their husbands are discussed.

4.2.1.1. Roles of women petty traders in their households

The women petty traders hold the usual gender roles of women in the Ethiopian context. They are wives and mothers. As wives they carry out their responsibilities by serving their husbands and all other social obligations. As mothers they take care of their children (they socialize with, discipline and educate them). Therefore, in addition to income earning they were responsible for household management.

Even though all are house managers, when it comes to household chores the women have different experience. Majority of the very poor women of the first category undertake the house chores by themselves. As per the interview result, seven participants did not have some body to help them in the house chores (participants 4,7,10,11,13,15,16). They cook, clean and purchase food staffs, etc. before going to the market or late in the evening back from market. Although they had children some of them were kids who cannot help and those who were able to help were out to look for money to assist themselves. For instance an elderly woman who gave birth to 2 girls and 6 boys noted:

I am a poor women earning very low income, which could not cover our food. My husband is also an old man who works only to cover the expense of his alcohol. We cannot dress our children. We cannot buy exercise book and pen for their schooling. I strive only to fill their stomach. Thus, they are the ones who toil to cover their clothing and school material. Even the youngest boy who is only 10 years old is engaged in shoe cleaning to cover the cost of his school material. Some times even he gives me money for coffee (participant 7).

The old woman has two daughters who were expected to assist her in the household chores as per the existing tradition. However, since the parents (especially the woman) were unable to cover the school and clothing expenses for the children, she was forced to face the double burden at her older ages. Here we can see how poverty affect greatly woman in a household. The consequences of this poverty also affect the children in the household not to get proper education to come out of poverty.

Another elderly woman of 55 ages who holds the responsibility of income generation and household chores has similar experience. She stated:

My earning is very low that it does not exceed the cost of our food. My husband does not contribute income. He only works for himself. My daughter is now over 20 years. I cannot educate her paying in private college. The only alternative she has is to struggle herself to improve her live. She is working in a small shop earning very low that could only cover her transportation cost. So I am the only one to bother for the housework and generate income for survival (Participant 10).

From the above quotations we could understand that age is one of the limiting factors on the type of income generating activities one could engage in. The meager income earned by the old woman was unable to educate her child. And as a result, the woman was shouldering the double burden as income earner and the one responsible for household chores. The daughter also did not get educational opportunity due to poverty.

In the first category (very poor households), out of the 10 participants, only 3 participants had assistances for house chores. The household chores assistants were relatives (participant 3 & 14) or children (participant 12). A 38 years old woman who's children were all in school said:

I brought a woman from countryside to assist me in house chores. I promised her that she would generate income helping me in preparing dry food such as 'barbare' and 'shiro'. When I took order to prepare 'barbare', I let her to prepare it and pay her 7 Birr for 17 Kg. She doesn't make financial contribution for her food; on the other hand I do not pay her for assisting me in household chores (Participant 3).

Although this woman was unable to hire domestic servant systematically she got somebody to assist her in the household chores. As quoted above, in their connection, both benefited. The woman who came from the countryside assists in the household chores, which was like 'food for work'. On the other hand, the house owner let this woman generate income by giving her a job.

Where as, the majority of women in the second category (relatively economically better households) have somebody to assist them in household chores. Two women (participants 1 & 9) whose husbands contributed monthly income in addition to their own earning hired domestic servants. A woman who earns about 800 Birr from the different income generating activities hired a domestic servant paying her 80 Birr per month. The other woman who earns about 300 Birr per month from the petty business also hired a domestic servant paying 60 Birr per month. The rest women were assisted by their children or relatives (participant 2, 5, 8).

Among the entire study participants, one woman who was 46 years old from 'Semen Magzegaja' area has different experience. She witnessed that her husband helps her in house works. She noted:

He is a carpenter. He works on contractual basis. When he gets a job, he bring good amount of money to the household. Until he finds another job

he stays at home. I am a petty trader, I always work. Since all the children are in school, I do not have some body to help me with the household chores. Thus, some time my husband prepares coffee and 'wat' when I couldn't do so. He also helps me in cleaning the house and washing dishes (Participant 6).

Here, we see that even though it is not the norm in the Ethiopian context, this husband assisted his wife with the household chores, which should be encouraged. Thus, since the husband also knows how tiring and time consuming the household chores are, he could recognize the contribution of the woman.

In general, women participants were found to be responsible for feeding and nurturing the household. The majority of the women were responsible for the education of the children. The women said that they were responsible to do the purchase of food items; purchase of small household utensils; children's cloth and school materials; pay telephone, electricity and water bills. In addition to their traditional gender roles they were also responsible to generate income for the household as discussed in the pervious section.

4.2.1.2. Roles of the husbands/ partners in their households

Among the study participant the roles and the responsibilities of the husbands were few compared to that of the women. Although as a head of the household the husband is expected to be the breadwinner, very few husbands were carrying out their responsibilities. Especially among the poor households (category one) the roles of the husbands were insignificant. Most of the participants in category one witnessed that women were found to be the main income earner in the households (as discussed earlier). Even, in a household where the husband earns and contributes what he earns

it was found out that the woman was the main income earner. A woman in this household asserts:

My husband is a guard in one organization earning monthly salary of Birr 250. He brings what he earns. But his earning could only covers the cost of house rent. We live in a room rented from an individual paying 210 Birr per month. Thus I am the one who cover all the costs of food, clothing, education material of the children, medication costs, etc. in the household. Per month I expend more than 300 Birr from my earning (Participant 11).

The other participants also confirmed that the roles of the husbands were insignificant. Some of the women (in category one) were even happy that their husbands were able to raise income for their own expenses such as alcohol, 'chatt', and cigarette. As the study participant said, if the husbands were unable to generate their own income, they could have bothered the women for those expenses since they are addicted (participant 3, 7, 14, & 16).

In the second category (relatively better households) the husbands were the breadwinners. Participants 1, 5, 6, 8, & 9 said that husbands cover the costs of the major expenses in the household, such as food and big household furniture. However, their participation on raising and educating children was minimal. They left such responsibilities to the women except one participant who helps his wife in the house works.

As discussed above, the roles of husbands in the first category (very poor households) was insignificant, while in the second category household, majority of the husbands were responsible for income generating to the households.

4.2.2. Negotiating Power of Women in Making Decisions in the household

As discussed above, the study participant women hold both responsibilities of income earning and house management. The unpaid but tedious household chores were exclusively left to the women. Thus, the study participant women confirmed that they exercise full decision-making power in the house management. These are the traditional gender roles of women (nourishing and nurturing the household members, bringing up the children such as covering children's cloth and education expenses), which do not award status and bring change on the life of women except tiring them.

The decision-making power of women as income providers to their households (that was been traditionally considered as the gender role of the husband) varies as per the importance of the matter. All women testified that they decide how to expend their income. But the influences of the gender ideologies were visible. They expend most of their incomes to carry out their traditional gender roles as mothers and wives. In addition, when the women want to purchase big household furniture or construct houses (which are traditional gender roles of men) they had to first consult their husbands.

When it comes to decision-making on the resources of the household, the level of participation of women in the decision-making process differ as per the household. For instance unschooled woman who was the main income provider to the household testified:

I am a hard working person. I am the one who suffered a lot in building my house. I do remember times I walked from 'Merkato' to 'Shegole' to save transportation cost which was only 25 cents. I worked day and night at the cost of my health without reserving my labor (Participant 3).

The woman explained that she has great contribution in the construction of their house. Yet, when it comes to the issue of decision-making the woman explained her case as:

My husband ignored me and makes contractual agreement with somebody to take loan of Birr 33,000 handing my house for collateral. When I resisted signing on the contractual agreement, he locked me in a room and forced me to sign on the agreement. Actually at that time I did not know what the agreement says since I am illiterate. But later I came to know that he took loan to pay it back after 4 years. For the interest of the lone, they arranged to live in my house until four years. Now I moved to one small room that I was using as kitchen previously. Even, when I tried to build another room on the open spaces in my compound, my husband stopped me. With that money he got married to another woman in the countryside (Participant 3).

From the above quotations we understand that although she played great role in the construction of the house, she was not given the opportunity to take part in the decisions regarding the house. The husband forcefully took an action. The woman said that she was dominated because of lack of education and because she is a woman.

An old woman who didn't have formal education shared similar experience. She has equal contribution while accumulating the household resources. But due to lack of information and because of gender discrimination, the woman was denied her right to take part in decisions regarding the household resources. She explained her case as:

Until we build our house we had love and peace. After we bought taxi borrowing money from bank guarantying our house, he was totally

changed. The way he dresses himself and his behavior is unusual. Especially after being an employee of Telecommunication Corporation he started to speak different language. He started to mistreat and degrade me. I suspect that he started an affair with an employed woman. Now I am living in the house with my children. I have no control over our property. Even he stopped me from maintaining the house. He does not contribute money for his children's food, clothing, and education. Now days, I heard that he want to divorce me if I start questioning (Participant 12).

In this case, we see the woman as powerless and helpless. As she stated above, the woman has recognized the status difference between herself and her husband. According to her explanations, he is government employee and she is still a petty trader. This woman has taken the issue to the court but still since the house is bank collateral the case is suspended.

In the other households of category one (very poor households) there were no resources that demands negotiation for decisions (participants 7,10,13,). Yet, some participants reflected that the husbands try to dominate in the decisions regarding household matters although they are poor without resources (participants 4,15,16).

A woman who learned up to 8th grade reflected that her husband wants to dominate some decisions in the household although his contribution was low. She explained:

Although his contribution in the household is minimal he wants to decide on the schooling of the children, and other matters. But I resist. I usually tell him that he could only decide, if he is able to fulfill the needs of the children and able to finance the household. The children also support

my idea. They tell him that I should be the decision maker since I am the one who suffer to raise income for survival (Participant 4).

This woman was aware of her rights and resisted his domination. She said that she has attended different training on leadership that was provided by the Kebeles. Here, we could see that how information and knowledge brings difference even though she was in the poor household category.

Another woman who earns a living for the household testified that she could not decide on her body. She said:

I retail vegetable on the roadside. I also work as daily laborer in construction sites. I am the one who cover all the costs of living. I have baby boy who is only 3 years old. Unknowingly I got pregnant for the second child. My husband got hungry and forced me to make abortion. When I consult physicians, they advised me that I couldn't make abortion because of other complications. When I told him the case, my husband pushed me away from home with my baby and changed his address (Participant 15).

When I asked her the reason, the participant responded that:

He contributes nothing to the household except consuming what I prepare. When I get tired of working, he will be obliged to feed our child and me, but since he is selfish, he doesn't want to do so. Thus, he decided to remove me (Participant 15).

Here also, we see the existing gender discrimination and the oppression of woman. This woman toils from morning to night to earn a living. According to her

explanation, the contribution of the husband was insignificant. However, she has no power to decide on her own body. When I asked her the reason, she told me that he doesn't want to take the burden of feeding her and his son. While explaining her previous history she told me that she suffered of malnutrition when she gave birth to the first child. From this, we can understand that the relationship between the couples was not based on love but on benefits. As far as she was able to work and feed him he let her to live with him. But when he realized that he has to feed her when she became unable to work he preferred to remove her.

To conclude, although women in the first category (very poor households) as main income providers decide how to expend their money, but when it comes to important matters of the households such as household resources, the negotiating power of women in the decisions are minimal due to the socio cultural factors.

In category two (relatively better households), as breadwinners the men claim to have greater say in decisions regarding the households. However, the level of income contribution of the women determines their negotiating power in decision-making. A Muslim woman who was 42 years old stated:

Previously, he used to tell me to shut up my mouth when I object some of his decisions. But now since I am also contributing income to the household and also the children are old enough to support my idea, I can say that I have a say in any decisions regarding the household (Participant 1).

In this household even though the husband was seen as the breadwinner, the contribution of the woman was significant. She said that she started the petty business to raise her own income. Now she earns about 800 Birr per month. She said

that her income contribution has enabled her to negotiate with him on important household matters.

Another Christian woman who was 39 years old has also stated that her income contribution empowered her to have voice and vote on decisions regarding important matters of the household. She said:

Previously, unwillingly I was forced to accept some of his decision because I had nowhere to go. But now since I have money, I am able to reject his decisions and negotiate (Participant 2).

This woman explained that her income helped her to challenge her husband. Other women of this category (relatively better households) also testified that their income earning has improved their negotiating power in decision-making on important household matters. As a person who is capable to raise income and earn a living, they developed the confidence to claim their right for decision-making (Participants 5, 6, 8, & 9).

As discussed above, from the data obtained through interview, I find out that decision-making power of women in the household is influenced by other factors in addition to their income contribution. These are the cultural background of the household; religion; educational status of the partners, composition of the household members, etc. The main influential factors identified in the current study are educational status of the women; presence of mature children; and the type of marriage arrangement.

a) Educational status of women

Education of the women is found to be one of the influential factors in the household decision-making. From the study participant 50% have attended formal education.

The highest educational status of the study participant women was grade 8, which was attended only by one participant. The rest of the educated women attended school up to grades 7th, 5th, and 4th. Out of the study participants four women said that they were illiterate who could not read and right.

In the present study, I found that educated women had better awareness and knowledge to claim their right. They had also better access to attend different trainings provided by the Government and Non-governmental bodies. For instance, the Kebele selected a woman who has grade 8th education as chairperson among the women petty traders organized into cooperatives. Thus, as a leader she had access to various trainings and information. She has taken training on leadership, women's right, etc. The other study participants who had formal education were also selected for various responsibilities among their groups and were aware of their rights. While comparing the schooled and unschooled women, those who were schooled are likely claiming their rights in the households where as those who were unschooled are more influenced by culture and traditions.

The other point is that, when compared to the unschooled women the schooled women were aware of how to involve themselves to negotiate in the household decisions. Even though they expend most of their income on their traditional roles (nurturing the household members), they were systematic. They knew how to make their contributions visible. For instance, some women told me that instead of purchasing small foodstuffs such as sugar, coffee, salt, etc. daily they accumulate their money (in the form of 'equb' with other women friends) and purchase once a month for the monthly consumption. Thus, instead of spending their money in small amount that is invisible they make it visible.

The other women make their contribution visible discussing openly with their partners. A woman who had education up to grade 4th said:

Both of us work and earn income for the household. I am transparent to him. I tell him my daily income and expenditure and wisely ask him how much he expends per day from his income. Previously he used to hide me his income giving me only 7 Birr per day for household expenses. But now when I tell him my earnings he started to tell me his daily income. Thus, I am able to calculate his income versus his expenditure. Even though I am not in a position to help my parents as he is doing, I know how much he is giving to his sisters and brothers. In general, I know more or less his income and his expenses (Participant 14).

This woman was able to control the income and expenditure of the household. As she told me, she had convinced her husband to invest their income on things that could be an asset for the household. Where as, some women (among the unschooled) even do not know how much their husband/partner earn and what he works. They only know the amount he contributes.

Some study participants who were educated used different mechanisms to have voice on decisions of important household matters. Although the culture and tradition allows the husbands as a head of the household to make decisions, the women resist and invite the children to participate in the decision-making processes (Participant 1 & 4).

Further, the schooled participants in the second category (relatively better households) were engaged in the relatively better rewarding activities. This is because of the fact that these women had access to obtain information and shift their business as per the existing market demands (Participant 1, 2, &11). In addition to

formal education, due to life experience the elderly women had better negotiating power in decision-making in the household.

Women who were educated are relatively able to claim the right for decision-making. Participants 1,2,4,14 are aware of how to involve themselves to negotiate in decision-making. Two participants said when their husbands want to make exclusive decision by himself rejecting their input, they raise the issue openly at the presence of the children (Participant 1 & 4). Although the culture and tradition, allow the men to dominant in decision-making in the household, due to the influences from the children they keep on negotiating.

b) Presence of mature children in the household

Decisions made in a household most likely affect all the household members. In this study, I found that children have greater contribution on most of the decisions made in the participant's households. Their presence influences how their mothers should spend their money. On the other hand, they interfere and influence decisions made by both partners (Participant 1,4,6). A woman who has three children over the age of 18 explained that her children were actively participating in household decisions. In her words:

He was the king in the household for he was the main income earner in the household. He doesn't let any body to challenge him. But as the children grew up they started to challenge him. Now on big family issues we decide after discussion and negotiation (Participant 1).

The woman explained that in her religion, and also in her tribe women were not given due recognitions in decision-making processes but when her children grow up

and understand that the woman was laboring to educate and improve their life, they started to challenge their father to make fair decisions.

A young woman who has 2 children (girl & boy aged 8 and 10 respectively) also confirmed that her children challenge their father. She said

The children intervene in our discussion and challenge him saying 'she is the one who suffer a lot to bring income so she has the right to decide'
(Participant 4).

Most study participant women also confirmed the influence of children in their household starting from how the women should expend their income. As head of the household men claim the decision-making power. But as the income contribution of women became significant and as the children in the household grew, the husbands were challenged to follow participatory decision-making process on important household matters.

c) The type of marriage arrangement

As per the information obtained from participants the type of marriage arrangement was one of the contributing factors on the status of women and her decision making power in the household. Most of the study participants repeatedly discussed that they are legally married and have 'semaniya' which they consider as protective tool. Where as, the other participants who got married without legal coverage was dominated by their husbands and hesitate to claim for their rights. For instance a young woman noted:

We got to know each other at night school. I was living with my mother while we began love affair. Later, I decided to live with him. Without

studying his background I began to live with him. Lately, I got to know that he has a child from his previous wife. He doesn't tell me his daily or monthly income. During conflict, I am the one who was chased out of home. Since I refused advises of my mother when I got married to him, my mother is not willing to take me back home (participant 15).

In this household the woman being the main income provider do not have power. And since she didn't follow the traditional pattern of marriage, she condemns herself and has accepted the oppression.

A young lady who is only 25 years old also has similar impression.

I met him on job. I got married without the permission of my families. As I gave birth to a child, he sends me away of home after 3 months. I lived with my relatives for 2 years. After 2 years he send elders for reconciliation saying that he loves me and wants to live with me. Now I am back to him. But still he come drunk and disturbs us. Some time he even bit me. I am afraid to go back to my family. I am planning to take away my child and live in other area (Participant 16).

This woman was also the main income provider but since she was informed that her marriage was illegal she blamed herself for being oppressed.

4.3. Status of women petty traders in the household and the community

The study found out that some of the women have developed confidence and acquired status in the household as a result of the income generating activities. All of them explained that they were comfortable for being independent, since they can earn a living for themselves. Women in both categories viewed themselves as

hardworking and independent individuals. These women believed that without working they would not be respected at home as well as in the community

Most of the study participant women noted that they obtain respect in the site of their children because of their economic contribution. Two women said that the children used to consider them as one member of the household who depended on the husband's earning. But as they started earning income they explained that the children have started to show due respect for them (Participants 2 & 8). The other participants also noted that the children acknowledge the contribution of the mother for their survival (participants 4,11,12,14). They said

"Imamma anchi nuriilin" meaning 'mam let you have a long life'.

The women had also respect from their husbands when they are able to generate income to the household. Some participant said that one of the causes of conflict in the house was finance. When the women generate income and cover the household expenses by themselves without nagging the husband, they stated that they started to live peacefully.

The study participants also noted that their income generating activities award them with respect in the community. All the participants said that people consider them as working women who strive for life. Some of the expressions are:

She is not a lazy woman; she strives to earn her living; she doesn't look for some body's assistance to earn her a living, etc.

The other participants explained that their work provided them with psychological comfort. For instance a woman aged 42 who was engaged in dry food preparation noted:

I am engaged in dry food preparation in the cooperative. Each other day I go to our shade where we prepare the dry food. When people ask me 'where are you going?' I tell them that I am going for work. Even though the income we earn is meager, people consider me as an employee who earns monthly income. Thus people trust me to borrow me money or items since they know that I am working woman (Participant 6).

Here the woman explained that she got trust and respect among the community members because of the work.

When a 39 years old woman who earn a lot from the petty business explained the status they hold in the community she said:

If some thing is stolen in the community, no body suspects a workingwoman. They rather suspect a non-working woman even if a workingwoman steals it. We have also developed trust among the community. Most of us do not have sufficient working capital. We take the raw materials from our customer on credit basis. We pay them after selling our products. If they do not see us working they would not trust us for the credit (Participant 2).

According to this woman, the income generating activities has granted them with status and trust in the community. Other participants also mentioned that in some community organizations such as 'idir' or 'equb' the working women are selected as cashiers.

In general, the women have testified that they noticed the difference of earning and not earning on the status they hold in the household and the community. When they generate income they are respected and trusted.

4.3.1. Some challenges faced by women petty traders

Although the income generating activities have greatly contributed to the life of the women as well as other household members as discussed above, some women have also mentioned short comings of their work.

The first one is lack of recognition from the husband side. Even though their husbands know that the women were covering large expenses in the household, the husbands did not want to recognize their contributions. When talking about her case a woman said:

'My husband said you are a wise woman, when I give you ten Birr, you buy with it 10 items. You know how to expend your money'. He doesn't want to recognize my income contribution and appreciate me for it (Participant 2).

The second point is that the husband leaves the burden of income generating on the women. The husband became irresponsible of contributing income to their household and rather became infidel to their wives. As the women said, when they cover most of the expenses, the husband got relief and started to expend his income on alcoholic drinks that lead him to extra marital sex and second wife (participants 3 & 12).

The third point is that husbands do not want to see their wives' independent. As the women became financially strong and able to fulfill their demands without bothering the husband, he fills discomfort because of the fact that she declares her independence that challenges his headship. Some women said that their husbands urge them to stop the business and be only housewives (Participants 1 & 9).

On this issue one author said:

"Many men are suspicious of their wives achieving the status of wage-earners, because money-even a little money means power and independence" (Rowbotham, 1923:67).

The other problem the women had is the lack of capital or finance; lack of safe working place and working condition; lack of information; lack of market and lack of access to training and education, which are also listed in a number of researches. Although credit facilities were available, since the women didn't have collateral and also the activities they were engaged in has very low return, they were not able to be beneficiaries.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

The present study tried to investigate how women's income earning influences the decision-making level of women in the household and how it contributes to the well being of the children as well as other members of the household. For this purpose, first the income source of the household was examined. Here, the main income provider to the household and the expenditure pattern of women and men in the household was analyzed. To investigate the decision-making power of women in the household, the role of women and men in the household was identified and how decisions are made in the household was analyzed.

During analysis the study participants were categorized into two groups: women in the very poor households (category one) and women in relatively better households (category two). The first group of women consists of those in the poor households who were engaged in activities such as retail of vegetables on the roadside, outdoors or on *gulet*, spinning, daily laborer, etc. These women were working several activities other than the petty business to earn living for the household. They are the main income providers to the households. These women are relatively engaged in the low earning and insecure jobs. The second group of women included those in the relatively better households engaged in the preparation of dry foods and embroidery, spinning, etc. Although these women were engaged in additional activities other than the petty business, since they were not the main income earners they work in relatively secure conditions and relatively better earning jobs.

Most significantly, the findings of the present study confirm the importance of income for making decisions in the household. Women in both category testified that income earning has improved their life and their status in the household and the community. The petty business has created an employment opportunity for those marginalized women to generate income to earn their living. It has promoted the women from being dependent on their male partners to independence. It has helped them to develop their confidence to take part in household decision-makings in the non-traditional female spheres activities.

As most studies identified, the present study also found out that the women have full right to decide how to expend their own income. Women in both categories have greater say in the house management (nutrition of the household, children raising and schooling, etc). But when it comes to the negotiating power of women in decision-making of important matters in the household, it differs as per their contributions in the household. Women in the first category as main income earners to the household have relatively equal voice in the absence of resources. Women in the second category, supplementing the income of the household (not the main breadwinner) have a better negotiating power on important household matters.

The study findings back up Lesser's theories of gender stratification and gender and development. Similar to her assertion this study finds out that economic gain of women improve the decision-making power of women in the household and contributes to the well being of the daughters and sons in the household. The finding shows that the income earning of women has greatly contributed to the well being of the children as well as other members of the household. Majority of the income of the women in relation to the men are expended for nutrition and education of children (girls and boys).

The level of education and awareness of the women has also effect on the level of the decision-making power of women in the household. From the study findings women in the cooperatives are more aware of their rights. As they said, they share experiences and also have acquired trainings that enlightened them to be more assertive.

The patriarchal ideology also matters in decision-making in the household. Culture and religion promote the patriarchal ideology that certain types of decisions were resistant to be influenced by income. For instance, in the poor households where the women is the main breadwinner, at times of conflict the women were pushed out of home bare handed (Participants 3 & 15).

The overall result of this analysis confirms that income and gendered ideologies matter in household decision-making. They matter in different ways in different areas of decision-making. High relative income contribution of the women associated with higher degree of influence in non-traditional spheres. In addition to the income effect, there is simultaneously a cultural effect since it is structured by culture notions of men as dominant breadwinner and women as producers of supplemental.

5.2. Recommendations

From the findings of the present study, I would like to forward few recommendations:

- Studies undertaken by the CAS and other concerned bodies have revealed that women dominate the informal businesses that are less rewarding and less secure jobs. However, in the present study I found out that large number of women is engaged in the unseen informal business. Hence, these women who are unseen to the government and other bodies are shouldering the heavy responsibility of

earning a living to their families. Thus, to address these unseen women petty traders and change their lives in the poverty reduction strategies, there should be mechanism to include the unseen women petty traders who are operating on the roadside, in corners, outdoor in the informal sector statistics.

- Although Government bodies and non-governmental organizations are working on women petty traders, the very poor women are excluded in most cases. Since most of them are illiterate and do not have assets for collateral, they couldn't benefit from the credit facilities. But, I believe and recommend that if the officials working with these women are feminists who could understand the women and are committed to change the life of these women, they could create mechanisms to encourage the women to be beneficiaries of the credit and other available facilities.
- One of the identified problems of women petty traders is lack of recognition and encouragement from the husband side. Thus, governmental bodies, the non-governmental bodies and we the individual gender practitioners should work on the awareness raising, lobby and advocacy to challenge the traditions and the wrong perceptions to bring change.

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Appendix 1

Interview Guide questionnaire

This in-depth interview guide questionnaire is designed to obtain information on the effect of the study 'Women's Decision – making in the household: the case of women petty traders in Gulelle sub-city, Addis Ababa'. To realize this purpose, your accurate, objective and reliable information is highly demanded. Thank you

I. Socio-demographic information

1. Name or Code of participant _____
2. Age _____
3. Address _____
4. Place of birth _____
5. Educational status _____
6. Marital status _____
7. Number of children by sex, age: Female _____ Male _____

II. Economic situation of the family

1. What are your household income sources?
2. Who is the main economic provider for the household?
3. How much income do you get from your business weekly/ monthly?
4. How much of your income do you contribute to the well being of the family? How about your partner?
5. How do you expend your income and how about your husband/partner?

III. Decision-making power of women petty traders in the household

- (a) Decision-making power of women in the traditionally female sphere activities in the household
 - i. What are the activities of women petty traders in the household?
 - ii. How are decisions made on those activities?
- (b) Decision-making power of women in the traditionally male sphere activities in the household
 - i. What are the activities of the husband in the household?
 - ii. How are decisions made on those activities?

IV. The status of women petty traders

- 1. What roles / status do you have in the society?
- 2. How do you think your income earning contribute to the status you have in the household and in the community?

Socio-demographic information of the study participants

Appendix 2

| No | Name | Age | Address | Educ. status | Religion | Ethnic group of the woman & the husband | Monthly income of the women | No of children by sex | Condition of residence | Type of activities they are engaged in | Reason for operating as petty trader |
|----|---------------|-----|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Participant 1 | 42 | Shegole, K. 13/14, Cheffe | 7 | Muslim | Silxee/ Silxee | about 800 Birr | 3 children (2 females & 1 male) | Own house | preparation of dry foods & embroidery | to earn additional income |
| 2 | Participant 2 | 39 | Shegole, K. 13/14, Cheffe | 5 | Orthodox Christian | Gurage / Oromo | about 1000 Birr | 4 children (3 females & 1 male) | Own house | preparation of dry foods & embroidery | to earn additional income |
| 3 | Participant 3 | 38 | Shegole, K. 13/14, Cheffe | - | Muslim | Oromo/ Gurage | not less than 650 Birr | 5 children (1 female & 4 males) | Own house | retail of spices & 'barbare'; dry food prepn. ('baltina') | for survival |
| 4 | Participant 4 | 28 | Shegole, K. 13/14, Mender Sebat | 8 | Muslim | Silxee/ Silxee | about 300 Birr | 2 children (1 female & 1 male) | rent Kebele's house | selling of processed food out door (tea & bread); retail of vegetables; basket making; embroidery | for survival |
| 5 | Participant 5 | 45 | Shegole, K. 13/14, Mender Sebat | 4 | Protestant Christian | Oromo/ Oromo | about 200 Birr | 7 children (3 females & 4 males) | Own house | preparation of dry foods | to earn additional income |
| 6 | Participant 6 | 42 | Semen Mazegaja | - | Orthodox Christian | Amhara/ Amhara | about 200 Birr | 6 children (1 females & 5 males) | rent Kebele's house | preparation of dry foods in cooperative & spinning | to earn additional income |
| 7 | Participant 7 | 55 | Semen Mazegaja | - | - | - - | about 150 Birr | 8 children (2 females & 6 males) | rent Kebele's house | preparation of dry foods in cooperative; spinning; part time domestic servant | for survival |
| 8 | Participant 8 | 40 | Semen Mazegaja | 4 | Christian | Oromo/ Oromo | about 200 Birr | 3 children (2 females & 3 males) | rent Kebele's house | preparation of dry foods in cooperative; sale of 'injera' | to earn additional income |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----------------|----|----------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 9 | Participant 9 | 35 | Semen Mazegaja | - | Christian | Amhara/ Amhara | about 300 Birr | 3 children (2 females & 1 male) | rent Kebele's house | preparation of dry foods in cooperative; embroidery | to earn additional income |
| 10 | Participant 10 | 55 | Semen Mazegaja | - | Christian | Amhara/ Amhara | not less than 270 Birr 150 | 1 children (a female) | rent Kebele's house | preparation of dry foods in cooperative; domestic servant | for survival |
| 11 | Participant 11 | 35 | Rufael Market | 5 | Orthodox Christian | Amhara/ Amhara | not less than 300 Birr | 3 children (1 females & 2 males) | rent individual' s house | retail vegetables in 'gulet' | for survival |
| 12 | Participant 12 | 48 | Rufael Market | - | Orthodox Christian | Amhara/ Amhara | about 400 Birr | 3 children (2 females & 1 male) | Own house | retail vegetables in 'gulet' | for survival |
| 13 | Participant 13 | 34 | Shola Market | - | Muslim | Guraghe/ Guraghe | about 180 Birr | 3 children (2 females & 1 male) | rent individual' s house | retail vegetables in 'gulet' | for survival |
| 14 | Participant 14 | 38 | Semen Mazegaja | 4 | Muslim | Guraghe/ - | not less than 270 Birr | 1 children (a female) | Living with relative | preparation of dry foods in cooperative; retail of charcoal & fire wood | for survival |
| 15 | Participant 15 | 29 | Kechene Medhaniyalem | 7 | Orthodox Christian | - | about 180 Birr | 1 children (a male) | rent individual' s house | retail vegetables on the roadside, daily laborer | for survival |
| 16 | Participant 16 | 25 | Shegole | - | - | Dorze/ Dorze | more than 150 Birr | 1 children (a female) | rent individual' s house | retail vegetables on the roadside, retail fire wood | for survival |

Other informants

| No. | Name | Sex | Organization | Position |
|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Tigist Berihe | F | Kebele 13/14 | Extention worker |
| 2 | Negash Nigbash | M | Kebele 13/14 | Extention worker |
| 3 | Etaferaw Misfanaw | F | Gullell sub-city | Junior expert |
| 4 | Abebe Kefale | M | Gullell sub-city | Promotion expert |

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

Name of student

Signature

Date

I confirm that this thesis has been submitted with my approval as supervisor of the same:

Name of Supervisor

Signature

Date