



**WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, GENDER ROLE NEGOTIATION, AND MARITAL
STABILITY AMONG FEMALE STAFF OF CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS)
ETHIOPIA**

MEHRET ZERIHUN BEYENE

MAY 2026

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

**WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT, GENDER ROLE NEGOTIATION, AND MARITAL
STABILITY AMONG FEMALE STAFF OF CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS)
ETHIOPIA**

MEHRET ZERIHUN BEYENE

ADVISOR: MR. FISSEHA TEKLU

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

MAY 2026

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF ART IN SOCIAL
PSYCHOLOGY

DECLARATION

I, Mehret Zerihun Beyene, affirm that this thesis research which is titled as “Women’s Empowerment, Gender Role Negotiation, and Marital Stability among Female Staff of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Ethiopia,” is completely my original work. All sources and data used in this thesis have been properly acknowledged. I produced this work independently, except for the guidance and suggestions provided by my advisor. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree at this or any other university.

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

Mehret Zerihun

ADVISOR STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION

I, Mr. Fisseha Teklu, hereby certify that the thesis “Women’s Empowerment, Gender Role Negotiation, and Marital Stability among Female Staff of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Ethiopia,” was conducted by Mehret Zerihun Beyene as part of the requirements for the completion of the Master of Arts in Social Psychology at Addis Ababa University. I confirm that this thesis represents an original piece of work and has been submitted with my approval.

ADVISOR

SIGNATURE

DATE

Mr. Fisseha Teklu

BOARD OF EXAMINERS STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, GENDER ROLE NEGOTIATION, AND MARITAL STABILITY AMONG FEMALE STAFF OF CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS) ETHIOPIA

This thesis paper is prepared by Mehret Zerihun Beyene and submitted to the School of Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Art in Social Psychology.

Approved by Board of Examiners

We have examined and approved the thesis research report prepared and submitted to the School of Psychology.

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

Internal Examiner

Dr. Mitiku Hambisa

External Examiner

Dr. Tsega M

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I give thanks to God for carrying me through this journey and for blessing me with the strength, wisdom, and patience to complete this work I had tough moments, but I kept going because of His help. I also want to thank my advisor, Mr. Fisseha Teklu, for guiding me and giving me feedback on my thesis. His support helped me stay focused on my work. I also want to thank Addis Ababa University, College of Education and Language Studies, School of Psychology for giving me the chance to study.

I truly appreciate Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Ethiopia for granting me a supportive professional environment to complete this study. And I thank all the women who shared their stories and time with me for this study. Without their openness I wouldn't have been able to do this work. In addition, I also want to thank my colleagues, friends and family for their support and encouragement. Their strong belief in me gave me strength when I needed it most.

To my beloved husband, Alex, I am deeply grateful for your love, patience, and constant encouragement throughout this journey. Thank you for standing beside me, believing in me, and supporting me when I needed strength the most. Your presence and continued support have meant so much to me. I can't thank you enough.

To my children, Keamlak, Bemehret, and Tamnen, I want to say thank you. Thank you for your patience when I did not have a lot of time for you while working on this. I am so sorry for not being fully present with you, and I know that was not always easy. Your quiet understanding, love, and simply being my children gave me strength to keep going. This achievement is also yours, and I carry deep gratitude for understanding you showed me throughout this journey.

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
ACRONYMS	xi
<i>ABSTRACT</i>	xii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of Study	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	4
1.3. Objective of the Study	6
1.4. Significance of Study	7
1.5. Scope of the Study	8
1.6. Operational Definitions	9
CHAPTER TWO	10
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	10
2.1. Introduction	10
2.2. Conceptual Description of Key Terms	10
2.3. Theoretical Foundation	11
2.4. Empirical Literature	14
2.5. Theoretical Framework	16
2.6. Conceptual Framework	17
2.7. Summary	19
CHAPTER THREE	20
RESEARCH METHODS	20
3.1. Research Design	20
3.2. Description of the study Site	20
3.3. Study Population	22
3.4. Sample and Sampling Techniques	22
3.5. Research Variables	24
3.6. Data Collection Instruments (Questionnaire/Scales)	24
3.7. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments	26
3.8. Data Collection Procedures	27

3.9.	Data Analysis	28
3.10.	Ethical Considerations	30
CHAPTER FOUR		31
RESULTS		31
4.1.	Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	31
4.2.	Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables	33
4.3.	Correlation Analysis	34
4.4.	Regression and Mediation Analysis	35
4.4.1.	Direct Effect of Empowerment on Marital Stability (Model 1).....	36
4.4.2.	Path a: Effect of Empowerment on Gender Role Negotiation (Model 2)	36
4.4.3.	Full Mediation Model: Empowerment and Negotiation Predicting Stability (Model 3)	37
4.4.4.	Summary of Mediation Analysis.....	38
4.4.5.	Mediation Model Diagram	38
4.5.	Relative Income Analysis	40
4.5.1.	Comparison by Relative Income Group	40
4.5.2.	Findings from Income Comparison	41
4.6.	Focus Group Discussion (FGD) findings	41
CHAPTER FIVE		45
DISCUSSION		45
CHAPTER SIX		48
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		48
6.1.	Summary	48
6.2.	Conclusions.....	49
6.3.	Recommendations	50
6.4.	Limitations of the Study.....	51
REFERENCES		52
ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE.....		54
English Version		54
አማርኛ ትርጉም		60
ANNEX 2: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDING QUESTIONS		68

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=57)	32
Table 2: Relative Income Distribution	33
Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (n=57)	33
Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Study Variables	34
Table 5: Regression Model 1 - Direct Effect	36
Table 6: Regression Model 2 - Path a	36
Table 7: Regression Model 3 - Mediation Model	37
Table 8: Mediation Analysis Summary	38
Table 9: Key Variables by Relative Income Group	40

List of figures

Figure 1: Conceptual framework	18
Figure 2: Mediation Model of Gender Role Negotiation.....	39
Figure 3: Mean marital stability by relative income group.....	40

ACRONYMS

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CRRSA	Civil Registration and Residency Service Agency
SoP	School of Psychology
GRAS	Gender Role Attitudes Scale
SRES	Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale
DAS	Dyadic Adjustment Scale
SD	Standard Deviation
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability, with special attention to the mediating role of gender role negotiation among married female staff of CRS Ethiopia. The study was carried out using a mixed-method, cross-sectional design. Quantitative data were collected through a survey, while qualitative data were gathered through an online focus group discussion supported by anonymous polls for sensitive questions. Out of 99 survey responses received, 57 respondents met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis. In addition, 10 participants took part in the focus group discussion. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, mediation analysis, and relative income comparison. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings showed a moderate level of women's empowerment, a moderate level of gender role negotiation, and a moderate level of marital stability. Women's empowerment was positively related to marital stability, but its direct effect became non-significant when gender role negotiation was added to the model. This showed that gender role negotiation fully mediated the relationship between empowerment and marital stability. The study also found that equal-income couples reported higher negotiation and marital stability, while women who earned more than their spouses reported the highest empowerment. The qualitative findings also showed the importance of communication, fairness, role adjustment, and shared understanding in maintaining stable marriages. At the same time, participants mentioned that heavy workload, unequal household responsibilities, and continued traditional expectations are major challenges for effective negotiation. Overall, the findings suggest that women's empowerment supports marital stability mainly when it is combined with healthy gender role negotiation. Based on this, the study recommends that empowerment programs and workplace support systems give more attention to communication, role adjustment, and practical support. This can help women better manage both work and family responsibilities. Keywords: women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, marital stability, CRS Ethiopia, relative income.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Ethiopia has been undergoing rapid socio-economic changes, which are affecting family life and marital relationships. Recent evidence shows that marital instability is increasing, especially in urban areas. For example, according to the CRRSA Ethiopia mid-year report (January 2026), 5,805 divorce cases were recorded in Addis Ababa during the first six months of the year, which is higher compared to previous years. This trend suggests that there are increasing pressures within marriages, influenced by changes in social expectations, economic challenges, and gender roles. In addition, recent media reports have also raised concerns about rising divorce in Addis Ababa, showing that marital instability is becoming an important public issue.

Previous studies have linked marital instability to different factors such as economic stress, communication problems, unmet expectations, and rigid gender roles (Spanier, 1976; Malm et al., 2023). In societies that are changing quickly, traditional marital arrangements often face new challenges. This is especially seen when women gain greater access to education and employment. When marital roles do not adjust to these changes, it can lead to tension, dissatisfaction, and sometimes marital breakdown. In organizations like Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Ethiopia, where many women are educated and professionally active, these tensions can become more visible, as traditional expectations meet modern ideas of gender equality.

The Ethiopian context is also shaped by strong cultural and religious understandings of marriage. Marriage is not only seen as a personal relationship between two individuals, but also as a social and moral institution that connects families, faith, community expectations, and social responsibility. In many Ethiopian communities, religious values continue to influence how husbands and wives understand love, sacrifice, authority, respect, and family unity. Since CRS is a Catholic-based organization, this context is especially relevant. Catholic social teaching gives importance to the dignity of every person, the value of family life, mutual care, justice, and the common good. These values can support women's dignity and participation, while also encouraging stable and respectful family relationships. Therefore, studying marital stability among female staff of CRS Ethiopia requires attention not only to general empowerment theories, but also

to the moral and religious environment in which marriage and family responsibilities are understood.

At the policy level, Ethiopia has formally recognized women's rights and gender equality for several decades. The National Policy on Women, introduced in 1993, aimed to promote women's political, economic, and social rights and to make public institutions more gender-sensitive. The FDRE Constitution also recognizes equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. More recently, Ethiopia's Ten-Year Perspective Development Plan and national gender equality commitments have continued to emphasize women's participation, economic empowerment, leadership, protection from harmful norms, and access to decision-making. These policy directions show that women's empowerment is not only an individual or family issue, but also part of Ethiopia's broader development agenda. However, policy progress does not always immediately change household-level gender expectations. This makes it important to examine how empowered Ethiopian women negotiate marital roles within their families.

Women's empowerment has become an important factor in shaping modern marital relationships. It is understood as women's ability to make important life decisions, access resources, and exercise control in personal, economic, and social areas (Kabeer, 1999). In marriage, empowerment can be seen in women's participation in decision-making, financial independence, confidence, and social mobility. As more women become educated and employed, traditional power relations within marriage are increasingly changing.

Studies show that women's empowerment can support marital stability when it is combined with positive relationship processes. Empowered women often contribute to both the economic and emotional well-being of the household, which can reduce financial stress and improve shared decision-making (Mason & Smith, 2000). Research from Sub-Saharan Africa also shows that couples who both earn income and work together with mutual respect are more likely to have stable marriages (Malm et al., 2023).

However, the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability was not always positive and remained highly dependent in different contexts. In patriarchal settings where traditional gender norms are highly valued, empowerment could disrupt established power relations within marriage. Studies indicated that when women's increased independence was not

followed by attitudinal change among spouses, empowerment could create tension and conflict (Egbule et al., 2022). This suggests that empowerment may create pressure when couples are not able to adjust their expectations and roles together.

The key to resolving this tension appeared to rely in gender role negotiation. Gender role negotiation is commonly referred to the process by which spouses communicate, adjust, and renegotiate responsibilities. The negotiation could be related to income generation, household work, decision-making, and childcare. Marital adjustment theory emphasizes flexibility and negotiation as central to marital stability (Spanier, 1976). Recent research from Kenya also showed that both gender role perception and gender role performance were positively related to marital stability, with actual role performance showing a slightly stronger relationship. This suggests that marital stability depends not only on beliefs about gender roles but also on how those roles are practiced in everyday life (Pinto, 2023).

Dellie et al. (2024) reported that women's participation in key household decisions in Ethiopia remained limited, reflecting persistent patriarchal norms that positioned men as primary decision-makers. Despite cultural expectations that positioned husbands as primary authority figures, increasing numbers of Ethiopian women—especially professionals employed in development organizations such as CRS Ethiopia—were attaining higher education, economic independence, and leadership roles. While these changes held promise for gender equality, there was limited empirical evidence on how empowered Ethiopian women and their spouses negotiated evolving marital roles and how this negotiation affected marital stability. This gap shows the need for more context-specific research.

Although issues of women's empowerment and family changes are becoming more visible in Ethiopia, there is still limited research that examines how women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability are connected in the Ethiopian context. This gap is more visible among professional women who have access to education and employment opportunities. As a result, much of the existing literature comes from other African countries or international studies, which may not fully reflect the Ethiopian social and cultural context.

Marital instability in Ethiopia is now understood as a complex issue that is influenced by many factors, such as rapid social change, urbanization, and changing expectations in relationships. In

urban and professional settings, individuals are often exposed to different and sometimes competing values. On one hand, traditional norms continue to support male authority in marriage. On the other hand, modern ideas encourage gender equality and shared responsibilities. These differences can create tension, especially in households where women experience empowerment at work but still face traditional expectations at home.

It is also important to understand that empowerment is not the same for everyone. Its impact depends on the relationship between spouses. While economic and psychological empowerment can increase women's independence, they can also create challenges if couples do not adjust their roles together. This shows that empowerment alone may not lead to positive marital outcomes. Instead, its effect depends on how couples respond to these changes and manage their roles in the relationship.

In this sense, marriage, empowerment, and gender role negotiation are incorporated in this study in a broader way. Marriage is treated as a relationship shaped by emotional, cultural, religious, economic, and policy contexts. Women's empowerment is also understood beyond income or employment; it includes decision-making, confidence, respect, and the ability to participate meaningfully in family and social life. Gender role negotiation then becomes the practical process through which these wider changes are handled inside marriage. This broader perspective is important for Ethiopia because women may experience empowerment in the workplace and through national policy, while still living within family and religious settings that value marital unity, respect, and traditional responsibilities.

Therefore, understanding marital stability in the Ethiopian context requires more than looking at women's empowerment alone. It also requires examining how empowerment interacts with household processes, especially gender role negotiation. Looking at this interaction provides a deeper and more context-based understanding, which forms the basis of this study.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the expansion of women's empowerment initiatives in Ethiopia, marital instability remains an important social concern, especially among urban and professional populations. As a professional woman working in the Ethiopian development sector, the researcher paid close attention to the everyday realities that influence marital negotiation beyond what is explained in

theory. According to the available official mid-year administrative report which gives important comparative evidence, the total divorce registrations in Addis Ababa increased from 3,769 in the first six months of 2017 to 5,805 in the first six months of 2018, representing a 54% increase. Current divorce registrations also increased from 674 to 1,750 during the same comparison period, showing a 160% increase. These figures show that marital dissolution is becoming a visible concern in Addis Ababa and strengthen the urgency of examining marital stability in the Ethiopian urban context.

Divorce registration category	2017 first six months	2018 first six months	Percentage change
Current divorce registrations	674	1,750	160% increase
Delayed divorce registrations	684	695	2% increase
Overdue divorce registrations	2,411	3,360	39% increase
Total divorce registrations	3,769	5,805	54% increase

Note. The table is based on the available CRRSA first six months performance report comparing 2017 and 2018 data.

At the center of this issue is the gap between increased opportunities for women's empowerment and continued traditional expectations within marriage. Although many women now have better access to education, employment, and economic independence, marital relationships often continue to follow patriarchal structures where men are expected to remain the main decision-makers (Kabeer, 1999; Dellie et al., 2024). This gap can lead to confusion in roles, conflict, and dissatisfaction in marriage.

The effects of this issue go beyond dissatisfaction in marriage. It may also increase the risk of instability, including separation and divorce. These outcomes can affect family unity, the well-being of children, and wider social stability. Without proper adjustment and communication, empowerment may create pressure in relationships instead of strengthening them (Malm et al., 2023).

Gender relations and marital stability are shaped by the interaction of social norms, economic conditions, and changing ideas about empowerment. Although many international studies have

examined these issues, there is still limited research that looks at how women's empowerment and gender role negotiation interact within marriage in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Ethiopia (Kabeer, 1999; Cornwall & Rivas, 2015).

There is insufficient empirical evidence on whether and how couples renegotiate marital roles in response to women's empowerment. A gap remains in the limited attention given to examining gender role negotiation as a mediating variable. It was not clear whether and how couples renegotiated roles in response to women's empowerment. And this gap is particularly evident among professional women working in development organizations such as CRS Ethiopia.

In response to this, this study examines the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability, with specific attention to the mediating role of gender role negotiation among CRS Ethiopia female colleagues. By doing so, the study aims to generate context-specific evidence that contributes to both academic knowledge and practical intervention efforts.

1.3. Objective of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to examine the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability, with particular attention to the mediating role of gender role negotiation among CRS Ethiopia female colleagues.

Specific Objectives:

- To assess the levels of women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability among married female staff of CRS Ethiopia.
- To analyze the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability.
- To determine whether gender role negotiation mediates the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability.
- To compare women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability across relative income groups among married female staff of CRS Ethiopia.
- To describe the demographic characteristics of respondents, including age, education, number of children, job grade, income, spouse employment status, and spouse education.

1.4. Significance of Study

The significance of this study is its contribution to understanding how women's empowerment influences marital stability in the Ethiopian context, especially through the role of gender role negotiation among professional women.

By focusing on gender role negotiation as a central factor between empowerment and marital stability, this study addresses an important gap in existing literature. Previous studies, including Agarwal (1997), Chant (2016), Cornwall (2016), and Cornwall and Rivas (2015), discuss empowerment as a pathway to positive social and household outcomes. However, other evidence also shows that changes in gender roles can create tension when couples do not adjust their roles properly. Therefore, this study adds value by examining not only empowerment itself, but also the relational process through which empowerment affects marital stability.

Theoretically, the study contributes by linking women's empowerment theory, gender role theory, and marital adjustment theory in one framework. It shows that empowerment should not be understood only as women's access to resources or confidence, but also as something that must be negotiated within intimate relationships. By testing gender role negotiation as a mediating variable, the study helps to explain the mechanism through which empowerment may influence marital stability in the Ethiopian context.

The findings of this study are also important for development organizations, such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which are working to promote gender equality in their programs. Empowerment initiatives that do not consider negotiation within the household may unintentionally create tension in marriage (Cornwall, 2016). Therefore, the findings of this study can provide practical insights for designing programs that support both women's empowerment and healthy family relationships. This can help improve the effectiveness and sustainability of such interventions.

The Ethiopian government and international donors recognize gender equality as an important part of social development (FDRE, 2020). This study offers evidence-based insights that can inform policies aimed at supporting women's participation in decision-making, economic participation, and equitable marital relationships while fostering marital stability. Such approaches have the

potential to strengthen family systems, reduce social tensions, and contribute to national development goals aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals 5 (SDG 5) on gender equality.

- **Women and Families:** This study offers practical insights for professionally employed Ethiopian women and their spouses on how empowerment and role negotiation can be managed constructively to strengthen marital stability.
- **Development Organizations (e.g. CRS Ethiopia):** The findings inform gender programming by emphasizing the importance of incorporating household-level negotiation and relational dynamics into empowerment initiatives.
- **Policy Makers and Practitioners:** the study provides evidence to support the development of culturally sensitive gender and family policies that promote both women's empowerment and family cohesion.
- **Researchers and academics:** This study helps to fill an important gap in the Ethiopian literature by introducing gender role negotiation as a mediating variable between women's empowerment and marital stability.

In general, by linking theoretical perspectives with practical applications, this study contributes to the development of gender-sensitive approaches. These approaches aim to support both women's empowerment and marital stability, and in this way promote more balanced and harmonious social development.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study focused on examining the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of gender role negotiation. The scope of the study was limited to married female staff of CRS Ethiopia. These participants a group of professional women working within an urban and organizational context where workplace empowerment may interact with expectations and practices within marriage. As such, the study was both geographically and institutionally bounded to CRS Ethiopia context.

In terms of content, the study examined women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability, along with selected background variables such as income and job grade. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative focus group discussion findings. The findings will also contribute to the broader literature on gender, marriage

and empowerment in Ethiopia. The approach employed allowed the study to capture both measurable patterns as well as lived experiences of married female staff within the CRS Ethiopia context. The results should therefore be interpreted within this specific organizational context.

1.6. Operational Definitions

- **Women's empowerment:** In this study, women's empowerment refers to the respondent's score on items measuring decision-making power and psychological empowerment within marriage. Decision-making power was measured through items asking who usually makes decisions on major household purchases, social activities, children's education and health, and the use of personal savings or assets. Psychological empowerment was measured through Likert-type items on confidence in expressing opinions, ability to make important life decisions, and feeling respected in marriage. Higher scores indicate higher empowerment.
- **Gender role negotiation:** In this study, gender role negotiation refers to the respondent's score on items measuring how often spouses discuss, share, adjust, and compromise on household and family responsibilities. It was measured using frequency-scale items related to joint decision-making about children, shared childcare, discussion of domestic work expectations, compromise during disagreement, and adjustment of domestic roles over time. Higher scores indicate more frequent and active negotiation between spouses.
- **Marital stability:** In this study, marital stability refers to the respondent's composite score on items adapted from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). The items measured agreement between spouses, relationship satisfaction, emotional closeness/cohesion, communication, conflict or disagreement, and perceived commitment to continue the relationship. Therefore, satisfaction was measured as one part of marital stability, not as a separate dependent variable. Higher scores indicate greater perceived marital stability, while lower scores indicate lower stability or more disagreement and conflict.

Although some indicators, such as satisfaction and cohesion, may also relate to marital quality, they were included here because the adapted DAS treats these dimensions as part of dyadic adjustment and relationship stability. The study did not measure legal divorce or actual separation. Instead, marital stability was measured as perceived stability within an ongoing marriage, using agreement, satisfaction, cohesion, commitment, communication, and low conflict as practical indicators.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical literature related to women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability. The review is organized in a way that first explains the main concepts, then discusses the theories that guide the study, and finally examines empirical findings from Ethiopia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and other relevant contexts. The chapter also presents both supportive and opposing arguments. Some studies suggest that women's empowerment can strengthen marriage through confidence, economic contribution, and shared decision-making. Other studies show that empowerment can create tension when traditional marital expectations do not change. Therefore, the review does not treat empowerment as automatically positive or negative, but as a process whose effect depends on how couples negotiate their roles within marriage.

There is limited empirical literature in Ethiopia that directly addresses women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability as one process. Thus, this review draws on studies from other African countries and broader international contexts to build the conceptual and empirical basis for the study.

2.2. Conceptual Description of Key Terms

Women's empowerment is generally understood as the process through which women gain the ability to make strategic life choices in areas where such ability was previously limited. Kabeer (1999) explains empowerment through three related dimensions: resources, agency, and achievements. In the context of marriage, resources may include income, education, employment, and social support. Agency refers to the ability to express opinions, make decisions, negotiate, and act with confidence. Achievements refer to the outcomes of empowerment, such as greater wellbeing, respect, and participation in household decisions. For this study, women's empowerment is understood mainly through decision-making power and psychological empowerment within marriage.

Gender role negotiation refers to the way husbands and wives discuss, adjust, and share responsibilities in response to changing life situations. It includes communication about household

work, childcare, financial decisions, social responsibilities, and expectations about authority within marriage. Conceptually, negotiation is different from simply holding gender-equal attitudes. A couple may believe in equality but still fail to practice it in daily life. In the same way, a couple may hold some traditional beliefs but maintain stability if they communicate well and adjust responsibilities fairly. This makes gender role negotiation a practical and relational concept.

Marital stability refers to the ability of a marriage to continue with commitment, agreement, satisfaction, cohesion, and low conflict. In this study, marital stability does not mean only the absence of divorce. It is understood as perceived stability within an ongoing marriage. The study measured it using items adapted from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, which includes agreement, satisfaction, cohesion, communication, conflict, and commitment to continue the relationship. This is important because a marriage may legally continue but still experience low emotional stability, poor communication, or frequent conflict.

2.3. Theoretical Foundation

Women's Empowerment and Marital Stability

Women's empowerment is widely understood as a multidimensional concept that includes economic independence, access to education, psychological self-efficacy, and socio-cultural independence. Research have shown that women's empowerment can contribute positively to marital stability, particularly when it is acknowledged and supported within the marital relationship.

Several studies show that women's confidence, agency, and participation in family decision-making can support healthier marital relationships. For example, Malm et al. (2023), in a study conducted in Ghana, identified behaviors such as affection, companionship, commitment to family, and financial support as important factors linked to marital satisfaction. Their findings suggest that when women are empowered and take part in household decision-making and economic contribution, this can strengthen the relationship, especially when their spouses recognize and value these contributions.

Similarly, a study conducted in Rwanda by Gikundiro (2019) found that women's economic empowerment improved marital satisfaction, especially in households where both spouses were earning income. Taking together, these studies suggest that women's empowerment can help to

support stability in marriage when it is combined with mutual understanding and shared responsibilities between partners.

Challenges of Empowerment in Traditional Marital Contexts

Despite these benefits, women's empowerment does not always lead to positive outcomes in marriage. Some studies show that empowerment can create tension, especially in contexts where traditional gender roles are still strong. For example, in Nigeria, Egbule et al. (2022) found that some men felt uncomfortable when their wives earned higher incomes or held higher positions. This discomfort sometimes led to resistance or conflict, which affected marital harmony. The study also showed that assertive behavior from women was sometimes seen as disrespectful, which increased tension in the relationship.

Evidence from Ghana shows similar challenges. Malm et al. (2023) found that in many divorce cases, women mentioned disrespect and rigid male roles as main reasons for separation. The study showed that when husbands were not able to adjust to the increasing independence of their wives, it contributed to marital instability.

These findings show that cultural beliefs and attitudes play an important role in shaping marital outcomes. When women's empowerment happens in contexts where traditional expectations remain strong, it can sometimes lead to conflict instead of stability. This means that the relationship between empowerment and marital stability depends on how couples and communities respond to changing gender roles.

Gender Role Negotiation as a Mediating Variable

Gender role negotiation is increasingly seen as an important process that connects women's empowerment with marital stability. It refers to how couples discuss, adjust, and redefine their roles and responsibilities as social, economic, and cultural conditions change.

Previous studies show that negotiation and role adjustment are important for turning empowerment into positive marital outcomes. For example, Park et al. (2025) found that relationship satisfaction was higher when partners had similar views on gender roles. At the same time, Malm et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of communication and compromise in everyday marital life. These findings show that empowerment is more likely to support marital stability when couples can communicate well and adjust their roles together.

Overall, the literature suggests that gender role negotiation helps couples align their expectations, build mutual respect, and manage changes in their relationship. Through this process, empowerment becomes part of daily marital life, which can reduce conflict and support stability.

Further evidence from Kenya also supports this idea. Pinto (2023) found that both gender role attitudes and actual role practices were related to marital stability. However, role practices had a slightly stronger effect than attitudes. This means that what couples do in their daily life may be more important than what they believe. The study also recommended including gender role awareness in premarital and marital counseling, which further shows the importance of negotiation and role adjustment for stable marriages.

The Experience of Professional and Urban Women

Professional and urban women often face competing expectations between their work and family roles. Previous studies suggest that when both partners are working, couples need continuous communication and adjustment to manage household responsibilities in a fair way.

As women's empowerment changes women's roles in professional and public spaces, it becomes more important for couples to renegotiate expectations within the home. These findings also suggest that professional and urban women are playing an important role in shaping new marital roles. Their experiences show the need for ongoing negotiation, mutual support, and cultural adjustment to maintain stability in marriage in the context of women's empowerment.

From the researcher's reflection as a professional woman working in a development organization, this issue is not only theoretical. In many professional spaces, women are encouraged to lead, speak, decide, and become economically independent. However, the home environment may not always change at the same pace. This can create a quiet tension between the empowered woman at work and the expected woman at home. This reflection supports the need to study not only empowerment, but also the process through which couples adjust to empowerment in daily marital life.

The researcher also reflects that women's empowerment is sometimes discussed as if it is only an individual achievement. However, from lived and professional observation, empowerment becomes more complicated inside marriage because marriage involves two people, two families, and sometimes religious and cultural expectations. A woman may become more confident and

economically capable, but if her spouse does not also adjust, the empowerment may be experienced as pressure rather than partnership. This reflection supports the argument that the study should not stop at empowerment alone, but should examine the practical process of negotiation inside the marital relationship.

2.4. Empirical Literature

Empirical studies show that the level of women's empowerment varies across contexts and is influenced by education, employment, income, social norms, and household power relations. Dellie et al. (2024), using Ethiopian demographic and health survey data, showed that women's empowerment in Ethiopia is still shaped by household, community, and structural factors. This means that even when women have education or employment, their actual power within the household may remain limited. This is relevant to the present study because professional women may report high confidence and income, but may still face limits in household decision-making.

A recent Ethiopian study by Bitew et al. (2024) also examined household decision-making autonomy among rural married women using EDHS data. The study found that women's autonomy was associated with education, literacy, work status, household wealth, and marriage-related factors. Although this study focused on rural married women rather than professional women, it is still useful because it shows that household decision-making remains an important part of women's empowerment in Ethiopia. For the present study, this supports the idea that empowerment should be examined not only through income and education, but also through actual participation in household decisions.

At the African level, the Africa Gender Index 2023 Analytical Report shows that gender equality and women's empowerment have improved in some areas, but major gaps remain in economic opportunities and empowerment representation. The report indicates that African women still access only about half of the social, economic, and representation opportunities available to men. This broader evidence is relevant because it shows that empowerment is improving but remains incomplete across the continent. Therefore, professional women may experience empowerment in some areas, such as education and employment, while still facing unequal expectations in the household.

Studies on marital satisfaction and stability also show that relationship quality depends on both positive and negative behaviors within marriage. Malm et al. (2023), in Ghana, found that affection, companionship, commitment to family, and financial support were related to marital satisfaction, while disrespect, selfishness, and annoying habits were related to dissatisfaction. This finding is important because it shows that marital stability is not determined only by economic status or empowerment, but also by everyday behavior, respect, and emotional connection between spouses.

Broader relationship literature also shows that marital outcomes are shaped by more than individual empowerment. Studies on marital adjustment and gender roles show that agreement, communication, shared responsibility, emotional closeness, and role flexibility are important for marital satisfaction and stability (Spanier, 1976; Malm et al., 2023; Pinto, 2023). This supports the present study because it shows that empowerment becomes meaningful for marriage only when it is reflected in daily interaction between spouses.

The safer conclusion from the reviewed studies is that gender beliefs alone are not enough to explain marital stability. What appears more important is how couples practice those beliefs in daily life. For example, Pinto (2023) showed that actual gender role performance was more strongly related to marital stability than gender role perception. Similarly, Malm et al. (2023) showed that affection, companionship, respect, and family commitment were important for relationship satisfaction. These findings support the argument that marital stability depends more on communication, respect, and practical role adjustment than on empowerment or attitudes alone.

Empirical evidence on gender role negotiation is more limited, but related studies show that negotiation and actual role performance are important. Pinto (2023), in a study among couples in selected counties of Kenya, found that both gender role perception and gender role performance were positively related to marital stability. The relationship was stronger for gender role performance than perception. This supports the argument that what couples actually do in daily life may matter more than what they say they believe about gender roles.

The relationship between empowerment and marital stability is therefore not simple. Gikundiro (2019) found that women's economic empowerment improved marital satisfaction in Rwanda, especially where spouses both contributed to household income. However, Egbule et al. (2022)

showed that women's employment and higher social position may create spousal adjustment challenges in Nigeria when traditional expectations remain strong. These findings present two sides of the argument. Empowerment can support marital stability when it is accepted and negotiated, but it can also produce conflict when it is seen as a threat to established gender roles.

Taken together, the recent empirical literature shows a consistent pattern. Women's empowerment, gender equality, and egalitarian attitudes are important, but they do not automatically produce stable marriages. Communication, shared responsibility, flexible role adjustment, and respectful negotiation are repeatedly identified as important processes in relationship outcomes. This supports the central argument of the present study: gender role negotiation is not only an additional variable, but a practical mechanism that explains how empowerment may become helpful for marital stability.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Marital Adjustment Theory (Spanier, 1976) and Gender Role Theory. These theories provide a useful framework for understanding marital stability in the context of women's empowerment.

Marital Adjustment Theory focuses on the importance of communication, flexibility, and negotiation between spouses in maintaining a stable relationship. According to this theory, marital stability is not something fixed, but a continuous process. Couples need to adjust to changes over time and align their expectations. When partners can communicate well and negotiate their roles and responsibilities, they are more likely to manage conflict positively and maintain satisfaction in the relationship.

Gender Role Theory gives another important perspective. It explains how social expectations about men's and women's roles influence behavior in marriage. This theory was first introduced by Parsons (1955) and later developed into Social Role Theory by Eagly (1987). It shows that traditional gender roles often give more authority and decision-making power to men, while women are expected to take more caregiving roles. In such situations, fixed role expectations can make it difficult for couples to adjust to change. On the other hand, more equal role arrangements can support shared responsibility and greater flexibility in marriage.

Taken together, these theories suggest that women's empowerment alone does not determine marital outcomes. What matters more is how couples negotiate changing roles and expectations. This means that empowerment can lead to stability or conflict, depending on how couples communicate and adjust to these changes.

2.6. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study shows the expected relationships between women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability. It is based on the theoretical perspectives discussed above and is supported by relevant empirical studies.

Narrative Description:

Women's empowerment is expected to influence marital stability among married female staff of CRS Ethiopia. The direct relationship in the framework is the path from women's empowerment to marital stability. However, based on the theoretical and empirical literature, this relationship is not expected to operate only in a direct way. The framework proposes that gender role negotiation mediates this relationship. This means that empowerment may first influence how couples communicate, share decisions, and adjust household roles, and this negotiation process then influences marital stability.

The theoretical basis for treating gender role negotiation as a mediator comes mainly from Marital Adjustment Theory and Gender Role Theory. Marital Adjustment Theory emphasizes communication, agreement, cohesion, and satisfaction as important parts of stable relationships. Gender Role Theory explains that social expectations about men's and women's roles influence marital behavior. When women become more empowered, traditional gender expectations may be challenged. However, empowerment by itself does not automatically create marital stability. It first needs to be translated into day-to-day marital practices, such as shared decision-making, discussion of domestic work, compromise during disagreement, and adjustment of responsibilities. Gender role negotiation represents this translation process. In this sense, it stands between empowerment and marital stability: empowerment may increase a woman's confidence and agency, but negotiation determines whether this empowerment becomes cooperation or conflict within the marriage. Empirically, studies such as Pinto (2023), Malm et al. (2023), and Gikundiro

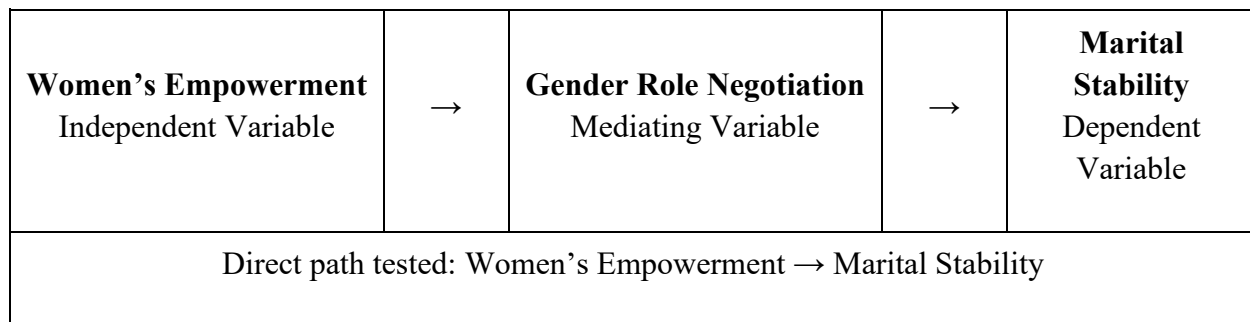
(2019) support the importance of role practice, communication, and shared responsibility for marital outcomes.

Accordingly, the conceptual framework was developed by the researcher based on Kabeer's empowerment framework, Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Gender Role Theory, Marital Adjustment Theory, and empirical studies on empowerment, gender roles, and marital stability. The model focuses only on the variables measured in this study: women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability.

Visual Diagram:

Below is a conceptual diagram that shows the relationships between the key variables:

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



In this framework, women's empowerment is the exogenous variable because it is the starting variable that is expected to influence the other variables in the model. Marital stability is the outcome variable because it is the final variable the study seeks to explain. Gender role negotiation is the mediating variable because it explains the process through which women's empowerment may influence marital stability. The arrows in the revised framework are one-directional, and they show the expected direction of influence tested in the study: from women's empowerment to gender role negotiation, from gender role negotiation to marital stability, and the direct path from women's empowerment to marital stability.

Diagram Description:

- Women's empowerment is shown as the independent variable and starting point of the model.
- A direct arrow goes from women's empowerment to marital stability to show the direct relationship tested in the study.
- Another arrow goes from women's empowerment to gender role negotiation, showing that empowerment may influence how couples communicate and adjust roles.
- A final arrow goes from gender role negotiation to marital stability, showing the indirect or mediated pathway proposed in this study.

2.7. Summary

The reviewed literature shows that women's empowerment can contribute to marital stability, but the relationship is conditional and context-based. Empowerment can strengthen marriage when it increases confidence, participation, and shared decision-making. However, it can also create tension when traditional gender expectations remain unchanged. This means that empowerment should not be viewed as a simple one-directional influence on marriage.

Therefore, gender role negotiation plays an important mediating role in this relationship. It helps couples to manage their expectations, share responsibilities, and build mutual respect. In addition, the experiences of professional and urban women show that negotiation is very important when dealing with changing roles in marriage.

Overall, the literature reviewed provides a strong theoretical and empirical foundation for this study. Based on these insights, the study examines the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability among married female staff of CRS Ethiopia, with a focus on the role of gender role negotiation as a mediator.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method cross-sectional research design. More specifically, it used an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, in which the quantitative phase was conducted first and followed by a qualitative phase. The quantitative survey was used to measure the levels of women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability, and to test the relationship and mediation effect among the variables. The qualitative focus group discussion was then used to provide deeper explanation of the quantitative findings by exploring participants' lived experiences, especially how empowerment, household expectations, communication, and role adjustment are experienced in marital life.

A cross-sectional design was appropriate because the study aimed to examine the current status and relationships among the study variables at one point in time, rather than to follow changes over a long period. Since the objectives focused on describing levels, examining associations, and testing mediation using data collected during one study period, the cross-sectional approach was practical and academically suitable. It also matched the available time, resources, and access to participants. However, because the design is cross-sectional, the findings show relationships and mediation patterns but do not establish long-term causal change.

3.2. Description of the study Site

In selecting the research site, attention was paid to its relevance to the research problem and to the presence of the target population. The study focused on professional women within CRS Ethiopia, one of the international development and humanitarian organizations operating in Ethiopia. CRS Ethiopia was selected because it employed professional women who were exposed to organizational values and practices related to gender equality, participation, workplace support, leadership, and empowerment. Although the organization provided a relatively similar empowerment-supportive work environment, the women in the study were not identical in status. They differed in job grade, income, age, education, number of children, spouse employment status, and marital experiences. This made CRS Ethiopia a relevant site for examining how women in the

same organizational environment experienced empowerment and negotiated marital roles differently.

CRS Ethiopia was also selected because it is a setting where the researcher can begin from a place of practical influence. As a woman working within CRS, the researcher is part of the same professional environment where questions of empowerment, workplace support, gender equality, and family life are experienced in everyday practice. This gave the study practical relevance, because the findings can inform discussions and possible actions within an organization where the researcher has access, responsibility, and the ability to contribute to change.

In addition, CRS is a global humanitarian and development agency working in more than 100 countries, and its programs and institutional practices are guided by values related to human dignity, justice, participation, and the wellbeing of vulnerable communities. For this reason, evidence generated from CRS Ethiopia had relevance beyond one country office. Although the sample size of this study was small and limited to CRS Ethiopia, the practical implications were broader because recommendations related to workplace support, gender role negotiation, and women's wellbeing could contribute to internal learning and wider organizational reflection. Therefore, CRS Ethiopia was not only a convenient study site, but also a meaningful institutional entry point where a small context-specific study could support wider reflection and action.

CRS Ethiopia provided a relevant institutional context for this research mainly for three reasons:

1. Concentration of professional women: The organization includes women staff members across functions (i.e., program, and operations) whose professional work has high tendency to influence decision-making power and autonomy at household level.
2. Gender equality exposure: As most of the development organization, CRS promotes gender equality and empowerment values. This may unintentionally create tensions or opportunities in marital relationships when changing workplace values meet traditional household expectations.
3. Urban-centered employment context: Many CRS Ethiopia staff are based in urban settings including Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Hawassa, Kombolcha/ Dessie, Adama and Mekelle. In these areas social change and emerging gender norms are more practiced, making it a

useful site to study negotiation processes and marital stability outcomes among dual-career households.

3.3. Study Population

The study population consisted of all female staff employed at CRS Ethiopia. According to the human resource records, the total number of female staff was 174. From this population, the study focused specifically on married female staff. However, the researcher did not pre-identify married staff from HR records because marital status and related personal information are private personal data. Accessing such information without individual consent would not be appropriate under personal data protection principles and the current Ethiopian Personal Data Protection Proclamation No. 1321/2024. Therefore, eligibility was determined through voluntary self-report screening questions in the questionnaire.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to make sure that the participants were suitable for the objectives of the study. The inclusion criteria focused on selecting female staff members of CRS Ethiopia who were legally married, had been in marriage for at least one year, and were willing to participate voluntarily. These conditions were important because the study examined women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability within an ongoing marriage.

At the same time, the exclusion criteria helped to remove respondents whose marital status was not relevant to the study. This included those who were single, divorced, widowed, newly married, or not available during the data collection period. Applying these criteria helped to improve the relevance, consistency, and credibility of the study findings.

Based on this, out of the 99 survey responses received, 57 participants met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis, while 42 responses were excluded based on the predefined criteria (i.e., Not Married (Excluded) 29, Divorced (Excluded) 4, Married < 1 Year (Excluded) 6, Not Willing to Participate (Excluded) 3.)

3.4. Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sample Size Determination

Given that the total female staff population was relatively small and accessible ($N = 174$), the questionnaire was shared with all female staff rather than only with a pre-identified married group.

This was done because the researcher could not access or use marital-status information from HR records for pre-screening. Instead, the questionnaire included screening and consent questions so that eligibility could be determined directly and voluntarily by each respondent.

A total of 99 female staff responded to the questionnaire. After applying the screening criteria, 57 respondents were retained for the final quantitative analysis because they were legally married, had been married for at least one year, were willing to participate, and completed the survey. The other 42 responses were excluded because they did not meet one or more of the eligibility criteria.

This approach was selected because it:

- included all accessible eligible participants within the defined target group;
- reduced sampling error within the CRS Ethiopia eligible married female staff group; and
- supported context-specific interpretation within CRS Ethiopia, rather than broad generalization to all Ethiopian women.

Quantitative Sampling Technique

The quantitative part of the study used a census approach within the accessible female staff population, followed by eligibility screening. Since the researcher was not allowed to pre-identify participants based on marital status, the questionnaire was first made available to all female staff. The screening questions then identified those who met the study criteria. Although the final sample size of 57 may appear small in general terms, it represented the eligible respondents who voluntarily disclosed that they met the criteria and consented to participate. Therefore, the findings were not intended for broad statistical generalization to all Ethiopian women or all professional women. Instead, they provided context-specific evidence about married female staff within CRS Ethiopia.

Qualitative sampling technique

For the qualitative part of the study, maximum variation purposive sampling was used. This type of purposive sampling was appropriate because the aim was not to select a statistically representative qualitative sample, but to include participants with different experiences. Participants were selected intentionally from survey respondents who were willing to take part in the discussion, while also considering variation in age, length of marriage, job grade, and marital

experience. Initially, about 15 participants were selected from the survey respondents who expressed willingness to participate in the discussion. However, only 10 participants were finally available and took part in the focus group discussion. The main purpose of this approach was to capture varied experiences related to women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability.

This approach helped the researcher to compare experiences across different situations, instead of focusing on only one type of respondent. To maintain privacy and confidentiality of the data, the focus group discussion was conducted through an online platform, Microsoft Teams. This provided a safer space for participants to share their views, especially on sensitive issues, and helped the study to collect richer and more honest information from the 10 participants who took part in the FGD.

3.5. Research Variables

- Independent Variable: Women's empowerment (economic, educational, psychological, socio-cultural).
- Mediating Variable: Gender role negotiation (communication, shared decision-making, flexibility in household roles).
- Dependent Variable: Marital stability (marital satisfaction, cohesion, perceived stability/commitment, low conflict).

3.6. Data Collection Instruments (Questionnaire/Scales)

This section explains the instruments used to collect data for the study variables. The study used a structured questionnaire to measure the main research variables among married female staff of CRS Ethiopia. The questionnaire was developed by adapting relevant items from established scales and related literature, especially women's empowerment measures, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and literature on household role negotiation, to make sure the instrument was relevant and reliable for this study.

The questionnaire was divided into different sections. The first section included screening and consent questions. These questions were used to check whether respondents were eligible and willing to participate. It included items on marital status, duration of marriage, and willingness to

take part in the study. Only respondents who met the inclusion criteria, meaning those who were legally married for more than one year and agreed to participate, were allowed to continue.

The second section collected demographic information. This included age, educational level, number of children, job grade, monthly income, spouse employment status, spouse income, and spouse educational level. These variables were used to describe the respondents and to examine possible influences on marital stability.

Women's empowerment was measured as a multidimensional construct. It included decision-making power and psychological empowerment. Decision-making power was measured using items that focused on who makes decisions about important household matters, such as purchases, social activities, children's issues, and financial resources. Psychological empowerment was measured using Likert-scale items that assessed confidence in expressing opinions and feeling respected within marriage. These measures are based on the concept of empowerment explained by Kabeer (1999), which includes both control and personal agency.

Gender role negotiation was measured using items developed from the study objectives and related literature on household role sharing and marital adjustment. The items examined how couples shared responsibilities, made decisions together, communicated expectations, and adjusted roles over time. Responses were recorded using a frequency scale ranging from "never" to "always," which helped to capture how often negotiation took place.

Marital stability was measured using items adapted from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) developed by Spanier (1976). This scale is widely used to assess relationship quality and stability. It included different areas such as agreement between spouses, conflict and disagreement, emotional closeness, and overall relationship satisfaction. Additional items looked at communication patterns, arguments, and positive interactions. Responses were collected using Likert-type and frequency scales.

All items were coded numerically for analysis. Negatively worded items were reverse coded to keep the direction consistent. Composite scores were calculated for the main variables, including women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability. Higher scores showed higher levels of each variable.

3.7. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

To strengthen the validity of the instruments, the questionnaire was developed by adapting items from established scales and related literature, including women's empowerment measures and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The items were reviewed to ensure that they were relevant to the study objectives and appropriate for measuring women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability among married female staff of CRS Ethiopia. The questionnaire was also organized into clear sections and included screening, consent, demographic, and scale items to improve content clarity and relevance.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha based on the final analytical sample of 57 complete cases. The interpretation of alpha values followed the commonly used guideline in which $\alpha \geq 0.90$ indicates excellent reliability, $0.80 \leq \alpha < 0.90$ indicates good reliability, $0.70 \leq \alpha < 0.80$ indicates acceptable reliability, $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.70$ indicates questionable reliability, $0.50 \leq \alpha < 0.60$ indicates poor reliability, and $\alpha < 0.50$ indicates unacceptable reliability.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis of Study Scales

Scale	Number of items	n	Cronbach's alpha	Interpretation
Women's empowerment full scale	14	57	0.724	Acceptable
Gender role negotiation full scale	5	57	0.889	Good
Marital stability full scale	19	57	0.931	Excellent

The reliability results showed that all main study scales met acceptable reliability standards. The women's empowerment full scale had acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.724$), the gender role negotiation scale had good reliability ($\alpha = 0.889$), and the marital stability full scale had excellent reliability ($\alpha = 0.931$). Since the main descriptive, correlation, regression, and mediation analyses were conducted using the full composite scores of the study variables, these results supported the internal consistency of the instruments used in the study.

3.8. Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected by the researcher after the study objectives, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and eligibility criteria were clearly explained. The quantitative data were collected first through a structured online questionnaire shared with all CRS Ethiopia female staff through the organization's communication channels. This broad distribution was necessary because the researcher could not access personal HR data on marital status for pre-identification of eligible participants. The questionnaire therefore included screening questions, consent, demographic items, and scales measuring women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability. Respondents completed the questionnaire individually and anonymously at a time convenient for them.

The quantitative data collection was conducted online within CRS Ethiopia during the study period in 2026. A total of 99 responses were received. After screening for marital status, duration of marriage, and willingness to participate, 57 eligible responses were retained for analysis. The online format was used because participants were located in different CRS Ethiopia offices and because anonymity was important due to the sensitive nature of questions related to marriage and household roles.

After the quantitative survey, the qualitative data were collected through one online focus group discussion using Microsoft Teams. Participants for the discussion were selected from survey respondents who expressed willingness to take part in the qualitative phase. About 15 participants were invited, and 10 participants finally attended the discussion. The FGD was facilitated by the researcher and lasted approximately 90 minutes. Anonymous polls were used during the discussion for sensitive questions, while open discussion was used to explore participants' experiences of empowerment, marital role expectations, negotiation, and work–family balance.

The focus group discussion was guided by a short semi-structured FGD guide developed from the study objectives. The guide included open discussion questions on work–family balance, workplace or organizational support, and advice for unmarried young women. It also included anonymous poll questions on whether professional empowerment created tension at home, the main challenge in negotiating household roles, and the type of workplace support that could help professional women. The FGD guiding questions and anonymous poll questions are presented in Annex 2.

The qualitative discussion was not recorded with personal identifiers. Notes were taken and responses from the anonymous polls were summarized. The researcher then organized the qualitative information around the main themes of the study. Throughout the data collection process, participants were informed that they could refuse to answer any question or withdraw at any time without any consequence.

3.9. Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis:

The quantitative data in this study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, such as mean, frequency, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the main study variables. Inferential analysis, including correlation and regression, was used to examine the relationships between women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability. In addition, mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether gender role negotiation explains the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability.

To better understand marital dynamics, a relative income variable was also created by comparing the income of respondents with that of their spouses. This variable was developed during the analysis stage after the researcher identified that the income relationship between spouses could give more insight than individual income alone. Based on this, respondents were grouped into relative income categories, and comparative analysis was conducted to examine differences in women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability across these groups.

For the interpretation of mean scores, the study used a three-level classification based on equal class intervals. Since the variables were measured using both five-point and six-point Likert scales, the cut-off points were calculated separately for each scale. For the five-point scale, the interval was calculated as $(5 - 1) / 3 = 1.33$. Based on this, scores from 1.00 to 2.33 were considered low, 2.34 to 3.66 as moderate, and 3.67 to 5.00 as high.

For the six-point scale, the interval was calculated as $(6 - 1) / 3 = 1.67$. Based on this, scores from 1.00 to 2.67 were considered low, 2.68 to 4.34 as moderate, and 4.35 to 6.00 as high. These cut-off points were applied depending on the original scale used for each variable. Standard deviation was also reported to show the level of variation in responses among participants.

Qualitative Analysis:

The qualitative data collected through the online focus group discussion were analyzed thematically. The anonymous poll responses were summarized using frequencies and percentages, while the open discussion responses were reviewed to identify repeated ideas, patterns, and meanings related to women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital dynamics.

The open-ended discussion responses were coded manually using broad thematic codes developed from the study objectives and the FGD guide. These codes included work–family balance, household role negotiation, empowerment-related tension, barriers to negotiation, workplace support, and advice for young unmarried women. Similar responses were grouped under these thematic areas and used to support and explain the quantitative findings. Therefore, the percentages reported in the FGD findings came from the anonymous poll results, while the thematic conclusions came from manually grouping repeated ideas from the open discussion.

Data Screening and Preparation

A total of 99 survey responses were received from the 174 female staff members at CRS Ethiopia. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the final analytical sample consisted of 57 participants (57.6% of responses).

Table 1: Sample Distribution and Missing Data Analysis

Category	n	%
Total survey responses	99	100.0%
Not married (excluded)	29	29.3%
Divorced (excluded)	4	4.0%
Married < 1 year (excluded)	6	6.1%
Not willing (excluded)	3	3.0%
Final analytic sample (married $\geq$ 1 year and willing)	57	57.6%
Spouse not working (included)	9	15.8%
Spouse working (included)	48	84.2%

Note. Inclusion criteria: married for $\geq$ 1 year and willing to participate. Exclusion criteria: not married, divorced, married for less than one year, and not willing. For respondents whose spouse is not working, spouse-income data were missing by design because of questionnaire skip logic.

Of the 99 responses received, 57 participants met the study inclusion criteria and were retained for analysis. The excluded responses consisted of women who were not married, divorced, married for less than one year, or unwilling to participate. Missing data on spouse income were expected for respondents whose spouses were not working and were therefore treated as missing by design rather than as item nonresponse.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

When there is discussion about marriage and the roles of men and women it is a personal thing. So the researcher made sure to keep everything safe for the people who took part in our study. Nobody had to join if they did not want to and they could stop answering questions or leave at any time without anything bad happening to them. All the answers were kept secret and stored in a safe place and only used them to learn more about the topic. To keep the people who took part in the study safe we only talk about the results, as a group, not as people. The researcher does this to protect the people who shared their thoughts with us about marriage and the roles of men and women.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study on women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability among married female staff of CRS Ethiopia. The results are organized into several sections. These include the demographic characteristics of respondents, descriptive statistics of key variables, correlation analysis, regression and mediation analysis, relative income comparisons, findings from the focus group discussion, and a brief synthesis of the results at the end of the chapter.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The information includes age, education level, number of children, job grade, and monthly income. These variables provide background context for understanding the personal and professional profile of the married female staff who participated in the study.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=57)

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS				
Variable	Category	n	%	Cumulative %
Age (years)	25-30	10	17.5	17.5
	31-35	10	17.5	35.1
	36-40	17	29.8	64.9
	41-45	13	22.8	87.7
	46-50	3	5.3	93.0
	51-56	4	7.0	100.0
	Total <i>M = 38.40, SD = 7.06, Range: 28-56</i>	57	100.0	
Education	Diploma	1	1.8	1.8
	BA/BSc Degree	14	24.6	26.3
	Master's Degree	42	73.7	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	
Number of Children	0	6	10.5	10.5
	1	12	21.1	31.6
	2	16	28.1	59.6
	3	15	26.3	86.0
	4	8	14.0	100.0
	Total <i>M = 2.12, SD = 1.20, Range: 0-4</i>	57	100.0	
Job Grade	3-5 (Junior)	10	17.5	17.5
	6-7 (Mid-level)	16	28.1	45.6
	8-9 (Senior)	25	43.9	89.5
	10-11 (Management)	6	10.5	100.0
	Total <i>M = 7.49, SD = 1.75, Range: 3-11</i>	57	100.0	
Monthly Income (ETB)	41,000-50,000	1	1.8	1.8
	Above 50,000	56	98.2	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	
Marriage Duration	1-3 years	14	24.6	24.6
	4-10 years	16	28.1	52.6
	More than 10 years	27	47.4	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	
Spouse Employment	Working	48	84.2	84.2
	Not Working	9	15.8	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	
Spouse's Income (n=48) ^a			100.0	
	10,000-20,000 ETB	7	14.6	14.6
	21,000-30,000 ETB	4	8.3	22.9
	31,000-40,000 ETB	6	12.5	35.4
	41,000-50,000 ETB	4	8.3	43.8
	Above 50,000 ETB	27	56.3	100.0
Spouse's Education (n=48) ^a	Total	48	100.0	
	Certificate	3	100.0	6.3
	Diploma	3	6.3	12.5
	BA/BSc Degree	18	37.5	50.0
	Master's Degree	20	41.7	91.7
	PhD	4	8.3	100.0
^a Based on respondents with working spouse	Total	48	100.0	
				100.0

Note: N = 57 married women employed at CRS Ethiopia (≥1 year married, consenting participants)

The demographic results show that respondents represented different age groups, education levels, job grades, income categories, and family situations. Most respondents had master's degrees and

earned above 50,000 ETB per month. The sample also included women with different numbers of children and different lengths of marriage. This background information provides important context for interpreting the study findings on women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability.

Relative Income Distribution

Table 2: Relative Income Distribution

Code	Category	n	%
0	Spouse not working	9	15.8%
1	Wife earns more than spouse	21	36.8%
2	Equal income	27	47.4%
3	Wife earns less than spouse	0	0.0%

The relative income distribution shows that nearly half of the respondents reported earning the same income as their spouses, while more than one-third reported earning more than their spouses. None of the respondents reported earning less than their spouses. This pattern suggests that equal income and wife-higher income arrangements were the most common economic situations in the sample.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

This section presents the descriptive statistics for the main study variables: women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability. The mean and standard deviation values were used to describe the general level of each variable among the respondents.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (n=57)

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Interpretation
Women's empowerment	3.40	1.04	1	5	Moderate
Decision-making power	2.78	0.61	1	4	Moderate
Psychological empowerment	4.22	0.91	1	5	High
Gender role negotiation	3.53	1.24	1	5	Moderate
Marital stability	3.88	1.59	1	6	Moderate

Women's Empowerment - the results show a moderate overall level of women's empowerment among the respondents ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.04$). However, the two dimensions of empowerment were not at the same level. Psychological empowerment had a high mean score ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.91$), which shows that respondents generally felt confident, respected, and capable in their relationships. In contrast, decision-making power was at a moderate level ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.61$), which indicates that women's actual control over household decisions was more limited than their internal sense of empowerment.

Gender Role Negotiation - showed a moderate mean score ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.24$), with a wide variation among respondents. This suggests that some couples actively discussed and adjusted their responsibilities, while others followed more traditional role arrangements or did not negotiate as often.

Marital stability - showed a moderate mean score ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.59$), based on the six-point scale cut-off levels. This indicates that respondents generally reported a fair level of stability in their marriages. However, the relatively large standard deviation shows that there were noticeable differences among participants.

4.3. Correlation Analysis

This section presents the correlation analysis among demographic variables and the main study variables. The analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships between women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, marital stability, and selected background characteristics.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Education	-.073	1.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Children	.544***	.153	1.00	—	—	—	—	—
4. Job grade	.355*	.265	.120	1.00	—	—	—	—
5. Income	.200	.212	.249	.189	1.00	—	—	—
6. Empowerment	-.266	-.012	-.077	-.054	-.099	1.00	—	—

7. Negotiation	-.047	.076	-.051	.208	.270	.389**	1.00	—
8. Stability	-.068	.177	.036	.081	.281*	.359**	.784***	1.00

(Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$)

The correlation table provides several meaningful relationships among the study variables. As shown in the table, women's empowerment was positively and significantly associated with marital stability ($r = .359, p < .01$), suggesting that higher empowerment tended to correspond with better marital stability. Empowerment was also positively related to gender role negotiation ($r = .389, p < .01$), suggesting that empowered women were more open to engage in discussion and adjustment of household roles with their spouses.

The strongest relationship in the analysis was between gender role negotiation and marital stability ($r = .784, p < .001$). This suggests that active negotiation of roles and responsibilities within marriage is closely related to higher marital stability. In addition, income showed a small but significant positive relationship with marital stability ($r = .281, p < .05$), which may show that financial security can play a supportive role in marriage.

Some expected demographic relationships were also observed. Age was positively related to the number of children ($r = .544, p < .001$), which means that older respondents generally had more children. Age was also positively related to job grade ($r = .355, p < .05$), suggesting that older respondents were more likely to have higher job positions.

4.4. Regression and Mediation Analysis

This section presents the regression and mediation analysis conducted to examine whether gender role negotiation mediated the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability. The analysis was presented in three steps: first, the direct effect of women's empowerment on marital stability was tested; second, the effect of women's empowerment on gender role

negotiation was examined; and third, both women's empowerment and gender role negotiation were entered together to assess the mediation effect.

4.4.1. Direct Effect of Empowerment on Marital Stability (Model 1)

Model 1 examined the direct effect of women's empowerment on marital stability before including the mediator. This step was important to determine whether empowerment had a significant relationship with marital stability at the initial stage of the mediation analysis

Table 5: Regression Model 1 - Direct Effect

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.425	.181	.166	0.79

Note. Dependent variable- Marital Stability.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.906	0.923	2.065	.044
Empowerment	0.566	0.248	2.746	.001

The results in the above table 6 show the direct effect of women's empowerment on marital stability. The result indicates that empowerment has a positive and significant effect on marital stability ($B = 0.566$, $p = .001$). This means that when women's empowerment increases, marital stability is likely to increase. The model explains 18.1% of the variation in marital stability, which shows that empowerment has an important contribution, even if other factors also influence marital stability.

4.4.2. Path a: Effect of Empowerment on Gender Role Negotiation (Model 2)

Model 2 tested path a of the mediation model by examining whether women's empowerment significantly predicted gender role negotiation. This step was necessary to determine whether empowerment was associated with the mediating variable.

Table 6: Regression Model 2 - Path a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
-------	-------------------------------	------------	---	------

(Constant)	-0.101	1.210	-0.084	.933
Empowerment	0.635	0.326	2.985	.002

*Note- Model 2 estimates path a in the mediation model, predicting gender role negotiation from women's empowerment. ** $p < .01$.*

Table 7 shows the effect of women's empowerment on gender role negotiation. The result is positive and significant ($B = 0.635$, $p = .002$). This result indicates that higher levels of empowerment are associated with greater engagement in discussing, sharing, and renegotiating household roles with their spouses. In practical terms, women who reported higher empowerment were more likely to participate actively in gender role negotiation within marriage.

4.4.3. Full Mediation Model: Empowerment and Negotiation Predicting Stability (Model 3)

Model 3 examined the full mediation model by entering women's empowerment and gender role negotiation together as predictors of marital stability. This step was used to determine whether the direct effect of women's empowerment on marital stability remained significant after gender role negotiation was included in the model. It also helped to assess whether gender role negotiation explained the pathway through which empowerment influenced marital stability.

Table 7: Regression Model 3 - Mediation Model

Model	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.964	0.662	2.967	.005
Empowerment (c')	0.164	0.121	1.355	.181
Negotiation (b)	0.633	0.079	8.012	<.001

Note. Model fit: $R^2 = .680$, Adjusted $R^2 = .668$, $F = 57.26$, $p < .001$. Dependent variable - Marital Stability.

Table 8 presents the full mediation model, where both women's empowerment and gender role negotiation were included together to predict marital stability. The results show that gender role negotiation remained a strong and significant predictor of marital stability ($B = 0.633$, $p < .001$). However, the direct effect of empowerment became not significant ($B = 0.164$, $p = .181$).

This means that empowerment does not directly affect marital stability when gender role negotiation is taken into account. Instead, empowerment seems to influence marital stability through its effect on gender role negotiation. The model explains 68% of the variation in marital stability, which suggests that it provides a good explanation of the data.

4.4.4. Summary of Mediation Analysis

This section provides a summary of the mediation analysis by presenting the key paths in the model. It shows whether women's empowerment predicted gender role negotiation, whether gender role negotiation predicted marital stability, and whether the direct effect of women's empowerment on marital stability remained significant after the mediator was included.

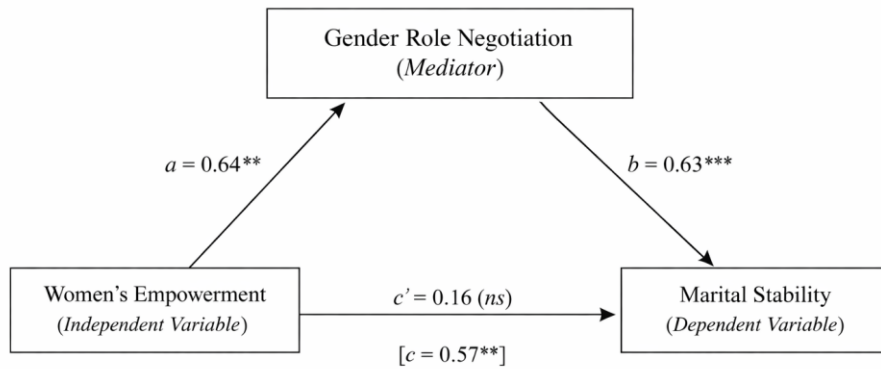
Table 8: Mediation Analysis Summary

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z / t	Sig.
Path a	0.635	0.326	2.985	.002
Path b	0.633	0.079	8.012	<.001
Total effect (c)	0.566	0.248	2.746	.001
Direct effect (c')	0.164	0.121	1.355	.181
Indirect effect (a × b)	0.402			
Sobel test	4.044		4.044	<.001

Table 9 summarizes the mediation analysis. First, the results show that women's empowerment has a significant positive effect on marital stability (total effect, $c = 0.566$, $p = .001$). Second, empowerment significantly predicts gender role negotiation (path $a = 0.635$, $p = .002$). Third, gender role negotiation significantly predicts marital stability (path $b = 0.633$, $p < .001$). However, when gender role negotiation is included in the model, the direct effect of empowerment on marital stability becomes non-significant ($c' = 0.164$, $p = .181$). In addition, the Sobel test is significant ($Z = 4.044$, $p < .001$), which confirms that the mediation effect is statistically significant. Therefore, the results show full mediation. This means that women's empowerment improves marital stability mainly through gender role negotiation.

4.4.5. Mediation Model Diagram

To visually represent the mediation process, the study developed a mediation model showing the relationships among women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability. The diagram presents the unstandardized coefficients for each pathway in the model. This visual summary is especially useful because it clearly shows that the strongest pathway to marital stability operates through negotiation rather than through empowerment alone.



Note. c = total effect; c' = direct effect controlling for mediator; $**p < .01$; $***p < .001$; ns = not significant.

Figure 2: Mediation Model of Gender Role Negotiation

As illustrated in Figure 2, women's empowerment has a positive and statistically significant effect on gender role negotiation ($B = 0.635$, $p < .01$). Gender role negotiation, in turn, shows a strong positive association with marital stability ($B = 0.633$, $p < .001$). The total effect of women's empowerment on marital stability is also significant ($B = 0.566$, $p < .01$).

However, when gender role negotiation is included in the model, the direct effect of women's empowerment on marital stability is no longer significant ($B = 0.164$, $p > .05$). This result shows that gender role negotiation fully mediates the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability. In other words, women's empowerment does not directly improve marital stability. Instead, it helps improve communication and negotiation between spouses, and this is what leads to a more stable marriage.

4.5. Relative Income Analysis

4.5.1. Comparison by Relative Income Group

In this part of the study, comparative analysis was used to examine the differences between groups. This finding is also consistent with household-income literature showing that relative income between spouses can shape gender identity, power, and relationship dynamics (Bertrand et al., 2015).

In this study, respondents were grouped based on their relative income, and differences in women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability were examined.

Table 9: Key Variables by Relative Income Group

Group	n	Empowerment	Negotiation	Stability
Wife earns more	21	4.32	3.28	4.24
Equal income	27	4.19	3.72	4.49
Spouse not working	9	4.11	3.56	4.38

Figure 3 presents the mean marital stability score across the relative income groups. The line graph helps to show the pattern of marital stability more clearly by comparing respondents who earned more than their spouses, those with equal income, and those whose spouses were not working.

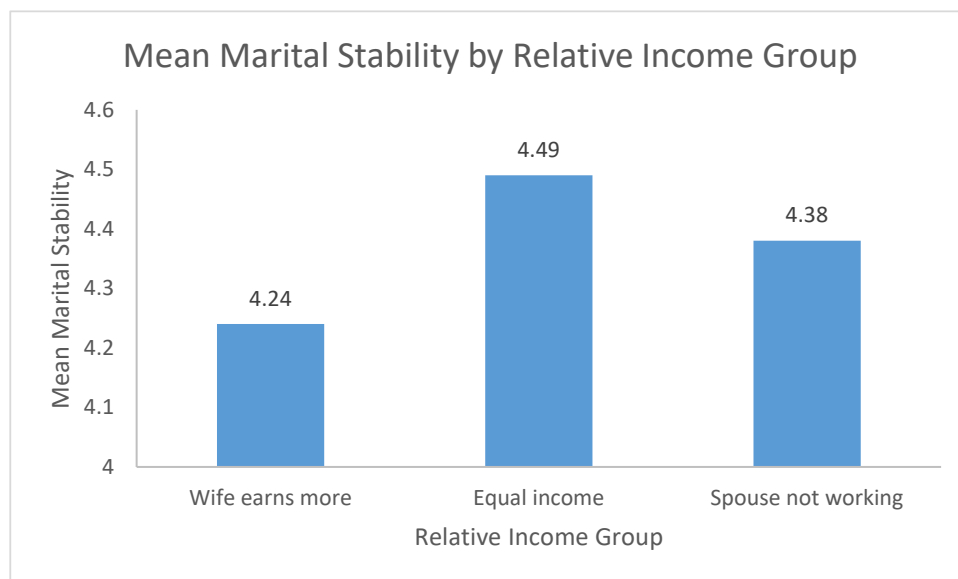


Figure 3: Mean marital stability by relative income group

4.5.2. Findings from Income Comparison

Women's empowerment - was highest among respondents who earned more than their spouses ($M = 4.32$). This was followed by those in equal-income marriages ($M = 4.19$) and those whose spouses were not working ($M = 4.11$). This pattern suggests that women who earn more than their spouses tend to report slightly higher levels of empowerment, especially in psychological terms.

Gender role negotiation - was highest among women in equal-income marriages ($M = 3.72$), followed by those whose spouses were not working ($M = 3.56$). The lowest level of negotiation was reported by women who earned more than their spouses ($M = 3.28$). This finding suggests that income equality may create a more balanced situation for discussion and shared decision-making within marriage. In contrast, women who earn more than their spouses may engage less in negotiation. This may be because they feel less need to negotiate or because decision-making becomes more one-sided.

Marital stability - was also highest among women in equal-income marriages ($M = 4.49$), followed by those whose spouses were not working ($M = 4.38$), and lowest among women who earned more than their spouses ($M = 4.24$). This pattern indicates that income equality, rather than income advantage, is associated with higher levels of marital stability in this sample.

Marital stability is highest when incomes are equal, while empowerment is also highest when the wife earns more. This suggests that income parity do not have much influence for marital outcomes. This is likely because equal income promotes mutual respect, partnership, and balanced negotiation.

4.6. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) findings

In the qualitative part of the study, 15 participants were invited and 10 participants took part in the online focus group discussion. The discussion was conducted through Microsoft Teams, and short anonymous polls were used during the meeting for some of the more sensitive questions. The percentages reported in this section are based on the anonymous poll responses. The open discussion responses were not quantified; instead, they were manually grouped into thematic areas based on repeated ideas related to work-family balance, empowerment-related tension, role negotiation, workplace support, and advice for young unmarried women. This helped participants respond more freely and supported the interpretation of the quantitative findings.

The first discussion point was about balancing professional work and marriage. Participants described balance as an ongoing process in marital setting. The good side of this balance included having a sense of purpose at work, contributing to the household, and feeling respected for professional achievements. At the same time, participants described the challenge of moving between two demanding spaces (i.e., the expectations of workplace and home). Several comments pointed to fatigue, time pressure, and the feeling that success at work does not automatically reduce expectations for childcare, emotional care, and household management expectations at home. In this sense, balance often meant trying to perform well in both work and family roles, while managing a heavy mental and physical load.

Another issue discussed was the possible tension between workplace gender values and expectations at home. The discussion showed that exposure to gender equality values at CRS does not always create open conflict in the home, but in some cases it can. The results from the anonymous poll showed that 70% of participants did not experience noticeable tension, 20% said it sometimes happened, and 10% said they experienced clear tension. This suggests that for most participants, workplace ideas about gender equality were not a major source of conflict. However, tension may still arise when ideas about shared roles, women's voice, and fairness at work are not matched by expectations at home. Participants explained that the main difficulty is not women's employment itself, but the gap between changing beliefs and unchanged roles at home.

Another important point discussed was what makes negotiation difficult. Both the anonymous poll and the group discussion showed similar challenges. The main challenge, reported by 60% of participants, was high workload combined with uneven household responsibilities. This suggests that negotiation becomes more difficult when women are already managing heavy responsibilities at both work and home. Another challenge, reported by 20% of participants, was traditional beliefs about men's and women's roles. This shows that fixed expectations still influence how responsibilities are shared within the household. A smaller number of participants pointed to spouse unemployment and household stress (10%) and the involvement of in-laws (10%) as added pressures that make private discussion around negotiation more difficult. Notably, none of the participants selected changes in income, such as the wife being promoted or earning more, as the main reason negotiation becomes difficult on its own. Overall, the discussion suggested that

workload pressure and continued traditional expectations were more of the challenges when it comes to negotiation than income change alone.

Participants were asked to suggest on what CRS could do to support women. Almost all participants shared the idea of women's empowerment at work is important, but many said it is not enough on its own if women are left to deal with the challenges at home by themselves. They suggested that CRS could offer more practical support for work-life balance, such as awareness sessions on gender role negotiation, emotional intelligence, and relationship management. Some participants were open to the idea of safe spaces where women could talk about family-related challenges, while others felt that family matters are private and may not be easy to discuss in a workplace setting. Other suggestions included more flexible working arrangements, such as working from home when possible, and greater attention to workload and flexibility. Some participants also noted that women may need greater understanding and flexibility during certain periods that affect their wellbeing, including menstruation, pregnancy, maternity, and the post-maternity period. Participants explained that supportive supervision and flexible work arrangements during busy times could help women manage both work and family responsibilities more effectively. They also believed that this kind of support can reduce stress, improve communication at home, and make it easier for couples to adjust to changing roles together. In this way, workplace support, in addition to women's empowerment, may indirectly contribute to marital stability by helping women feel less overwhelmed and more able to engage in positive negotiation within the marriage.

The final question asked participants to give advice for unmarried young women. When giving advice, participants emphasized the importance of discussing expectations early and in a realistic way. They warned against entering marriage with the belief that love alone can solve differences related to roles and responsibilities. Instead, they highlighted the need for open discussions about work, finances, household responsibilities, family boundaries, and long-term goals before marriage.

Participants also emphasized the importance of religion, education, financial awareness, and self-confidence. They also mentioned respectful communication and mutual understanding as key factors. Overall, their advice shows that while empowerment is important, marital stability also depends on honest communication and the willingness of both partners to adjust to each other.

Overall, the findings from the FGD support the quantitative results by showing that women's empowerment alone does not directly lead to harmony in marriage. All participants indicated that what matters more is how couples communicate, adjust their roles, and manage changes in work, income, and expectations in a fair way. The use of anonymous polls during the online discussion also helped participants to share more honest views on sensitive issues, especially about tension at home and the challenges they face in negotiation.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The study was conducted focusing on how women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability are connected. So, in this chapter, the researcher discusses the main findings of the study based on the research objectives and specific factors, such as relative income, which provided a deeper understanding of how these relationships work in practice. In addition, understanding the findings of this study requires an appreciation of the organizational and cultural context of CRS Ethiopia. CRS is a professional environment where women are exposed to ideas of gender equality, participation and empowerment. Each section discusses one key aspect of the findings and explains its importance for understanding marital stability.

i. Women's Empowerment and Marital Stability

The quantitative results showed that there is a positive relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability. This means that women who reported higher levels of empowerment also reported having more stable marriages. The results from the regression analysis also showed that empowerment was significantly related to marital stability, even before including the gender role negotiation variable. This is consistent with previous studies, which explain empowerment as a way for women to develop self-confidence, self-respect, and participation in important family decisions (Kabeer, 1999). It is also in line with other studies that show women's empowerment can have a positive effect on household well-being when women's roles are recognized and respected within marriage (Malm et al., 2023; Gikundiro, 2019).

At the same time, the current study result implies that psychological empowerment was relatively high among the participants, even though women reported having less decision-making power at the household level. Based on the FGD findings, participants explained that empowerment is important and beneficial. However, they also mentioned that professional success does not automatically remove traditional family expectations. This suggests that while empowerment can help support marital harmony, it needs to be understood within the context of relationship dynamics. In other words, empowerment alone is not enough, but it should be balanced with how couples manage their roles and expectations in marriage.

ii. *The Mediating Role of Gender Role Negotiation*

The quantitative results confirmed that when women have more control over their lives, they are better able to negotiate roles with their partner. This process of role negotiation is very important because it helps to maintain a stable marriage. The study also found that women's empowerment does not directly make marriage stronger. Instead, it supports better day-to-day negotiation between spouses. These daily negotiations help couples to manage responsibilities and expectations, and this in turn leads to a more stable marriage. This finding can be explained by Marital Adjustment Theory that marital adjustment not only is a correlate of good individual and relational skills, but it is also a correlate of life satisfaction, good physical health, and so on. Spanier (1976).

The qualitative result from the focus group discussion reflected the same thing. The participants told the researcher that strong marriages are the ones where people talk to each other are fair and work out their roles together. On the hand when people are stressed out and do not share the household work equally it is harder for them to work out their problems. Women's empowerment and gender role negotiation are key to stability and women's empowerment is important for gender role negotiation, which is important, for marital stability.

iii. *Empowerment Without Negotiation*

Another important result shows that marital stability is not about empowerment. Even when women are empowered and feel confident it does not mean they will have a stable marriage. Marital stability is not about women being empowered. Empowerment of women can help make marriages stronger by creating self-confidence to negotiate better. But it can also cause problems if it goes against what people normally expect from each other in a marriage. This is what Egbule and his colleagues found out in their study in 2022. They said that the relationship between social roles, employment, and spousal adjustment among married women in Nigeria. It was found that women's employment significantly impacts their social roles and spousal adjustments, highlighting the importance of spousal adjustment for harmonious family life and societal function.

Participants in the focus group discussions explained that one reason for conflict is that women start to develop new ways of thinking about their roles at the workplace, while expectations at home remain the same. In other words, even when a woman is working and becoming more empowered, she may still be expected to take full responsibility for household tasks. This situation

can lead to tension and conflict in the marriage. Empowerment of women can support stability but empowerment alone is not enough to make a marriage stronger unless there are changes, in the way spouses interact with each other and share responsibilities.

iv. The Role of Relative Income

The analysis of income gives another important perspective to this study. The results showed that women who earned more than their husbands reported higher levels of empowerment. However, women in marriages where both spouses earned similar income range showed better negotiation and higher marital stability. This finding is important because it shows that empowerment and marital stability do not always increase in the same way.

Earning more income may improve a woman's sense of independence and confidence. At the same time, having equal income with a husband may create a better environment for communication, cooperation, and role adjustment. In this study, couples with similar income levels appeared to work together more effectively and showed more stable relationships.

This suggests that relative income plays a different role in empowerment and marital stability. Higher income may support empowerment at the individual level, while equal income may support better interaction between spouses. Equal income seems to create a more balanced relationship, where both partners can discuss, negotiate, and adjust more easily.

The findings also show that economic factors alone cannot explain marital stability. What seems more important is how couples manage their relationship in their daily life. Even when income levels are different, stability depends on whether couples can communicate and adjust to each other.

Overall, the results suggest that relative income is an important factor, but its effect is not direct. Women who earn more may feel more empowered, but equal income between spouses may lead to stronger negotiation and more stable marriages. This highlights the importance of balance and partnership in maintaining a stable marriage.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Summary

This study examined how women's empowerment is related to marital stability among female staff of CRS Ethiopia, with particular attention to the role of gender role negotiation. In a professional environment such as CRS Ethiopia, where women are actively engaged in both organizational responsibilities and family life, understanding how these dynamics interact is especially important. The findings show that although empowerment is positively associated with marital stability, the relationship is not direct and requires further explanation. Overall, the quantitative results and the qualitative findings support each other. The results show that women's empowerment is important, but it does not directly make marriages stable on its own. What seems to matter more is how couples communicate and work through issues together. This includes being open, adjusting to each other's roles, and trying to understand each other.

The study also highlights that marital stability is shaped more by daily practice than by empowerment alone. Stability was closely associated with how couples handled responsibilities, resolved disagreements, and supported each other in everyday life. This suggests that behavior, communication, and practical interaction play an important role in sustaining marriages.

Another important finding relates to the role of income within marriage. Women who earned more than their spouses reported higher levels of empowerment, particularly in terms of confidence and independence. At the same time, couples with equal income levels showed higher levels of negotiation and greater marital stability. In many urban Ethiopian households, including those reflected in this study, economic balance appears to encourage mutual respect and a stronger sense of partnership between spouses.

At the same time, the study shows that the main challenges affecting marital stability are not limited to income differences. The quantitative results showed that gender role negotiation is the link between women's empowerment and marital stability. The qualitative findings also support this idea. As per the FGD discussion, participants explained that factors such as heavy workload, unequal household responsibilities, and persistent traditional expectations play a more significant

role. These pressures often make it difficult for couples to negotiate roles effectively, especially when responsibilities at home do not adjust alongside changes in the workplace.

Overall, the findings suggest that women's empowerment can contribute to marital stability, but only when it is supported by effective communication and role negotiation. Stable marriages are not the result of empowerment alone, nor of attitudes alone. Rather, they depend on the ability of couples to adapt to changing realities and work together in a flexible and respectful way.

6.2. Conclusions

Regarding the first objective, which was to assess the levels of women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability, the study concluded that all three main variables were generally at a moderate level among married female staff of CRS Ethiopia. Psychological empowerment was relatively high, showing that many respondents felt confident and respected in their marital relationships. However, decision-making power and gender role negotiation remained moderate, suggesting that internal confidence did not always translate into equal household decision-making or consistent negotiation of roles.

Regarding the second objective, which was to analyze the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability, the findings showed that women's empowerment was positively and significantly related to marital stability. This means that women who reported higher empowerment also tended to report more stable marriages. However, the conclusion is that empowerment alone did not fully explain marital stability, because marriage occurs in a broader social and cultural context where traditional role expectations may still be strong.

Regarding the third objective, which was to determine whether gender role negotiation mediates the relationship between women's empowerment and marital stability, the study concluded that gender role negotiation fully mediated this relationship. When gender role negotiation was included in the model, the direct effect of women's empowerment on marital stability became non-significant. This shows that women's empowerment contributed to marital stability mainly when it improved communication, shared decision-making, role adjustment, and practical negotiation between spouses.

Regarding the fourth objective, which was to compare women's empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital stability across relative income groups, the study concluded that relative

income provided an important additional understanding of marital dynamics. Women who earned more than their spouses reported the highest empowerment, while respondents in equal-income marriages reported higher gender role negotiation and marital stability. This suggests that individual economic advantage may strengthen women's sense of empowerment, but income balance between spouses may create a more cooperative environment for negotiation and marital stability.

Regarding the fifth objective, which was to describe the demographic characteristics of respondents, the study concluded that participants represented different age groups, educational levels, job grades, income categories, number of children, marriage duration, and spouse-related characteristics. These demographic differences showed that the respondents were not a completely homogeneous group, even though they worked within the same organizational setting. This background helped to contextualize the findings and showed that marital stability among CRS Ethiopia female staff should be understood within both personal and organizational realities.

Overall, the study concluded that women's empowerment can support marital stability, but this effect depends largely on how couples negotiate changing roles and responsibilities. Stable marriages in this study were not explained by empowerment alone. Rather, they depended on the ability of couples to communicate, adjust roles, share responsibilities, and maintain mutual respect within changing work and family realities.

6.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, empowerment efforts should not only focus on improving women's confidence or economic status. It is also important to consider how couples communicate, share responsibilities, and adjust to changes in their marriage. Thus, especially for organizations like CRS Ethiopia the following are recommended:

- To strengthen workplace support in practical ways like:
 - Providing family-friendly work arrangements,
 - Arranging flexible support during busy periods,
 - Training in communication, emotional intelligence, and role negotiation.
- Workplace support systems to minimize the pressures women face both at work and at home. This could be facilitated through:

- Marital or family support programs (i.e., free counselling service)
- Training for couples once a year to help them adjust positively to changing expectations in marriage

The researcher also recommends conducting studies over a longer period of time. This can help to better understand how empowerment, negotiation, and marital stability influence each other over time. It would also be useful to include both husbands and wives in future studies. This can provide a clearer understanding of negotiation as a process that happens within couples. In the Ethiopian context, there is still limited research on these issues. At the same time, there are growing concerns about increasing divorce rates, particularly in urban areas such as Addis Ababa, which makes this topic even more important to study. Therefore, there is a need for studies that focus on specific situations in Ethiopia.

6.4. Limitations of the Study

This study has a few limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, it depended mainly on self-reported data, and participants may have been cautious in how they responded because marital issues are sensitive in nature. Second, the study focused only on married female staff of CRS Ethiopia and did not include husbands' perspectives. Third, the findings are specific to this organizational and professional context and may not fully represent women in other employment sectors, rural settings, or different social groups. Therefore, the results should be understood within the specific scope and context of this study.

REFERENCES

- Agarwal, B. (1997). Bargaining and gender relations: Within and beyond the household. *Feminist Economics*, 3(1), 1–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135457097338799>
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173–1182.
- Beere, C. A., King, D. W., Beere, D. B., & King, L. A. (1984). The sex-role egalitarianism scale: A measure of attitudes toward equality between the sexes. *Sex Roles*, 10(7–8), 563–576. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00287265>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Civil Registration and Residency Service Agency (CRRSA). (2026). Mid-year report (January 2026). Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Chant, S. (2016). *Women, work and poverty in the global South*. Routledge.
- Cornwall, A. (2016). Women’s empowerment: What works? *Journal of International Development*, 28(3), 342–359. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3210>
- Cornwall, A., & Rivas, A.-M. (2015). From gender equality and women’s empowerment to global justice: Reclaiming a transformative agenda for gender and development. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(2), 396–415. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1013341>
- Dellie, E., Tiruneh, M. G., Jejaw, M., Demissie, K. A., Getnet, M., Belachew, T. B., Teshale, G., Addis, B., Geberu, D. M., Yazachew, L., Tafere, T. Z., & Worku, N. (2024). What factors influence women’s empowerment in Ethiopia? A multilevel analysis of Ethiopia’s demographic and health survey data. *Frontiers in Global Women’s Health*, 5, 1463157. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fgwh.2024.1463157>
- Egbule, E. O., Okoh, I. P., & Solomon, E. C. (2022). Social roles, employment, and spousal adjustments of married women in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 12(4), 28–47.

- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). (2020). *Ten-Year Perspective Development Plan 2021–2030*. Planning and Development Commission.
- Gikundiro, J. D. (2019). *Women's empowerment and marital satisfaction in Kigali, Rwanda* (Master's thesis). University of Rwanda.
- Heavey, C. L., Larson, B. M., Zumtobel, D. C., & Christensen, A. (1996). The communication patterns questionnaire: The reliability and validity of a constructive communication subscale. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58(3), 796–800. <https://doi.org/10.2307/353737>
- Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30(3), 435–464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125>
- Malm, E. K., Oti-Boadi, M., Adom-Boakye, N. A., & Andah, A. (2023). Marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction among Ghanaians. *Journal of Family Issues*, 44(12), 3117–3141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X221126752>
- Mason, K. O., & Smith, H. L. (2000). Women's empowerment and social context: Results from five Asian countries. *Gender and Development*, 8(2), 111–122.
- Pinto, H. (2023). Relationship between gender roles and marital stability among couples in selected counties of Kenya. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 7(8), 1417–1434. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7908>
- Park, H. G., Qin, H. Y., Horne, R. M., Impett, E. A., Yorgason, J. B., & Cheung, F. (2025). Partner (in)congruence in gender role attitudes and relationship satisfaction. *PNAS Nexus*, 4(1), pgae589. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgae589>
- Spanier, G. B. (1976). Measuring dyadic adjustment: New scales for assessing the quality of marriage and similar dyads. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 38(1), 15–28. <https://doi.org/10.2307/350547>

ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Behavioral Studies

School of Psychology

Questionnaire for Catholic Relief Service Female Employees

English Version

Women empowerment, marital stability & gender role negotiation

Dear participant,

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. This study is part of my Master's degree and aims to better understand the experiences of married women working in professional and institutional organizations such as ours, in terms of empowerment, gender role negotiation, and marital life. The study explores the various aspects of women's empowerment (e.g., decision-making, economic, and psychological interactions); how couples negotiate gender roles; and how these dynamics shape marital experiences and their relationships.

Your experience and perspective are essential to grounding this study in real-life experiences and ensuring that the findings are relevant and meaningful. Therefore, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the time, ideas, and openness you gave me to conduct this study. I promise to spend some time sharing the final findings with the CRS Women's Group and facilitating a brainstorming session to discuss, learn from, and implement the insights gained from this study.

Please note: Your **participation is completely voluntary**, your responses are **completely anonymous (that means your name, role or email address won't be seen)**, and each of **your comments is highly valued**. I sincerely thank you for supporting my educational journey and for your contributions to the research that explores our experiences, voices, and choices as women.

Kindly,

Mehret

(INTRO: GENERAL)

1. Marital status a. Married b. Not married c. Divorced
2. How long have you been married? A. Less than 1 year b.
3. Are you willing to participate in this study? A. Yes, I am willing b. No, I am not willing

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Your age? _____
2. What is your highest level of education? _____
3. How many children do you have? _____
4. What is your current job grade in the organization _____
5. Average monthly income)
 - a) 0-1000 ETB
 - b) 1000 -10,000 ETB
 - c) 10,000 - 20,000 ETB
 - d) 21,000 - 30,000 ETB
 - e) 31,000 - 40,000 ETB
 - f) 41,000 - 50,000 ETB
 - g) Above 50,000 ETB
6. Is your spouse working? A. Yes b. No
7. If your answer is "yes" to the above question, tell us the average monthly income of your spouse?
8. What is your spouse's highest level of education? _____

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

No.	Item	Wife only	Mostly wife	Jointly	Mostly husband	Husband only
1	Who usually decides on major purchases, such as assets like car or house?					

2	Who decides on social activities or visits to family/friends?					
3	Who decides on children's education and health matters?					
4	Who decides how your personal savings or assets are spent?					
5	In my marriage life, I feel confident expressing my opinions to my spouse.					
6	I am able to make important decisions about my life.					
7	I always feel respected in my marriage.					

GENDER ROLE NEGOTIATION

- Please indicate below the level of agreement between you and your spouse for each statement in the following list.

No	List	(Never)	(Rarely)	(Sometimes)	(Often)	(Always)
----	------	---------	----------	-------------	---------	----------

1	We jointly make decision to have children.					
2	We share responsibilities regarding childcare.					
3	We openly talk/ discuss about our expectations from each other regarding domestic work.					
4	When we disagree about domestic work roles, we find a compromise.					
5	We have adjusted our domestic work roles over time based on changes in work or family needs.					

2. Please indicate your position and level of agreement with each statement in the following list below.

No	List	(Strongly agree)	(Agree)	(Neutral)	(Disagree)	(Strongly disagree)
1	As a married woman, my primary role should be motherhood.					
2	My husband can make decisions about my personal life.					
3	Contraception should be the sole responsibility of the woman in marriage.					

4	A woman should remain silent instead of arguing with her husband.					
5	The man should be the head of the household.					
6	A woman should not work as long as her husband earns enough income for the family.					
7	A man/ husband should decide how family income is used.					

MARITAL STABILITY

9. Most marriages have their own ups and downs in their relationships. Please indicate the level of agreement or conflict between you and your spouse for each statement in the following list using the scale below.

NO	List	(Always agree)	(Almost always agree)	(Occasionally agree)	(Occasionally disagree)	(Almost Always Disagree)	(Always Disagree)
1	Handling family finances						
2	Time and place of recreation						
3	Religious matters						
4	Demonstrations of affection						
5	Personal and mutual friends						

6	Sex relations and intimacy						
7	Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws						
8	Amount of time spent together						
9	Household tasks						
10	Career decisions						

10. Please indicate how often each of the following situations occurs in your relationship.

NO	Lists	(All the time)	(Most of the time)	(More often than not)	(Less often than not)	(Occasionally)	(Never)
1	How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?						
2	How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?						
3	In general, how often do you think that things between						

	you and your partner are going well?						
4	Do you ever regret that you married? (or lived together)						
5	How often do you and your partner quarrel?						
6	Express your love for your spouse.						
7	Have a stimulating exchange of ideas						
8	Calmly discuss on things with my spouse						
9	Work together on a project with my spouse						

አማርኛ ትርጉም

ሴቶችን ማብቃት፣ የጋብቻ መረጋጋት እና የፆታ ሚና ድርድር

ውድ ተሳታፊ፣

በዚህ ጥናት ለመሳተፍ ስላሳዩት ፍላጎት ከልብ አመሰግናለሁ። ይህ ጥናት የማስተርስ ዲግሪዬ አካል ሲሆን በተለይም እንደኛ ባሉ ሙያዊ እና ተቋማዊ ድርጅቶች ውስጥ የሚሰሩ ያገቡ ሴቶችን በማብቃት፣ በፆታ ሚና ድርድር እና በጋብቻ ህይወት ላይ ያላቸውን ተሞክሮ በተሻለ ለመረዳት ይሞክራል። ጥናቱ የተለያዩ ሴቶችን የማብቃት እንቅስቃሴዎች (ለምሳሌ ውሳኔ አሰጣጥ፣ ኢኮኖሚያዊ እና ስነ-ልቦናዊ መስተጋብር የመሳሰሉት)፣ ጥንዶች የፆታ ሚናዎችን እንዴት እንደሚደራደሩ እና እነዚህ ተለዋዋጭ ሁኔታዎች የትዳር ህይወትን ልምዶች እንዴት እንደሚቃኙ እና ያላቸውን ግንኙነት ይዳስሳል።

ይህንን ጥናት በህይወት ተሞክሮ ላይ የተመሰረተ ለማድረግ እና ግኝቶቹ ተዛማጅነት እና ትርጉም ያላቸው መሆናቸውን ለማረጋገጥ የእርስዎ ልምድ እና አመለካከት በጣም አስፈላጊ ነው። ስለዚህም ይህንን ጥናት እንድሰራ ለሚሰጡኝ ጊዜ፣ ሃሳብ እና ግልጽነት በቅድሚያ ከልብ ማመስገን እፈልጋለሁ። ምስጋናዬንም በጥቂቱ ለመግለጽ፣ የመጨረሻውን የጥናት ግኝቶች ከሲኦኒስት የሴቶች ቡድን ጋር ለማካፈል እና በጋራ ሃሳቦችንን የምንለዋወጥበት ክፍለ ጊዜን ለማመቻቸት፣ ከዚህ ጥናት የተገኙ ግንዛቤዎች ላይ ውይይትን፣ የጋራ ትምህርትን እና ተግባራዊ የሚሆኑ ምክክሮችን በማድረግ ጥሩ ጊዜ ለማሳለፍ ቃል እገባለሁ።

እባክዎን ይህንን ልብ ይበሉ፡ **የእርስዎ ተሳትፎ በፈቃደኝነት ላይ የተመሰረተ መሆኑን፣ ምላሾችዎ ሙሉ በሙሉ ማንነትዎን የማይገልጹ መሆናቸውን (ይህ ማለት ስምዎ፣ ሚናዎ ወይም የኢሜይል አድራሻዎ አይታዩም ማለት ነው) እና እያንዳንዱ አስተያየትዎ በጣም የተከበረ መሆኑን** አረጋግጣለሁ። የትምህርት ጉዞዬን ስለደገፉ እና እንደ ሴት ያሉንን ልምዶች፣ ድምጾችንን እና ምርጫዎቻችንን ለማጠናከር በሚዳስስ ጥናት ላይ ላበረከቱት አስተዋጽኦ ከልብ አመሰግናለሁ።

ከትህትና ጋር

ምህረት ዘርይሁን

መግቢያ

1. የጋብቻ ሁኔታ : - 1. ያገባች 2. ያላገባች 3. የተፋታች (Divorced)
2. ለምን ያህል ጊዜ በትዳር ቆይተዋል? : - 1. ከ አንድ አመት ያነሰ 2. ከ 1- 3 አመት 3. ከ 4-10 አመት
4. ከ 10 አመት በላይ
3. በዚህ የዳሰሳ ጥናት ለመሳተፍ ፈቃደኛ ነዎት? 1. አዎ ፈቃደኛ ነኝ 2. ፈቃደኛ አይደለሁም

አጠቃላይ መረጃዎች

1. ዕድሜዎ ስንት ነው? _____
2. ከፍተኛ የትምህርት ደረጃዎ? _____
3. ስንት ልጆች አለዎት? _____
4. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ያለዎት የአሁኑ የሥራ ደረጃዎ ስንት ነው? _____
5. አማካይ የወር ገቢ 1. 0-10000ብር 2. 10000-20000ብር 3. 21000-30000ብር 4. 31000-40000ብር 5. 41,000 - 50,000ብር 6. >50000 ብር
6. የትዳር አጋርዎ በስራ ላይ ናቸው? 1. አዎ 2. አይደሉም
7. ከላይ ለተጠቀሰው ጥያቄ አዎ የሚል መልስ ከሰጡ የትዳር ዳደኛዎን አማካይ ወርሃዊ ገቢ ይገነጥን?
1. 0-10000ብር 2. 10000-20000ብር 3. 21000-30000ብር 4. 31000-40000ብር 5. 41,000 - 50,000ብር 6. >50000 ብር
8. የትዳር ዳደኛዎ ከፍተኛ የትምህርት ደረጃ ስንት ነው? _____

የሴቶችን አቅም ማጎልበት

ውሳኔ አሰጣጥ፣ ኢኮኖሚያዊ እና ስነ፡ ልቦናዊ መስተጋብር

ተ.ቁ.	መግለጫ	ሚስት ብቻ	አብዛኛው ሚስት	በጋራ	አብዛኛው ባል	አብዛኛው ባል
1	አብዛኛውን ጊዜ ዋና ዋና ግዢዎችን (ለምሳሌ እንደ መኪና፣ ቤት) የሚወስነው ማነው?					
2	ማህበራዊ እንቅስቃሴዎችን ወይም ወደ ቤተሰብ/ጓደኞች የሚሄዱበትን ጊዜ የሚወስነው ማነው?					
3	የልጆችን የትምህርት እና የጤና ክትትል ጉዳዮች ላይ የሚወስነው ማነው?					
4	ስለ የግል ቁጠባዎ ወይም ስለ ገንዘብ ነክ ሀብቶችዎ ወጪ በተመለከተ ውሳኔ የሚያደርገው ማነው?					
5	በትዳር ህይወቴ ውስጥ፣ ሀሳቤን ለባለቤቴ ለመግለጽ ጥሩ የሆነ በራስ መተማመን አለኝ።					
6	በትዳር ሕይወቴ ውስጥ አስፈላጊ የምላቸውን ውሳኔዎችን ማድረግ እችላለሁ።					
7	በትዳሬ ውስጥ ሁልጊዜም የተከበርኩ እንደሆንኩ ይሰማኛል።					

የፆታ ሚና ድርድር/ ስምምነት

እባክዎን በሚከተለው ዝርዝር ውስጥ ለእያንዳንዱ መግለጫ በእርስዎ እና በባለቤትዎ መካከል ያለውን የስምምነት ደረጃ ከዚህ በታች ያመልክቱ።

ተ.ቁ.	መግለጫ	በፍጹም	አልፎ አልፎ	አንዳንድ ጊዜ	ብዙ ጊዜ	ሁልጊዜ
1	ልጆችን ለመውለድ በጋራ ውሳኔ እናደርጋለን።					
2	የልጆች እንክብካቤን በተመለከተ እኩል ኃላፊነቶችን እንጋራለን።					
3	ከቤት ውስጥ ሥራ ጋር በተያያዘ አንዳችን ከሌላችን ስለምንጠብቀው ነገር በግልጽ እንነጋገራለን/እንወያያለን።					
4	በቤት ውስጥ ሥራ ሚናዎች ጉዳይ አለመግባባቶች በሚፈጠሩበት ጊዜ፣ የጋራ የሆነ መግባባታችንን ላይ እንደርሳለን።					
5	በጊዜ ሂደት በሥራ ወይም በቤተሰብ ፍላጎቶች ላይ በሚደረጉ ለውጦች ላይ ተመስርተን የቤት ውስጥ ሥራ ኃላፊነቶቻችንን አስተካክለናል።					

3. እባክዎን በሚከተለው ዝርዝር ውስጥ ለእያንዳንዱ መግለጫ ላይ የእርስዎን አቋም እና የስምምነት ደረጃ ከዚህ በታች ያመልክቱ።

ተ.ቁ.	መግለጫ	በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	ገለልተኛ	አልስማማም	ምንም አልስማማም
------	------	------------	--------	-------	--------	------------

1	እንደ አንድ ባለትዳር ሴት፣ የእኔ ዋና ሚና እናትነት መሆን አለበት።					
2	ባለቤቴ ስለግል ህይወቴ የተለያዩ ውሳኔዎችን ማድረግ ይችላል።					
3	የእርግዝና መከላከያ በትዳር ውስጥ ያለች ሴት ብቸኛ ኃላፊነት መሆን አለበት።					
4	አንዲት ሴት ከባሏ ጋር ከመጨቃጨቅ ይልቅ ዝም ማለት አለባት።					
5	ወንዱ የቤተሰቡ ራስ መሆን አለበት።					
6	አንዲት ሴት ባሏ ለቤተሰቡ በቂ ገቢ የሚያመጣ እስከሆነ ድረስ ስራ መሥራት የለባትም።					
7	አንድ ወንድ/ ባል የቤተሰብ ገቢ በምን በምን ጥቅም ላይ እንደሚውል መወሰን አለበት።					

የጋብቻ ሁኔታ መመዘኛዎች

11. አብዛኛዎቹ ጋብቻዎች በግንኙነታቸው ውስጥ የራሳቸው የሆኑ ውጣ ውረዶች አሏቸው። እባክዎን በሚከተለው ዝርዝር ውስጥ ለእያንዳንዱ መግለጫ በእርስዎ እና በትዳር አጋርዎ መካከል ያለውን የስምምነት ወይም የግጭት መጠን ከዚህ በታች ባለው መለኪያ ያመልክቱ።

መግለጫ	ሁልጊዜም እንስማማለን	በአብዛኛው ጊዜ እንስማማለን	አልፎ አልፎ እንስማማለን	አልፎ አልፎ አንስማማም	በአብዛኛው ጊዜ አንስማማም	ሁልጊዜም አንስማማም
የቤተሰብ ገንዘብ አያያዝ						
የመዝናኛ ጊዜ እና በታዎች ምርጫ						
ሃይማኖታዊ ጉዳዮች						
የፍቅር መግለጫ መንገዶች						
የግል እና የጋራ ጓደኞች						
የፆታ ግንኙነት እና ቅርርብ						
ከወላጆች ወይም ከአማቶች ጋር ያሉ ግንኙነቶችን አያያዝ						
በአብሮነት የምናሳልፈው የጊዜ መጠን						
የቤት ውስጥ ስራዎችን በተመለከተ						
የስራ ሁኔታ ውሳኔዎች						

12. የሚከተሉት ሁኔታዎች ከትዳር አጋርዎ ጋር ባለው ግንኙነትዎ ውስጥ ምን ያህል ጊዜ እንደሚከሰቱ እባክዎን ያመልክቱ።

ተ.ቁ.	መግለጫ	ሁልጊዜ	አብዛኛውን ጊዜ	ጥቂት የማይባል ጊዜ	ጥቂት የሚባል ጊዜ	አልፎ አልፎ	በፍፁም
1	ስለ ፍቺ፣ ስለመለያየት ወይም ስለ ግንኙነቱ ምን ያህል ጊዜ ተወያይታችሁ ወይም አስባችሁ ታውቃላችሁ?						
2	ከጠብ በኋላ እርስዎ ወይም የትዳር ዳደኛዎ ምን ያህል ጊዜ ቤቱን ጥለው ይወጣሉ?						
3	በአጠቃላይ፣ በእርስዎ እና በትዳር አጋርዎ መካከል ያሉት ነገሮች በጥሩ ሁኔታ እየተከናወኑ እንደሆነ ያስባሉ?						
4	በማግባትዎ (ወይም በትዳር አብሮ በመኖርዎ) ተጽዕኑት ያውቃሉ?						
5	እርስዎ እና የትዳር ዳደኛዎ ምን ያህል ጊዜ ይጣላሉ?						
6	ለትዳር ኃይላዊ ፍቅርዎን ይገልጻሉ?						
7	እርስ በእርስ የሚያበረታቱ የሀሳብ ልውውጥ ያደርጋሉ?						
8	እኔና የትዳር አጋሬ ነገሮችን በእርጋታ እንወያያለን						

9	ከትዳር አጋፊ ጋር በጋራ ፕሮጀክት ላይ አብረን እንሰራለን						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

ANNEX 2: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDING QUESTIONS

Open Discussion Questions

1. How do you describe the experience of balancing your professional work and your marriage/family responsibilities?
2. What kind of support could organizations such as CRS provide to help women manage work, family responsibilities, and marital expectations?
3. What advice would you give to unmarried young women about marriage, empowerment, communication, and role expectations?

Anonymous Poll Questions Used During the FGD

1. **Do you feel that your professional empowerment has created tension at home?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
2. **What is the biggest challenge in negotiating household roles?**
 - High workload and unequal household responsibilities
 - Traditional beliefs about men's and women's roles
 - Spouse unemployment or financial stress
 - In-law/family interference
 - Wife earning more or being promoted

3. What support would help professional women most?

- Flexible work arrangements
- Training on communication and emotional intelligence
- Safe discussion spaces for women
- Couple/family counselling support
- Workload management support