

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**CENTER FOR GENDER STUDIES**



**Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihood of Women Street Vendors in Gondar Town, Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia**

**By: Hiwot Amare**

**July, 2022**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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in Gondar Town, Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia**

**By: Hiwot Amare**

**Advisor: Hanna Tegegn (Ph.D)**

**MA Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis  
Ababa University as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Addis Ababa University**

**School of graduate studies**

This is to declare that the thesis prepared by Hiwot Amare entitled: *“effects of COVID-19 pandemic on Livelihood of Women Street Vendors in Gondar Town, Ethiopia”* and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies compiles with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standard concerning originality and quality.

**Signed by the Examining Committee**

**External Examiner**

**Signature**

**Date**

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**Internal Examiner**

**Signature**

**Date**

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**Advisor**

**Signature**

**Date**

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**Chair of Department of Graduate Program Coordinator**

**July 2022**

## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned declare that this thesis is my original work, it has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all resources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

**Name:**-----

**Signature:**-----

**Date of Submission:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Abstract**

*This study aimed to explore the effects of COVID 19 on the livelihood of women street vendors, focusing on selected sites of Gondar town, Ethiopia. The research was conducted through qualitative research using a phenomenological approach. Purposive sampling was used to select participants and data was collected using in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and observation. A total of 12 participants had recruited for the study. The collected data was analyzed through thematic analysis. Data analysis indicated that street vending was a livelihood strategy for women street vendors who were poor and uneducated. In terms of the effects of COVID19 on the livelihood of women street vendors, the study showed that COVID 19 had multidimensional effects on women street vendors such as hunger, food insecurity, and health-related risks like depression, stress, and anxiety. The study also revealed that the crisis and its subsequent shutdown response have resulted in a dramatic increase in the work burden of women and created a challenging environment both at home and in vending sites. The study indicated that women street vendors who took part in the study employed different forms of coping mechanisms via Faith, social support, decreasing expenditure, skipping a meal, withdrawing female students from school, giving young girls for marriage, and changing dietary habits with minimal nutritional values containing foods as a means to overcome the shock. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that governmental and non-governmental institutions should pay necessary attention to the lives of women street vendors in developing public health crisis management and should take pragmatic preventive policy-based measures.*

**Keywords:** COVID 19, Street vendors, Livelihood, Vulnerabilities, coping Mechanism, Livelihood Strategies

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses belonging to the family of *Coronaviridae*, which infect both animals and humans. In December 2019, a brand-new coronavirus that had never before been discovered in humans appeared in Wuhan, China (WHO, 2020a). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is identified as a new coronavirus disease now known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and it's transmitted through air droplet or direct contact. Signs and symptoms of the virus include respiratory symptoms and include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, an infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, and sometimes death (WHO, 2020a). After the first fatal case of COVID – 19 was reported in China on January 11, 2020, the virus has since then spread to 221 countries and territories, with almost 541,121,501 confirmed cases and 6,332,713 deaths until June 14, 2022 (*Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)*, n.d.). The first case of the pandemic was reported in Ethiopia on March 13, 2020, and 469,611 people are affected and 7,492 people lost their lives because of the pandemic until March 2022 (MOH, 2022)

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic (WHO, 2020b). Most governments decided to close their borders in response to the pandemic to stop the virus's spread and in the hopes that there wouldn't be an excessive number of infected individuals (Rudan, 2020). What started as a health crisis quickly grew to include economic, social, and political crises. Countries around the world have introduced national and local-level measures such as lockdowns, social distancing, quarantines, and curfews following the COVID-19 pandemic. Developed countries were the first to take these measures, and soon after, developing countries also began to adopt these virus-suppressing strategies. In developing countries, the applicability of these initiatives was questionable, given that about 70% of the population in these countries are employed in the informal sectors, including in the agricultural sector, with women over-represented (ILO, 2020d). Informal workers are workers without access to labor rights or social security through work. They make up over 60 percent of total global jobs and 90 percent in low-income countries(ILO, 2018a). In Sub-Saharan African countries, 80% of workers are employed in the informal economy (ILO, 2018a). In most

countries, the number of women is higher than men in the informal economy. The economic opportunities for informal economy actors who depend in large part on personal contacts with the number of customers are significantly reduced by lockdowns, job closures, travel bans, and social distancing measures (Schwettmann, 2020).

The pandemic has generated significant changes in the spatial and sectoral distribution of conditions of employment after the pandemic in Ethiopia. Since the outbreak of the pandemic almost all sectors were affected adversely (Goshu et al., 2020). As anticipated, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted jobs in almost all sectors adversely. The sectors affected adversely by the pandemic are construction work, hotels and restaurants, retail and wholesale industries, manufacturing, transportation, and personal services as many are unemployed in these sectors (Schwettmann, 2020).

Governments, however, might not be taking into account the financial struggles of some of the population's most vulnerable groups. Given their degree of poverty and economic dynamics, street vendors are one such vulnerable sector (Recchi, 2020). Street vendors operate in what is known as the informal economy in Ethiopia and other countries, which due to its characteristics, places them outside the regulations regarding the use or occupation of public areas and roadways as workplaces. Their commercial activities and services do not demand tax records or regulatory controls, nor any social protection service (Abebe, 2017).

Street vendors are recognized as self-employed workers in the informal sector. There is a low level of investment and expertise needed for street vending, making it a reasonably affordable opportunity for women to earn their livelihoods. Street vendors operate from temporary static structures, mobile stalls, or headloads rather than permanent structures and offer a wide range of goods and services to the general public (Alebachew, 2017). This type of work has expanded tremendously in public spaces of cities of all sizes, especially in developing countries. Nonetheless, in recent decades, is a continually growing phenomenon, affecting both developed and developing countries. In many developing countries, street vending represents an essential income source for marginalized and impoverished people, especially for internal rural migrants. Moreover, in many developing countries, petty trade is performed mainly by less educated people (Berhanu, 2019).

The group of people who do not receive a fixed salary and live in poverty may not benefit from the "Stay at Home" or "Do Not Go Out" media campaigns. The most vulnerable industries, like street vendors, suffer the most, even though everyone is economically impacted by the pandemic. The drop in their earnings can affect most necessities, such as providing food for their families and themselves. The limitations brought on by not receiving a fixed salary prevent the street vendors from quitting their jobs. In contrast to the situation for formal employees, if they can, it will only be for a few days. Notably, the lesser degree to which street vendors carried out quarantine measures at home and with family members was associated with a higher degree of economic losses most likely related to not stopping working and a lower educational level (Recchi, 2020).

Despite ample empirical evidence about the importance of an informal urban area in the economy of low-income families in developing countries, the sector has not been integrated into the overall development effort through development programs and plans ( Desta, 2018). Moreover, there is limited evidence about the importance and challenges of the informal sector in Ethiopia (Desta, 2018).

According to the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) of Ethiopia, there are about 1,634,069 informal sector workers in Ethiopia of which 20.9% of workers are found in the Amhara region (CSA, 2012, pp. 175–190). From the total informal workers residing in the Amhara region, 60.5% are females and 30.6% are engaged in street vending, and 76.4% of the street vendors are females (CSA, 2012, pp. 175–190). Gondar is one of the highly populated cities in Ethiopia, and there are many women street vendors in the city. According to CSA (2003), there were 14,214 informal workers and females account for 60 % (8,948), and males for 40% (5,266) in the city, and 1,861 females are involved in street vending (CSA, 2003,p.25). Thus, this study aimed to explore the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on workers in the informal sector with a particular emphasis on women street vendors in Gondar town, Ethiopia.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on people's lives and livelihoods all over the world. The effects of coronavirus on the global economy have been devastating (ILO, 2020a). Almost, 90% of the African sub-Saharan workforce are in the informal economy sectors and are

mostly self-employed, especially vulnerable to health shocks as mostly excluded from social protection systems, earn a low-income livelihood and irregular income, lack adequate representation in local and national governance structures, and do not have labor protection (Schwettmann, 2020). Women are also more likely to remain out of the labor market when the crisis hits in a situation where the male breadwinner bias continues and priorities in times of work shortages are mostly given to men (Cancedda et al., 2020).

Evidence from COVID-19-like outbreaks of infectious diseases suggests that women and girls could be affected in particular (de Paz et al., 2020) Gender disparities remain around countries in the outcomes of economic opportunities. These pre-existing gender gaps would further amplify the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The measures taken by the Ethiopian government were the declaration of a national state of emergency on April 8, 2020, banning public gatherings and other social activities of more than four people. This challenge had the socio-economic condition of the majority of people as it resulted in the loss of jobs, salaries, and daily income (daily laborers), and it exerted adverse effects on food and nutrition security (Coibion et al., 2020). Besides, around 42 percent of households are working in the wholesale and retail sector, with more pronounced harmful effects of the pandemic (UN Women, 2020). Compared to men, COVID-19 further intensified the still more vulnerable condition of female informal sector employees, exacerbating pre-existing gender inequality (UN Women, 2020).

Previous studies indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic results in psychological problems (Kassaw, 2020) leading to reduced decision-making and raising the risk of abuse from intimate partners (CARE, 2020). Even though the aforementioned studies have assessed the implication of COVID-19 on women's life generally, they didn't particularly cover the impact and cope up mechanisms of the COVID-19 pandemic on women street vendors in the Ethiopian context. Although the effect of the COVID 19 pandemic on the informal sector working women is well articulated, the extent to which the pandemic affected the different types of informal work remains poorly defined. Studies done in different parts of the world indicated that the pandemic and its subsequent lockdown caused social, economic, and psychological problems. However, COVID-19 is a recent phenomenon and is still under investigation. As a result, available studies done so far to assess the effects of COVID-19 pandemic are quite limited. Besides, most of them

are quantitative in nature and entirely focused on the socio-economic impacts of COVID 19. Despite the uttermost importance of addressing the effect of COVID 19 on the livelihood of women street vendors, available studies have never attempted to qualitatively understand the effect of the pandemic. Therefore, there is a paucity of knowledge about COVID 19 effects on the livelihood of women street vendors. To the extent of my knowledge, the issue of COVID 19 effects on the livelihood of women street vendors remains unaddressed in the Ethiopian context. Hence, the present study was contrived to fill this gap of knowledge. While street vendors are expected to accommodate the expatiating burdens of COVID 19 pandemic, it is less clear that policymakers understand the depth of this burden, the consequence it has on, and what can be done to help minify it. So, the current study was designed to fill this gap of knowledge. Moreover, the street vendor women's perspective on the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic on their livelihood is a neglected area of concern that is often missed in the majority of the studies. Hence, the main aim of this study was to assess street vendors' perspectives on how COVID 19 pandemic affected women's street vendor livelihood in Gondar town, Ethiopia.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The main objective of the study is to explore the effects of COVID-19 on the livelihood of street vendor women engaged in street vending in Gondar town, Ethiopia.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

- I. To identify major livelihood strategies used by women street vendors in Gondar town, Ethiopia
- II. To examine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihood options of women street vendors in Gondar town, Ethiopia
- III. To explore the various coping mechanisms that women street vendors used during the COVID-19 pandemic in Gondar town, Ethiopia

### **1.4. Research Questions**

1. What are the major livelihood strategies used by women engaged as street vendors in Gondar town, Ethiopia?

2. What are the livelihood constraints of street vending on street vending women during COVID-19?
3. What coping strategies are utilized by women street vendors and how do they impact their livelihoods during the pandemic?

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

Some previous studies in different parts of the world have documented the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic on the lives of informal sector workers. However, the aforementioned studies concentrated generally on women but the proposed study is different in many ways even if it centers on women. The finding of this study may help the government to better understand and identify the types of problems women street vendors faced because of the COVID 19 pandemic. The current research not only captures the financial and social issues but also addresses broader concerns such as the center of the problem investigated as COVID-19 being a recent phenomenon. The fact that the geographical location and context are not identical also suggests that it is important to understand livelihoods from the point of view of women street vendors because there are broader concerns that are important to grasp about the lives of women during the COVID pandemic era.

To date, there is no empirical finding pertaining to the effects of COVID19 on street vendors at the national level generally and in Gondar city in particular. In line with this, this study explored vulnerabilities and challenges experienced during the pandemic and the existing coping strategies in the study setting. An examination of the effect that the pandemic brings on the living conditions will help to improve the knowledge about urban livelihood and coping strategies. This particular study also contributes to the existing body of literature by identifying the effects of COVID-19 on women's street vendors in Gondar city, Ethiopia. Moreover, it provides current information that decision-makers and stakeholders may utilize for a well-informed decision to enhance the living condition of women during the COVID pandemic.

### **1.6 Scope and Delimitations of the Study**

This study explored the livelihood situations of women street vendors from different sub-cities of Gondar City, such as Kidame Gebeya, Auto parko, and Chechela. These sites have been selected

for the presence of a high concentration of women street vendors. Theoretically, the study was confined to the conceptual outlines of the Sustainable Livelihood framework which allows exploring the nature of the asset that individuals/households combine to overcome vulnerabilities that come because of COVID 19. The study is focused on exploring the experience of women and didn't give any consideration to the men who are going through difficult times during COVID 19 Pandemic.

## **1.7 Definition of Terms**

### **Livelihoods:**

This study used the livelihood concept developed by Department for International Development (DFID) (1999), which describes livelihood as follows: a living means includes capacities, assets (including material and social resources), and activities necessary to live on. Support is sustainable if it can deal with and recover from stresses and shocks and preserve or improve its ability and properties, both now and in the future without weakening the basis of natural resources (DFID, 1999). Recover and maintain or improve capacities and properties from stress and shock (Rakodi, 2002). The core element of urban livelihoods is therefore identified as the protection of livelihoods including the capacity to cope and recover from stress and shocks and the conservation or improvement of capacity and assets (Rakodi, 2002).

### **Livelihood Strategies:**

Livelihood Strategies were described as "the global term used to describe the range of activities and combinations of options that people take to achieve their livelihood objectives" (DFID, 1999).

### **Coping Strategies:**

Coping strategies are a way forward designed to respond to shocks in the short term and survival (adaptive strategies) are designed to improve circumstances in the long term (Singh and Gilman 1999).

### **Street Vendor:**

In this research, A street vendor is a person providing goods or services for public sale with a static structure or mobile stall (*head load*), without a permanent structure built up. Street vendors may be stationary while occupying space on floors and other public/private spots, or they can be mobile, moving from place to place carrying their goods by pushcarts (Bhowmik, 2014).

## **1.7 Organization of the study**

This study comprises five chapters each of which comprises different subtitles as outlined;

Chapter One: contains, the background to the study, statement of the problem, the significance of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and definition of operational terms.

Chapter Two: contains a literature review and theoretical framework. Chapter Three: contains the study research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, instruments of the study, ethical considerations, data collection procedure, and data analysis. Chapter Four: study findings and discussions. Chapter five: conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Street Vending

Street trade is rampant and a source of employment and income for many urban dwellers. Street vending has a significant contribution to the urban and national economies of African countries (Abebe, 2017). However, in most countries, it is unaccounted for and unrecognized in national income statistics (Alebachew,2017). Street trade has in the past, been viewed as an underground activity that undermines the healthy function of the formal economy (Alebachew, 2017). This perception has resulted in conflicts with urban authorities over licensing, taxation, site of operation, sanitation, and working conditions (Alebachew, 2017). Street vending harms legal trading as well as the economy by denying the government's tax revenues.

Ethiopia like many other sub-Saharan African countries has been experiencing rapid population growth and high rates of migration into the cities and large towns. In cities and towns, most people find it difficult to get jobs in the formal economic sectors due to their limited education and lack of skills for formal employment. In their quest for making a living, many people with no education and skill have limited choices other than taking to the streets by engaging in street vending activities (Abebe, 2017). Mitullah's (2005) synthesis of case studies regarding street vending in African cities from six countries (Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, and South Africa) revealed that the majority of traders have only primary or secondary education.

An UN-Habitat (2006) study on "*Situation Analysis of Informal Settlements in Addis Ababa*" indicated that 51 percent of the productive economy is in the informal sector in Addis Ababa. While Ethiopia's informal economy is significant, almost four non-registered firms exist for every ten registered companies (Admasu, 2019,p.14). Street sales provide a broad spectrum of economic activity in Addis Ababa. In almost all of the city districts, street vendors and their markets can be found selling products and services without receiving receipts or paying taxes. Some vendors operate on sidewalks, busy roads, and crossings where several people gather, especially at the first and last stops, or at the bus stop. Other walks around the city selling goods or services without a fixed place to operate (Girma, 2009).

## **2.2. The Informal Sector and COVID-19**

According to Goshu et al (2020), the pandemic generated shocks to the economy through three sources. First of all, certain forms of business practices such as hotels, restaurants, air travel, construction, retail and wholesale trades are banned by the government. Second, companies are taking precautionary steps, including corporate closures and reduced activities. Third, people minimize trips to the market, travel, going out and other social activities impacting the demand side. These measures negatively influence economic activity and shift the economic path (Baldwin, 2020; Takes, 2020). The pandemic caused several shocks, including health, economic and social disruption, to increase simultaneously (Triggs & Kharas, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected lives and livelihoods across the globe and there is growing evidence that women informal workers have been hardest hit(WOW, 2020). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, informal sector workers, especially women had already been vulnerable to abuse and exploitation (WOW, 2020).

Women informal sector workers predominate in the trade sector in the petty trade of goods and services, in domestic work, food, hospitality, and tourism, as a seasonal workers in agriculture and the manufacturing industry as subcontractors, household workers, and industrial workers (UN Women, 2020).

Due to a lack of adequate protection, the vast majority of informal workers are exposed to threats to occupational health and security and, thus, are at higher risk of disease, injury, or mortality, and have an increased chance of infection by COVID-19. If they fall ill, most workers do not have guaranteed access to medical care or income security through sickness or employment injury benefits (Schwettmann, 2020).

Another evidence has also shown that even before the pandemic, informal workers have restricted access, sometimes overwhelmed, ineffective, costly, and away from their employment, to quality and accessible health care through public health facilities and services (WIEGO, 2015).

Informal sector workers and their families continue to face the risk of contracting the Coronavirus even though they remain home because they often live in overcrowded, unsanitary

conditions and inescapable confines that practically prevent physical distance. Lack of water supply not only restricts manual washing opportunities but also requires women to queue up for water, thereby putting themselves and their communities at risk of contracting COVID 19 (ILO, 2020b).

Though they lack access to adequate social security cover and support mechanisms for survival, African informal economy workers are vulnerable to poverty, starvation, and illness. It includes waste recyclers, street vendors, transport workers, building workers, domestic workers, and many more, small-scale farmers and migrant workers in rural and suburban areas (Schwettmann, 2020).

The loss of livelihoods and wages in comparison with men and women informal workers has been excessive, with less access to social security to handle the economic shock. Responses from authorities risk heightening the economic fallout (Cancedda et al., 2020)

Women outnumber men in most countries' informal economies. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the lives and livelihoods of women in the world, with reports that informal workers were hit hardest (WOW, 2020).

### **2.3. The implication of COVID-19 on women**

ILO (2020), reported that housing and food services, manufacturing, wholesale and retail businesses, real estate, and business operations, are the hardest affected industries. A lot of women in these high-risk sectors are self-employed or owners of micro- or small-sized enterprises. This represents about 70% of the world's retail jobs and almost 60 percent in the housing and food services industry reflects their extreme weakness in the current economic crisis (ILO, 2020d).

women's household burden increased during the COVID-19 crisis, In this regard, the burden index indicates the number of household activities for which women or men reported increases in time spent during the COVID-19 outbreak (Ross & Taylor, 2020). On average, women reported an increase in time spent on at least three household chores – 3.2 activities per woman, compared to 2.3 activities per man (Ross & Taylor, 2020,p.6).

Women also have less access than men to valuable resources such as loans and technology. They have lower safe access to the property, fewer savings than men, less opportunity for networking, and less power to make decisions (WIEGO, 2020). This will affect their ability to adapt to the economic impact of the situation at COVID-19 and thus exacerbate the already vulnerable situation. Many informal jobs operate on the streets and in homes, particularly in urban areas, and are under threat during lockdown (OECD, n.d., 2020).

It can push families into negative coping mechanisms which have a disproportionate effect on women, such as reductions in girls' and women's food consumption or early marriage (CARE, 2020). With increasing unemployment, financial pressures, and poverty, violence against women and girls continue to intensify, according to UN Women (2020). Violence against women and girls will continue to rise as unemployment, financial strains, and insecurity rise. Increased care burdens have meant that women are “trapped” at home and potentially unable to escape violence from male perpetrators.

In general, women are likely to experience a significant burden because of the outbreak and the response to the rapid spread of COVID 19. Women are disproportionately affected by the closing of schools, as they are primarily responsible for all informal care in the household and may see their economic and economic opportunities further limited. In addition to caring for their children, they are likely responsible for the elderly and the disabled, as they have been observed in past or other similar crises across countries, who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. In low-income contexts and particularly in families living in slums, camps, and similarly poor circumstances where morbidity from COVID-19 and other diseases can increase (de Paz et al., 2020).

A protracted crisis, along with an economic downturn could also have dire consequences for sexual and reproductive health outcomes. The lack of economic and educational opportunities for women and girls is closely associated with their sexual and reproductive well-being. Economic distress could lead to an increase in child marriages and other coping mechanisms that negatively affect sexual and reproductive health (Cancedda et al., 2020).

In situations of public health crises, women are faced with heightened risks of sexual harassment(de Paz et al., 2020). A recent analysis of literature showed that in all past epidemics, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and rape, were the most prevalent types of violence

(de Paz et al., 2020). Indeed, COVID 19 exacerbated gender-based violence, evidence from many countries (China, Spain, France, and Germany) suggests that gender-based violence may have risen, perhaps in conjunction with increased tension, stress, and household containment (de Paz et al., 2020). The loss of jobs, income loss, and reduction in pay hours have affected women of all walks of life and ages (Ross & Taylor, 2020).

The hardest hit because of the pandemic were self-employed women (Hirvonen, 2020). The outbreak especially affected women self-employed, with 25% losing their jobs compared to 21% of men self-employed (Hirvonen, 2020).

There are increasing threats of violence against women, their abuse, exploitation, and neglect, in periods when social isolation and distance measures are being practiced (Malik & Naeem, 2020). Past research showed that disease outbreaks affected men and women differently in their day-to-day activities (Malik & Naeem, 2020). It is, as a result, absolutely vital that when we talk of a crisis, we understand how it affects communities and more so the ones already with increased vulnerabilities or marginalized characteristics. In global terms one such large marginalized area seems to be that of "women," and the lack of understanding of how COVID-19 affected their lives is still ignored and an enormous omission, considering that women provide us with most of the informal care within families (Malik & Naeem, 2020).

## **2.4. Livelihood sustainability and COVID-19**

Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2014a) argue that livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.

The effects of the pandemic on household income in Ethiopia are different in different industries, regions, and locations. About 61% of non-farm households have suffered a loss of income, while 80% of households' income decreased since the pandemic outbreak (Hirvonen, 2020,p.5).

Although the World Bank survey on Assessment of COVID-19 Effects and Response Measures in Ethiopia was conducted early in the progression of the pandemic in Ethiopia, nevertheless, 23 percent of the households reported a shortage of food, of which 21 percent reported a lack of resources, and 14 percent reported being hungry (Hirvonen, 2020,p.6 ). The reported incidence

of food insecurity, in April and May 2020 which is a month later after the first cases of the virus were reported, is likely to be a reflection of an underlying chronic food deprivation than only caused by COVID-19 (Hirvonen, 2020).

Substantial proportions of Ethiopians have insecure sources of income and are highly vulnerable to any kind of shock that threatens their income source for the majority of the population (Weldesilassie & Woldehanna, 2020,p.14). About 30% of the low-income community of 40 percent comes from the sales of non-agricultural products and services in urban areas (Weldesilassie & Woldehanna, 2020,p.14).

Informal sector employees, women in particular, also have less access to social security which reduces their economic shock absorption (Chuku et al., 2020). Social protection can provide insurance for unemployment, maternal leave, health care, and support for income and food. Employers can easily dismiss informal employees because they have no job protection and benefits (Chuku et al., 2020).

The reduction in income and livelihood resulting from the decline in economic activity combined with the absence of social insurance and sufficient savings poses a danger to food safety (WIEGO, 2020).

Job losses were highest in the hospitality, construction, and wholesale/retail sectors and were most likely to be reported by casual workers, private sector employees, and self-employed people (Wieser et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the global economy has exposed not just the dominant nature of the informal sector in the African economy but also the vulnerability of the women in the continent (Malta et al., 2019). Ironically, unlike other regions, women dominate the informal economy in Africa with the harsh economic situation in the sector compared to the formal economy. Again, women experience another great discrimination and are pushed into the most vulnerable sector in Africa (Malta et al., 2019), with approximately 89.7 percent of employed women in Africa being in informal employment excluding agriculture and 92.3 percent when agriculture is included (ILO, 2018b, PP,97-103 ). The risk of unstable earnings and no access to health care for men and women in the informal sector is high. However, women must also

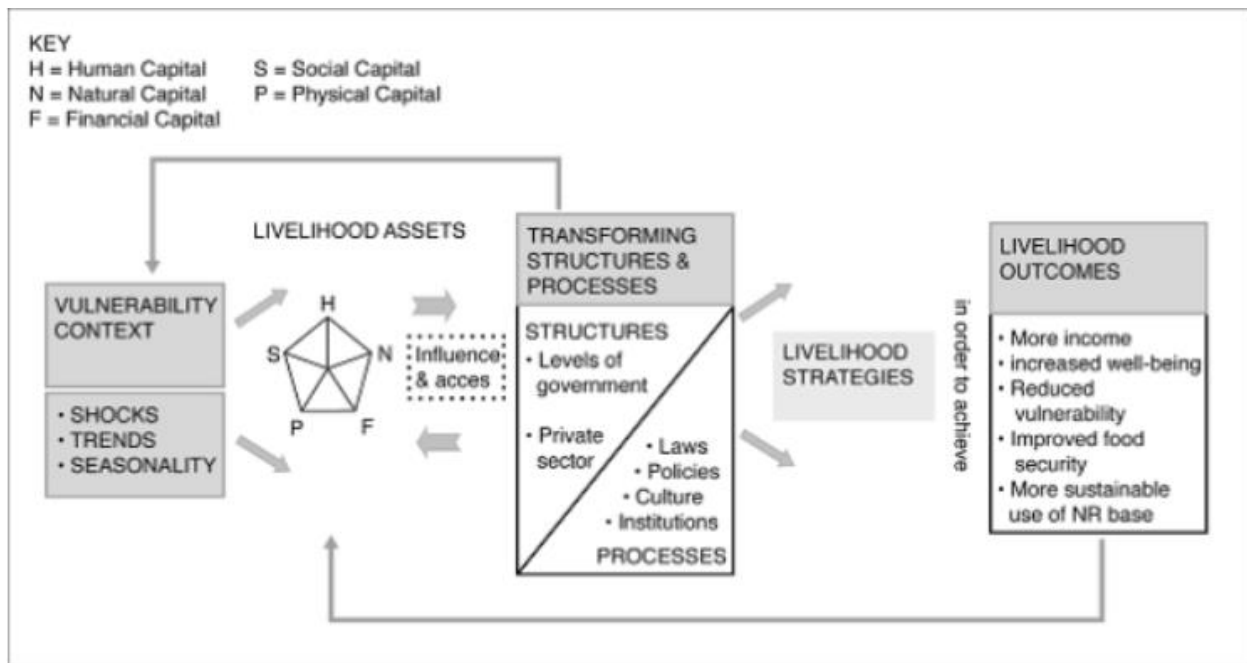
balance work with childcare in addition to these risks faced by women. They are also likely to face intimidation and abuse from powerful counterparts (Schwettmann, 2020).

The lockdown has caused major economic problems and food insecurity since large segments of the population are highly vulnerable and live on daily earnings without any savings to protect them from the halt in economic activity (Ray & Subramanian, 2020).

## 2.5 Theoretical Framework

### 2.5.1 The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

The sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) has been selected as a theoretical framework to explore urban livelihood strategies, livelihood constraints, coping strategies, and livelihood assets among street vendors’ women. The framework permits a detailed review of the issues mentioned above which this section discusses in depth.



Source: DFID, 1999 Available at [livelihoods.org](http://livelihoods.org)

The framework focuses on the various assets that individuals or families use, including human, social, physical, financial, and natural resources, to build livelihoods. The access to assets is affected according to the framing of the vulnerability, policies, structures, and processes that

affect the way livelihood strategies are transformed into livelihood results. The arrows show an association rather than direct causality in the system (Lloyd-Jones & Rakodi, 2014a).

Livelihood Strategies were described as "the global term used to describe the range of activities and combinations of options that people take to achieve their livelihood objectives" (DFID, 1999). The use of the word 'strategy' has been criticized, however, for giving the impression that the poor are faced with a wide variety of strategies. Sometimes this is not the case (Rakodi, 2002).

The livelihoods framework includes an agency approach that stresses such factors as poverty, vulnerability, and marginalization with a central focus on family, networking, and community (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005). Moser (1998) argues that poverty is not a static concept, stressing the question of vulnerability and suggesting that people are entering and leaving relative poverty (Moser, 1998). Even though poor individuals cannot access financial assets, it is recognized that they have other resources that are demonstrated by the use of a variety of strategies to ensure survival or protection. It is therefore proposed that the assets of the poor should be viewed instead of what is lacking (Moser, 1998; Rakodi, 2002).

The approach emphasizes tradeoffs between different assets and emphasizes the transformation of one asset into another (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005). This study does not attempt to understate the importance of financial capital by applying the sustainable livelihood framework to the situation of women street vendors. Entry to financial resources can be prioritized by women vendors. If cash is not available, however, additional coping strategies may emerge to provide an image to which the vendors may have access or have no access as assets.

### **2.5.2 Capital Assets – Human, Financial, Social, Physical, and Natural Capital**

Human Capital is the skills, knowledge, and good health which enable people to pursue and achieve various livelihood strategies (DFID, 1999). Human capital is people's health and their capacity to work, and their expertise, information, and skills learned through generations of experience and observation. Education can help people efficiently leverage existing assets and build new assets and opportunities. Education can help people.

Financial capital refers to the resources available which include wages, credit, deposits, loans, and transfers that can provide livelihood strategies with opportunities or constraints. Access to

financial resources has an impact on investments in livelihoods such as homes, and corporate enterprises as well as in the health and skills of household members (Rakodi, 2002).

The access to financial revenues from the selling of their workers is a key advantage for urban poor people (Moser, 1998). Besides, people may use social capital for livelihood building. This applies to social networks, such as membership in the community and trust relationships, social assistance, and access to social institutions. Social capital was described in the urban context as 'reciprocity within and between communities based on social links' (Moser, 1998). The possibility of exclusion was criticized because social capital could be unequally distributed (Lyons & Snoxell, 2005). Social capital can be less dynamic in urban areas than in rural areas because of higher levels of heterogeneity and mobility among the population (Moser, 1998). Others claim that social capital offers the urban poor a degree of agency and emphasizes their value for survival (Lyons & Snoxell, 2005).

The basic infrastructure, for example, housing, electricity, water, and transport as well as manufacturing facilities refers to physical capital or production capital. It is necessary because direct investment in productive resources, such as access to adequate equipment, will boost labor activity and increase income (Rakodi, 2002). Also, access to public space has been identified as a crucial aspect of physical capital in urban areas which is considered to be important for the poor (Brown & Lloyd-Jones, 2002; Brown & Rakodi, 2006). Moreover, access to public space was defined as an important aspect of physical capital in urban areas, an important aspect for the vulnerable (Brown & Lloyd-Jones, 2002; Brown & Rakodi, 2006).

Finally, natural capital includes natural resources such as land and water. However, natural resources are generally regarded as less important in urban environments except for urban dwellers that depend on urban agriculture (Rakodi, 2002).

### **2.5.3 The Vulnerability Context – Shocks (COVID 19), Trends, and Seasonality**

The meaning of vulnerability seeks to incorporate variables frequently occurring in an external context to assess how it affects livelihoods. The background of vulnerability involves three main factors: trends, seasonality, and shocks that people have little to no influence over. Trends may relate to issues such as demographic change, domestic or foreign economic trends, or governance trends. Trends for the vulnerable are also not inherently bad (DFID, 1999).

Seasonality refers to persistent seasonal changes such as job openings or market fluctuations (Rakodi, 2002). Finally, shocks may include natural disasters, conflicts (Lloyd-Jones & Rakodi, 2014b), or international economic shocks (DFID, 1999). The biggest difference between seasonality and shocks is, in comparison to shocks, that the latter is recurring. The urban livelihood framework emphasizes not just the detection of vulnerabilities, but also the use of assets to tackle possible crises. The emphasis is therefore on how people and families strive to reduce vulnerability (Moser, 1998; Rakodi, 2002).

#### **2.5.4 Livelihood Strategies**

The living conditions of households are central to the development and the methods that people use to improve them. Livelihood strategies consist of survival-producing behaviors. Livelihood strategies reflect how people combine and use properties to achieve positive livelihood results that achieve their livelihood targets. Livelihood strategies are deliberate activities that men and women embark on to build their livelihoods. Any livelihood strategy aims to provide households with the means for subsistence and survival and possibly to increase safety nets (Beall & Kanji, 1999).

Scholars talk from various perspectives about livelihood strategies. The first one is dependent on the timeframe and how often they are perceived instead of as a temporary response as part of a long-term strategy. This approach includes livelihood strategies to respond to short-term shocks and survival (adaptive strategies) to help boost the long-term circumstances (Singh & Gilman, 1999).

Strategies for coping can be divided into ex-ante and ex-post strategies (Dercon, 2002). Ex-ante strategies are households' protection measures for risk control before any shock. Self-insurance strategies, such as precautionary savings and acquisition of an asset or formal or informal Group insurance. These strategies are typically insured. Aquiar & Hurst (2005) explained that household behavior to reduce adverse event effects is an ex-post strategy (Aguiar & Hurst, 2005). These strategies are examples of reducing spending, rising domestic output, or increasing revenue diversification sources. Home tactics can have short-term or long-term impacts in terms of impacts. Cameron (2001) discusses household coping mechanisms implemented with short-term effects such as using up savings or selling assets first. Besides that, Cameron (2001) asserts

that when those mechanisms fall short, households may resort to other strategies with more long-term effects such as withdrawing children from schools (Cameron, 2001).

Survival strategies are long-term behavioral and practical improvements to respond to ongoing stress. It is people's answer to their risk analysis (Singh & Gilman, 1999). How people may adapt normally reflects their access to various types of assets and their willingness to use them. The vulnerability would be strong in places where there are very few assets or people cannot use them.

As CARE (Carney, 1998) uses another categorization of livelihood strategies, the strategies for supporting livelihood activity that can be implemented by the NGOs are examined. Carney (1998) distinguishes between livelihood promotion resilience enhancement activities for households, livelihoods security household safety reduction measures, e.g. early warning systems, cash or food for work, health education, and livelihood provisioning – direct provision of basic needs, usually in emergencies (Carney, 1998). The strategies for living conditions are strongly affected by the location of their assets (Scoones, 1998). This means that households' livelihood strategies to ensure their livelihoods are based on how they can integrate livelihood assets and take account of their vulnerabilities as well as their policies, institutions, and processes. All or all of these components are the livelihood results that households attain with their strategies.

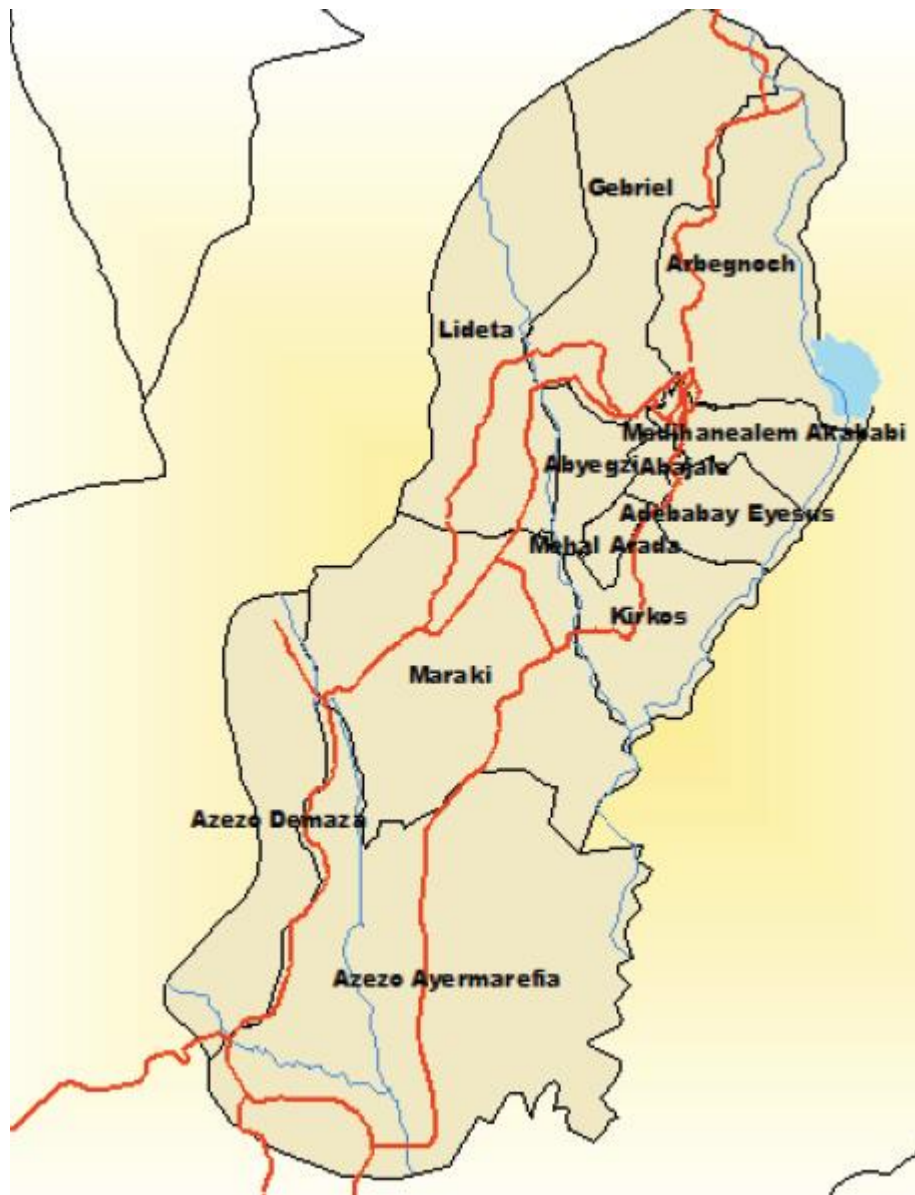
## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Study Area**

The study was conducted in Gondar City Administration, Northwest, Ethiopia. It is located in the Central Gondar Zone of the Amhara Region which is 727 km from Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, and 176 km from Bahir Dar town. Gondar is north of Lake Tana on the Lesser Angereb River and southwest of the Semien Mountains and is located 2,133 meters above sea level (“Gondar,” 2021). It is 12°03’N latitude and 37°028’E. Gondar town has a total area of 192.3km<sup>2</sup> (Atsedo et al., 2018.).

Gondar had a total population of 400,455, of which 196,225 were men and 304,230 were women, based on the national census of 2019 by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA, 2019, p.5). The majority of the inhabitants practice Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, with 90.2% reporting it as their religion, while 8% of the population said they were Muslim and 1.1% were Protestant (“Gondar,” 2021). There are remains of royal castles in the region, including the site of Fasil Ghebbi which is on the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Gondar was called 'Camelot of Africa.' (“Gondar,” 2021). Gondar is a city administration classified into 12 sub-cities and 20 kebeles (Atsedo et al., 2018.).

## Geographical location of Gondar Town



Source: City profile of Gondar (Atsede et al., 2018)

### **3.2. Study Design**

To study the impact of COVID 19 on the livelihood of women street vendors, this study applied a qualitative approach with a phenomenological study design. Qualitative research has been described as a form of social inquiry that focuses on human activities and experiences, it seeks to comprehend concepts, emotions, and the relationships between them (Walliman, 2011). The primary goal of qualitative research is to develop new concepts and theories by systematically describing and interpreting issues or phenomena from the perspective of the individual or population being studied (Mohajan, 2018). The lived experience of women street vendors during the pandemic was explored using a phenomenological design.

A phenomenological inquiry is basically about human experiences, how individuals understand their experiences and give meaning to them, and its philosophical and inductive approach as well (Bliss, 2016). This approach allows the researcher to get insights into how a phenomenon is perceived. As a result, this design goes in line with the aim of this study which is to explore this phenomenon and gain insight into the issue.

### **3.3 Study Population**

Women who were engaged in street vending business in Gondar city were taken as the target population in this study. All women aged 18 years or above, working on street vending in Gondar city and available during the data collection period were included. To protect participants' confidentiality, the names of the participants were not disclosed. Therefore, each participant was given a code name accordingly.

### **3.4 Sample of the study and selection of participants**

Qualitative researches rely on a fewer number of research participants. More specifically, phenomenological study designs use a very limited number of samples as the focus is to explore more data in depth for instance. Morse (2000:5) argues as follows "If, on the other hand, one is conducting a phenomenological study and interviewing one person many repeatedly, one has a large amount of data for each participant and thus requires fewer participants in the study (perhaps only 6-10). In addition, Creswell (1998) suggests studying 3 to 10 subjects in one phenomenological study Based on these guidelines, a total of 12 participants were recruited for

this study (9 women street vendors in Gondar city and 3 key informants who are experts in the area). The final sample size for this study was determined based on the level of information saturation. Information saturation was ensured with the redundancy of ideas and when there are no new emerging ideas in the consecutive interviews.

In this research, a non-probability sampling method was used to achieve maximum variation aimed to capture a range of experiences and demographics among the study participants. Study participants were selected through purposive sampling methods from the different sub-cities of Gondar city. The purposive sampling technique is a method that is used based on a researcher's judgment of participants that he/she believes best fits the study (Bryman, 2016). That means it was necessary to be curious to include a sample with different key characteristics to show a level of diversity (Bryman, 2008). With that premise in mind, the study participants varied in terms of age, education level, items they sell, marital status, and other factors. Here the researcher prioritized women working as street vendors as they are a more vulnerable group and hence to give suggestions for the concerned body who will provide them immediate assistance and sustainable solution. To understand the effect of the COVID 19 pandemic on different family types and sizes single, married women who have children, widowed women who have children, and divorced women were included.

### **3.5 Types and Sources of Data**

Primary data sources were used in this particular study. Walliman (2011) states that primary data provides the researcher with immediate and authentic information. In that regard, the researcher used, a semi-structured in-depth interview as the main source of primary data. Primary data sources contained women who engaged in street vending in different sub-cities of Gondar city, government offices that control street vending like the Small Scale Enterprise Office and additional information was gathered from Gondar City Health Bureau and Gondar Women Children and Youth Affairs Office.

### **3.6 Data Collection Tools and Procedures**

After reviewing relevant literature, an in-depth interview guide, key informant interview guide, and observation checklist were prepared in English and translated into the local language (Amharic) for actual data collection (*See annex I*). The applicability and feasibility of the data

collection tool were tested on two street vendors in Gondar city. The interview guides and observation checklist were revised for actual data collection based on the inputs from the pretest. The data was gathered through a face-to-face interactive interview approach. During the interviews, participants were asked probing questions to further explore the issues. The data was collected from the participants using a tape recorder and notes. To protect the study participants' privacy, a convenient environment was created when they are free from customers at their workplace for data collection. Finally, an interview that lasted an average of 40 minutes was conducted with all the participants until data saturation was reached.

### **In-depth Interview**

To get women street vendors' perspectives on the experience of the impact of COVID 19 on livelihood, a semi-structured in-depth interview was carried out. The semi-structured interview allows questions to emerge during the interviews which were not initially included and aims at highlighting the livelihoods from people's points of view. Semi-structured interviews allow for follow-up questions and do not include a fixed interview guide which allows for the adjustment of inconsistencies. This approach is also necessary because some specific questions have to be asked to remain focused on research to address the questions of research (Bryman, 2008). To allow the interview to proceed naturally, an in-depth qualitative interview guide was used in a flexible manner keeping the major themes of the research in mind. This approach allowed questions to emerge during the interviews which are based on the guiding points initially included which aimed at highlighting the effect of COVID 19 livelihoods assets, vulnerabilities, and strategies from the street vendors' point of view.

The information from the in-depth interview was captured using voice recorders and short notes. Interviews were conducted until the information saturation point was reached.

**Key Informant Interview:** - Key informant interviews are in-depth, qualitative interviews with people who have firsthand knowledge of a topic of interest. The interviews are unstructured and rely on a list of topics to cover. In-depth interviews with key informants provide detailed information directly from knowledgeable people while also allowing for the exploration of new ideas and issues that were not anticipated during planning (Kothari, 2004). The researcher used a key informant interview to assess the awareness of different organizations about the challenges women street vendors face and to find out about efforts in place to help support the livelihood of

that section of the community. The key informant was identified using purposive sampling. The organizers of the inquiry will purposively choose specific units of the universe to make up a sample on the basis that a small mass chosen from a large one will be typical or representative of the entire universe (Kothari, 2004). This enabled the researcher to select interviewees with relevant information regarding the problem under study. With that premise in mind, government offices that control street vending like the Small Scale Enterprise Office and additional information were gathered from Gondar City Health Bureau and Gondar Women Children and Youth Affairs Office. From each office, one participant was selected based on their close work on issues of street vendors. Therefore, this study deployed a semi-structured in-depth interview with key informants as a data collection tool to explore key informants' insight on the impact of COVID 19 on women street vendors.

**Observation:** to obtain supplementary data the research used a non-participatory observation while the street vendors are at work on the street. Non-participant Observation entails observing participants without actively participating. This method involves entering a community or social system while remaining detached from the observed activities to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon (Liu & Maitlis 2010). Non-participant observation is frequently used in conjunction with other data collection methods because it can provide a more "nuanced and dynamic" understanding of events that is difficult to capture using other methods (Liu & Maitlis 2010). Thus, the Observation was used to provide additional information about the location and the situation of the street vending environment, how they apply COVID 19 preventive measures as well as the challenges the vendors face.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Data collection and analysis were done at the same time. The recorded audiotapes were repeatedly listened to and notes were reviewed, as recommended by Creswell (2009) for qualitative data analysis. The researcher transcribed the audio after listening to it. The transcription included events that occurred during the interview, such as pauses, cries, and silences. A linguist with sufficient skill and experience was hired to double-check whether or not the translations were correct. In addition, the transcription included the researcher's notes. Meanwhile, thematic analysis based on emerging ideas and patterns was conducted. Similar ideas were grouped after this process. The ideas were organized into three themes, each of which

was further subdivided into similar ideas, yielding six major subthemes. A final report was written after ensuring that all themes had been classified.

### **3.8 Quality Assurance**

Before beginning the actual data collection, the data collection instrument was tested. Before conducting each interview, the researcher obtained consent and ensured that the participants did not feel coerced or uncomfortable. Participants were told that if they didn't understand a question, they could ask for clarification. To ensure that the data was accurate, the researcher asked the same question in various contexts and wording.

Before and during transcription, the researcher listened to the collected data several times to ensure that no important points were missed. In addition, as part of data quality assurance, the researcher double-checked transcripts and translations. The information was kept in a secure place. The researcher ensured that the research findings were a direct reflection of the data that was collected, transcribed, and coded.

To ensure consistency, key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, and observation were used to elicit information about the same issue. In addition, to improve credibility, the data from the three methods were triangulated during interpretation. Furthermore, quotes from participant interviews were used to provide a detailed description of the findings with adequate evidence.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Before data collection, a formal letter was given to the researcher from Addis Ababa University and the researcher showed it to the concerned organization and the proper introduction and purpose of the study were explained to each participant. Verbal consent was taken from the participant before using the phone recorder, each participant was given the right to refuse or stop the interview at any point in time and the right to withhold personal information. To ensure the confidentiality of data, study subjects were identified using codes.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were presented and discussed in this chapter. Three main themes and eight subthemes were identified from the collected data based on the experiences of the study participants. The main goal of the study is to explore the impact and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's street vendors in Gondar city, Ethiopia.

### 4.1. Findings

Table 1: Profile of Research Participants

Participant	Age	Education level	Work experience	Marital status	Number of children
P1	70	Can't read & write	15	Widowed	6
P2	28	10	3	Single	0
P3	30	Can't read & write	<1 year	Single	0
P4	60	Can't read & write	15	Widowed	4
P5	40	Can't read & write	16	Divorce	2
P6	37	Primary	11	Widowed	4
P7	24	10	2	Single	0
P8	35	6	27	Widowed	2
P9	25	9	4	Married	2

Table 1 shows the age, work experience, education level, marital status, and the number of children of the participants in the study. The age of the participants ranges from 24-70 years of age. The work experience of the participants ranges from < 1-27 years.

Table 2: Background Information of Key Informants

Key informant name	Age	Education level	Organization	Position
P10 (K1)	45	MPH	Gondar health bureau	Emergency disease control and prevention case team manager
P11 (K2)	40	MA	Gondar city women children and youth affairs	Head
P12 (K3)	35	MSc	Gondar small-scale enterprise office	Head

Table 2 shows the background of the key informant such as their age, educational level, the organization they work for, and their position in the organization they work for. The age of the participants ranges from 35-45 years of age. The findings of this study were presented with three major themes: Livelihood strategies, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihood of women, and coping mechanisms to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on livelihood assets.

#### **4.1.1. Livelihood Strategies**

In this section, the research aims to explore the life choices of these women, to understand what leads them to this venture, what keeps them in it, and what they aim to gain from their experience. This study revealed that street vending was a necessary means of living for women as it became an option for those that didn't have any, for others who saw a possible way out of their economic restraints, and for others who were simply supporting their families. Study participants also reported facing a drastic change of circumstances (like displacement, childbirth,

divorce, etc), lack of alternative options, and low educational status as a reason leading them to end up as street vendors. In the case of P.1 and P.5 in particular both had experienced a drastic change of circumstances, for P.1 it was displacement from their original hometown while P.5 was childbirth. Since they were obligated to provide for their children, both ended up taking up street vending as a trade.

P.1 said this about her journey:

*I used to be living a happy married life in Eritrea. Soon after the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia, I, along with my 6 children, was forced to displace to Gondar, Ethiopia. In Gondar, I didn't have relatives, friends, a house, and permanent work. Then, to make a living, I started searching for work as, a daily laborer but it was unsuccessful. Finally, I started vending by selling onions, potatoes, and tomatoes on the road (P1).*

Another participant in the study confirms this fact by discussing how giving birth to her child led her to street vending. Participant 5 also explained her situation by stating that:

*I used to be a daily laborer till I gave birth to my first daughter so I started vending since carrying a child into the workplace was too difficult for me. Because I had no other source trade of income, I was obliged to do street vending to obtain money and spend on food, rent payment, and clothes for my children (P5).*

Likewise, this participant also chooses this venture because she had no other choice but to pursue Street vending due to a lack of options. She explains: *"I start this job when I had no option...my family lives in the countryside and they were unable to cover my education fee, so I had to engage in this work"* (P2).

Key informant 2 also complimented young girls from a poor family engaged in street vending due to a lack of different alternatives.

*Even though there is no statistical evidence, from my observation and experience 35-40 percent of young women are directly or indirectly participating in street vending. They all engaged in this activity are leading their life as the only option*

*and this business is developed gradually from a low level of small business activities (P11).*

Since securing employment in the formal sector is a hard task, most are forced to look to the informal sectors as a possible source of income. Street vending is a favored activity among women of different backgrounds commonly pursued by women with low educational status. Despite differences in reasoning, most of the participants in this study agreed that they joined the work of street vending because it was a last resort to build their livelihood as they believed they were not qualified for a formal job due to their lack of education.

This is the case for Participant 4 who stated: *“I entered this business a long time ago simply because I lacked sufficient education and had nothing to do” (P4).*

Similarly, another participant in the study confirms this fact by discussing how her limited educational achievement force her to join this job. *“Four years ago, after completing my 10<sup>th</sup>-grade education, there wasn’t any job to do for me. Assuming that it is better than to be a housewife I started this vending” (P9).*

This may allude to the informal sector's low level of education and skill, as the higher the level of education, the smaller the informal sector's operators will be. This is supplemented by the finding that the majority of street vendors who took part in this survey had only an elementary or secondary education. This could imply that women with abilities and opportunities that would allow them to obtain formal employment or other lucrative informal work would not likely choose street vending. That being said, for these women street vending became a source of income when they didn’t have any, facing the bottom of the barrel was what drove them to this engagement but as a result, they were able to survive and even provide for themselves and their loved ones.

While lack of formal education, as well as lack of options, lead some of these women to street vending others found it to be an appealing business alternative that would possibly assure their economic freedom.

For instance, Participant 6 explains her journey like this:

*I was a housewife and my husband was a guard. The source of income was my husband's salary only and it was not enough for a living. I used to talk about this problem to my best friend who leads a life via vending fruits. One day, my friend advised me to start vending fruits with her with a small amount like 5 kilos of fruit. Luckily, I found the job lifesaving and continued vending with many boxes of fruit (P6).*

On the other hand, some participants also highlighted that the other reason for this type of livelihood strategy was the requirement to earn household income since the husband was ill or had died. When their husbands died or were ill, half of the ladies began street vending. This implies that as shown in the statement below, these women have become the household's new and sole breadwinners, posing a huge financial burden for them.

Participant 3 says: *"I started the business soon after my spouse passed away. To be honest, life is difficult since there was once assistance and now there is none. Rather, you rely on yourself"* (P3).

Participant 4 supplemented that after the death of her husband, she was not able to get his pension and this forced her to join street vending: *"My husband was a soldier in the Derig regimen and he died in 1982 E.C. Due to unknown reasons, I was not able to get the pension of my husband. Then, I started selling fruits by taking loans to raise my children despite knowing it was not a profitable business"* (P4).

Another participant stated that Divorce was one of the reasons she ended up in the street vending business. She states that: *"I don't have other sources of income since my husband and I are divorced, we have children so I had to provide in some way"* (P5).

The women in this study perhaps represent a majority of those in the business of street vending all over Ethiopia. Most girls and women are employed in the informal economy without legal recognition or security. Informal traders are very often easily accessible and tend to sell products at lower prices in the town. Some were led to this venture by unfortunate circumstances, a few chose this venture to reach some form of economic benefit, and a few others also embarked on

this journey to secure their future and the future of their loved ones. Regardless of their choices, street vending has enabled them to support themselves and their families, so to understand more of these woman's life choices participants were asked to describe what this business means to them.

The participants described that the economic benefit of street vending had significantly decreased their financial strains. With the income that they get from their business, they can provide necessities for themselves and their families. They were also able to surpass their survival instinct and hope for a much better future in the business world. The women vendors mainly sell vegetables, which include a variety of products whose diversity varies depending on the season and customer preference, but they primarily offer green vegetables, fruits, socks, and underwear.

Participant 2 mentioned: *“Street vendor had been the most active income-generating for my families and my life depended on vending vegetation” (P2).*

The study implies that the COVID 19 pandemic preventive measures created a job opportunity for street vendors such as selling face masks and sanitizers. The researcher's observation indicated that they try to sell extra goods depending on their customer's preferences for instance at the time of the interview there were high cases of COVID 19 infection as a result, they added selling face masks and sanitizers. Participant 6 also explained: *“I am living by selling fruits and face masks in the street. I feed my children, buy clothes for me and, for schooling and other expenses are covered from the money I got in this work” (P6).*

Most feminist defines women and girls as assertive, powerful, and in control of their own life, in response to stereotypical images of women as passive, weak, and indecisive, Contrary to popular thought women are not simple bystanders in their own lives, while circumstances vary when the situation requires it they are capable of taking charge and making wise decisions. The participants in this study reveal that women are more than capable of overcoming their situations, they are in fact assertive, powerful, and in control day in and day out to survive the day-to-day struggle demand and they also bring income to the house. The women in the study did not let their circumstances nor was their women hood hold them back from doing what was necessary. This brings into focus the baseless ideas and stereotypes of women in the mindset of

most societies, third-wave feminist movement has played an impactful role in exposing these cracks and giving women the platform to be seen for who they actually are.

#### **4.1.2. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on livelihood assets of women street vendors**

Before the COVID pandemic, street vendors strive to work and sustain their livelihoods by selling their products without legal recognition and protection. Informal traders are very often easily accessible and tend to sell products at lower prices in the town. However, during the COVID pandemic, local authorities closed some public spaces ordinarily used by street vendors, and social interaction restrictions were placed, disrupting the supply chain of goods to prevent the wide spread of Covid-19. Thus, several street vendors were locked out of their only source of livelihood, this has a ripple effect on every aspect of these women's lives.

Another important factor to consider is how the pandemic affected income inequality. According to studies from other countries, historically disadvantaged and low-income households have suffered more than high-income households (Bernstein and Jones, 2020). That is, low-income households' up and down swings are amplified. Because lower-income households are disproportionately employed in the informal sectors, the pandemic may exacerbate income disparities. In, this segment the researcher discusses the effect of the pandemic on the lives of these women and goes in-depth to identify common issues faced by women in the informal sector. Several aspects were identified and categorized as follows.

##### **I. Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the social life of women street vendors**

People may use social capital for livelihood building. This applies to social networks, such as membership in the community and trust relationships, social assistance, and access to social institutions. Social capital was described in the urban context as 'reciprocity within and between communities based on social links' (Moser, 1998). It is a social network system such as social organization, networks, norms, and trust where the individuals and households can produce livelihoods through relations e.g. community, family, etc. Participants reported that they have strong support networks. Unfortunately, the lockdown disrupted this strong network. Their social assets include family and friends, groups, such as 'ekub' and 'idir' that are available through interest groups. Some participants stated that they did not have access to any of these assets,

suggesting that they are falling through the cracks and need further assistance in order to connect to communities that can be of assistance. Women in this field of business depend on social connections to generate and sustain their income. Besides the economic support, the social connections meant much more as they would often depend on each other for moral support and friendship.

The Ethiopian government released guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID 19. One of the guidelines has been keeping social distance and staying at home. In addition, vending zones are also required to use a mask and undergo sufficient hygiene services. Gondar city authorities used the same guidelines for society and street vendors. The women were asked to describe how these guidelines have affected their social life. The majority of the participants replied that the COVID pandemic had affected their social life and imposed psychological pressure on their day-to-day life.

One of the participants mentioned her experience: *“Your self-esteem suffers as a result of your inability to socialize with others, we were totally separated from the community, and everyone was ordered to stay at home. It was difficult” (P4).*

The study also found that the uncertainty felt by women who are staying at home during the lockdown and this affected their abilities to discuss the difficult process with their friends and loved ones. Another participant commented how this new way of life had impacted her psyche: *“ceasing my work and restriction of visiting my relatives....were most challenging things for me. Living in isolation is a very difficult thing” (P7).*

Most participants agreed that the preventive strategies of COVID 19 reduced their social support either directly or indirectly even though some didn't agree with this proposition because they already had limited social life.

*Because of the pandemic, I don't need anyone to come to my home and likewise, they don't need me to go to their house too. I heard a lot of rumors from my neighbors. They told us that oh! She is coming as they consider me of having a Covid-19 disease. They fear that I might get them infected with the pandemic*

*since I have close contact with many customers. As a result, I was highly isolated by my own neighbors (P3).*

Some of the participants depend on their social contacts to gain financial support, others were simply socially active for the fun of it, and a few others go beyond the title of active participants and were the organizers of community gatherings. Participants also described that COVID 19 decrease their social interaction and it has resulted in a decrease in their income and a lack of job opportunities. One of the respondents described the situation as follows:

*I went to my previous customers for washing clothes, but they ignored me because they said 'it is corona time; we can wash it ourselves. So, there is no work, I could not find any work because of the virus. Before corona, I was washing their clothes and me 300 birr and I have been supporting my business with this (P8).*

The observation of the study implies that some of the vendors use strict COVID 19 preventive measures such as social distancing by exchanging products and money with customers using a long stick and plastic bags but most of the vendors didn't care about any of the preventive measures. In some parts of the country, street vendors use the appropriate preventive measures like wearing a face mask and maintaining social distancing.



Source: UNICEF Ethiopia, 2020.

For some of the participants, the social restrictions resulted in more problems than others, social gatherings such as ‘edir’ and ‘mahiber’ were restricted. These women were the ones who were seriously affected by the restrictions during the pandemic. They explained that they felt emotionally drained and sad as they were not able to maintain their normally packed social calendar. Study participants (particularly Participants 2 & 6) who were active participants in the community gathering said that the restrictions were harder on them as they depended on these gatherings to see their loved ones to seek comfort and support.

On the other hand, some of the women didn’t have much problem with the social restrictions but rather with the economic impact it resulted during the pandemic period. As for women who were not socially active the pandemic wasn’t much different from their already dwindling social life. For instance, Participant 1 described her experience as follows:

*Honestly speaking, the COVID-19 pandemic had not brought any social problems since I had no friends, neighbors, or relatives here in Gondar before the*

*pandemic. I didn't have a social life before the pandemic except engaging in a funeral. I didn't drink coffee with neighbors or relatives, I didn't invite or was invited to ceremonies, and I don't have "senbete" or "Mahiber". Thus, social life was the same for me before and during the pandemic. Besides, I didn't stop the vending due to fear of a pandemic rather it was due to the lockdown and expensiveness of goods (P1).*

The study found that one of the reasons for limited social life is being poor and they believe that COVID 19 preventive measures didn't affect their already weakened social life. In line with this argument, another participant underscored that;

*Usually, social life is indirectly dependent on economic status because the poorer you are the lesser social life you have. As far as I am one of those poor people, I have poor social life except with close friends and those poor. As a result, the effect of the pandemic on my social life was minimal. Apart from these, the most difficult thing that I faced due to the pandemic was the stress of the disease (P3).*

From the finding, we can say that the social capital of the respondents was weak in terms of linking social relationships during COVID 19. Social links are important for sustainable livelihoods. Because it could foster mutually beneficial relationships among people and encourage the ability of the study participants to cope with economic crises and provides access to other necessary assets. That is to say, livelihoods depend to some degree on social capital. For example, there are things the rich family can provide street vendors talking about in the above case. Social capital developed through social networks of poor and rich can expand the livelihood opportunities available to street vendors. Access to opportunities can depend on ideas, encouragement, and gifts from personal acquaintances. Street vendors can learn skills from neighborhoods, including quite profitable trade approaches. Social networks are often crucial for learning about job opportunities.

In general, the researcher found that social isolation and decreased social networks were commonly experienced amongst women street vendors because of the state of emergency declared by the government of Ethiopia.

## II. Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the financial capital of women street vendors

Financial capital refers to the resources available which include wages, credit, deposits, loans, and transfers that can provide livelihood strategies with opportunities or constraints. Access to financial resources has an impact on investments in livelihoods such as homes, and corporate enterprises as well as in the health and skills of household members (Rakodi, 2002). The access to financial revenues from the selling of their workers is also a key advantage for urban poor people (Moser, 1998).

Women in the informal sector are found in low-income activities which hardly guarantee survival. The study findings revealed that the enforcement of the lockdown measures has further weakened the ability of women within the informal sector to sustain their life and be exposed to hunger.

One Participant stated that: *“Economically we were seriously affected. It was the worst time in my life. We were out of a job, forced to stay at home”* (P9).

Key informant 2 indicated that the declared state of emergency deepened the level of poverty of the street vendors. Key informant 2 also described the impact of COVID 19 as follows:

*Street vendors had been the most active income-generating for many poor families and their life dependent on vending vegetation. However, the lockdown has largely shut down the street vendor for most informal vendors especially women and girls and the banned informal sector has exposed street vendor to absolute poverty (P11).*

During the lockdown period of the COVID-19 pandemic, enforced social distancing and stay-at-home conditions not only restricted the employment opportunities of street vendors but also increased the cost of doing business significantly.

Accordingly, the pandemic restricted vendors from working efficiently which made it worse to have better financial gain as compared to the time that was before the COVID era. When asked about how the COVID-19 pandemic affected her economy, one participant described it as follows:

*There was no marketing, no one buying goods, and I was threatened by this. Lunch and dinner were difficult to consume. Furthermore, the merchants'*

*greediness exacerbated the inflation. For example, a kilogram of onion costs 4birr from the farmers and 10birr from the merchants. We sold to customers with 10.50 or 11birr. Do you notice how the greedy merchants inflate it from 4 to 11 birrs? I didn't make a profit because the goods were too expensive, and I sometimes prefer not to vend at all. Due to the high cost of the goods, I was unable to vend for a month (P1).*

Almost all of the participants agreed with the proposition that the COVID-19 pandemic has incurred a big problem for their economy, financial management, or the overall marketing system. In line with this argument, another participant underscored that:

*There was no business flow, there was no movement of people, and we lost thousands of birr. I stayed at home and feeding my child was very difficult. I couldn't even buy a piece of bread for my children. That situations were very unforgettable. Furthermore, everything was inflated and most people including my daily customers couldn't afford to buy goods (P5).*

Another participant also complimented that: *“I have lost a lot of revenue during the COVID 19 period since I have stopped the vending of my goods. I feared dying from the pandemic” (P8).*

Even, after Gondar city authorities lifted the control policy on street vending in cities, the cost of doing business, as well as the risk has gone up significantly, with many street vendors not having access to wholesale markets and suppliers pushing them to stop their vending. Respondents reported that the relaxation in government restrictions on transportation and marketplaces created an opportunity to engage in income-generating activities. However, due to the persistent increase in the price of food, the economic and affordability issues remained the same and even worsened in some cases. In line with this, one of the vendors reported that: *“My income is now better than it was after the lockdown. This does not mean that my current income is comparable to my income before the advent of the Coronavirus” (P6).*

Due to business suspension during the early stages of the pandemic, normal economic activities stagnated and cost inflations particularly for materials and transportation (they were forced to spend more money on travel due to the city's travel restrictions) were very difficult to afford. These were the primary causes of decreased income and purchasing power.

Incongruent with this, one of the participants elaborated that:

*During the pandemic, two boxes of fruit were spoiled because it was not allowed to sell in the street. Because of this, I experienced a loss of more than 2000 birr. In addition, the price of transport was doubled than before. I paid 40birr to Bajaj for boxes of bananas every day. Moreover, the business flow was highly compromised because the price of everything was inflated. For example, customers who were able to buy two kilos of banana before the pandemic were buying only half a kilo or less after the pandemic (P3).*

It was also claimed that all street vendors experienced a decrease in customers. Customers are hesitant to buy from them for fear of spreading the disease and for the reason that customers could not afford the price of the product. Due to this, their product becomes spoiled and they become dependent on merchants' decisions which means they have no alternative to getting the product with the balance credit loan. As a result, their daily income has decreased, resulting in a pandemic of hunger. Hence, they were unable to sustain themselves through their daily modest business endeavors, and the pandemic entirely decimated their economic potential.

When describing her experience one participant said that *"People are afraid to purchase because they are afraid of becoming infected. It has caused significant harm, particularly to the urban poor"* (P4).

Participants mentioned that customers were afraid to buy from the street due to fear of contracting the virus. The other street vendor also explained her situation by stating: *"Nobody bought fruit at the beginning of the pandemic. We are very concerned because it is our source of income. The people were terrified for nearly four months. Then they adapted to the pandemic and resumed normal operations"* (P8).

When asked about their spending since the COVID-19 outbreak, some of the respondents said they had cut costs by sacrificing their necessities. Some stated that their overall expenses had increased as a result of the shutdown. Added expenditure on buying food materials, as well as the increased cost of food, transportation, and other things, are all on the list making it difficult for the street vendors to afford and adhere to the precautions.

One of the participants replied:

*One person's Bajaj tariff was 5 birr. Following the restriction, one person pays 15 birrs. We are expected to pay 30, 40, or 50 birrs if we use three or four trips, exposing us to additional costs. There is also a cost to buying facemasks that will be ruined after only a few days of use; as a result, we are expected to buy facemasks repeatedly. We also have to buy sanitizer on a daily basis. All of these costs are additional compared to before (P6).*

Participants mentioned that the COVID 19 preventive measures such as wearing face masks, maintaining hand hygiene with soap and water, or using sanitizers added more expenditure.

*...they were educated through a microphone, about the pandemic. It was good for the community to be aware and take action. However, there were forced measures. For example, my children in school were told to take sanitizer, soap, and tissue paper. How can I buy these things for the two children? The measures didn't consider the poor people (P5).*

Similarly, government officials reported that the pandemic has deepened the level of poverty and vulnerability for those who were already in poorer classes. The officials also mentioned that the street vendors didn't get adequate support during the pandemic for various reasons.

Key informant 2 mentioned that:

*Because of the pandemic, many women in our district have lost their employment. Poverty was especially prevalent among women who worked in small-scale markets. Women have been reduced to terrible poverty as a result of the sickness. In our district, there are now thousands of poor and unemployed women and girls. These people (street vendors) are not getting support as our main focus shifts to the war in addition to COVID 19 pandemic ...this is worsening their problem while inflation is getting worse from time to time (P11).*

Participants of the study seem to be less likely to re-invest the earnings into a different sort of income source. This is because they originally had small startup capital and they engage in

business that does not generate not even for daily consumption. Similarly, key informant 3 complimented that:

*Women and men used to engage in a variety of supplementary income-generating occupations prior to the pandemic. However, many women and men have stopped working as a result of the pandemic. Some men and women have been involved in small business activities, and some of those who have been doing so have stopped doing so. While few people persevered despite the dangers, those who lost their jobs have become reliant on those who have continued to work (P12).*

According to the study's findings, the COVID-19 lockdown, as well as the subsequent recession, had a significant impact on market supply chains. Women already had limited mobility and market access, and current market shocks and supply chain failures have harmed women's informal economies even more.

### **III. Human capital-related effect of COVID-19 pandemic on women street vendors**

Human capital is the skills, knowledge, and good health which enable people to pursue and achieve various livelihood strategies (DFID, 1999). The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant loss of human life around the world and poses an unexpected public health threat. Stress was found to be a common experience among the study's participants. All participants in this study reported feeling stressed at some point during the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown.

Regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic affected their human capital, specifically emphasizing health conditions, Participants put it as follows: *“You know the chance of getting infected by the disease may be low with contact. But my neighbors did not want to get closer to me. I was always stressed. Coming home alone makes me feel depressed” (P1).*

The thought of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopia alone was a cause of the feeling of stress to be experienced. Similarly, P9 complimented that:

*The most difficult thing for me was the stress I was under during my illness, which appeared to be coronavirus." I was concerned for my children because I*

*imagined myself dying as a result of my illness. That was the most stressful time in my life (P9).*

The COVID-19 response measures taken by the government of Ethiopia like banning social and religious gatherings as well as limited availability of public services led to limited mobility, deeper isolation, weakening of social networks, and psychosocial distress. In line with this argument, another participant underscored that;

*I was stressed at the beginning of the pandemic. The diseases could infect if there is poor hygiene and sanitation. And as I told you my living house is very dirty so I fear the loss of my children from the pandemic. To be honest, I hadn't thought that I and my children would die but God sees our poverty and saves us (P8).*

A significant reported incidence of feeling hopeless, having thoughts of loneliness, and depression highlights the need for mental health interventions. Regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic affected human capital in terms of exacerbating existing disease conditions and taking measures as a disease prevention modality to preserve their health condition. According to one participant, who is a 10<sup>th</sup> grade completed 30years old single woman vendor, the area she is currently vending is highly suffocated and congested which might be exposed her to different communicable diseases which can be transmittable in such condensed areas such as Influenza, TB, and Coronavirus. Another participant also mentioned her experience as follows:

*Being a weaver at night and doing vending during the daytime was tiresome. I was sleeping only for a few hours and as a result of this, I was feeling fatigued and weak. It further exacerbated my chronic back pain. Also, I was afraid that I may lose myself or my children due to sanitation problems and the chance of vulnerability to covid-19 due to the nature of my work. It was difficult for me to provide my children with sanitizers, masks, and tissue paper and I was highly stressed by that. I used to travel all by myself in the mini taxi to withstand the difficulty colligated with traveling with mass (P1).*

The observation of the study also indicated that the workplace of the street vendors is highly crowded, suffocated, and congested, this implies that street vendors are a high-risk group for

contracting communicable diseases. Health providers observed since the pandemic began, the number of people seeking health services has decreased, with the main reason being a perceived risk of coronavirus exposure and inadequate preventive measures. The majority of the vendors lacked the necessary methods to prevent virus transmission.

To this end, key informant 1 underscored that:

*.....in the presence of coronavirus, these population groups strive for living without consideration of the virus transmission. Also, different voluntary organizations which were supporting them financially are phased out during the pandemic, these lead them to fight more for their lives in high-risk areas of the infection (P10).*

This study pointed out that there is a lack of knowledge on how to apply coronavirus preventative measures. According to a few respondents in the interviews, some people used restriction measures to avoid being held accountable for circumventing government limits. The finding from the observation and key informant interviews indicates that some people do not want to wear a facemask or are unaware of the reasons why they should use it.

Key informant 1 shared his witness in such a way that *“I usually notice street vendors partially cover their mouths while their noses are left uncovered” (P10).*

The study implies that vending on the streets brought different types of health problems highly suffocated and congested work environments exposed them to different communicable diseases which can be transmitted in such condensed areas but their struggle to survive made them ignorant of health issues. Key informant 2 also stated that

*.... low-income people struggle for their life to full fling their basic necessities in every difficulty which might be high-risk areas for getting the infection. Additionally, they do not give attention to taking the precautions as their concern is only escaping from starvation they say nothing is bad as hunger ”ke rehab torinet yishalal ”. They work up and down to earn money that covers their expenses for a living (P11).*

These findings indicated that street vendors are one of the communities that lack adequate knowledge about why and how to use a facemask. Key informant 3 also supplemented that:

*Some people wear a facemask solely because cops are present. They wear a mask not because they believe the information about its effectiveness in preventing COVID-19 exposure, but because they are afraid of security personnel pressure. They were forced to utilize them due to a government proclamation and fear (P12).*

The data from the observation were taken in August 2021, and during that time the government of Ethiopia impose the obligation on all people to wear face masks in public service areas such as markets, shops, transport services, or other public spaces with a large number of people where social distancing is not possible as covering nose and mouth are recommended health care measures to prevent the spread of COVID 19 pandemic. Street vendors are one of those public services that have close contact with many customers in public spaces, and they are obligated to follow the laws. Unfortunately, the photos and the observation of the study indicate the contrary.

It is often said that the chief asset possessed by the poor is their own labor. Human capital refers to the labor available to the household|: its education, skill, and health. The study showed that the human capital of street vendors was not well developed. This implies that there are misconceptions in the community about the transmission and prevention modalities of COVID-19 for which concerned stakeholders should act with an integrated effort in a way that could reverse the situation.

#### **IV. Gender role-related effect of COVID-19 pandemic on women street vendors**

Gender roles are somewhat an unspoken rule and are the fragments that make up the foundation of many societies. These rules by which genders abide to often dictate how one looks, acts, and even thinks. Furthermore, gender roles exist beyond the realms of home life, to affect a person's occupation and livelihood. In patriarchal societies, women often end up on the bad receiving end of the harsh rules where defiance is called out and even met with punishment. It's a vicious cycle that creates a harsh environment for women who want to create a sustainable income.

While women were already doing most of the world's unpaid work before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a recent ILO survey (2019), almost all women (75%) in the world were involved in unpaid caregiving and domestic activities prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, whereas only about half of men were involved in unpaid activities. Men spend less time in such activities than women around the world in 2019. This reflects the large gender gap in the unpaid workforce participation rate. This study also indicated that the crisis and subsequent lockdown have further increased the unpaid work burden on women. Regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic affected their gender role, street vendors explained that the emergence of the COVID pandemic has resulted in a challenging environment both at home and in vending sites. Supporting this idea, one of the participants reiterated as follows:

*The working environment is very hard for women and especially for older women like me. It is difficult to carry my stuff from home to here because the hill is difficult to climb. I have chronic back pain so it is challenging for me to carry my stuff. Furthermore, staying the whole day at this hot temperature is hard for us. When the challenge seems very hard, I tried to involve children in my vending activities. However, involving them, especially my daughters, was a big challenge because they could be harassed, beaten, or injured (P1).*

Based on the study findings, women who have no children are not going back to street vendors until the local government allows them to do their work. But family members of women vendors with more than two children did resume vending on the streets due to the fear of starvation. Participants also mentioned that they involve their female children to cope with the challenge.

As women who have four children or P.6 said:

*Because I am a single parent with four children, no one assists me during COVID 19. It was extremely difficult for me to manage my family and my job loss, as well as the resulting loss of income to pay rent and meet day-to-day expenses; and for many, it became difficult to even manage my basic needs.*

The study indicates that in poor households daughters replace or help their mothers to gain financial relief. Additionally, other participants also complimented as follows: “*I have tried to*

*vend extra goods than the usual. I usually sold fruits but now I started potato, onion, and tomato. My female children started street vending to cope with the challenge” (P8).*

The women were afraid to engage their daughter in street vending because they are afraid of the risk of harassment but they don't have any other choice other than to take a risk. Similarly, P9 complimented that: *“The challenge is that engaging my children to street vending is very hard to me but I have no other choice. They are young girls they could be harassed, beaten or injured. Worry a lot about them” (P9).*

So this implies that the pandemic directly or indirectly increases the burden on women. Feminist was concerned with reclaiming patriarchal terms used to oppress or label women and using them as a tool of liberation. Women, regardless of social class, continue to perform the majority of household and childcare tasks. When gender roles are normalized, they become the default behavioral standard that each gender is expected to follow. Women, of course, bear the brunt of the burden because patriarchy expects women to accept that their place in society is not as important as men's.

The observation of the study indicated that most of the women were caring for children when they were in the street vending. Participants also mentioned that they are forced to bring their kids to work. P6 stated that she has to bring her 3-year-old boy to work because she has no help at home. The study indicated that the vendors seek to diversify their income by having different family members, especially the female children engage in different types of activities and they employed a number of mechanisms to reduce expenditure. One area of that is covering domestic burdens by them than getting house help. Some of the participant's children were engaged in street vending selling face masks and sanitizers.

Another important aspect of the COVID-19 crisis is that it involves pervasive closures of daycare centers and schools, implying that children must be cared for and educated at home. This poses particularly severe challenges for single parents where their daughters are forced to join the street vending to support them as mentioned by the study participants as follows:

P.8 explains her situation by stating *“I cannot afford to send all my children to school, so my 12 years old daughter started vending with me”*. P.8 implied that her struggle to earn enough money for her family's basic needs forced her to use her 12 years daughter. P.9 also stated, *“I*

*have no male child who sells mask and sanitizer. My older daughter is with me selling fruits so didn't use the opportunity”.*

The responses of the mothers also clearly imply that they too reinforce their own wrong mindset by putting their daughters on the back burner as they are taking their female children away from their school and not their sons. Their statements indicate that women and girls are often expected to sacrifice the most while still being labeled as the contrary.

Key informant 1 also described that the impact of COVID-19 infection was higher among women posing gender differences that was supported by the following quote:

*...at the beginning of the pandemic, the infection was more common among males than females due to their high movement from place to place but later high cases are seen in females as a result of the caring practice they provide for sick members of the family without thinking about themselves (P10).*

In addition, this study implies that COVID-19 preventive measures like the lockdown and market closure disempower women in making their decision making and intra-household conflict.

*Since the COVID-19 crisis, I've experienced a lot of changes. In addition to becoming divorced and becoming a single mother, I had put my business (selling fruits in a hamlet in the local market) on hold and taken a lower-paying job. Before the crisis, my spouse was at my side and used to support our family while I cared for our daughter. Because of his job loss, my husband has become more inebriated. With the current inflation, everything has become beyond my ability. In my house, I have no say. I can't even provide for my daughter's basic needs. Life is now significantly more difficult than it was before the COVID-19 catastrophe. Mainly, I am forced to give my daughter for marriage (P5).*

Despite their best efforts to manage their lives, during interviews, many women street vendors stated that they frequently have to bribe police officers during official evictions. There were several reports of police officers using batons to beat workers who went outside during the lockdown, and this continued even after the curbs were removed. Police and local officials were also accused of harassing some of the women. Despite the fact that many street vendors were hesitant to mention it for fear of further harassment during the interview, police harassment and

brutality was mentioned as a major concern for them. Authorities have seized products on several occasions, forcing vendors to return to the police station and pay a fine to reclaim their goods. Because the fine is so high and this keeps happening, they usually get tired and give up after a while. After paying the fine, some customers complained about missing items or pieces.

#### **4.1.3. Coping mechanisms to minimize the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on livelihood assets**

##### **Coping mechanisms of street vendor women**

Strategies for coping can be divided into ex-ante and ex-post strategies (Dercon, 2002). Ex-ante strategies are households' protection measures for risk control before any shock. Self-insurance strategies, such as precautionary savings and acquisition of an asset or formal or informal group insurance. These strategies are typically insured. Aquiar & Hurst (2005) explained that household behavior to reduce adverse event effects is an ex-post strategy (Aquiar & Hurst, 2005). These strategies are examples of reducing spending, rising domestic output, or increasing revenue diversification sources. Home tactics can have short-term or long-term impacts in terms of impacts. Cameron (2001) discusses household coping mechanisms implemented with short-term effects such as using up savings or selling assets first.

When asked about the coping mechanism they followed and implemented to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their livelihood assets, Participant1 put it as follows. *“Working day and night was the coping mechanism I fully pledged to lessen the impact of the pandemic because I believe with the saying that ‘If you are healthy, you can cope any difficult situation’” (P1).*

The participant mentioned selling different types of goods and getting help from their daughters were one of the coping mechanisms they used. Incongruent with this, another participant underscored that: *“I have tried to vend extra goods than the usual. I usually sold fruits but now I started potato, onion, and tomato. My children started street vending to cope the challenge” (P6).*

Regarding the government's effort to address the impact of COVID-19 by providing support to the street vendors, participants indicated that the government should create a favorable working

environment and should take action to reduce control the astoundingly rising inflation during the pandemic.

Participant 1 claims that:

*I think helping healthy people is not a good approach because they will stop working and will always expect support from the government. And it exacerbates laziness and poverty. I recommend the government to create a favorable working environment, opportunities, and enterprises and make the people work harder. In addition, it would be good if they give us permanent market places for street vending individuals like me (P1).*

The participants believe that government should control unnecessary inflation of goods. Similarly, another participant also claims that:

*Our life is hand to mouth. We consume what we earned in from selling goods. We don't save money because we don't have extra money. Hence, the government should take action to reduce to control the astoundingly rising inflation. I don't agree with the forced measures taken by the government because it didn't consider the poor people (P6).*

Participants described they coped up with the pandemic by decreasing expenditure, especially with an increase in the price of certain crops, such as Teff, which is one of the main staple food items. Participant 3 also explained her situation by stating that:

*The price of Teff has increased to more than 4,000 birr per 100kg and subsequently, the price of one Enjera became 15 birr maybe only rich people can overcome this problem...but for us (the poor) it is too scary and even difficult to survive...The good thing is I have the experience to handle hunger....I have seen even worse than this (P3).*

Participants also mentioned the high price of food resulting in the consumption of less preferred food items, which are considered to have less nutritional value and appeared to be the

predominant strategies for coping with food shortages caused by the pandemic. Similarly, P4 complimented that: *"We only eat maize, which is the cheapest and least preferred food." Even if we wanted to, we couldn't afford to buy other foods like meat, bread, or Teff" (P4).*

This study also found that reducing the number of meals per day remained the predominant strategies for coping with food insecurity during the pandemic. This is the case for Participant 6 who stated:

*All of my children are older than six years. My child who is female and six years old has had a little bit of lunch, but all the rest of my children are above six years old and have had to cut down lunch (P6).*

This will have a serious consequence on the health and human development of future generations, especially on their educational achievement. Another participant also shared her experience in such a way: *"Most of the time, we skip breakfast and usually eat two meals a day. We used to eat meat sometimes, but now we have ceased to use it" (P5).*

Some respondents reported a change in priorities regarding their expenses, while others reported food items and house rental costs as their priorities rather than buying clothes, as they used to do before the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, the income loss among households resulted in changes in their priority. One of the study participants said that:

*I used to buy clothes and fruit for the children before, but I have stopped purchasing such items because our income decreased significantly. Thus, currently, we have been prioritizing purchasing food, buying water, and house rent (P9).*

Other respondents reported that they had stopped saving money and used their money to buy food and food materials instead:

*Previously, I spent on family food. If I got some extra money, I used to save for medication and other services in the form of Ekub (traditional money-saving). Now there is no Ekub; we stopped it totally. Now we are spending on the family's food consumption (P8).*

Many of these women street vendors resorted to negative coping strategies such as the distressed sale of assets and taking loans from moneylenders at an exorbitantly high-interest rate. Some of the women have taken a loan to sustain and supplement the loss in income. Many of them stated that repayment is a major concern and the interest keeps piling up, which leads them into the vicious cycle of a debt trap. Some of the participants also stated that they are either using existing savings or selling household assets and trying to manage without taking a loan. Some of them even had to beg for food.

The study participants mentioned loans as a coping strategy during the pandemic. Furthermore, after the COVID-19 pandemic, women street vendor decreased their business income. Only a few women vendors use their saved money from their previous work, however, the saved money was not enough to lead their life as usual. When saving loans and support fall short, households may resort to other strategies with more long-term effects such as withdrawing children from schools involving children in early marriage and starting vending with them. One of the participants stated: *“I cannot afford to send all my children to school, so my 12 years old daughter started vending with me” (P8).*

Most participants used negative coping mechanisms. Pandemic imposed a disproportionate effect on women it pushed families into bad coping mechanisms like giving young children for early marriage. Participant 5 stated:

*I even cannot provide the necessities for my daughter. Mainly, I am forced to give my 15 years old daughter for marriage to an older man who lives in a rural area, where there is no facility for my kid. I am unable to pay house rent because of my small income. Life is now much more difficult than it was before the COVID-19 crisis (P5).*

The COVID-19 extended lockdown has affected the lives and livelihood of street vendors in myriad ways. They are the worst affected because their work requires physical presence at the workplace, in the absence of which wages cannot be earned. The luxury of working from home and maintaining physical distance is not available to street vendors. Moreover, within street vending there are binaries too; fruit, vegetable, and other food vendors seem to have been able to

reopen their stalls but non-food vendors are left with a pile of inventory for which the market has declined significantly.

Most street women and girls vendors endure coping strategies such as taking out new loans that can bring in much-needed income during crises. The Covid-19 pandemic seems to have provided a perfect opportunity to traders to get extra profit from street vendors by providing credit for them. During COVID 19 financial crisis, women and girl vendors reported that access to low-interest loans from traders allowed them to maintain basic living standards by paying for rent, utilities, and food for their children. Small low-interest loans can help to fill immediate gaps in care provision, but the effects of debt repayments are still unpaid and/or unclear. Therefore, street vendor women and girl interviews showed that debt repayments can add pressure to limit household expenses.

## **Faith**

Regardless of their respective religions, the women in this study relied on their faith to help them get through the difficult process of attempting to survive the COVID 19 pandemic. All of the study's participants identified their faith in God as a coping mechanism for the difficulties they encountered. *“I pray to Allah, I cry when I am making dua, I ask Allah to help me pass this difficult time. I feel better almost right away and I come here to continue my survival” (P6)*

The study also found that women were ready to accept being infected by the COVID 19 virus. As it is the will of God. Participants in this study stated that they will accept if they got sick because whatever happens is “written”.

*I was stressed at the beginning of the pandemic. The diseases could infect if there is poor hygiene and sanitation. And as I told you my living house is very dirty so I fear the loss of my children from the pandemic. To be honest, I hadn't thought that I and my children would die because it's God's will and God sees our poverty and saves us (P8).*

The study found that prayer and partaking in religious activities were ways the participants dealt with feelings of stress and emptiness that are associated with income loss and hunger. *“I pray to the almighty to bless my home with a little money. We all want this disease to vanish from the*

*earth, we are here trying our best to pass this time but our faith isn't in the technologies, it is in GOD" (P9).*

According to the study, faith was one of the coping mechanisms used by women who were struggling as a result of the pandemic. According to the study, women turned to their religion and trusted God/Allah to help them deal with challenges. This study discovered that the women still held the belief that God was the source of everything, despite their struggles to provide for their children.

## **Social Support**

Relying on the support of loved ones is another finding made by the study as a coping mechanism. Participants in this study stated that they rely on the support of their loved ones to get them through the day when things are difficult. Even though social gatherings were restricted during the pandemic, the participant mentioned that even when things get tough at home, they still rely on support from loved ones. *"I don't tell my friends about my issues with getting a divorce, but I talk to my mother, I ask her for advice on what I should do and how I should continue. She is always helpful and she prays for me" (P5).*

Another participant proves this point by discussing how she relies on her siblings to be there whenever she feels stressed or a certain way about feeding her children with very little money. *"I tell my sister everything; she is always there, whenever I am done praying I go to her for advice" (P6).*

Participant in this study also mentioned that her spouse serve as a main source of support during the journey. The study found the participant in this study had her relationship with her partner strengthened throughout the state of emergency. *"He hates it when I worry, we have been living without money for so long that he doesn't really care anymore, he never pressured me or threatened to leave, he is very caring and I go to him whenever I feel down" (P9).*

Even though the government declared social distancing, depending on social support was also a finding of this research. Women who participated in this study sought social support and used it as a coping mechanism during a state of emergency.

### **Coping mechanisms from governmental and non-governmental bodies**

The government officials reported that they have planned to support street vendors to change to formal trade firms by receiving loans and monetary support from NGOs. On contrary, the street vendors were not getting the required support as our main focus shifted to the war in addition to COVID 19 pandemic. As part of the government support, distribution of face masks, and sanitizers to women street vendors were in place. When asked key informants about the coping mechanism to be implemented to minify the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on women street vendor's livelihood assets, one of the key informants summarized it as follows:

*We tried to bring the informal sector (including women street vendors) to a formal one and for that as part of a government measure, our office is helping street vendors to change to formal trade firms. Furthermore, we are also striving under a movement called "Sunday Market" an Ideology to support women street vendors by providing them a free marketing zone like Arada, Piassa, etc. every two weeks and motivating them to be changed to a formal entity by increasing their income. The office is currently following this shift by assigning an officer for better facilitation (P12).*

Some representatives of government institutions mentioned that the different NGOs should help in making a good and safe work environment for street vendors. To this end, the same participant underscored that:

*Those NGOs should work together when the government is unable to respond to the types and number of various requests. There are many NGO projects in the city so they have to prepare shades and give them to those in need of it, this will ease the problem of street vender women. It's possible to work by combining them both. We also have NGO that only gives monetary loans for only women who are street vendors, this led most street vendors to come to the formal firm in order to get the money fund. The other effort is that we are providing capacity-building training for those female firm holders in an attempt to make them more profitable.*

The study indicated that non-governmental organizations were working with governmental organizations by giving training and loan to a few selected women street vendors. In line with this argument, another key informant 2 reiterated that:

*To address the impact of the pandemic, we established a task force committee that worked on the pandemic. The committee composite of different departments. The main task of the committee in our institution was to distribute face masks and sanitizers to women street vendors. In addition, many non-governmental organizations were working in concert with our institution. They gave training to the community, and distribute preventive materials. The regional women and child bureau send a 400,000 birr loan and we distributed it to the street vendors. The loan is given to 40 women 10,000 birr each. And they will return the loan when getting profit and are stable (P11).*

Implementation of a sustainable income-generating project for Women Street vendors through voluntary organizations and creating monitoring and evaluation platforms that could ensure accountability was one of the core coping mechanisms. A key informant 1 described the core coping mechanisms as follows:

*One of the mechanisms should be an implementation of a sustainable income-generating project for Women Street vendors which can help the women stand to be independent enough. Also, we have to make sure that support is delivered for the women in need of that help and be sure others are not taking advantage of them because there is also a fake and unfair attempt of favoring friends, and relatives by unethical approaches from people working in such organizations. Further, the government must ensure consistent monitoring and evaluation of these voluntary organizations so as to ensure accountability (P10).*

Keeping this in mind, the government's benefits under this scheme are inadequate. It is critical to provide financial assistance to street vendors, not only to help them survive the pandemic but also to help them return to their normal livelihood activities. Many women and girl vendors were not able to find alternate work due to their educational status and lack of experience in other business sectors as most of them have been involved in vegetation vending for 2-20 years. Therefore, most women vendors are affected by psychological stress and forced to resort to high-

risk coping strategies. Similarly, the study findings are consistent with Abebe (2017) and show that most of these people find it difficult to get jobs in the formal economic sectors due to their limited education and lack of skills for formal employment. In their quest for making a living, many of these people have limited choices other than taking to the streets by engaging in street vending activities.

Covid-19 prevention systems have resulted in the closing of some public spaces ordinarily used by street vendors, social interaction restrictions, disruptions in the supply chain of goods, and the collapse of distribution networks. This has left several street vendors locked out of their only source of livelihood. Under these circumstances, specific measures have to be taken and avoid a heavy toll on this marginalized group.

*.....the organization failed to support women in need of their support while some of the organizations changes their support for victims of the war. Whereas a few organizations are supporting them to an inconsistent and insufficient extent (P11).*

The life of women and girls working as street vendors is further complicated by disparities in access to information. Lower functional literacy levels and less access to information about the COVID-19 pandemic could not adapt to the market and find and cop mechanism to cover their earn. In this regard, media campaigns, public awareness creation, and availability of necessary logistics to the street vendors by the government were mentioned as additional coping strategies.

To this end, the study participant underscored that:

*Among the different measures, the media campaign is one effort done by the government which is helpful to aware the community including street vendors. The efforts we made so far to enhance public awareness are good. The other is, that it is working well on the distribution of the vaccine to the most vulnerable groups including the women street vendors. However, little is done so far on this issue (P10).*

However, very few working vendors mentioned that they received, masks, and sanitizer from the government. Most of them did not receive essential protective facilities from the government.

## **4.2. Discussion**

This study explored the lived experience of women street vendors during COVID 19 era, using a qualitative research method that had a phenomenological approach, themes were identified and the findings were discussed in the previous chapter. The following section aims to compare the findings of this research with the findings of other researchers conducted on the topic. Studies conducted in different parts of the world will be used.

### **4.2.1. Livelihood Strategies**

This study revealed that street vending was a necessary means of living for women as it became an option for those that didn't have any. Most Participants have difficulty getting jobs in the formal economic sector which might be due to their lack of skills for formal employment or lack of job opportunities. This goes together with the study conducted by Berhanu's (2019) and Abebe's (2017) study in Addis Ababa, which found that street trade is an appealing economic strategy and source of livelihood for the majority of people with poor educational backgrounds. Studies conducted in other parts of the world also found that the majority of traders have only primary or secondary education (Mitullah, 2005). This may allude to the informal sector's low level of education and skill, as the higher the level of education, the smaller the informal sector's operators will be. This could imply that women with abilities and opportunities that would allow them to obtain formal employment or other lucrative informal work would not likely choose street vending.

### **4.2.2. Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the social life of women street vendors**

The study found that social isolation and decreased social networks were commonly experienced among women street vendors because of the state of emergency declared by the government of Ethiopia. A study conducted by Messay (2020), had a finding that goes in accordance with the findings of the current research and mentioned socially, the state of emergency declared by the government of Ethiopia banned social and religious gatherings. In addition, several services were closed or limited including schools, as public resources were directed to COVID-19 response,

and measures were taken to control transmission. This resulted in decreased mobility, increased isolation, weakening of social networks, and psychosocial distress (ActionAid-Ethiopia 2020; Messay 2020b).

#### **4.2.3. Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the financial capital of women street vendors**

The study found that the enforced social distancing and stay-at-home conditions restricted employment opportunities. This goes together with the study conducted by Weldesilassie & Woldehanna (2020) which found that Substantial proportions of Ethiopians have insecure sources of income and are highly vulnerable to any kind of shock that threatens their income source for the majority of the population (Weldesilassie & Woldehanna, 2020,p.14). It also indicated that the first two weeks of the lockdown were the most difficult for street vendor women and girls as they had no work. A report in the initial days of the lockdown pointed out that street vendors suffered tremendously. The study finding confirm by WOW (2020) COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the lives and livelihoods of women in the world, with reports that informal workers were hit hardest.

According to the study's findings, the COVID-19 lockdown, as well as the subsequent recession, had a significant impact on market supply chains, and this resulted in food shortages. Women already had limited mobility and market access, and current market shocks and supply chain failures have harmed women's informal economies even more. This finding is consistent with the findings of a World Bank survey conducted early in the progression of the pandemic in Ethiopia, in which 23.4 percent of households reported a food shortage, 21 percent reported a lack of resources, and 14 percent reported being hungry (Hirvonen, 2020). The reported incidence of food insecurity in April and May, a month after the first cases of the virus were reported, is likely to be a reflection of underlying chronic food deprivation caused by the COVID-19 virus (Hirvonen, 2020).

The study found that the closure of market places ordinarily used for street vending resulted in starvation and hunger. This find goes in line with the study by Schwettmann which indicated they lack access to adequate social security cover and support mechanisms for survival, African informal economy workers are vulnerable to poverty, starvation, and illness. It includes waste recyclers, street vendors, transport workers, building workers, domestic workers, and many

more, small-scale farmers and migrant workers in rural and suburban areas (Schwettmann, 2020).

#### **4.2.4. Human capital-related effect of COVID-19 pandemic on women street vendors**

The study indicated that stress and depression was a common experience among participant. The finding of this research goes together with the finding of the study done in Addis Ababa which indicated that the pandemic results in psychological problems like depression, stress, and anxiety in the female gender and those with a monthly income of less than 3000 ETB (Kassaw, 2020). Another finding by SEWA indicates that those who have been unable to work have expressed severe mental stress they had suffered during this period and the economic crisis has disrupted their livelihoods (SEWA 2020). The study implies that vending on the streets brought different types of health problems highly suffocated and congested work environments exposing them to different communicable diseases which can be transmitted in such condensed areas. This finding is consistent with the findings of Schwettmann stated, that due to a lack of adequate protection, the vast majority of informal workers are exposed to threats to occupational health and security and, thus, are at higher risk of disease, injury, or mortality, and have an increased chance of infection by COVID-19. If they fall ill, most workers do not have guaranteed access to medical care or income security through sickness or employment injury benefits (Schwettmann, 2020). Another study by ILO indicated Informal sector workers and their families continue to face the risk of contracting the Coronavirus even though they remain home because they often live in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions and inescapable confines that practically prevent physical distance. Lack of water supply not only restricts manual washing opportunities but also requires women to queue up for water, thereby putting themselves and their communities at risk of contracting the COVID 19 (ILO, 2020b). In low-income contexts and particularly in families living in slums, camps, and similarly poor circumstances where morbidity from COVID-19 and other diseases can increase (de Paz et al., 2020).

#### **4.2.4. Gender role-related effect of COVID-19 pandemic on women street vendors**

The finding of the study indicated that women's work burden increased because of the school closure. The current study has similar and consistent findings to the study conducted by Ross and Taylor (2020) finding shows that during the COVID-19 crisis, women's household burden

increased. In this regard, the burden index indicates the number of household activities for which women or men reported increases in time spent during the COVID-19 outbreak (Ross & Taylor, 2020). On average, women reported an increase in time spent on at least three household chores 3.2 activities per woman, compared to 2.3 activities per man.

The study found that COVID-19 preventive measures like the lockdown and market closure disempower women in making their decision making and intra-household conflict. Studies conducted in other parts of the world also found that decreased women empowerment is a common experience amongst women during the lockdown. The current study goes in line with the CARE 2020 study where COVID-19 reduces the potential of women and girls to bring financial contributions to their families, which can lead to reduced decision-making and raise the risk of abuse from intimate partners (CARE, 2020). The loss of jobs, income loss, and reduction in pay hours have affected women of all walks of life and ages (Ross & Taylor, 2020).

#### **4.2.6. Coping mechanisms of street vendor women**

The study participants mentioned loans as a coping strategy during the pandemic. Furthermore, after the COVID-19 pandemic, women street vendor decreased their business income. Only a few women vendors use their saved money from their previous work, however, the saved money was not enough to lead their life as usual. Finding by SEWA indicated that many street vendors were unable to bear the cost of necessities for family members rather they are forced into a vicious cycle of taking loans for medical treatment. Lockdown has severely hit the street vendors financially (SEWA 2020), which has resulted in a disturbed home environment.

When saving loans and support fall short, households may resort to other strategies with more long-term effects such as withdrawing children from schools involving children in early marriage and starting vending with them. Most participants used negative coping mechanisms. Pandemic imposed a disproportionate effect on women it pushed families into bad coping mechanisms like giving young children for early marriage and withdrawing young girls from school. Similarly, CARE (2020) and UN (2020) support the current finding as they can push families into negative coping mechanisms which have a disproportionate effect on women, such as reductions in girls' and women's food consumption or early marriage (CARE, 2020). With increasing unemployment, financial pressures, and poverty, violence against women and girls continue to

intensify, according to UN Women (2020), The COVID-19 extended lockdown has affected the lives and livelihood of street vendors in myriad ways. A protracted crisis, along with an economic downturn could also have dire consequences for sexual and reproductive health outcomes. The lack of economic and educational opportunities for women and girls is closely associated with their sexual and reproductive well-being. Economic distress could lead to an increase in child marriages and other coping mechanisms that negatively affect sexual and reproductive health (Cancedda et al., 2020).

The study also found that government and non-government organizations' support to cope with financial loss is not sufficient, most of the participants described they didn't get any support from any organization. This is similar to the findings mentioned by WIEGO in its impact analysis paper on informal sector workers where they found that these workers did not receive any protective equipment from the government to work within safety measures (WIEGO 2020).

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Summary of Major Findings**

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic livelihood in Gondar city is difficult without a means to earn an income. Consequently, women street vendors took business activities without being formally registered. The study shows that street vending is taken as a means of livelihood for those who were not originally from Gondar city and street trading has been creating employment opportunities for the less educated person. The study implies that street vending has been taken as a livelihood mechanism for females who were married, widowed, and unmarried. In terms of the effects of COVID 19 pandemic on asset possession of the women street vendors, the study showed that the financial capital of street vendors was not well developed. Regarding financial capital, the study implies that the participants generated income from diverse forms of activities from selling vegetables, fruits, fried foods, and soon. The study findings revealed that the enforcement of the lockdown measures has further weakened the ability of women within the informal sector to sustain their life and be exposed to hunger. The study shows that the vendors experienced market shortages leading to fewer sales, one or two in a day that they failed to cover expenses. In terms of financial assets, the participants of the study seem to be less likely to re-invest their earnings into a different sort of income source. This is because they originally had small startup capital and they engage in business that does not generate not even for daily consumption. Even if the financial return of street vending is not so much, vendors from the selected sites preferred to stay in it. They see street vending as a way to become independent and to be able to support themselves or their children even if they are not earning much money out of it. Conditions of social capital were strong among people who were familiar from the beginning and the study participants demonstrated loosely attached to people from other networks. Unfortunately, the study implies because of the state of emergency declared by the government of Ethiopia banned social and religious gatherings and it resulted in decreased mobility, increased isolation, and weakening of social networks. The study implies that vending on the streets brought different types of health problems highly suffocated and congested work environments exposed them to different communicable diseases which can be transmitted in such condensed areas. The fact that women street vendors spend many hours on street vending and

most of the days of the week implies physical fatigue and enfeeblement, especially on older street vendors. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant loss of human life around the world and poses an unexpected public health threat. As a result, stress was found to be a common experience among the study participants. The study also shows that women street vendors were vulnerable to different types of unpredictable shock-like COVID 19. Another important aspect of the COVID-19 crisis is that it involves pervasive closures of daycare centers and schools, implying that children must be cared for and educated at home. This poses particularly severe challenges for single parents where daughters are forced to join the street vending to support them. The study indicates that lack of adequate income in the household forced young girls to drop out of school and the COVID 19 pandemic has increased the work burden of women and young girls. In the face of the vulnerabilities, street vendors persuaded a number of coping strategies in fact the majority of them had only one source of income generation activity with frequent shifts from one type of product to another depending on the preferences of customers. The study implies the vendors seek to diversify their income by having different family members, especially their female children by engaging them in different types of activities and they employed a number of mechanisms to reduce expenditure. One area of that is covering domestic burdens by them than getting a house help. The study indicated they have different coping strategies put in place to respond to shortages of food and income including relying on less preferred and less expensive food and limiting portion size of the meal, withdrawing female children from school, giving young girls for marriage, loans, and others. All in all, the study shows that participating in street vending was taken as a mechanism for livelihood generation and a mechanism for survival.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

In, conclusion COVID-19 had a multifaceted impact on women and girl street vendors, especially in terms of their social lives and socioeconomic status. The emergence of the COVID pandemic has resulted in a challenging environment both at home and in vending sites. The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed walloping pressure on street vendors. The street vendors have been severely impacted by the lockdown. They have lost all of their earnings, and the lockdown has harmed their livelihood in the long run. Specifically, the pandemic affects women and girls facing hunger and food insecurity were higher rather than health risks. The main constraints of

street vending for women during COVID-19 were the economic crisis with an unstable market and more spending costs for transport due to travel restrictions in place in the city, and most women vendors are affected by psychological stress and forced to resort to high-risk coping strategies by decreasing expenditure push families into negative coping mechanisms which have a disproportionate effect on women, such as reductions in girls' and women's food consumption or early marriage and females children's dropping out of school. Faith and social support were the other positive coping mechanism used by the vendors. The crisis and its subsequent shutdown response have resulted in a dramatic increase in the work burden of women. It is likely that the negative impacts of COVID 19 on women and families will last for years without proactive interventions. The support provided by the government as a coping strategy under this scheme was highly insufficient. As a result, it is critical for policymakers to develop evidence-based schemes after consulting with representatives of street vendors.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

**Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were forwarded.**

- The street vendors from the study location had no education, primary educated or discontinued education. Introducing education programs tailored to the needs of such groups should be taught about by the concerted effort of the Gondar city administration and other NGOs.
- Gondar women children and youth affairs should monitor the involvement of young children below the age of 18 in street vending activity.
- Gondar's small-scale enterprise office should empower women street vendors to take small loans and pay them back with minimal interest in order to make their businesses sustainable and profitable for their improved livelihoods.
- The concerned government office may give street vendors education on basic knowledge on business skills through training on how to run a small business in times of pandemics
- Street vendors can be sensitized to keep their trading areas clean and follow COVID 19 safety measures and support one another.
- Street vending should get recognized for its high potential for poverty alleviation in the country.

- The Gondar bureau of education should closely monitor and follow female students dropping out of school.
- Government and non-government institutions should pay necessary attention to the lives of women street vendors in developing health crisis management.
- Non-government organizations should introduce activities that improve entitlements to the food through expanding economic opportunities.
- Concerned policymakers need to develop evidence-based schemes after consulting with some representatives of street vendors.
- Gondar city administration should find ways to meet the urgent financial aid for street vendor women with street vendor's organizations, associations, and Cooperatives.
- The government of Ethiopia should include street vending in inclusive urban planning and market system to maximize the national economy's benefits.
- Gondar city administration should work on sustainable reform strategies for a conducive business for street vending environment that could allow street entrepreneurship to vanish out of informality.

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## Appendix 1: Interview guide

The interview guide is designed to collect data for the research entitled on “*Impact of COVID-19 on the Livelihood of Women Working in the Informal Sector: The Case of Women Street Vendors in Gondar City, Ethiopia*” as a partial fulfillment of the MA Degree in center for gender studies. The study is intended to explore the impact of COVID 19 on *Women Street Vendors in Gondar*. The questionnaires need your exact feeling of answers, which makes my study sound and complete. Whatever you answer is considered right; so, feel free and give your true feelings on each item. Your response will remain confidential and not transferred to other bodies. Hence, I kindly request you to answer this interview honestly and genuinely. You are not required to write your name at any place in the interview.

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation!!!

### Annex 1: Interview Guide for women street vendors in Gondar city

#### I. Section one: General Information

1. Would you mind telling me about yourself (example; age, educational status, marital status, work experience, do you have children.....)

ስለራስዎ ቢነግሩኝ (ለምሳሌ ዕድሜ ፣ የትምህርት ደረጃ ፣ የጋብቻ ሁኔታ ፣ የሥራ ልምድ ፣ ልጆች አለዎት ...)

#### 1. Section two: Discussion points

1. How do you engage in this work? When you start the vending?**እንዴት ወደዚህ ስራ ገቡ?መኝት ጀመሩ?**

2. What are your livelihood sources? Do you have another source for a living?

**የመተዳደሪያ ምንጭዎ ምንድነው? ለመተዳደሪያ ሌላ ምንጭ አለዎት?**

3. How do you describe your work environment for women vendors? Are there any challenges?**ለሴቶች ሻጮች የሥራ አካባቢዎን እንዴት ይገልጻሉ?የሚያጋጥሟችህ ችግሮች አሉ?**

4. How would you describe the availability in the area to make vending?**የመነገጃ/ የመሥሪያ ቤታ/አካባቢ መገኘትን እንዴት ይገልፁታል?**

5. What do you know about COVID-19? What have you experienced during the COVID 19 pandemic? What was your biggest concern at the beginning of the pandemic? **ስለ COVID-19 ምን ያውቃሉ? በኮቪድ 19 ወረርሽኝ ወቅት ምን አጋጥመውዎታል? በወረርሽኝ መጀመሪያ ላይ ትልቁ ስጋትዎ ምንድነው?**

6. What is your opinion about new business opportunities because of the pandemic? **በወረርሽኝ ምክንያት ስለተፈጠሩ አዳዲስ የንግድ ዕድሎች ምን አስተያየት አለዎት?**

7. What situations worsen the effect of COVID 19? How do you overcome those effects?**በአለትተሰት ሂደቶ ላይ የኮቪድ 19 ውጤትን/ተጽኖ የሚያባብሱት የትኞቹ ሁኔታዎች ናቸው? እነዚህን ተጽዕኖዎችን እንዴት ይቋቋማሉ?**

8. What economic and social problems you experienced? **ምን ዓይነት ኢኮኖሚያዊ እና ማህበራዊ ችግሮች አጋጥመውታል**

9. How would you describe your social life during the pandemic? How about after the pandemic? **ወረርሽኝ በተከሰተበት ጊዜ ማህበራዊ ኑሮዎን/ሂደቶ እንዴት ነበር ወይም ምን ይመሥል ነበር ? ከወረርሽኝ በኋላስ?**

10. How have you been making money during the pandemic? How about after? What was the flow of business after the pandemic? **በወረርሽኝ ወቅት እንዴት ገንዘብ እያገኙ ነበር? በኋላስ? ወረርሽኝ ከተከሰተ በኋላ የንግድ ፍሰት እንዴት ነው?**

11. What have you experienced in terms of making a living? How do you see the income you obtain from selling? **መተዳደሪያ ከማግኘት አኳያ ምን ገጠመህ? ከሽያጭ የሚያገኙትን ገቢ እንዴት ያዩታል?**

12. What is /are your thought about the government policy related to COVID 19 and business activities? **ከኮቪድ 19 እና ከንግድ እንቅስቃሴዎች ጋር ስለሚዛመደው የመንግሥት ፖሊሲ ምን ያስባሉ/ምን አስተያየት አለዎ?**

13. What is your opinion about the government's public health awareness creation measures about COVID 19? ስለ COVID 19 የመንግስት የህዝብ ጤና ግንዛቤ ፈጠራ እርምጃዎች ምን አስተያየት አለዎት?

14. Do you receive support from government and non-government organizations? How do you feel about it? What is your thought suggestion about what intervention or policy issues need to be addressed

ከመንግስት እና መንግስታዊ ካልሆኑ ድርጅቶች ድጋፍ ያገኛሉ? ስለሱ ምን ይሰማዎታል? የመንግስት ጣልቃ ገብነት ወይም የፖሊሲ ጉዳዮች መስተካከል ያለባቸው ነገሮችን የእርስዎ ሀሳብ አስተያየት ምንድነው?

15. What are the most difficult things you faced because of the pandemic? በወረርሽኝ ምክንያት ያጋጠሙዎት በጣም ከባድ ነገሮች ምንድናቸው ?

16. How do you cope with the challenges resulting from the pandemic in your daily life? በዕለት ተዕለት ሕይወትዎ ላይ ወረርሽኝ የሚያስከትለውን ተግዳሮቶች እንዴት ይቋቋማሉ?

17. What coping mechanisms you undertake? ምን ዓይነት የመቋቋም ዘዴዎች ተጠቀሙ?

18. What opportunities and challenges do you face while taking those coping mechanisms? እነዚያን የመቋቋም ዘዴ ሲወስዱ ምን ዕድሎች እና ፈተናዎች አጋጥመውዎታል?

19. What are the safety mechanisms you take to protect yourself and your customers? እራስዎን እና ደንበኞችዎን ለመጠበቅ የሚወስዷቸው የደህንነት ዘዴዎች ምንድናቸው?

These are all about the questions. Thank you for your participation

If you have questions, suggestions, or other opinions, you can add.

**ድምዳሜ**

**ጥያቄዎች እነዚህ ነበሩ :: ስለ ተሳትፎዎ እናመሰግናለን**

**ጥያቄዎች ፣ አስተያየቶች ወይም ሌሎች አስተያየቶች ካሉዎት ማክል ይችላሉ::**

## Annex 2: Interview Guide for key-informants

### 1. Questions for Gondar women children and youth affair office and Gondar small business enterprise office የጎንደር ሴቶች ህፃናትና ወጣቶች ጉዳይ ጽ / ቤት እና የጎንደር አነስተኛ ንግድ ድርጅት ጽ / ቤት ጥያቄዎች

1. Please Introduce yourself (age, educational status, marital status, work experience, position)

እባክዎን እራስዎን ያስተዋውቁ (ዕድሜ ፣ የትምህርት ደረጃ፣ የጋብቻ ሁኔታ ፣ የሥራ ልምድ ፣ የስራ ሀላፊነት)

2. What do you think are the contributing factors that drive women to street vending? ሴቶችን ወደ ጎዳና ላይ ንግድ እንዲገቡ የሚገፋፉ /አስተዋዕፆ የሚያደርጉ ምክንያቶች ምን ይመስልዎታል?

3. How do you describe the magnitude of street vending and the participation of women in Gondar city? በጎንደር ከተማ ውስጥ የጎዳና ላይ ሽያጭ/ ንግድ መጠንን እና የሴቶች ተሳትፎ እንዴት ይገልጹታል ?

4. Is there a special unit in your organization that follows the issue of women street vending during pandemics? በወረርሽኝ ወቅት በድርጅትዎ ውስጥ የሴቶች ነጋዴዎችን ጉዳይ የሚከታተል ልዩ ክፍል አለ/ነበር?

5. How do you describe the nature of women individuals who participate in street vending (age, gender, education status)? በመንገድ ሽያጮች ውስጥ የሚሳተፉ የሴቶች ግለሰቦችን እንዴት ይገልጹቸዋል(ዕድሜ ፣ ጾታ ፣ የትምህርት ሁኔታ)?

6. Currently, what are the measures taken by the government to facilitate/manage street vending? በአሁኑ ወቅት የጎዳና ላይ ሽያጭን/ንግድን ለማቀላጠፍ/ለማስተዳደር በመንግሥት የሚወሰዱ እርምጃዎች ምንድን ናቸው?

7. What is COVID 19? ኮቪድ 19 ምንድን ነው?

7. What is the government policy toward street vending during the era of COVID 19? Do you think the policy is appropriate? በኮቪድ 19 ዘመን የመንገድ ሽያጭን በተመለከተ የመንግሥት ፖሊሲ ምንድን ነው? ፖሊሲው ተገቢ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ?

8. What kind of action has been taken by the government to support women's street vendors during the pandemic? **ወረርሽኝ በተከሰተበት ወቅት የሴቶች የሰው ልማት ላይ ነጋዴዎችን ለመደገፍ መንግስት ምን ዓይነት እርምጃ ወስዷል?**

9. What do you think are the possible challenges that women street vendors face while operating their business during the pandemic? **ወረርሽኝ በተከሰተበት ጊዜ ሴቶች የሰው ልማት ላይ ነጋዴዎች ሊገጥሟቸው የሚችሉ ተግዳሮቶች ምን ይመስልዎታል?**

10. Have you observed common coping mechanisms used by women street vendors? **ሴቶች የሰው ልማት ላይ ነጋዴዎች የሚጠቀሙባቸውን የተለመዱ የመቋቋሚያ ዘዴዎች ተመልክተዋል?**

11. To solve the challenges of Women Street vendors related to Covid 19, what do you suggest for the governmental and nongovernmental organizations? **ከኮቪ. 19 ጋር የተዛመዱ የሴቶች የመንገድ ላይ ንግድ ተያይዞ ሊገጥሙ የሚችሉ ተግዳሮቶችን ለመፍታት ለመንግሥታዊ እና መንግስታዊ ላልሆኑ ድርጅቶች ምን ይመክራሉ?**

12. Have you provided women street vendors loan/skill training, providing facilities during the pandemic? If no why

**ወረርሽኝ በተከሰተበት ጊዜ ለሰው ልማት ላይ ነጋዴዎች የብድር/የክህሎት ሥልጠና ሰጥተዋል? ካልሆነ ለምን**

15. What were some of the measures that your organization to street vendors took as a response to the change in business activity during the pandemic?

**ወረርሽኝ በተከሰተበት ወቅት በተፈጠረው የንግድ እንቅስቃሴ ለውጥ ምላሽ ድርጅትዎ ለሰው ልማት ላይ የወሰዳቸው እርምጃዎች ምን ነበሩ?**

16. Do you have additional comments? **ተጨማሪ አስተያየቶች አሉዎት?**

### Annex 3: Question for Gondar city health bureau

#### ጥያቄ ለጎንደር ከተማ ጤና ቢሮ

1. Please Introduce yourself **እባክዎን እራስዎን ያስተዋውቁ**

2. What do you say about covid 19? What makes it different from other diseases

**ስለ ኮቪድ 19 ምን ይላሉ? ከሌሎች በሽታዎች የሚለየው ምንድን ነው?**

3. What kind of work predispose people to COVID 19? ሰዎችን ለኮቪድ 19 የበለጠ የሚያጋልጠው የትኛው የሥራ ዘርፍ ነው?

4. How would you describe COVID 19 effect on women ? ኮቪድ 19 በሴቶች ላይ የሚያሳድረውን ተጽዕኖ እንዴት ይገልፁታል?

5. Do you think street vending can increase the transmission of the COVID 19? How?

**የጎዳና ላይ ሽያጭ የኮቪድ 19 ስርጭትን ሊጨምር ይችላል ብለው ያስባሉ? እንዴት?**

6. What do you think are the possible challenges covid 19 exposed the urban poor women? በኮቪድ -19 ምክንያት በከተማ የሚኖሩ ድሃ ሴቶችን ሊገጥሟቸው /ሊያጋልጡ የሚችሉ ችግሮች ምን ይመስልዎታል?

7. What are the mechanisms for reducing the difficulties encountered by urban poor women? በከተማ የሚኖሩ ድሃ ሴቶች ያጋጠሟቸውን እነዚህን ተግዳሮቶች ለመቀነስ ስልቶቹ ምንድናቸው?

8. What are the measures your organization took to control the pandemic? ወረርሽኝን ለመቆጣጠር ድርጅትዎ የወሰዳቸው እርምጃዎች ምንድን ናቸው?

9. What does your organization use to educate women street vendors about the pandemic? የጎዳና ላይ ሴት ነጋዴዎችን ስለ ወረርሽኝ ለማስተማር ድርጅትዎ ምን ይጠቀማል?

10. Which government measure do you consider most relevant in minimizing the effect of COVID 19 on the informal sector?

መደበኛ ባልሆነ የሥራ ዘርፍ ላይ /informal sector የኮቪድ 19 ውጤትን/ተጽኖ ለመቀነስ የትኛው የመንግስት እርምጃ በጣም ተገቢ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ?

11. What is your opinion about the measures the community use to prevent transmission? ህብረተሰቡ የኮቪድ 19 ስርጭትን ለመከላከል ስለሚወስዳቸው እርምጃዎች ምን አስተያየት አለዎት?

12. Are COVID19 impact mitigation measures being targeted to a vulnerable group, including for example women informal workers? ኮቪድ 19 ን ተይዘው ሊመጡ የሚችሉ ችግሮችን ለማቃለል የተዎሰዱ እርምጃዎች/አቅዶች ተጋላጭ ህብረተሠብን ያካተቱ ናቸው? ለምሳሌ የጎዳና ላይ ነጋዴዎችን

13. Do you have any recommendations on what action to address the problems?

ችግሮቹን ለመፍታት ምን መደረግ አለበት ብለው ያስባሉ?

### Annex 4: Observation checklist

Observation points	Yes	No	Comment/Observations
<p>Appearance of vending area (sanitation, presence of shades )</p> <p><b>የሽያጭ ቦታ ገጽታ (ንፅህና ፣ የጥላዎች መኖር)</b></p>			
<p>Vending activity ( type, volume, good flow of market )</p> <p><b>የሽያጭ እንቅስቃሴ (ዓይነት ፣ ይዘት ፣ ጥሩ የገቢያ ፍሰት)</b></p>			
<p>Any measures to prevent the transmission of covid 19( wearing a mask, social distancing ..)</p> <p><b>የኮቪድ 19 ስርጭትን ለመከላከል ማንኛውም እርምጃዎች (ጭምብል መጠቀም ፣ ማህበራዊ ርቀትን ..)</b></p>			
<p>Condition of the work environment (safety, Acces to clean water)</p> <p><b>የሥራ አካባቢ ሁኔታ (ደህንነት ፣ የንጹህ ውሃ ተደራሽነት)</b></p>			
<p>Prevalence of observable gender-based violence ( humiliation, involuntary touching, throwing objects, verbal violence....)</p> <p><b>ሊታይ የሚችል በጾታ ላይ የተመሠረተ ጥቃት (ማዋረድ፣ በግዴለሽነት/ያለፍቃድ መንካት ፣ ዕቃዎችን መወርወር ፣ የቃል ጥቃት ....)</b></p>			
<p>Other/ተጨማሪ ሀሳብ</p>			

## **Annex 5: Background of the participants**

### **Participant's profile**

The biographic descriptions of each of the participants are outlined and thematically narrated based on the street vending experiences of women and the key informant's profile. Any other identifying details that could be used to identify any individuals have been intentionally left out to protect confidentiality.

#### **Participant 1**

This is a 70-year-old widowed woman with no education and a mother of 6 children who tries to cope with life by selling vegetables on street. She was living in Asmara with her husband and children. Her husband died thereafter. they have six children. Immediately after the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia, she and her children were forced to move to Gondar, Ethiopia. Then, she started vending by selling onions, potatoes, and tomatoes on the road. Surprisingly, all her children were involved in the school based on the only income she obtain from vending and she is proud of them even though she is not educated by herself. Currently, all of them are independent of her though they don't support her.

#### **Participant 2**

This is a 28-year-old divorced and literate woman who completed 10<sup>th</sup> grade and has 3 years of street vending experience. She started this job when she had no option because her family lives in the countryside and they were unable to cover her education fee. The source of her income comes from selling socks and underwear.

#### **Participant 3**

This is a 30-year-old single with no education woman who has less than a year of street vending experience. She started this job just not to be idle and to engage in a certain work. The source of her income comes from selling potatoes, eggs, and sugar.

#### **Participant 4**

This is a 60-year-old single and widowed woman who has 15 years of street vending experience. Her husband was a soldier in the Derig regimen and he died in 1982 E.C. However, she was not

able to get the pension of her husband. Then, she started selling fruits by taking a loan to raise her children despite knowing it was not a profitable business.

#### **Participant 5**

A 40-year-old with no education and divorced woman and a mother of 2 children. She has been a street vendor selling vegetables and fruits for the last 16 years. She used to be a daily laborer till she gave birth to her first daughter. She started vending since carrying a child at workplace was too difficult for her. She had no other source of income. Apparently, she spends the money she obtains from vending for food, rent payment, and clothes for the children.

#### **Participant 6**

A 37-year-old widowed woman and a mother of 4 children who completed primary school and had 11 years of the street vending business. She was a housewife and her husband was a guard. The source of her income was his salary (1050 birr) only which was not enough for living. One day her friend asked her to start vending fruits with her and began with a small amount like 5 kilos of fruit but now she is vending with many boxes of fruit. She feeds her children, buys clothes for herself and them, for schooling and other expenses are covered from the money she got in this business.

#### **Participant 7**

A 24-year-old single and literate woman who completed grade 10 and has 2 years of street vending experience. Before she got into this business she was working as an assistant driver in a taxi. After the owner sold his car, she was jobless for a while and then started the street vending. She had insufficient capital in the beginning and got a loan from friends and she paid back the loan. She was selling shoes and clothes on street.

#### **Participant 8**

This is a 35-year-old widowed street vendor who completed grade 6 and mother of 2 children. She has 27 years of street vending experience now she is selling fruit and vegetable. The livelihood source is merely from the street vending she used to get the supply from a neighboring rural village but now she has a supplier in the Gondar city.

**Participant 9**

This is a 25-year-old married and 10<sup>th</sup> grade completed woman. She has 2 children and work as a street vendor for the past 4 years. She started vending four years ago, after completing her 10<sup>th</sup>-grade education, there was no any job to do for her. Assuming that it is better than being a housewife she started this vending. She had mentioned that her husband is a driver earning up to 3,000 birrs per month in addition to her income. However, the income from the vending will not be enough if not her husband earns enough money. She is selling fruit and vegetable.

**Participant 10**

This is the first key-informant aged 45 years, with an educational background of MPH, who has been working as an Emergency disease control and prevention case team manager in Gondar City Health Bureau.

**Participant 11**

This is the second key-informant aged 40 years, with an educational background of MA, who has been working as an official in Gondar city Women Children and Youth Affairs office.

**Participant 12**

This is the third key-informant aged 35 years, with an educational background of MSc, who has been working as an official in Gondar city small scale enterprise office