

Elders engaged in begging as a means of livelihood in Debre Birhan town: An  
exploration of major push factors and their challenges

By: Aynshet Wendosen

A Thesis Submitted to School of Social work in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Work (MSW)

Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

June, 2017

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**Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that this master’s thesis is my original work and all the sources or materials used have been duly acknowledged.

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**Advisor’s Approval**

This Master’s thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name Meseret Kassahun (PhD)

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Approved by Examining Board

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## **Definition of Terms and Concepts**

**Begging:** is defined as an act of asking alms that is essential for survival, solving temporary problems or fulfilling some crucial and religious assurances (MoLSA, 1992).

**Beggar:** a person who lives by asking people for money or food.

**Disability status:** refers to difficulty in carrying out tasks of daily life. The person can't take care of him or herself. It is any loss of normal physical abilities due to illness, or injury or accident.

**Elder:** refers to a category of adults who have attained advanced ages, 60 or 65 years. Ethiopia uses 60 years and above to refer the elderly (United Nation, 2010). According to this study elders are those people whose age is 60 years and over.

**Elder beggars:** refer for this study those whose age ranges from 60 and above who practices begging on the defined site.

**Livelihood:** in this study is taken as a source of income or the income itself. This includes cash and non-cash income.

**Poverty:** Poverty in its most general sense is the lack of necessities such as basic food, shelter,

**Livelihood strategy:** is a way, tactic or approach to generate income needed to meet human needs.

## **Abstract**

This study explored that the push factors, challenges and coping mechanisms of elder beggars in Debrebirhan town. Qualitative descriptive case study design is employed to come up with the detailed understanding of the issue under investigation. Multiple data sources which include in-depth interview, focus group discussion and observation are used to generate adequate data. The study employed purposive sampling methods in order to incorporate participants based on pre-determined criteria. Thematic types of data analysis is used to categorize and labeled ideas in to meaningful themes from which meaningful interpretation emerged. The analysis of the study passed through the process of transcribing, translating, categorizing, thematizing and interpreting. According to the findings of the study the major push factors of elder beggars to engage in begging were death and distance of support providers, disengagement from work, economic, family, environmental, physical and health problems. The finding of the study also showed the challenges of elder beggars. Elder beggars encounter challenges in getting food and cloth, house, problem of health, physical and psychological challenges. They cope those challenges by cutting meal, by drying bulle, buying cheapest food, some of them by drinking local *areke*, Self-medication, eating garlic, reporting the police, sharing feelings, adapting the situation and using religious practices. Implication for social work practice, policy and future research also suggested that social workers can play the role of intervention through advocating, counseling for the study participants, work in the formulation as well as suggestion of policy based on the finding of the study and also further investigation should conduct by including elder beggars in different regions of the country.

**Key words:** Elder Beggars, Push Factors, Challenges, Coping Strategies

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### List of Abbreviations

MOLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
HAI	Help Age International
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CSA	Central Statics Agency
NASW	National Social Work Association.
FGD	Focus group discussion
ERDA	Elshadai relief and development association
ANRS	Amhara national regional state
EB	Elder beggar
FEB	Focus group elder beggars
UN	united nation

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

This chapter included the background, statement of the problem, significance of the study, study objective, research questions, and limitation of the research.

### **Background of the Study**

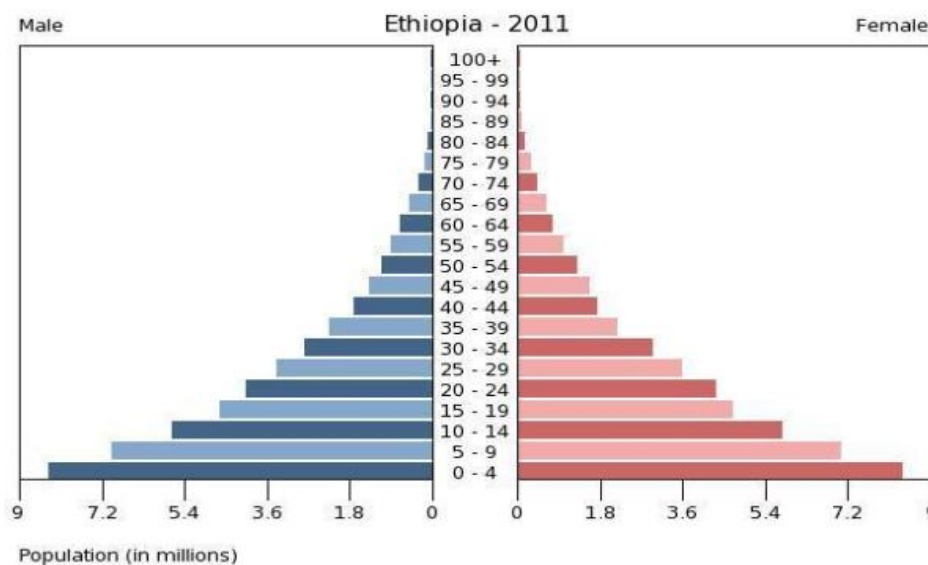
Begging is one of the social problems in a certain country or across the world that involves various activities through which an individual requests fellow community members or strangers for money, food or other resources on the basis of being poor or needing charitable donation for basic survival, health or religious reason (International labour organization [ILO,2014]). Even though it is difficult to get clear and sufficient evidence about where and when begging started, from different traditional and oral hearsays it is estimated as it has been started with the emergence of a competitive life (Lucas, 2007). It is believed that begging has a long history in Ethiopia, but there is no written document that indicates the exact time and place of its beginning in the country. However, oral reports indicate that begging has existed for centuries especially around religious temples or synagogue and rural areas (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs [MoLSA, 1992]).

Today, large numbers of the elderly, the unaccompanied children, mothers and handicapped soldiers escaped to cities and towns being involved in the practice of begging as a means of livelihood. It is also taken as the last alternative of coping mechanisms of poverty, disability and various political, social and environmental crises (MoLSA 2006). There may be a number of reasons that lead to begging depending on the economic circumstances of a given country, several factors are repeatedly identified in numerous studies conducted across a range of countries. Inadequate access for basic necessities such as; inability to secure housing, clothing, and food are identified as the major factors (Christopher, 2015).

According to the research conducted by Addis Ababa City Government Labor and Social Affairs Office (2015) explored that 10,253 peoples are engaged in begging and among this figure 2,351(22.9 %) were elder beggars found in Addis Ababa.

Elderly can be defined in terms of chronological age, functional age, biological age as well as the retirement age. In developed countries the life expectancy is high and the age of retirement from active public economic activity is 65 years, and the elderly age defined as persons aged 65 years and above. Where as in developing countries the life expectancy is low and the age of retirement is 60 years. Therefore, the elderly considered as persons aged 60 years and above. Ethiopia accepted the UN definition as it coincides with the countries official retirement age is 60 years and above (UN, 2011).

As one of the developing countries Ethiopia's population pyramid shows that the majority of its population falls under the age of fifteen. According to the triangular structure (broad base) of the country's population pyramid also reveals the fact that people aged sixty four and above are the smallest age group.



**Fig1:** population pyramid (source: UN 2011)

The 2007 Ethiopian Housing and Population Census Report of CSA explored that the number of elderly persons were 3.6 million that constitute around 5% of the total population. Inadequate clothing, inaccessibility to health service, lack of caregivers, age related health problems, absence of social welfare provision, psychological stress and trauma associated to death of their children and grandchildren, and lack of elderly targeted projects are major problems facing old people (Mussie,2006). It is common to see the elderly who have the knowledge and skill to help not only themselves but others facing serious problems and resorting to begging and sleeping in streets (MoLSA, 2006).

Begging is not a matter of choice to these elderly people, it is rather the only mechanism to cope with their reality where there is no one to support them (Abdi, 2012). The causes of beggary are multidimensional or vary in accordance with the type of beggars in the past or present socio-economic, health and other factors or events. Therefore, it is impossible to attribute one major cause for people's resort to begging. Hence, the causes for begging can only be identified through research that takes into account individual cases and those who have a direct experience (Wubshet, 2003).

Debrebirhan is one of the growing towns in Amhara region. According to the 2015 Population Projection Values at zonal and wereda levels, Debrebirhan Town Administration, 2015-16 by Central Statistical Authority (CSA), found that the town has a population of 92,889 of which 6,032 (6.49%) people are elders. The numbers of elder beggars are increasing in different time due to different factors. A recent survey by the North Showa Zone Labor and Social Affairs Bureau (2016) also revealed that 216 beggars are engaged in begging in this town. Among these beggars 120 of them were 60 and over while the remaining are below the age of sixty but it doesn't incorporated children. Begging is becoming a more serious social issue which rises up from time to time when the elderly people use it as a means of livelihood in the town. However, the increasing complexity in the

depth and magnitude of this problem has also given less attention by the concerned bodies in the study area.

### **Statement of Problem**

Begging is an issue which is not given much attention today especially in the study area. Older persons are facing various problems which expose them to engage in begging and this practice becomes a means of livelihood for a large number of persons (Wubshet, 2003).

In Ethiopia, there are a number of researchers conducted studies on different aspects of begging. A study Undertaken by Tatek (2009) on the survival strategies of Child Beggars in Addis Ababa city explored about the perspectives of children on begging as a way of life, the life experiences of children and social and economic significance of begging to poor children. In addition to this, Abebaw (2003) conducted research on child beggars in Addis Ababa city and assessed about the psychosocial effects on the behavior of children and the reason for using children for begging, magnitude of using children for begging, and attitude of people towards using children for begging

The study conducted by Girmachew (2006) on the livelihoods and survival strategies among migrant children revealed that elders as well as street children, disabled people, and families beg in public spaces such as shopping areas, cinema and theater halls, stadiums, churches, mosques, busy streets or at the junction and near traffic lights, as begging is a principal means of livelihood. The study focused on migrant children in Addis Ababa city by using structural theory and livelihood approach employed as a theoretical framework to address the research problem.

Fireyihun (2011) studied about the experiences of beggars who were practicing begging and the problem of begging only from mother beggar's point of view at the age range of 23 to 35, who carried babies while they beg in Addis Ababa city by using semi structured interview

and observation method of data collection. In addition to this Kerebh *et.al* (2014) explored the demographic and socio-economic determinants of women beggars in Bahir Dar town. The study assessed about the duration of begging practice and reasons for begging among women beggars in Bahir Dar town by using a case-control design.

The study conducted by International Labour Organization (2014) on disabled beggars in Addis Ababa showed that begging is more common in urban areas, with the population of beggars in urban areas drawn from the surrounding countryside, as well as within the cities themselves, which provide greater anonymity and a broader base for support. In addition to this Wamisho and Menore (2009) conducted study on begging on the street and tried to assess about the causes of street begging, the degree and duration begging on the streets as an impact of musculoskeletal disability in Addis Ababa. The researchers revealed that 1,237 street beggars engaged in begging activity. Fitsum (2009) conducted on the life experience style of street beggars by considering it as a means of livelihood for elders, children and youngsters who are found actively engaged in Shashemene town.

Mohammed (2016) conducted study on begging as a means of livelihood for migrants in Jigjiga town. The researcher explored that significant number of migrants at Jigjiga town have been engaged in begging by traveling from one individual home to another, but a number of migrant beggars live a very unhygienic lifestyle, cooking, sleeping and even release waste in the same area and large proportion of destitute migrant beggars don't have access to shelter, medication, either potable water or water for washing and educational opportunities. However, this study gives more emphasis for young migrant beggars who came from Eastern Harare Zones.

Wubshet (2003) conducted research on *Begging as a Survival Strategy at the Orthodox Religious Ceremonial Days in Addis Ababa* and the author tried to explore the major causes

to begging as a means of livelihood. This research given emphasis is placed on the description of begging in the context of the orthodox ceremonial days and participants were including all age group beggars. But, now a day the number of elder beggars is increasing and in Debre Birhan town in particular has an impact on the socioeconomic development of the country. In addition to this, Addis Ababa City Government Office of Labour and social Affairs (2015) conducted research on the causes and effects of begging in Addis Ababa. The study considers the participants including all age groups beggars. The study explored that 10,253 beggars were found and among this 2,351(22.9 %) were elder beggars found in Addis Ababa city. The Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs of North Showa Zone also undertook few surreys, which aimed at knowing the overall situation of beggars, but it did not try to identify the basic push factors and challenges of beggars especially elders.

Looking into recent studies, discussed above, the researchers showed that little attentions were given to factors that pushed elders to engage in begging as a means of livelihood and their challenges. This suggests that further research is needed to elaborate on the push factors and the challenges of those elder beggars. Study area can be taken as one research gap because the results of studies may vary across contexts. Hence, this study focused on addressing the factors that push elders in begging as a means of livelihood and their challenges in Debre Birhan town.

## **Objective**

### **General objective**

The general objective of the study is to explore the major push factors of elders in begging as means of livelihood and their challenges in Debre Birhan town.

### **Specific objectives**

The specific objective of the study is to

- 1) describe the major factors that push elders for begging,
- 2) identify the major challenges of elder beggars,
- 3) Explore the coping mechanisms of elder beggars to cope with challenges.

### **Research Questions**

- 1) What are the factors that push elders to engage in begging?
- 2) What are the major challenges of elders in begging activities?
- 3) How to do elder beggars cope their challenge?

### **Significance of the Study**

According to the National Social Work Associations (NASW, 1999), social work researches explored the complex interventions that are needed to respond to society's most underserved populations, those experiencing at greatest risk. This study would attempted to identify the factors that force elders to engage in begging a as means of livelihood, their challenges and their coping mechanism in Debre Birhan town. The contribution is the greatest importance for planning and designing of programs and strategies to ensure improvements in the quality of the life of elders because the promotion and strengthening of the social work role is meeting the bio psychosocial needs of older adults through practice, policy, research, and advocacy. It also provides available information for intervention to this social problem for those interested in and concerned with the issue. Moreover, the suggestions was forward on the existing policy issues and practices based on the study which shall indicate relevant social work interventions to government organizations, NGOs, religious institutions, community based organizations and associations working with these older beggars. The study was limited to addressing the issue of elder beggars who reside in

Debre Birhan town. But, the findings may serve as a reference for further broad and detailed investigation.

### **Limitations of the Research**

The researcher has different shortcomings or limitations. One of the critical limitations in this regard was first some of those elder beggars were reluctant to accept me for in-depth interview. Their reluctance to cooperate due to suspicion that disclosing information may lead to negative effect on their begging life. So it took me long time and more patience to build a rapport and get trust from them. The other major limitation was it was difficult to get the willingness of those elder beggars for FGDs. Another problem encountered in some study sites those younger beggars and intoxicated persons were interrupted me. This research is limited scope of focusing on the push factors, their challenges and coping mechanisms of elder beggars focusing only in Debre Birhan town. Therefore the study may not represent the case of elder beggars found in all parts of the country. The issue of generalization was the challenge as it holds little meaning for qualitative studies.

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of literature on the definition, historical background, and situation of begging in Ethiopia, factors of begging, challenges of beggars, their coping mechanism and theoretical literatures to understand the issues of elder beggars are explained.

#### **Definition of begging**

The concept of begging can have various definition based on the type of persons involved in the activity and the purpose of begging. The technical committee formed by MoLSA in 1980 use the definition for begging is a method of earning ones living from the income obtained by other sectors of the society using age, health and economic condition as a means for gaining sympathy for survival, solving temporary problems or fulfilling some crucial and religious commitments (as cited in MoLSA, 1992). In addition to this International labour organization (2014) defined begging is as *“a range of activities through which an individual asks fellow community members or strangers for money, food or other resources on the basis of being poor or needing charitable donation for basic survival, health or religious reason, which allows an individual to call upon people with whom he or she has no close ties for small donations to meet basic needs.”* Beggars may also sell small items, such as dusters or flowers, in return for money that may have little to do with the value of the item for sale (ILO, 2004).

#### **Historical background of begging**

There is no clearly kept record which briefly indicates the historical development of begging over time and across different parts of the world. However, according to the study conducted by MoLSA little was known about begging in ancient societies. There was not

begging in large due to the fact that the number of people was small and there was a helping system which gives protection and security for the people. The problem of begging began to be noticed in association with the gradual transformation of societies towards individualistic way of life (MoLSA, 1992). Begging and disabled beggars are found throughout the Bible, in Greek, Roman and Chinese history, as well as in the historical accounts of many other major civilizations, that references to beggars in urban areas and city states begin to appear throughout the historic record. In some societies, begging has been routinely considered an acceptable way and in some cases the only way for people with disabilities to make a living outside the home (ILO, 2014).

When begging actually began in the world is unknown. In Ethiopia, also there is no written document that indicates the exact time and place of the emergence of the practice of begging. However, it is known from oral reports that the practice has existed for centuries especially around religious temples and in the rural areas. According to a report made by MoLSA (1992) three different categories of beggars are believed to have existed and still continue to exist in Ethiopia. The first types of begging were the disabled and the elderly with nobody to support them is depended on begging by the destitute related to religious teachings and beliefs. The second category of begging is by religious students, and caste related to traditional beliefs. That is based on a belief that if spiritual students travel far away from their home regions they can easily absorb the religious teaching and hence become bright students and the other types are a caste known as haminas or lalibelas who are related to another traditional belief holding that this special caste of people will become leprous unless they practice begging. The third category of begging is related to a religious ritual service that includes holly beggars like priests who carry sacred pictures and ask for charity to build new churches, to buy clothes for clergymen, etc. Thus, it is mainly due to different reasons that the problem of beggary has continue to grow and expand in Ethiopia.

## **The situation of begging in Ethiopia**

At the present time large numbers of beggars are being involved in the practice as a means of livelihood in cities and towns because currently begging has been considered as a good work or business and alternative means of surviving (MoLSA, 2006). Begging has radically increased in recent years. City streets, traffic lights, public transits, places of worship, shopping centers, tourist destinations, and hotels are swarmed with people who try to make a living by begging. The current trend is particularly alarming as rural based farmers and their families are flooding to cities to engage in begging. Developing countries carry the largest burden of disability as the result of civil war, poor access to health facilities, harmful traditional practices. As the result, they have a large numbers of street beggars (Wamisho & Menore, 2009). The combination of several factors cost the lives and properties of many Ethiopians and which in turn led them to start begging as a means of survival in urban centers which continues today by those victims of the same and related problems (Fitsum, 2009).

The research conducted by Addis Ababa city government labor and social affairs office (2015) found that around 10,253 beggars are existed in Addis Ababa city and among this 2,351(22.9 %) were elder beggars. The study also indicated that 6,814 (66.5%) beggars were able bodied and the rest 3,439 (33.5%) were disability victims in Addis Ababa city. This implies that the beggary problem prevailed in urban Ethiopia due to different push factors.

### **Factors for Begging**

#### **Environmental problems**

Being developing country, Ethiopia has suffered from different environmental factors such as recurrent drought, climate change, flooding, land degradation and deforestation. These factors has contributed begging to be universal feature of the Ethiopian society (Tafere, 2007).

According to Wubshet (2005) the present beggary problem in Ethiopia has to be seen on the basis of some natural and manmade factors that have occurred over time. Many of rural people who could not make a living due to repeated famine and drought are constantly pushed off their land and are forced to take to the streets of urban areas. For some people, the position of these farmers will continue to worsen, aggravating the problem of beggary.

Mohammed (2016) found in his study that rural-urban migration is the factor for the expansion of youths begging in Jigjiga town. These wereda are drought prone area repeatedly hit by famine and their peoples were forced to Migrate to the town. The factors motivating rural-urban migration in Jigjiga were recurrent drought, peer or relatives' pressure, the proximity of Jigjiga town to the area, the almsgiving culture of the Somali peoples. Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) experiences declining agricultural productivity and has been affected by natural and man-made disasters for a long period which aggravates the rural-urban migration that potentially contributed for growing number of beggars (MoLSA, 1992). The region accommodates the largest number (44, 843) of beggars in the country because of the aforementioned problems (ERDA, 2007).

### **Economic problems**

Economic problems are the other push factor of elders to use begging as a means of living. Economic factors include lack of alternative economic opportunities, economic inequalities, higher food prices and the like. According to Fireyihun (2011), economic problem was cited as the major push factor for mother beggars in Addis Ababa city. However, there were also other immediate push factors towards begging such as divorce, separation, unwanted pregnancy and child birth related responsibilities. In addition to this, begging is considered a viable option for children or the elderly unless they are without other means of support and seen as the last resort for people who have found themselves in a downward spiral of poverty.

In its most general sense is the lack of necessities such as basic food, shelter and cloths (ILO, 2014).

Reddy (2013) tried to develop some concepts and relating variables on his research to identify the major causes for begging by taking socio economic parameters in to consideration in three Mandals of Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh area. Those causes are, lack of support either form the family or close kin group in terms of food and other essential economic elements, lack of alternatives to fulfill their basic needs, abandoning their family out of psychological frustration caused by the behavior and treatment served by the members of family towards them are some of them.

According to the result of the research on Women's Agenda for Change in Cambodia (2002) shows that there are many factors pushing people migrate to city and engage in begging activity such as landlessness, domestic violence, lack of and no access to resources, irresponsible husband to supporting the family, debt, poverty, widowhood, natural disaster, and unemployment.

### **Religious factors**

Religions have the practice of providing social service for the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups as the center of their teaching .The Muslim's *Zakat* and Christian's *Miswat* are some of the examples. According to Jelili and Mnitp ( 2013) the issue of alms giving and begging as obtained in the scriptures of both Islam and Christianity. In Islam *zakat* (alms giving) is so weighty that it is one of the five pillars of the religion. It is believed that every *penny* spent for the poor is spent for the cause of Almighty Allah. Giving alms is seriously encouraged; begging is not frowned at, if the need arises. In Christianity, alms giving also encouraged but begging is silent upon. Thus says the Bible: "Oh the joys of those who are kind to the poor are that the Lord rescues them in times of trouble" (Psalm 41:1). In a way, it could be inferred that, if religions encourage alms giving, they indirectly encourage

begging. Such views about begging indicate that for some people especially those with more religious tendencies, begging is not something indecent and despicable. The positive attitudes of some strata of the society and social groups towards begging and providing help for beggars is contributing to increase the number of beggars to the society (Ahamdi, 2010).

Religions, especially the three monotheist religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, stress support for beggars through their emphasis on charity. These ideas are articulated in the New Testament, the Old Testament, and the Quran (Azam, 2011).

### **Physical and Health problems**

Physical and health problems such as physical disability, visual/hearing impairments, handicaps, and ailments can limit the potential and attention to work and made people to encompass in different activities. Therefore, in order to tolerate and made their daily bread and other requirements the people having such a problems started begging on different positions and angles of the country, specially Musculoskeletal disability lead to begging (Wamisho, & Menore, 2009).

As a research conducted by Kerebih *et al.* (2014) on the determinants of women beggar in Bahir Dar city points out that physical handicap (54%) were recognized and begging was found increasing as age level increases due to different age related health problems. In addition to this, Menka (2013) states that old age, diseases, disability and mental illness are the main biological factors which make up about 20 % of the total causes of the begging in Aligarh city. Most people with disabilities may turn to begging simply because they have no other options open to them or they may choose to beg given the limited range of options they face. In Ethiopia, 15 million people are reported have a disability; there are a range of different attitudes, beliefs and practices towards people with disabilities in some parts of Ethiopia. In general, people with disabilities are widely believed to be disabled because they

or their parents have committed a sin or have angered God in some other manner.

Additionally, some disabling conditions, for example epilepsy, are considered contagious (ILO, 2014).

According to Oluwole (2016) Physical defects was the highest ranked reason for begging and may not be unconnected to the fact that, like income, disabled beggars had other reasons why they engaged in begging activities regardless of their educational attainment and household sizes. In another dimension, the entire socio-economic variables considered had significant relationships with homelessness with disabilities in Ibadan Metropolis in Nigeria. According to the research result conducted on beggars by Addis Ababa city government labour and social affairs office (2015) there are 10,253 beggars registered, among this 3,439 (33.5%) were disabled and that are participating in begging as a means of livelihood in different parts of Addis Ababa city.

### **Cultural factor**

Cultural attitudes towards begging may also be a factor in the decision to beg or to avoid begging. The decision to trust to one's own efforts to earn a living by begging may be a rational economic decision, no matter what the social and psychological toll the individual incurs (ILO, 2014). Regarding living condition, 86% of older people live with their children as head of the family (CSA, 2011). Problems and the modern way of life caused by growing urbanization and modernization are now eroding the culture of intergenerational solidarity and mutual support that has been existing for a very long time and this increased the vulnerability of the society in general and older persons in particular.

The report from Elshadai relief and development progress (2007) indicated that some culture of generous almsgiving has made cities and tourist destinations a fertile ground for begging. In the same vein, distorted information spread by those engaged in begging that

portrays cities has become a major attracting factor for others to follow suit. Some beggar farmers admitted and regretted that the grain they had left in storage was found spoiled when they returned from their “begging trip” to cities (ERDA, 2007).

According to Wubshet (2003), beggary can be based on the need, based on Convenience or Preference that some people find begging to be their most efficient way of making a living, given their skill set, aspirations, and preferences as between income and leisure, and People forced into begging via criminal networks.

The begging phenomenon is controlled by the way society acts and reacts. In this respect, on the one hand on the interactions among civil society, population and beggars and on the measures they predict and on the legislative levers that may hinder this phenomenon. The analysis of the interactions between citizens and beggars reveals that despite the age, level of education and incomes, all the people empathized with the beggars (Matei et.al, 2013).

### **Demographic factor**

Demographic factors are the other push factors of begging. According to Azam (2011), demographic factors such as population growth, the existence of a large percentage of disappointed young people, rapid urbanization, large numbers of internally displaced people and refugees, and an environment where discrimination is a social norm are some of the factors of begging in Pakistan.

According to international labour organization research rural/urban migration was one factor that the vast majority 96 % of all disabled beggars surveyed was born outside of Addis Ababa. Around 10% come from a community or farmstead within 100 kilometers; 86 % come from farther than 100 kilometers and the remains 4% are from the study area (ILO, 2014).

**Family problem**

The unfavorable social conditions such as family conflict or family disorganization, divorce, death are some of the social problem that pushes people their lives through begging. Among the kinds of family problem; parents' behavioral problems like addiction/being alcoholic, family conflict and family breakdown were the causes of begging (Getenesh, 2016). According to Ramasamy (2004) the death of support providers, deaths of parents, death of the husband, death of the breadwinner, step parental treatment, maltreatment disruption in the family, or desertion by the husband are some important factors responsible for begging. Because of Expulsion from family some are found expelled from the family, since they caused unhealthy atmosphere in the family by addicting to liquor consumption, and torturing the wife and children, infidel sexual behavior, etc. are the major push factors of beggars (Reddy,2013).

In general, different factors push people off the social safety net and they end up begging on streets. The causes of begging can be structural and highly circumstantial due to natural disasters, accidents of various kinds like traffic accidents and work-related accidents that lead to loss of ability to work temporarily or permanently. Moreover, death of an income-earner in families, serious illnesses or health concerns, loss of employment for various reasons, social services and welfare cuts, domestic abuse and so forth are the other push factors of begging. Most of them started begging because of one or more factors mentioned above, and some become targets of criminals (Cheng & Kumar, 2012).

**The challenges of beggars**

There are a numbers of challenges facing beggars. The study undertaken by Fireyihun (2011) found that economic problem is one of difficulties that mother beggars came across. The study also indicates that beggars usually have difficulty of meeting their basic needs such

as food, cloth and shelter as well as the needs of their children due to the fact that the amount of money they collect by begging is inadequate. They usually challenged to pay house rent and to buy food. The financial difficulty they face also hinders their ability to maintain their hygiene and/or to provide enough milk for their babies. As a result of economic and emotional problems they experienced, they feeling of hopelessness, insecurity and stigma and discrimination due to their inability to led life as mainstream culture. They threat for car accident and female beggars sexual harassment during the night time while the engage in begging are increasing their emotional instability (Fireyihun, 2011).

Being they are disadvantaged and marginalized section of society, beggars develop psychosocial problems such as, a sense of aloneness, depression, dependency, shame, stigmatization, discrimination and other healthy related problems such as sexual harassment in turn they will be affected by sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS (Lucas, 2007). Moreover, the study made by Fitzpatrick & Kennedy (2001) found other psychological consequences of beggars like feeling embarrassed, demeaning, humiliating and depressed.

The study conducted by Namwata *et.al* (2014) showed that more than half of the street beggars indicated to have faced with different consequences of begging such as abusive languages from the public, harassments from municipal officials and police, harassment from fellow beggars, stigmatization, influence of crime, accidents, urban pollution, sun burn, cold during the nights and sexual abuse are the challenges they face.

In Ethiopia 90% support of older people is from extended family. The urban setting is generally less conducive to sustaining the traditional extended family network and reciprocity system than are rural areas. Elders face loss of social networks, and suffer from the lack of a supporting infrastructure in cities, which can lead to their demotion and exclusion in particular if they are ill or disabled. In these multifaceted challenges of older peoples lead

them to flow in large number to the streets of major cities this problem also the same with elder beggars (MoLSA, 2006).

Insufficient income, health problem, lack of food, clothes and shelter, ignorance of passersby, adequate nutrition, homelessness, exploitation, rude behavior of donors, police harassment, feeling ashamed or embarrassing, emotional insecurity are their major problems that beggar encounters. Living in unhygienic conditions without sufficient income for their means of livelihood and inaccessibility in basic civic amenities was the problem. Health problems are very common among beggars because these people suffer from many diseases due to their unhygienic living conditions, poor nutrition and bad habits. They eat and drink without washing their hands. Most of them are the victim of various infectious diseases. The proportion of beggars suffered from diseases, like, asthma, tuberculosis, gout and rheumatism and eye diseases (Menka, 2013).

In addition to this a research conducted by Hassan *et.al* (2013) indicated that there were problem like supply of electricity, lack of sanitation, potable water and proper housing, non-availability of ration card, various diseases etc., in both rural and urban areas. The insults, verbal aggressions, contemptuous and debasing looks are invulnerable on the life of beggars.

In Ethiopia 0.9% proportion older people have some type of disability and the chance of older people to be disabled is greater than the young population. Though the first difficulty is activity related or mobility extreme problem, 52.6% out of disabilities is vision related problem to the extent of blindness (CSA, 2011). Thus, disability further complicates the situation older people. The level of difficulty they face every day invites the injuries. Almost every elder are seen with cuts and wounds. The common injury occurs as they get hit by the local vehicles, fall from the pits, cuts by sharp things etc. This injury also indicates the how risky elder life is especially to elder beggars.

### **Coping mechanism of beggars**

The ways like cooperating and helping each other in various ways, saving and sharing materials and emotional resources, exchanging skills, supporting each other, and defending their own groups, all of their activities were based on friendship, personal proximity and group affinity were the life of street beggars in Addis Ababa (Wubshet, 2005 and Tatek, 2009). According to Getenesh (2016), child beggars satisfy their hunger, either they beg for left over foods from hotels and restaurants or buy food with the money they get from asking alms or earn from different informal works, and share it together with their fellow child beggars. On the other hand they sit together, discuss and consult each other in regards to their worries and try to improve their living condition by changing their place for sleeping.

In addition to this, the study on elderly women in South Africa shows the different lifestyles, livelihoods, challenges faced by elderly women and the different strategies they employ to address their daily challenges. These include income diversification through participation in income-generating activities, renting out rooms in their yards, being loan sharks or micro-lenders, casual work and the involvement of their children and grandchildren in income generation in order to mitigate some of the poverty experiences of the elderly women (Sidloyi, 2010).

Due to the lack of support from the state and the stark poverty elderly people are left to rely on kin relations, whether in reciprocal relationships where they are assisted by their children and where they also contribute to the household (with house-chores) or where they have to survive on their own (begging), elderly persons spent most of their lives engaged in labor intensive activities or daily labor. The main coping mechanisms were elders tried their best to deal with their problems on their own by participating in petty trade and income generating activities and received service from the institution when they were incapacitated to cope from their problem themselves (Abdi, 2012).

Older persons living in Ethiopia are challenged but a combination of livelihoods strategies including begging is necessary for survival. Reliance on a single economic coping strategy did not enable older persons to have a sustainable livelihood. Older persons seek to ensure livelihoods security through asset accumulation, asset diversification, and the support of family and community (HIA, 2011).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Disengagement theory**

Disengagement theory is a sociological theory which originated in the United States initially presented by Elaine Cumming and William Henry (1961). The major premise is that as one ages, there is a gradual decrease of activity and social involvement. This theory proposes that ageing entails a gradual withdrawal or disengagement from personal relationships or society in general. This results in the marginalization of older people in society and every work. Where disengagement does occur it may be due to other factors such as disability, poverty, retirement or widowhood (National council for the elderly, 1994). This theory did not take into consideration any societal processes and structures that curtail older people's opportunities for engagement.

Ageing is naturally brings with it a growing sense of powerlessness, loneliness, loss of role, loss of sense of purpose and with it increased dependency. From this theoretical perspective the position of older people as a non-productive and costly burden on society, so this dependency and powerlessness may pushed them to engage in begging activities.

The disengagement perspective, it could be argued, feeds the negative stereotypes of ageing as the part of life to be feared, which in turn creates the circumstances driving disengagement and the negative stereotyping of older people, impacting their quality of care.

Therefore, many elders were disengaged from their previous work due such factors and lack their care leads to become beggars.

### **Activity Theory**

Activity theory is developed by Robert Havighurst (1968) and the major premise is that active involvement in relationships and social roles is critical to successful aging. The activities of old age must be qualitatively similar to those of middle age. This theory was based on the hypothesis that older people remain socially and psychologically fit, if they stay active (Walker et.al, 2013). The activity theory sees activity as necessary to maintain a person's life satisfaction and positive self-concept. Within the context of this theory, activity may be viewed broadly as physical or intellectual (Meiner, 2015). But this theory does not explain the adaptation of elderly who are unable to maintain the middle-age activity level and yet reports high levels of life satisfaction. Research findings reported that retirement is seen as a role loss, which may lead to negative psychological outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and stress, resulting in low satisfaction in retirement (Carter & Cook, 1995).

### **Continuity Theory**

Continuity theory was formerly developed in 1989 by Robert Atchley. According to Atchley (1989), this theory suggests that older adults attempt to preserve and maintain existing internal (personality structure, beliefs) and external structures (relationships, social roles) to avoid the experience of stressful disruption. This theory suggests that people are most satisfied in their lives older years when their new roles and activities are consistent with previous experiences (Kinsella & Phillips, 2005). It argues that the latter part of life is simply a continuation of the earlier part of life. This approach emphasizes individual behavior and neglects the societal constraints that deter older people from continuing some activities.

**Social exchange theory**

It is initially proposed by Peter Blau (1964) and applied to the elderly by James Dowd (1975). It is based on the notion that the balance of rewards and costs of behavior to the individual and society predicts the overall behavior of the elderly. It borrowed ideas from economics and psychology. This theoretical perspective has been developed to understand both the larger society along with individuals and families. In families, for example, satisfying relationships will continue between the generations as long as the individuals involved perceive a balance between the rewards and the costs of the relationship. According to this theory, people establish relationships on the bases of negotiated exchanges for mutual benefit (Burnight & Mosqueda, 2011). It proposes interaction is only sustained as long as it is profitable to the participants. The amount and the quality of gifts and reciprocity received may influence a person to develop certain behavior, and may affect the balance of power in the relationship. A person who gives much may have the power advantage and influence the behavior of a person who contributes or returns less. Similarly, Batistich (2004), (Eckley & Vilakazi (1995), and Salari (2011) added that exchange, rewards, reciprocity, avoidance of punishments and costs are important elements for the continuity of interaction among individuals or groups. lack of power in the family contributes to different problems; they are vulnerable to the economic interests of other more dominant groups.

**Social dominance theory**

It was developed by social psychologists Sidanius and Pratto, 1999. As of social psychologists and sociologist's point of understanding, people could not have an equal power, status, role, privilege, and resources. They have expected and supposed that social stratification existed and will continue over a generation and it is an inevitable social phenomenon as far as human beings exist in this world. Because of the above mentioned stratification or difference, many people could have limited or no power, status, roles, and

resources and conversely others fully dominate the power and resources to the largest extent. This will lead to unequal treatment and discrimination of individuals based on races, ethnic group and other social categorize by the dominant and powerful groups (Teweldebirhan, 2011). So according to this theory, elder who have no power, status and resource's exposes unequal treatment, discrimination based on their age and roles by dominant or powerful groups or their caregivers.

Therefore, according to this theory, the dominant and more authoritative individuals can oppress, discriminate, exclude, marginalize, prejudice and isolate those with limited or no power and resources. People with such problems are subjected to move and migrate into their nearest environments. Thus, their fate could be to make a living through involving in different activities such as porters, security guards, lottery vendors, commercial sex works, beggary and other odd jobs (Gut kind, 1974). This oppression, exclusion and isolation may push elders to engage in begging activities.

**Summary of the Literature Review**

The literature review focused on different issues of begging, including the concept, historical background of begging and the situation of begging in Ethiopia. The literature provided an understanding of the factors that could contribute to begging, the challenges they face in begging life and some of the strategies they used to cope their challenges. Theoretical Perspectives are also discussed in the literature.

An extensive investigation of the relevant literature is performed. Different studies focused on prevalence of begging, factors that contribute for begging and the challenges they faced in begging life. However, some of the studies employ largely quantitative method and structured tools to understand the factors and their challenges, these studies give little space for beggars to speak of their mind and some of the studies were not age specific. Little global research has been done on elder beggars. A review of the above literature reveals a major research gap in the area of them. The elder beggars who live in poverty and different social problems have got little research attention. Besides, elder beggars who are mostly forgotten in different researches would contribute for deep investigation. So the implication of the above literature is exploring the major push factors and challenges among elders need further investigation. For sure, the elder beggars from different regional towns like Debre Birhan town will have different experience of the problem and the study also give much emphasis for differences.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

In this section, the whole process of research; paradigm, research design, description of the study area, sources of data, the data collection methods, the data analysis techniques, trustworthiness of the data, protection of human subjects and selection of study participants was described.

### **Paradigm**

In this part of the research, the researcher explained the general idea of constructivist paradigm which is selected as a guiding framework for this study. It is also expressed as the researcher's assumption and world view in conducting this qualitative research. Creswell (2007) states that "qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, and the possible use of theoretical lens". He further noted that the researchers brought their own worldviews when they conduct research and it in turn has an effect on the knowledge which is going to be produced.

Kreuger and Neuman (2006), note that there are competing approaches to social work research in regard to explaining the purpose of science and the nature of social reality. There are four paradigms (post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory and pragmatism). Among four paradigms the researcher selected that constructivism paradigm is the best to explain the stance for this research. It also helped to identify the researcher standpoint in this particular research and how the researcher going to interpret the data collected from the study participants. This paradigm acknowledged that human beings have different understanding of reality and subjective expression of the situation they are living in and it gives much emphasis for this subjective explanation of issues.

The researcher also believed that all elder beggars have their own expression of the situation they left through. In order to understand the push factors of elder beggars, their challenges and coping mechanism, deep investigation of elder beggars experience would be indispensable. Besides this constructivism paradigm gives an opportunity for the interpretation of the data by the researcher and accordingly the researcher interpreted the data after it is collected and gave greater emphasis for what have been said by the participants (Creswel, 2007). So constructivist approach helps the researcher to understand the issue and answer the proposed research questions from the participant's point of view. In general, using this paradigm the researcher analyzed the case experiences of elder beggars and the meaning they provide for the situation. The researcher did not influence or lead the participants to existing realities since they have their own reality, rather focus on their expression of reality. The reality of participants and their stories is presented in their own way of expression.

### **Research Design**

Qualitative research is the best to explore issues with the perspectives of study participants themselves. Understanding about the subject matter is acquired through direct association with the target by direct face to face communication, visiting their day to day activities at home and work place and listening to their life narrative in a way that fits to our objectives (Creswell, 2007). So, the researcher believed that qualitative research is preferable to identify the push factors, challenges and coping strategies of elder beggars. It is subjective and easily expressed in words than in numerical terms. This is very helpful taking into account the assumption that situations, experiences and practices are results of qualitative manipulation.

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system involving multiple sources of information. The study conducted in the natural setting attempting to make sense or describe phenomena based on the voice of the participants brings to the topic under investigation by using a case study (Creswell, 2007).

Likewise this study described the study by using case study approach involving multiple data sources in order to provide an in-depth picture of it. So, information on the study subject is collected by involving the study participants to express their practices and experiences without restriction.

According to Ryin (2003), descriptive case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred. The researcher begins with a well-defined subject and has a more highly developed open idea about a social phenomenon and wants to describe it. This research is for descriptive purpose.

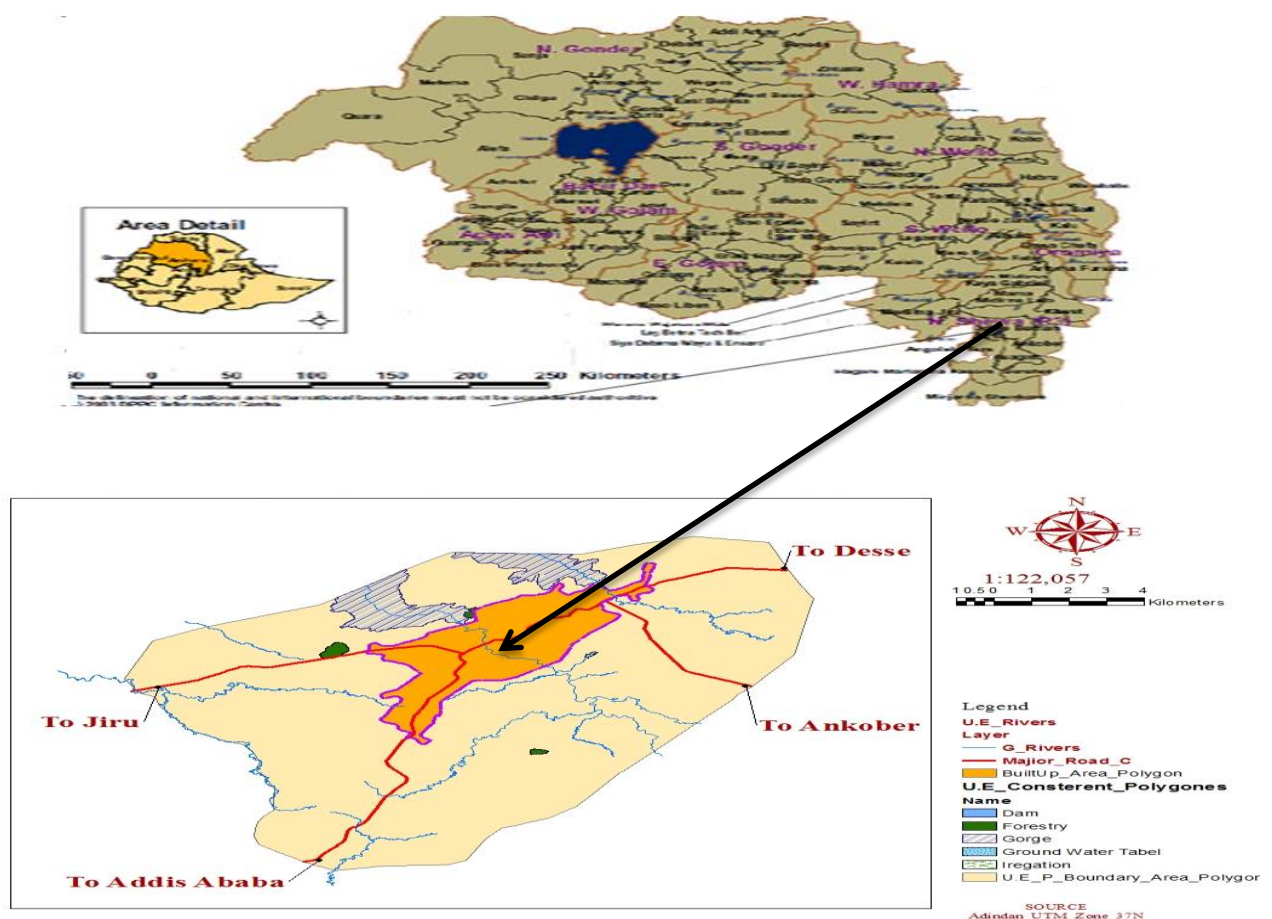
### **Description of the Study Area**

Debre Birhan town is the oldest town founded by Emperor Zera Yaqob around 1456 A.D. The town is located at 130 km towards the North East of Addis Ababa city and it is the capital city of Ethiopia North Showa Zone of Amhara Region. Astronomically, the town is positioned at 9°41' North latitude and 39°40' East longitude and characterized by cool temperate climate. The annual average temperature of the city ranges between 40°C in the coldest month (August) to 26°C in the hottest month (April). Average annual rainfall ranges between 814 to 1080 mm. Most of the built up areas of Debre Birhan town have an altitude of 2750 meter above mean sea level.

The population size in the town, according to the 2007 National Census, was about 65,231 of which 31,668 (48.5%) were males and 33,563 (51.5%) females. According to the 2015 Population Projection values at zonal and wereda levels, Debrebirhan town administration, 2015-16 by Central Statistical Authority (CSA) makes the town with the population of 92,889 and that contain 6,032 elders that lives in different economic back ground. Regarding the religious composition of Debre Birhan town residents, the majority (94.12%) of the

inhabitants were Ethiopian Orthodox Christian, while the rest (3.32%) of the populations was Muslim and 2.15% were Protestants (CSA, 2007).

The number of elder beggars has been ever increasing time to time due to different factors. The survey by the North Showa Zone Labor and Social Affairs Bureau (2016) also revealed that 216 beggars are registered in this town, among thus beggars 120 were elders. Taking into account the increasing and the seriousness and extent of the problem, the researcher selected this area purposely. Moreover, Debre Birhan town is the nearest urban area in North Showa Zone hence, it attracts more beggars. In addition, the researcher’s experience of living in the town made the curiosity to know the phenomena of elder begging.



**Fig2: Map of the study area (Debre Birhan town)**

### **Selection of Study Participants**

The target populations of this research were elder beggars found in Debre Birhan town. The research focused on public places like bus station, street or road (intersecting) and religious places to locate the beggars since these areas attracts large number of beggars than any other places. The criteria's to select participants for FGD and interview are age (60 years and above); those who are beggars, reside in Debre Birhan town and who have willingness and ability to provide relevant information.

According to Kreuger & Neuman (2006) purposive sampling uses the judgment of an expert in selecting cases or it selects information rich cases with specific purpose in mind and participants of the study are selected by their practical experiences on the issue. Hence, the researcher contacted participants who fulfill these mentioned eligibility criteria using purposive sampling techniques until data saturation of the study. As Creswell (2003) puts, in the case of qualitative research, for the purpose of deep understanding of the subject matter under study or research question, it is up to the researcher to make a decision on the research participants, sites and even the material to use.

### **Data collection methods**

As there is seldom a perfect measure of a concept, the researcher considered several data collection methods for the purpose. Thus, in-depth interview, focus group discussion (FGD) and observation were serving as primary data collection tools.

### **In-depth Interview**

In-depth interview is important for a detailed collection of information about a phenomenon under study in order to provide comfortable situation between the researcher and the study participant because information is gathered through conversation (Neale and Boyce, 2006). In-depth interview was undertaken with ten elder beggars to generate data

deeply for the push factors that force elders for begging as a means of livelihood, their challenges and coping mechanisms.

Yin (2003) indicated that case study interviews are of an open-ended nature, in which you can ask key respondents about the facts of a matter as well as their opinions about events. Thus, this study used open-ended interview guide in the process of data collection. These types of interview questions helped to explore personal issues and probe questions to the informants out of the response that the interviewees provide as it allows the researcher to be flexible to some extent. The interview guide was prepared by the researcher based on the research questions and the specific objectives, prepared in English and then translated to Amharic. The interview took from 30 to 45 minutes per individuals. The recorded responses are transcribed to written notes in Amharic and then translated in to English for further analysis.

### **Focus Group Discussion**

In focus group discussion (FGD), the discussions were more naturalistic and enable the participant in generating more topics than interview (Moriarty, 2011). In this case, fourteen participants were organized into two group based on their sex. To mean that, one group discussion comprised of seven male discussants and the other group comprised seven female discussants. Many issues were discussed on this specific research topic from different views.

### **Observation**

Observation also used as an additional instrument of data gathering technique based on the observation checklist. According to Creswell (2009), through observations it is possible that a researcher can take field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site. In this study non-participant observation is used as a primary data collection method. The researcher recorded every day observation on notebook that is helpful to observe the

activities of elder beggars including the food they eat, the cloths they dress, the places they sleep, their physical and health condition, the physical characteristics of housing, the ways they cope their challenges, sitting arrangement, nature of social interaction with their neighbors and nonverbal cues.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher met concerned bodies of labor and social affairs office manager of Debre Birhan town and explained the objectives of the study as well as submitted the supporting letter written from AAU School of Social Work. After that the manager wrote a supporting letter which helps me legal to collect any information and data's from the research participants. After having a legal supporting letter, the researcher met the participants for an in-depth interview and FGDs. The researcher performed self-introduction, a rapport building as well as expressing the purpose of the study to the research participants before data collection. The researcher took an appointment to undertake an in-depth interview and focus group discussion with the selected participants.

In the processes of interviewing, the researcher used the social work skill of demonstrating empathy, in which the person being interviewed feels heard, accepted and understood (Alston and Bowles, 2003). The researcher collected data using in-depth interview and focus group discussion as well as used tape recorder by their consent and recorded the information. The researcher confirmed to them that the recorded data will be destroyed after the completion of the study and finally separated from the participants with great thanks for their cooperation.

The researcher made frequent visiting on the study sites and observed those elder beggars and recorded every day observation on the note book based on the proposed reference points as a checklist.

**Data Analysis**

In qualitative research methods every moment of data collection is also a time of data analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2007). Data is recorded by using Amharic language that is language of the interviewees. Then, the researcher transcribed and translated all the data recorded through in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, observation and field notes including the nonverbal communication are transcribed into English language by keeping the originality of the information collected. In the other step repetitive reading of all the transcription put into practice in order to get deep understanding on it, to grasp the general idea to develop coding of ideas and to extract significant statement. The transcribed data is then organized and analyzed through careful interpretation of meanings and crosschecking of associations between categories. In addition, coding techniques is used to check for the pattern of frequencies on specific categories. In the other step the researcher also developed categories along with the content of interview which is important to avoid repetition of ideas. Then, the researcher developed themes and merges themes of similar ideas to come to the objectives of the study.

**Ensuring the Trustworthiness of Data**

In qualitative research, the researcher may be biased in the collection and interpretation of data. Therefore, there should be techniques to confirm the credibility of findings (Bowen, 2009). Therefore, in order to confirm the accuracy of the data, the researcher used the following strategies:

Expert judgment: The researcher consulted persons having experience on the topic. Their professional involvements occur throughout the study, during the interview transcription, emerging categories from those transcripts and the final report.

Data triangulation: Since the sources of information in this study were in-depth interview, observation and focus group discussion, triangulation had been applied as a major means for validating the study.

Note taking: The researcher had taken notes. The points that the researcher observed were written based on the observation checklist. Note taking was done before, during and after interviews. In addition to this, the study was done member checking and receiving feedback by submitting the narratives back to the participants. Finally, the researcher remained neutral and non-judgmental during data collection.

### **Protection of Human subjects**

According to Ryen (2011), every study with human participants in research requires prior approval from an institutional review board. Obtaining the needed approval can be an uneventful part of doing qualitative research. So, in this study the researcher submitted the research proposal to the department in order to get approval. Before going to the data collection process, an official support letter from Addis Ababa University School of Social Work established a proper rapport. Next, participants were informed about the aim of this research. In turn, involving people as research participants carries ethical obligations to respect their autonomy, minimize their risks of harm, maximize their benefits, and treat them fairly. Ethically, researchers are obliged to protect the identity of the participants (Ryen, 2004). To ensure the anonymity, the names of the participants not disclose in the final report of this study. In addition to this the National Research Council (2003) states the guidelines for the Considerations in protecting human Subjects, so the researcher used those guidelines in this study.

- 1) Obtaining voluntary informed consent from participants, the researcher prepares consent form to the participants to confirm their willingness to take part in the study.

“Informed” meaning that the participants understand the purpose and nature of the

research; the researcher explained about the purpose of the study, the obligation of keeping confidential information. The participants have the right to interrupt the interview process at any time when they feel discomfort, So that they have the right to self-determination

- 2) Minimizing any threat of harm (physical, psychological, social, economic, legal, and dignitary harm) to the participants,
- 3) Assuring confidentiality about participants' identities, The researcher have obligation of keeping confidential information including delegating pseudonyms, Personal information and sensitive issues keeps in secret. In order to ensure the confidentiality of the information, audio records were handled with greatest care and not transferred and used for other purpose other than the research objectives. Finally, the study participant accessed to some of the narratives to check whether confidentiality and privacy is ensured.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Findings**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter findings of the study have been presented in line with the objective of the study and those proposed research questions under chapter one. In the first part, the backgrounds of those key participants of the study /elder beggars are presented. In the next part, findings from the interview, focus group discussions with elder beggars and the researcher observation are presented. First, the push factors of those elder beggar participants, then the major challenges of elder beggars and their coping ways have been included under this chapter.

#### **Profiles of Study Participant**

The total of 24 elder beggars are participated in the research data collection activity, out of this figure ten elder beggars interviewed for in-depth interview and 14 elder beggars grouped and discussed in to male and female group discussions based on the pre-arranged inclusion criteria stated in the methodology part.

The major profiles of the research participants of elder beggars are summarized in the table below based on their age, sex, educational status, marriage status, their previous occupation, and length stay in begging.

**Table1: Elder beggar's participants for in-depth interview** (Source: The Researcher, 2017)

<b>Code</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Educational status</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Previous occupation</b>	<b>stay in begging in years</b>
<b>EB1</b>	75	M	Grade 6	Married	Solider	8
<b>EB2</b>	85	M	Illiterate	Divorced	Farmer	10
<b>EB3</b>	77	F	Illiterate	Widowed	House wife	8
<b>EB4</b>	67	F	Read and write	Widowed	House wife	2
<b>EB5</b>	73	M	Illiterate	Divorced	Farmer	6
<b>EB6</b>	80	M	Illiterate	Divorced	Daily laborer	5
<b>EB7</b>	63	F	Illiterate	Widowed	House servant	3
<b>EB8</b>	73	M	Read and write	Divorced	Solider	7
<b>EB9</b>	80	M	Illiterate	Widower	Farmer	5
<b>EB10</b>	73	F	Illiterate	Widowed	Daily laborer	13

Most of the elder beggar participated in the interview and focus group discussions came from different regions of the country side. From the total figure five came from Wello, three from Southern region, one from Addis Ababa, four from Tigray region and the remaining eleven around Debre Birhan town. Three participants have own rented house in group and the others were living on the street and around church. All participants except one participant had different health problems like, sight defect, difficulty walking, blindness, partial hearing impairment, joint problems, and occasional body shaking, problems of hypertension, severe headache, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, heart attack, and depression.

### **Push Factors for Elders to Engage in Begging**

Respondents provided different push factors for their engagement in begging life. Among those mentioned major reasons were; economic problem, family problem, death and distance of support providers, disengagement from work, environmental, physical and health problems.

#### **Economic problem**

According to the study participants economic problems made their life very bad. Because of poverty many elders were pushed to engage into begging to satisfy their immediate needs. As most of the interviewed elder beggars revealed, poverty is one of their major push factors to engage in begging activity. When they unable to fulfill their family needs for food, shelter, clothing and education consequently, they moved to beg so as to search for better life. It is important to mention the situation of some of the elders interviewed concerning this issue.

For instance, one of the interviewees EB5 explained that;

I came from Berehet wereda found around Debrebirhan town. I was a farmer with a small farmland and had no other sources of income. My wife also had no any source of income. Our family members were severely suffered from hunger, sickness and other poverty related problems because we couldn't afford our basic needs including our seven children needs. In short, we were leading a miserable life situation because of poverty. Therefore, I have migrated to Debre Birhan town and engaged in begging activity.

The interview participants explained that being unable to fulfill needs for food and medical treatment leads for begging activity. One of the other interview participants also explained that,

My financial problems especially after I faced more serious health problem caused me not engaged in work activity. This was my major push factor that forced me to engage in begging activity. Now a day, the cost of living is high, therefore, I couldn't adequate for living expenditures and medical care money (EB6).

In addition to this during the focus group discussion the majority respondents explained that with inadequate income, they suffered from inflation and high cost of living. Furthermore, they also revealed that economic problems loosened the social bond among their family members, relatives', friends', neighbors and the community at large, which in turn led to lack of mutual concern. So the decline of the tradition in providing support to older people as a result of worsening economic conditions. Respondents, who came from rural areas, also explained that the problem of poverty and famine are the reasons to start the activity of begging in the study area. they started begging to sustain their life. Concerning this one of the FGD participant explain that,

At this time it is difficult to help one another because of inflation and the increasing prices of foods, goods and services. A few years ago the price of goods was better at that time my relatives and children were-support me financially and in food. I had also good relationships with my relatives and they gave me what I needed. But starting from the last three years no one can help me because of economic difficulty. My children and relatives troubled by the increase of the price of cereals since it were imbalanced with their income. Then I forced to engage in begging because I can't fulfill my needs. :-.

### **Family problems**

Most of the participants interviewed explained that family problems or the unfavorable social conditions such as family conflict, family disorganization, divorce, are some of the social problem that push and drive elders to lead their lives through begging. EB3 explained that,

After my husband passed away, I had been deprived from my property by my child and his wife. When my husband was alive we had a mother-child relationship. Following his death our property was exploited by them and our relationship was strained because they obliged me to sign an illegal document. Unconsciously I signed it, that caused deprived my ownership rights over my private house. After that they alerted me to live with them saying nothing. But,

they suppressed, neglected and abused me even they deprived of my basic needs like food; they were not concerned about me. So, the neglect, abuse, suppresses and conflict exposed me to engage in begging.

Similarly in the focus group discussion Some of the elder beggars explained that conflicts arose in the family member emanated from economic problems like, inheritance competition, competition to expand farm land, tension over common land were the factors of elder beggars that leave their house and engaged in begging activities. one of the focus group participant explains that,

I have five children; their economic sustainability was depending on my farmland in common, but through time they always disagreed on that farmland and other mutual property. My family faced in serious challenges. The problem is not only this; I faced always insult, threat from my children and also one of them told me that as he will kill me once a day, if I will not leaving the home to take my home and farm land. Then, to leave from such threat and to save my life, my last resort was exile from my home and started begging.

In addition to this the other participant explained that among the kinds of family problem; parents' behavioral problem like addiction/being alcoholic was another push factors. For instance, one of the FGD participants explained;

I lived in rural area with my children since my wife divorced with me. When I stayed with my children, they always got drunk, hit out and forced me to leave home rather than treating me, we were always in conflict I didn't manage the family. I fear that one day they would kill me. They finished all of our property by selling and use the money for drinking. So we have nothing for continued existence, then I left my family and my home I came to Debrebirhan and stayed on the street with other elder and started asking alms from people for survival.

**Death and distance of support providers**

Some elder beggars interviewed explained that the deaths of their children, the husband/wife, their breadwinner and distance of support providers of desperate elders are some push factors to join bagging life. For instance, As EB1 an elderly father explained that,

I spent most of my life as a soldier. After seven of my children died. I started living only with my wife without any supporter. My wife became blind in before four years and she suffered from hearing impairment and her health condition was poor. I always waiting her, no one helped me I did not have any relatives or supporter in Debre Birhan town. The death of my children and deprivation of their proper care and support caused to my wife deep sorrow that resulted in the deterioration of our physical and health conditions. Currently I also loss my sight, then we engaged in begging to earn money in order to fulfill our basic needs. According to him, the loss for his children care and support were the push factors to engage in begging.

Similarly the other FGD participant explained that,

I was born about eighty five years ago in shoa Awraja, jiru Woreda, and my wife born only one child to me, and she was passed away. I have small plot of land. it was given too small and the productivity very low, I found life there quite miserable. My child was coming to Debre Birhan in order to find better job, but I couldn't cultivate that small land by myself when I became old and weak. As a result of my high age and the inability of my land to support me, I had to leave my birth place and made an immediate contact with my son. He rent me a house and took me to a place where I could find cheap accommodation. He was also assisting me financially apart from paying for the house rent. Suddenly, by car accident I lost my only supporter for my son, I was homeless, helpless and an elder. Consequently, I resorted to begging starting from that time. Now, I am a full time elderly beggar.

In addition to this some elder beggars during the focus group discussion explained that the distance of their support providers or their children, also another factors to engaged in begging. One participant explained that;

I was a divorced elder who lived in rented house. I had 8 children (4 men and 4 women) who were leading their own lives residing in different towns with in long distance. I was received financial and material support from my eldest son. The other children didn't know how, where I lived because of distance living condition. One of my children was going to kingdom of Saudi Arabia before six years ago for better job opportunities But, she didn't call until know I didn't have any information about her weather she was alive or not. In addition to this I lost my eldest son some years ago. There was nothing to survive, without any supporter. I had hypertension, and a stroke left me paralyzed, inhibiting my mobility. As a result, I was detached from any work, relatives and community members and pushed to begging life.

### **Disengagement from work**

Majority of the interviewed elder beggars explained that previously they engaged in various occupations to earn a living. During the interview of this study they explained that they retired from their occupations due to their age and they shifted from their occupations, they quit their jobs and started to get income through begging. EB6 explained that,

Previously, I was a daily laborer in different non-governmental organization, but the amount of money was enough only for basic needs and, has not saved resource. Now I couldn't do all previous activities because I was old, sick, have walking difficulty, cannot lift any heavy thing and cannot afford providing physical labour due to my physical condition in related to my age. So, by this reason I lost my job similarly income and started begging.

Similarly in the focus group discussion they explained that disengagement from previous occupations and failing to do daily activities also reduced productivity and income were push factors to elder engaged in begging. As one of the focus group participants explained that,

I was a married woman and relied on my husband for income but unfortunately our marriage ended in divorce. So after the divorce it was very difficult for me because I never had any means of income. But I had to adjust to started working as a domestic servant i.e. cooking and doing laundry. This was how I lived until lost my health but this work also needs lot of

energy and as a result I couldn't work anymore by the cause of my age and poor health condition. Failing to do this daily activity also reduced my productivity and income. So, I could not afford to live, even afford food because of disengagement from my previous work. That was the horrible thing that pushed me to engage in begging.

### **Physical and health problems**

The health problems such as sickness, disease, disability and impairment are fundamental reasons for begging explained during the interview. As presented in profiles of study participant those participants had different health problems, like sight defect, difficulty walking, blindness, partial hearing impairment, joint problems, and occasional body shaking, problems of hypertension, severe headache, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, heart attack, and depression. They explained that these physical and health problems worsened their lives of and increase their vulnerability to begging. As EB8 explained that,

I was a soldier born about 74 years ago in the region of Tigray. I joined the Dergue army in 1977; I lack my strength in that condition. I was served my country as a soldier for about fourteen years in different places until the fall of the Derg regime in 1991. Soon after the over throw of the Derg regime we were scattered, I traveled a long distance and directly came to Debre Birhan with a view to get gainful employment. At the beginning, that there were very few jobs I could do. The only jobs I found were those involving guard in one hotel. Thus, in the first few years after my arrival, I'm working as a guard in different hotels. As time goes by, however, my health condition becomes deteriorated, victims of walking difficulty and joint problem. So, I become unable to work as guard. I am homeless and sleep on the street, poorly dressed that's why I resorted to begging as forced by my poor health condition.

Similarly, in focus group discussion many of them explained that health problems such as physical disability, visual/hearing impairments, handicaps, ailments can limit the potential and interest to work and push them to involve in different activities. Therefore, in order to

sustain and get their daily bread and other necessities these people having such a problem forced to engage in begging. One of the focus group participant explain that,

Previously, I involved in petty trade; my income was sufficient to afford my needs. After few years I had experience complications of disease including heart disease, diabetes, visual problem and as my aging causes a progressive decrease in physical function because of a continued decline in muscle mass and strength and an increase in joint dysfunction and pain, I becomes weak and un healthy then completely stopped petty trade. These events were made a serious challenge in my livelihood and push me to engage in begging.

### **Environmental problems**

During the interview majority of the participants explained that natural factors pushed them to engage in begging. Environmental factors such as drought and climate change affect their productivities when they were farmers in rural areas and pushed them to migrate from their original place in order to fulfill for their necessities through begging. For instance, EB2 explained,

I am from Wello and started begging because of victim of drought. I forced to leave my village because of drought. All animals are died and my farmland also unproductive. Many of our friends died and the rest like me has left in our village because we do not want to die in hunger and thirst. As a result, I chosen to go unknown place and live by begging.

Similarly, in focus group discussions many of them explained that, land degradation, deforestation are directly linked with their productivity and life conditions. They were not in a position to sustain their life through agriculture, because they are highly affected by environmental conditions, then they pushed to move into urban areas and engage in begging. As one of the FGD participant explain that,

I was a farmer and my sustainability is depends on only agriculture. However, because of the intense drought happened recently, in our community there has been experiencing one of the worst droughts in the main *kiremt* rainy season in

June to September that is vital for the *meher* harvest which production failed in 2015, in two previous poor rain seasons, followed by delayed *belg* rains in 2016. This powerful El Nino driven weather event has caused our lives and our family's livelihoods. The devastating impact is far from over. So, my productivity reduced more than ever before and as the result; I have fallen in a massive famine with my parents. Consequently, I pushed to engaged in begging.

To conclude, the study presented different factors that pushed elders to engage in begging. Financial difficulty is one of those push factors. It caused mainly elders by the nature of the livelihood. On the other hand different kinds of family problem in their living environment, the loss of any supporter by the reason of distance or death also pushed them to engage in begging. The poor physical and health condition of elders minimized their ability to work. Economic problem, family problem, environmental problem, death and distance of Support Providers, disengagement from work, Physical and Health problems are found the major push factors of elders to engage in begging.

### **Elder Beggar's challenges**

In order to explore what elder beggars' see as their major challenges, they asked through proposing different types of in-depth questions. Majority of the respondents in the interview and focus group discussions expressed that there was; challenges in getting food and clothing, house, health, psychological and Physical challenges.

#### **Challenges in getting food and clothing**

The shortage of food and clothing was a major concern of many elder beggars as they explained during interview. The Problems of food and clothing made their lives unsafe; and all are the daily agenda for those elder beggars. As EB2 explained that,

My major problems are lack of adequate food, clothing and shelter; therefore, I always had problem in getting food and I wear dilapidated cloth. There is no

sufficient food, often hungry and consume mostly left-over foods, Most of the time, I sleep without having a dinner.

As far as the problem of clothing is concerned, half of the respondents' experienced serious problems in related to the hard weather condition of the study area. These elders had no extra clothes, and they had no blankets and sheets. Many of them always wear the same clothes day and night. EB10 explains that,

I had no warm night clothes, blanket and sheet and reserved dress; always I wear mended dress day and night. I felt ashamed to act together with people because of my dirty and mended clothes. I felt cold in the night time and half of my body got unresponsive and paralyzed.

In general the study participant elder beggars provided that the main problem that makes them worried is their basic necessities as a human being. They also explained their worries have no clothes and shoes to wear in cold weather conditions. As a result, they exposed to lice and cold.

During my observation, I observed that they did not wear proper and sufficient clothes to withstand the weather conditions of the street environment in places of their operation; most elder beggars seen wearing plastic, ragged and unclean/dirty clothes without any shoes.

### **House challenge**

The study participants explained that poor access to shelter especially place to sleep makes them highly worried. Majority of them explained during the in depth interview they often sleep outside, under the bridge or under destroyed houses or veranda without cloth, if they get wearing together like sacks, plastics using it inadequately. It is very challenging for elders especially on summer they can't sleep on street due to the rain and cold. They explained that it is impossible to use plastic sheet in any place on the street or around church yard in order to keep the image of the town, even they made it such code enforcer or church guard destroy that and hit out them. As EB3 explained that

I am living on the streets, churchyard, sleep on veranda and being exposed to weather of all season. However, the church guards by frustrating theft of the church told us to leave the place. It is because of young beggars and even thefts by seemingly beggar comes to sleep together with us and then they try to theft the church property. As a result, we non-theft and elderly beggars enforced to leave the sleeping area (church compound) and the guards comes to use and destruct our pity living plastic room at night time. This problem not face only me but also for others elderly beggars. I really feel sorry because in this our age we never theft property from the church and even outside of church like from individuals.

However, I observed that there are many homeless elder beggars on the streets, in churchyards, in open spaces, under the tree who cannot move, hear, see, or communicate due to various manmade and natural problems.



**Fig3: Elder beggars sleeping on the street** (Source: Field photo by the researcher, 2017)

In addition to this three elder beggar participants explained that they lived in rented house and living in group as a narrow, single, fractured room houses and their sanitation was poor. In my observation most of the household articles were not clean and properly arranged for

elders because of their age and inability to clean. The roofs, walls, and household materials covered with dust and spider's webs. I observed that the houses of the respondent's elders lived in a single room. In addition to this they explained during the interview, that they could not get enough sleep because of the irritation created by pests, inadequate night clothes, and uncomfortable sleeping places, beds as they experienced and also the roof leaks water during rainy season.

During the focus group discussion the issue of housing is also among pressing problems of those elder beggars. From the FGD participants three of them are currently living in rented house. The renter beggars discussed that the cost of rented house is rising up from time to time irrelative to the insufficient income that the elder beggars are generating. Pertaining to this issue, for instance, one participant narrated as follows:

Back in years, rental houses used to be quite cheap and affordable with our limited financial capacity, but nowadays things are increasingly becoming costly to the extent that we are no longer able to afford. House rent is very expensive in Debre Birhan for us. For instance, before the last two years we used to pay only 100 Birr for house, but now we are paying 400 ETB which is a huge sum of money in the light of our financial power and always challenged to pay house rent. I fear to think about what might be the destiny of me in the near future if things continue to exacerbate at this pace.

The other FGD respondent explained that

It is very difficult to get a decent house for people like us because we cannot pay its monthly rent as it is very expensive. I with three of my friends live in a very crowded small room due to this we have faced many challenges.

### **Health challenges**

The other challenging problem for elder beggars is health as understood from the study. During the interview they explained that those elder beggars are exposed to different health and physical problems due to their way of life but the severity of the problems was varied.

So, those elders concerned with their physical and health problems want to solve these problems through better care and support. During the interview they explained, as their age increases their capacity to prevent disease decreases and they subjected to different illnesses and their health condition becomes worsen in related to their begging life. They added that even they were the victims of different kinds of physical and health problems, that the hot weather in days related to sun burn aggravated their wound, infection, the physical abnormality and incapacity. The cold weather on the other hand caused for muscle weakness, joint pain, pain on their bone and their extremities, caused for lack of feeling, arthritis and a problem of mobility. One of the participants during in depth interview explains that,

The sun heat burns the whole days as it comes directly from the sky since I have nothing to protect myself with. Because of this, I suffer from serious headache during the night time due to repeated exposure to sun and wind for a long time.

Similarly, the FGD participants explain that both the cold and hot weather conditions are not favorable for them. As one of the FGD discussants confirmed during the discussion,

When we are sleeping out of home without cloth we are worried about the cold especially when it is rainy we got stressed as it would be more difficult for us. The cold weather condition of the study area was very difficult to live outside home, sometimes it breaks the water meter, mirror and other materials even in the house it was not favorable, when we are sleeping on the street at the evening we get that the cold create white snow cover on our cloth. It brings joint pain, pain on our bone and a problem of mobility.

In addition to this, in the focus group discussion many of them explained that these natural, physical processes of aging and being beggar are the factor why those people fall under health problems. Regarding this, many of the interviewed elder beggars explained that they repeatedly face health problem and they affected by disease and disabilities which needs long term medical care and treatment. But, many of them explained that they couldn't get

treatment for these health problems due to lack of money to go to health institution.

Concerning health checkup, they were not checked their health condition, lack of follow-ups and checking's of health situation of elder beggars to be the most determinant factors that upset the poor health conditions. Not only financial constraints but also individual caregiver also constrained. One of the participant explain that,

I had heart disease and diabetes that needs to take special medical treatment. I need to take medication continuously but my medications are not covered by Medicare continuously, because in related to financial limitation and sometimes forget to take medication because I lost some memory in related to my age. When I was sick no one to take care of me. In each week that the money situation I beg will be better I take my medication. The doctor tells me that about food I eat in related to my health condition especially salt was not related to the medicine I take, but I eat every left over food that I gained so this had impact on my health.

Some of them explained that they didn't get sufficient and balance diet. They further described that sometimes they do not have even three meals a day. Since, they do not have the money. So, their health challenge and treatment also related to their balanced diet and their unclean begging places, dirty clothes they wear, and congested sleeping places contributes for the birth and proliferation of bed bugs, fleas and lice which in turn result their contraction for typhoid and typhus.

In addition to this they explained that poor sanitation also the causes of their health, it is obvious that a person without a proper place to stay also have a poor sanitation and this poor sanitation leading to various health problems. They don't have a proper place to maintain their hygiene such as safe drinking water, clean clothes, toilets and place to bath. As EB2 explain that, "*We cannot easily get water for drinking and washing, and live with dirty clothes and in unclean environments, we are easily contracted by different water and air borne diseases*".

During my observation I observed that they eat without washing their hands and materials since they cannot get water. They lack pure water to drink, unhygienic living conditions and some of them even share sleeping place, their environment has bad smell, looks waste and dirty area that brings different disease and aggravates their health to be challenged.

On the other hand they explained that they frequently face physical injuries. Some of them had even no shoes to cover the feet and walk on bare foot. Hence, there is a situation when sharp materials such as waste syringes, rust metals and broken glasses penetrate into their feet while walking or begging. These injuries mostly experienced those elder beggars who have full and partial sight problem. Regarding this, I observed that wound, ulcers and scabies on the feet and hands of some interviewed elder beggars, which is an indication of the exposure to such condition.

They further explained the common injury occurs as they get hit by the local vehicles and about the health challenges related to car accident and fall from the pits. This injury also indicates the how their life is challenged.

Similarly during the focus group discussion they explained as their sleeping place is risky for their health. When they sleep under the street, in the destroyed houses or on veranda which is mostly full of waste and uncomfortable condition has an impact on their health. One of the focus group participant explain that,

We are living in poor sleeping situations and with poor eating habits having health impacts on ourselves which make worse our illness and death. In addition to this sometimes we are hit by local vehicles when we are going to street. One elder beggars our friends deceased by car accident last week.

### **Psychological and physical challenges**

As stated by the participants during the interview the major psychological problems or challenges that those elder beggars have experienced because of begging were fear, depression, loneliness, hopelessness and anxiety. Some of the manifestations of anxiety are

worry about the disease and fear about their future life. According to the explanation of many elder beggars loneliness is a common experience and occurs among those elder beggars. As one participant explain that,

I felt that my whole life had been miserable, had not respected or understood in my lives, a burden to society of course. Concerning the future, I felt only fear. I had a fear of pain, disability, and decline, loss of control, and ultimately dying or death. I had to struggle with in daily life and involved feelings of anxiety, fear and powerlessness.

The other participant explained that, *“My biggest problem is that my health is in a very poor condition which forced me to be dependent and unlucky it brings my anxiety and depression”*.

According to the responses of FGD participants elder beggars are facing different psychological challenges such as: the grief and trauma at the loss of children or their bread winners and supporter, depression, loneliness, and anxiety of their future survival, and other related problem. Many elder beggars explained that they experienced problems including inferiority, shame, and humiliation, dissatisfaction with begging life and feelings of helplessness. One of the FGD participant explain that,

After the death of my children, I was living with my niece and her husband before coming to this he told me I could no longer live with them because I was dependent. Through time passed I left their home and engaged in begging. I feel rejected ever since this day. I don't have children; nobody can take care of me. I seek care during the time of sickness. I have no one to talk to and it is very hard to live like this.

During the focus group discussion the participant explained that they have the belief that the community members have to believe that elder beggars are totally ill-bred, disrespectful, disobedient, deviant and completely bad. They explain that the community is totally uncaring, pushy and discriminatory. The focus group discussion explain that,

The community does not totally consider us human beings. For them, we are just dangerous creatures who do not deserve humane caring, love, respect and

relationship with them. The words they use to describe us are fatally painful which I sometimes believe are plainly unforgivable. I feel that they knowingly label and blame us thereby excluding us. Unlike their perception they have for us, we are all sensitive human beings who need love, care, respect and relationship and we feel what they feel, we need what they need. Sometimes, they physically attack us if we are aliens from another planet. It is too hurting for us. It is like adding fuel to fire on to our miseries we are already in.

As related to their social life, the study participant stated that they are worried for; having no contact with their family, negative perception by other People and offensive response from alms givers. The Study participants also explained that it is hard to see human eye, to see people's face and as they hate begging for the reason they face many challenges. Among their challenges in this regard they explained; people's disregard, disrespect, under estimation, insult and hit out are the major ones. As EB10 explains that, in sad, pained and worried facial expression,

When I was young I was extremely playful, curious, respectful and obedient. As a matter of fact I had been the follower of fashion but now my vision difficulty limits or hampers my personal or social life' but through time passed by the cause of my age and health condition makes interaction very limited and uncomfortable or withdraw from activities of interest with my neighbor's and work, I lost my occupation and I engaged in begging. Now the existence of the stereotype, labeling associated with begging life and such myth has also influenced my thinking as myself.

Some elder beggars mentioned that they have many challenges within their environment. Among those challenges physical attacks from code enforcers, gangsters, young beggars and intoxicated persons are the major ones. They hit out them and destroy their sleeping place especially at night time. During the focus group discussion they stated that;

While we sleep around church yard just the guard or code enforcer come and forced us to leave that place and destroy our sleeping place. Thus we are worried about, because we know about how they hit out us, when we are on

the street different intoxicated persons disturb, hit us, they took our material and money we beg in daily times, in addition to this sometimes the hyena and dogs comes and frustrated us.

In conclusion, the whole elder beggar respondents in the interview and focus group discussions expressed as there is nothing good in begging life, the life of begging is uninteresting, unsatisfying, routine, difficult and as it is overall terrible situation, they lived in shameful social life and poor access to many of basic services. Under this main theme regarding the major challenges of elder beggars, findings from interview and focus group discussion with those elder beggar respondents are; challenges in getting food and clothing, house , health, psychological and physical challenges.

### **Elder Beggars' Coping Strategies for their challenges**

The study participants of this study explained that they have experienced many ways to be joyful and enjoy within their life though they face many challenges in their begging life. Accordingly, findings on this main theme have been presented as follows;

#### **Cutting meals and drying food**

In response to the shortage of food and financial or material limit, elder beggars adopted different coping strategies. Elders who faced an acute shortage of food they reduced the amount of food they served in each meal, cut the number of meals. Some of them begged for food and money on the streets, in the market, in the church, in the neighborhood, and house to house when there was special ceremony in order to save food by drying it.

EB3 had an experience of using dry food when she faced acute shortage of food and money. She told me that;

In order to collect food as I round in restaurants, church during religious Holidays, along the streets, in the market, and also house-to-house when there is a special ceremony like wedding, *tezekar* and religious festivals. I received

foods (including left over foods), from different people. Then I used little and dried those foods by sun and save it in order to use for future time when I faced shortage of food.

During my observation I observed that many elder beggars were drying leftover food (*bulle*) on the street and around the church by sun with dickey plastic.



**Fig4: Elder beggars drying their *bulle* or left over food** (Source: Field photo by the researcher, 2017)

### **Eating cheaper food**

The focus group participant explained that they attempt to meet their daily meal requirements from different sources and they have hierarchies of priorities. This relatively cheapest source of meal is buying *bulle* (leftover food) usually from street sellers and mini restaurants. Most of the elder beggars survive from food challenge by buying *bulle* and buy foods usually from small tea houses, street cafes and venders. Even when their friends have money they borrowed to buy.

### **Drinking local areke**

Some elder beggars explained during the interview that drinking local *areke* is used to cope up the challenges of sleeping place, cold weather condition, health and to forget such psychological challenges. Sometimes when they forced to leave the churchyard at night time they were going to *areke* house in order to passes that night time by drinking *areke*. In addition to this, they used it to forget different emotional challenges like stress, worries, depression in related to their begging life. When they drink they forget everything. As one participant explain that,

Most of the time I'm living around the church, sometimes the church guard forced to live that place specially in the night time, then I am going to go *areke* house in order to pass that night by drinking *areke*, not only me it is common to see beggars to drink in that house fuddled, refreshed by forgetting their worries and feelings at night time, because there was no other alternative.

In addition to this some of the FGD participant also explained that drinking local *areke* was one of their coping mechanisms for their own health challenges like food poisonous, diarrhea, influenza and other pains. They also used to cope up the cold and rainy weather condition. As one of the FGD participants said that, "*When I feel unhealthy in related to food or faced such abdominal pain and haven't money in order to get medication in health institution my first treatment is drinking areke*".

### **Religious practices**

During the interview most of the participants explained that they considered religious activities as a response to their health and all other problems. Those elder beggars prayed, fasted, use soil given by religious fathers, holy water to drink, and to bathe their bodies. EB4 explained that,

I prayed for God when I felt sickness I prayed and sprayed my body and the slipping place with the holy water. Praying is a source of my mental satisfaction, and it gives relief from sickness or such unhealthy stress.

Similarly, the focus group participant also explained that they used for religious practices to remedy their health problems and to reduce feelings of anxiety, depression, and sickness. Religion created a feeling of happiness and mental satisfaction by expressing their grievances related health problems to God. One of the FGD participants explained as follows,

I went to church to pray for my health, family and my friends to keep us in peace. I enjoy my life believing in God because I feel that going to church is a means of getting relief from my depression because I will be able to communicate with God to cast my plights on him and forget everything.

### **Self-medication**

During the interview many elder beggars explained that Self-medication is one of their coping mechanisms against the problem of health. Some elder beggars clarified that they prefer pharmacies or other health facilities, but the price of medication which increases and their financial inability to be medicated in health centers, they used self-medication. One of the elder beggars explained that,

When I become sick, it is usually headache and gastric that I suffer from. I want to go clinic, but the price would not be affordable with me it needs a lot of money that I cannot when I feel it, I go to drug Store and buy paracetamol.

In the same way the focus group participant explained that, they sometimes buy drugs and analgesic based on the symptom they feel from drug stores by their own in order to minimize cost. One of the focus group discussant revealed that

I always faced sickness like headache and gastric by those causes also encountered sleeping disorder, then I am going to pharmacies or other health facilities when I got enough money by begging, but the price of medication which increases and my financial inability to be medicate continuously, I used

to buy shirop for my gastric, buy paracetamol for headache and my sleeping disorder without any diagnosis.

### **Using garlic**

It is also manifested by some elder beggars as coping mechanism when they face abdominal pain, typhus; typhoid and diarrhea. They used garlic drinking with tea for influenza. Traditionally they believed eating garlic prevents different transmitted diseases. So using it to prevent and medicate their pain. One of the participants reveals that,

Garlic is believed to be important kind spice. Typically, I use it when I starting from my adulthood age in order to prevent for influenza by drinking with tea and coffee with ginger, eating it in the morning without meal for preventing typhoid and other transmitted diseases.

Similarly the focus group discussants also explained that they use different traditional ways among this the majority of them were explained that they use garlic.

### **Adapting the situation**

Majority of the respondents stated that they adapt and accept all the difficulties in their begging life in their environment.

I expected that every challenge will be happened for my meaningless life. I familiarize the cold, sun and all challenges faced. I didn't bother about my life after this. I paid less attention to earthly life.

Likewise in the focus group discussion they explained that there are many complications that make their life difficult; physical attack, cold, sunburn, people's abuse and disrespect, but once their lives become bad they adapt to it, because there is no alternative.

### **Reports to the police**

Some elder beggars explain that when they faced challenges among the intoxicated person, conflict with young beggars and other physical attacks they report to the police. Among the interviewed elder beggars four participants report their cases to the police from in depth

interview and some of the focus group discussants also explained that reporting to police is used for to cope their challenges of any physical attacks in their environment. As EB6 explain that,

I had stolen my clothes, foods and the money by young beggars from my pocket when I was sleeping on the veranda that I received through begging, due to those problems, I am shocking, irritating, upsetting and I have developed distress. Then I reported to the police office. They disclosed the case and believed that hunger drove them to steal those clothes and foods, so the police pardoned them by giving warning. They returned my cloths but, did not return back my food; they already eaten that food.

### **By sharing feelings**

The study participant elder beggars explained that they tried to relax and manage their emotion in different ways. They explained during the interview they shared their feelings with their friends, expressed their complaints, grievances, interests, and the contexts and problems that they have experienced. By sharing their feelings some of elder beggars got support, advice, relief from expression their feelings. One of the focus group participants also explained that, "*We talk different types of experiences we passed through our life, we come together and make a joke and try to create fun in order to be happy and to get emotional relief from our worries*".

Some other elder beggars also explained that they sit together, and discuss and consult each other in regards to their worries and try to improve their living condition. Another discussant explains that,

Our Life as elder beggar has full of ups and downs with in such miserable condition. If we live alone, we don't have the power to overcome various life challenges. Even we may not be able to get all the daily meals for survival, Life alone is uninteresting and tedious in nature. So, togetherness is the remedy of life stress and loneliness.

In conclusion, elder beggars used different alternatives in response to the challenges of getting food, clothing, sleeping place, and health, physical and psychological problem they faced. These responses or coping strategies are by cutting Meals and drying food, eating cheaper food, religious practices, self-medication, using garlic, local areke, adapting the situation, sharing feelings and by reporting the police.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

This chapter discusses the major results of the study in related to previous research findings depending on the objective of the study. This shows both the consistencies and contradicting issues with other earlier explored research outcomes. The main themes of the study include the major push factors of elder beggars, the challenges and coping mechanisms which are used to solve their challenge respectively.

#### **Push factors to Engage in Begging**

This study revealed different intertwined factors that pushed elders in to begging in the study area .That includes economic, family, environmental, physical and health problems, death and distance of support providers and dis engagement from work.

Economic problem has been found to be one of the major causes that many elders lead their life through asking alms from the public in order to fulfill their basic needs. Like the study by Wubshet Demewozu (2003), shown that poverty is the major pushing factors behind every beggars, the researcher also consistently found that because of poverty many elders engaged in begging activity. When they were unable to fulfill their basic needs consequently, they moved so as to search life through begging. because; begging is considered as a viable option for children or the elderly unless they are without other means of support and seen as the last resort for people who have found themselves in a downward spiral of poverty (ILO, 2014).In addition this economic problems also loosened the social link among family members, relatives friends, neighbors and the community at large and the weakening of the tradition of providing support to older people as a result of deteriorating economic conditions then they pushed to begging. This problem as push factors of elder beggars also attested studies by Reddy (2013), on his research, the subject does not get any support either form the family, close kin group and relatives are very poor, So that they are not extending their support to the

subjects in terms of food and other essential economic elements, many of the old parents had been left with no option but to resort to begging.

This research has also proved that family problem was the other major push factors. As family is an integral part of their social system and a big institution that influences the patterns of behavior, activities of people and drive elders to lead their lives through begging. The findings of the study in this regard are positively related to the previous findings of (Teweldebirhan, 2011) as he stated, Family disorganization was the causes of begging and the disturbance in home condition especially in the case of a poor one has led to a breakdown of the family, which in return gives rise to beggary. The findings of this study are also similar with another previous research finding. For instance, Tatek (2009), provided family disintegration, abuse and neglect by parents, uncaring environments at home are the major factors for engagement in begging. As a study by (Reddy and Menka 2013), some are resort to begging by expelled from their family, since they caused an unhealthy atmosphere in the family by addicting to alcohol consumption, similarly, this study also found that among the kinds of family problem; parents' behavioral problem like addiction/being alcoholic was another push factor for elders to engage in begging.

Elders need help and support from their children or other support providers, but the deaths of their children, the husband/wife and breadwinner or their support providers were also the major the factors brought them under begging life. This is consistent with research findings of (Ramasamy, 2004). In addition to this the study attributed the distance of their children and support providers also the causes of elder engage in begging. According to (Cheng & Kumar, 2012), because of accidents of various kinds like traffic accidents and work related accidents that lead to loss of ability to work temporarily or permanently and the death of an income earner in families were the factors to started begging.

According to disengagement theory ageing entails a gradual withdrawal or disengagement from personal relationships or society in general. Where disengagement does occur it may be due to other factors such as disability, poverty, retirement or widowhood (National council for the elderly, 1994). Therefore, by the cause of disability, retirement many elders become dependent, loss of role and power. Then, Elders' disengagement from previous occupations, due to their age and physical inability was the push factors to engage in begging.

On the other hand the health problems such as sickness, disability, impairment are the major push factors for elder to engage in begging. According to Weiss (2007), there are some people who engage in begging because of their inability to sustain life as a result of physical limitations. This finding is also related to the previous research finding stated by (Menka, 2013, Wamisho and Menore, 2009), that is old age; diseases, disability and illness are the main biological factors which pushed people in to begging. In addition to this Environmental factors such as drought and climate change are natural factors that affect the productivities of farmers in rural areas and pushed them to migrate from their original place to in order to fulfill for their necessities through begging. In this regard the finding positively related to the previous findings of womyn's Agenda for Change Cambodia (2002) that is the illegal forest degradation causes the climate change, and people face a lot of natural disaster such as droughts and flooding in the past few years and these cause destruction farmers' crops and make their lives become poorer. The findings of the study in this regard are positively related to the previous findings of (Tafere, 2007, Wubshet, 2005, MoLSA, 1992).

### **Elder Beggar's Challenges**

Findings reveal that each elder beggar experienced many challenges including inadequate access to food, lack of clothes, house, and health, psychological and physical challenge.

Elder beggars faced the challenges of food and clothing, insufficient access to food, hunger, lack of clothes made the lives of elder beggars to become dangerous. In addition, another previous study finding also stated that, the domain of every of beggars is full of challenges like lack of access to get the basic necessities (Wubshet, 2005 and Menka, 2013). The problem of clothing is also a serious problem. These elders had no extra clothes, and they had no blankets and sheets. Elder beggars are seen wearing tattered and dirty clothes as well as plastics.

Like the study by Dessalegn (2016), revealed that many beggars aged more than sixty, who have been cared for, live in poor sleeping situations and with poor eating habits which exacerbate their illness and death. Majority of them are found sleeping in verandas, along the roads and religious centers both in the extreme coldness and hotness of the air and over open land with all kinds of hardship, the researcher also consistently found that there are many homeless elder beggars on the streets, in churchyards, in open spaces, under the tree, in the study area because of Poor housing. In addition to this the research conducted by Hassan et.al (2013) indicated that there were problem of every beggars like supply of electricity, lack of sanitation, potable water and proper housing in both rural and urban area.

Most of the elder beggars are mainly exposed to health problems due to their way of life. They face health problem and they exposed to disease and disabilities, which needs long term medical care and treatment. Many of them couldn't get treatment for these health problems due to lack of money to go to health institution. Therefore, this finding contradicts with (Dessalegn, 2016) beggars do not use their money for treating their health's even becoming at the verge of death despite them has money sewed in all parts of their clothes. when they were on the street both the cold and hot weather conditions worsens their health problem, the hot weather aggravated their wound, infection and disability and the cold weather on the other hand caused for muscle weakness, joint pain, pain on their bone and their extremities, caused

for lack of feeling, arthritis and a problem of mobility. In addition to this the elder beggars who have full and partial sight problem were frequently face physical injuries in related to car accident or hit by local vehicles and sharp materials such as waste syringes, rust metals and broken glasses penetrate into their feet while walking or begging. This goes in line with the idea of Namwata et.al (2014) also noted that accidents, urban pollution, sun burn and cold during the nights are further problems or the challenges beggars face.

Their sleeping place is risky for their health. Because they sleep under the street, in the destroyed houses or on veranda which is mostly full of waste and uncomfortable, it has bad smell, looks waste and dirty area so, it brings different disease this condition aggravates their health to be challenged. They eat and drink without washing their hands, so most of them are the victim of various infectious diseases. The proportion of beggars suffered from diseases, like, asthma, tuberculosis, gout and rheumatisms and eye diseases (Menka 2013).

According to the study by Teweldebirhan (2011), shown that beggars experienced emotional problems such as fear, anxiety, trauma, hopelessness, self-hatred and depression, the researcher also consistently found that elder beggars are experienced the major psychosocial challenges that they have associated with begging. The major psychological problems or challenges of elder beggars are fear, dependency, depression, loneliness, hopelessness, stigmatization, despair, depression, fear of dying, anxiety of their future survival, absence of caregivers and other related problem. In addition to this Namwata et.al (2014), also noted that more than half of the street beggars experiencing abusive languages from the public, harassments from municipal officials and police, harassment from fellow beggars and stigmatization.

The other challenge of elder beggars within their environment was related to the physical attacks from code enforcers, gangsters, and young beggars and intoxicated persons, when

they were on the street; they loss material and money they beg in daily times. Getenesh (2016), also noted that child beggars are worried for the physical attacks from code enforcers, gangsters, and intoxicated persons, as they may hit out them and destroy their sleeping place as well as they may burn their materials especially at night time.

### **Elder Beggar's Coping Strategies for Their Challenges**

Elder beggars employed different strategies in response to their challenges, the coping strategies are cutting meals and drying food, eating cheaper food, religious practices, Self-medication, using garlic, drinking local *areke*, adapting the situation, sharing feelings and by reporting the police.

When elder beggars faced shortage of food they reduced the amount of food they served in each meal, cut the number of meals, they borrowed, sharing foods from their friends and bought the cheapest food. Some of them begged for food and money on the streets, in the market, in the church, in the neighborhood, and house to house but as usual practice they do it over. Like the study by Addis Ababa city administration labor and social affairs bureau on (2015) revealed that many beggars who faced lacks food were survive from food challenge by buying bulle (leftover food) usually from street sellers and mini restaurants. When they didn't get by this way they bought biscuit, anbasha, tea and coffee from small tea houses, street cafes and venders, the researcher also similarly found that there are many elder beggars the street by surviving food challenges through buying cheap leftover food from street sellers and mini restaurants.

The study also found that elder beggars used to relax and manage their emotion by sharing their feelings with their friends, expressed their complaints, grievances, interests, and the contexts and problems that they have experienced. They got support, advice, relief from expression their feelings by siting together, discuss and consult each other in regards to their

worries and try to improve their living condition; togetherness was their remedy of life stress and loneliness, This goes in line with the idea of (Wubshet, 2005 and Tatek, 2009) they found that beggars are collaborating and serving each other in various ways, and sharing materials and emotional resources, exchanging skills, supporting each other, and defending their own groups, all of their activities were based on friendship, personal closeness and group affinity. But, this finding contradict with (Teweldebirhan, 2011) revealed that, beggars were conflicting and quarrelling each other and their social interactions among themselves are very poor.

The study found majority of the participants also used traditional means of treatment to cope up the health challenges in their community of origin, like using garlic. They went to the spiritual places and the holy water sites for praying to cope up the problems; rather they use holy water, and use holy soil given by religious fathers. In addition to this, some of the elder beggars used drinking *areke* as coping strategy for their health challenges, to get away from the situation of psychological problems and to adopt the cold weather condition. This is consistent with the concept of the study of Addis Ababa city administration labor and social affairs bureau (2015) that is beggars who gained such money through begging in daily time, they used that money in the night time for drinking alcohol in different drinking house, in order to forget their bad feelings related to begging life and to survive the cold weather condition. Another previous study finding also explored that, beggars cope their challenges by adapt and accept all the difficulties in their begging life, even the face many problems that make their life difficult and bad situation they adapt to it (Getenesh, 2016). The researcher also consistently found similar findings; elder beggars are surviving every challenge in their life by adjusting or familiarizing those problems.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion and Implication for Social Work**

#### **Conclusions**

This qualitative descriptive case study research is designed to explore the push factors of elder beggars' to engage in begging life, their major challenges and coping strategies for their challenge. Based on these objectives, In order to gather information on the issue the Investigator used In-depth interview with ten elder beggars, fourteen elders in two focus group discussion and observation. Based on the finding of the study the following concluding points are founded.

According to the findings of the study it is concluded the major push factors of elder beggars to engage in begging. Financial difficulty was figured out as one major reason for participant's engagement in begging. Family problems, like family conflict, family breakdown, divorce, and parents' behavioral problems like addiction/being alcoholic were also the other problems that push elders in begging. Moreover, there were other immediate causes found to push out the study participant to begging life. Death and distance of support providers, disengagement from work, environmental, physical and health problems reported as immediate causes which forced them to join in begging as a way of survival.

Regarding to those push factors elders engaged in begging activities and this leads for the exposure of different challenges. Getting food and clothing is also found problems of elder beggars. The income generated through begging does not be enough their basic needs. The majority elder beggars do not have enough cloth to dress both at the day and night time. In most instances they wear rags, plastics and sleep with their day time cloth.

House or sleeping place was the challenge for the majority of elder beggars. Most of them sleep in places like veranda, on the streets, in churchyards, in open spaces and under the

tree. Some elder beggars suffer from frequently increasing house rent and elder beggars renting a narrow room in-group exposes them to different challenges.

In addition, the health challenges related to the living and eating patterns of these elder beggars create a variety of health problems, most of which are related to unhygienic, overcrowded surroundings and repeated exposure to sun and wind for a long time that aggravate their health challenge. The financial constraint for medication is also found as the problem of health.

The study also founded that elder beggars are suffering from psychological problems like, the grief and trauma at the loss of children or their breadwinners and supporter, depression, fear of dying, loneliness, and anxiety of their future survival, inferiority, shame, and humiliation, dissatisfaction with begging life, and feelings of helplessness are resulting from challenging nature of begging life. The elder beggars are exposed to physical attack. The observed finding witnesses they are attacked by intoxicated persons, young beggars and security officers who control street living.

In regarding to their challenges, majority of the elder beggars employ different coping mechanisms against their problems. In order to cope food challenges cutting meal, drying bulle and buying cheapest food are used. On the other hand drinking local *areke* also their coping strategy of some participants for challenges of slipping place, health challenge, to adopt cold weather condition and to forget such bad feelings related to their begging life. Self-medication is another strategy in order to cope with the problem of health, they buy drug without diagnosis in order to solve the problem of cost of medication, In addition to this eating garlic also another coping mechanism for health. The elder beggars cop with physical attack by reporting the police, sharing feelings used for psychological challenges, adapting the situation and using religious practices like praying, fasted, use soil given by religious

fathers ,holy water to drink, to bathe their bodies were their coping strategies for their challenges.

In general, the findings of this research show that, even though elders engaged in begging by different push factors again they are facing with many challenges in begging life; still they have lived with in a miserable life by using different coping strategies in order to survive and thereby increasing their number. Elders beggars are not received their basic needs and service. They live in vulnerable life and will continue as it is unless better emphasis is given from the government and nongovernment organizations. Therefore, the issues of elder beggars need to give high emphasis, strengthen the attempt and incorporate those issues in the development plan of the country.

### **Implication to Social Work**

According to the National Social Work Associations (NASW, 1999), social work researches explored the complex interventions that are needed to respond to society's most underserved populations, those experiencing at greatest risk. The Social worker role is meeting the bio psychosocial needs of older adults through practice, policy, research, and advocacy. Findings of this study have the following implications.

#### **Implications for social work practice**

The ultimate goal of the social work profession is enhancing social well-being and helping to meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. The study revealed that elder beggars are vulnerable and living in poverty. Consequently, social workers can be work in helping elder beggars to meet basic needs. Thus multiple problems of elder beggars need the attention of social workers to apply macro practice that systematically link the problem with community resources, sponsoring organization and voluntary associations.

In the study area there is no NGO's and Voluntary association except Habesha elderly help and care center newly opened which provides care and support for few elders. Hence too many elders were residing there without any care and support begging for alms and coins from the passerby. As the involvements of sponsoring organization and voluntary association is important for providing care and support to elder beggars play the major roles in fulfilling basic necessities. Therefore, the social worker should link the problem of elder beggars to different governmental and non-governmental organization in the study area by drafting different project proposal.

As elder beggars are the most segregated and forgotten segment of the society, it is an ideal practice area where social work values and practice principles are applied in real life. Multiples of practice tasks are vacant waiting for the attention of professionals, practitioners and advocates. Caring, counseling, training and advocating are all needs the involvement of social work practitioners.

The study found that family problem was one of the push factors for many elders to resort to begging. Therefore, rehabilitation and counseling services by trained social workers should be given to those individuals who really need help and then they will outflow from this difficult life.

The study displayed that elder beggars in the study area are also suffering from different psychological problems and social problems. Thus, the provision of counseling by competent social worker or counselor to those elder beggars will help them regain hope, inspire, develop full potential to be integrated to the community, to help them how to cope with psychological problems and discrimination they are facing.

As it is indicated in the finding section, they face different problems in related to house. In this regard social workers need to advocate for the establishment of shelter for those elder beggars considering the situation of many elder beggars who live on the street.

In general Elders are citizens who protected our homeland from invaders; they are meant for the existing generation; they have lifelong wisdom and experiences, which may benefit the youth and the society at large; unfortunately, being old and poor, they are the most forgotten, neglected and abandoned segment of the population. They are constantly pushing to beg sitting in the street corner rather than helping and empowering to share the community resources. So, it is the responsibility for the governmental, nongovernmental stakeholders and every citizen of the country that they give respect elder beggars by providing accommodation and medical facilities to the beggars at cheaper rate, providing financial assistance and social security to the beggars, bringing change in the negative attitude of general population towards the beggars. Because they are also the part and parcel of the society, help them with responsibility, rather than give kind and cash to get rid of them.

### **Implication for policy**

In addition to recognizing elders as one important part of the society, expanding policies and programs that can address better institutional care and community support, the social care of elder beggars, housing, and service access needs of older beggars is required. Policies focusing at addressing issues related to people with disabilities and old people should seek to provide sustainable solutions that push disabled and old people into begging life. Advocating towards policy formulation targeting the health care of elderly and infirm elders treatment and availing medication services are required in the sphere of policy. In spite of the existence of large number of elderly beggars the government has been disproportionately focusing on rehabilitating existing beggars targeting on the youth. But; rehabilitation of elderly and physically weak beggars should be given top priority. So for

large scale changes, strengthening the existent voluntary association, seek foreign investment and properly implemented to reduce the multiple problems of elders, social worker can work in the formulation and suggestion of policy in this regard.

**Implication for future research**

This study explored the push factors, challenges and coping mechanisms of elder beggars in Debre Birhan town. In doing so, this research paved the ground for the upcoming studies in the area. A longitudinal and multidisciplinary study in the areas of elder beggars in the country is needed. So that further investigation can be conducted by including elder beggars in different regions of the country.

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**Appendices/Annexes**

**Annex I: Consent form**

Good morning/afternoon! , My name is Aynshet wendosen. I am a graduate student of Addis Ababa university faculty of social science department of social work. This time I am preparing to conduct thesis for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of Master of social work on the push factors and challenges of elder beggars. I am here to ask you to participate in the study. There is no any risk of harm because of participating in the study, except your time till the interview questions will complete. Surely, I am having a professional duty to keep confidentiality. I will use this interview data for the purpose of this study only. There is no immediate benefit to your participating in this study. Your participation in the study is purely voluntarily. I will use tape recorder to register response completely, because I don't want to miss any of your explanations. Therefore, I am asking your voluntarism by trusting you will give real and valuable information to the study. If you are willing to participate in the study, please sign and return this form.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Name of the interviewer- Aynshet Wendosen      Name of the interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**Annex II: Guiding Question for in Depth Interview Participant**

Age\_\_\_\_\_ Sex\_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_ birth place\_\_\_\_\_ marital status \_\_\_\_\_

How long you lived in begging\_\_\_\_\_ educational back ground\_\_\_\_\_

A. Questions related to push factors

What are the factors that pushed you to engage in begging?

Probing question

- Economic factor
- related to disability/health problem
- environmental factors
- disengagement from work

If there is any other.....

B. Challenges elder beggars face

What are the challenges you are facing currently? Please probe the following:

- Economic constraint
- related to house
- Abusive languages from the public
- Harassments from municipal officials and police,
- Harassment from fellow beggars,
- health
- Psychological problems and stigmatization
- Accidents ,sun burn and cold during the nights
- Physical insecurity
- Problem of shelter and food

Tell me if there is any other constraint that you face.....

C. Coping mechanisms against challenges

- What are your coping mechanisms against those challenges?

**Annex III: FGD Guiding Question for Study Participant.**

1. How do you see life by begging?
2. What are the challenges of begging?
3. What are the push factors for begging?
4. How elder beggars cope up challenges?

**Annex IV: Observation checklist**

- The physical and health condition of elder beggars
- The physical characteristics of housing, cloth, shelter etc.
- The living condition of elder beggars
- The ways they cope their challenges
- Their sitting arrangement
- Nature of social interaction with their neighbors
- Non-verbal cues

**Table 2:** observation check lists

No	Check lists	Good	Bad	Not good and/or not bad	Others (if any)	Remark
1	The physical and health condition of elder beggars					
2	The physical characteristics of	housing				
		cloth				
		Food				
3	The living condition of elder beggars					
4	Nature of social interaction with their neighbors					
6	Their sitting arrangement					