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**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MOTHER LEAVES? MIGRATION, LIVING CONDITION AND
TRANSNATIONAL RELATION IN TWO ETHIOPIAN AREAS.**

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ABSTRACT

Ethiopia is one of the countries from which an increasing number of transnational migrant parents originate. This results in the separation of the parents from their dependent children in place of origin. Consequently, left behind children in which their parents are abroad for work are increasingly common in Ethiopia. However, the plight of these children remained unstudied and little is known about their situation in Ethiopia. The present study has thoroughly examined the experiences and perspectives of left-behind children of migrant mothers in Addis Ababa and Sinana district. The philosophy of the social studies of children and childhood is the main perspective that majorly guides the overall work of this thesis. It advocates the assumption that children are experts in their own lives and they should be studied in their own right.

The data gathering was based on qualitative design through in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The study employed qualitative research tools, such as interviews and FGDs to collect the relevant information. It was conducted with 21 research participants using the snowball-sampling technique. The respondents were composed of left behind children and their caregivers. The analysis revealed the experience and perspective of left-behind children of migrant parents. It is found that left behind children experience emotional suffering following the absence of the mother. The study revealed that mothers' migration alters family structure as children increasingly assume new roles to fill the gap left by the mover. Children do employ their agency to cope with parental migration and make life more bearable. Though divergent views were observed, most children confirmed improvement in their living condition following the inflow of remittance from migrant parents. However, the children have no decision-making power on remittance utilization. The study also unveiled that most migrant worker mothers continue to provide care support to their dependent children back home using modern telecommunication technology. In the end, it is revealed that parental migration increases migration desire of left behind children. Children consider migration as a way out of poverty both for themselves and for their family members.

Keywords: migrant, left behind children, transnational, and remittance

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRWC.....	African Chatter on the Rights and Welfare of Children
BOFED.....	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
CSA.....	Central Statistics Agency
FGD.....	Focus Group Discussions
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
ILO.....	International Labour Organisation
MOLSA.....	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
NGOs.....	Non Governmental Organisations
SAPs.....	Structural Adjustment Programmes
UNDP.....	United Nations Development Programs
UNFPA.....	
UNCRC.....	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF.....	United Nations Children Emergency Fund

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Transnational labor migration is a worldwide phenomenon that is tremendously growing in scope, complexity, and impact. By the year 2015, the number of people that work and live outside their country of origin has reached 244 million (Landau & Achiume, 2017). Today, most states have become simultaneously states of origin, transit, and destinations of migrants. These states, as argued by the United Nations (UN), (2013) face multidimensional opportunities and challenges related to this wave of migration.

More often, labor migration involves the separation of the migrant from the rest of family member. Accordingly, the migrants leave behind their family members like spouse, children, and parents. For instance, in China, 45 million elderly, 47 million wives and 61 million children are left behind in rural areas by individuals who migrated to urban areas. In the Philippines, 9 million children are growing up without at least one of their parents because of overseas labor migration (Démurger, 2015).

Transnational migration has created a new form of transnational families that live some or most of their time separated from each other as growing number of parents are joining the global movement of the labor force to take up a temporary job outside their country of origin. In recent decades, the feminization of international labor migration resulted in the migration of a growing proportion of mothers leaving their children behind. For example, in Indonesia and Philippines, the outmigration of documented women migrants outnumbers men as a migrant worker (Graham & Jordan, 2011; Chammartin, 2004). It is estimated that several millions of children in the global south are currently growing up in the absence of mother for work abroad. This raises urgent need for the understanding of the implication of parental migration on the overall well-being of left-behind children (Graham & Jordan, 2011).

The implication of transnational labor migration on sending communities has been a point of debate for so long. The debate and discussion in this regard can be seen into two relevant but

not mutually exclusive categories. On the one hand, transnational labor migration is viewed as a strategy to improve the social and economic condition of both the migrant and those left behind.

The idea is that the flow of remittance help to ease the financial constraint of families back home thereby improve families' welfare and investment. Most studies confirmed that left behind family members have benefited from remittances in improving their nutrition, schooling, housing and access to healthcare (Hadi, 1999; Bhandra, 2007). However, some studies have also found the deterioration of the income status of some left behind families when the debt they incur to facilitate migration is big and the income they get happens to be lower than they expected (Smith-Estelle & Gruskin, 2003 in Graham and Jordan, 2011).

On the other hand, several studies reported the social and psychological cost of parental migration on children back home (D'émurger, 2015). Transnational families may improve their economic circumstance; however, they also sacrifice in terms of emotional and geographical proximity (Graham & Jordan, 2011). When the migrant is the mother, such costs are usually high on children back home, since mothers traditionally are the focal point of social relations in the family. The mother in traditional nonwestern society is usually responsible to raise children and carry out domestic chores.

The growing feminization of international labor migration has also prompted the examination of how gender identities are configured when mothers are the migrant (Silver, 2006). Besides, it also prompted studies about care crises and future of families in labor-exporting countries. These studies confirmed that left behind husbands and children assume new roles which used to be performed by the migrant mother. These studies also reported the existence of work overburden on left behind family members including children (Save the children, 2006; Silver, 2006). The study further noted that, left behind children feel as if their migrant parent is living with them due to the regular social and economic presence of the later. However, these studies rely on adults' perspective about children rather than children's perspective.

Thus, the implication of parental migration on children back home is complex and context dependent. It largely depends on who is left behind, who is the migrant, pre-departure preparation and length of separation. In this thesis, I want to understand what happens with children in a specific areas in Ethiopia when their parents leave them to work in another country.

Transnational migration from Ethiopia is a recent history that largely started with the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution. The Revolution induced a two-decade of civil war that led to a massive outflow of refugees. In 1980s Ethiopia was the source of the largest number of refugees in the world, with over one million refugees resided in neighboring countries (Bariagaber, 1997).

Today, transnational migration from Ethiopia has continued, however, now the focus on labor migration and refugee flow has been tremendously reduced. While Ethiopia is hailed as one of the fastest growing economies in the world, the growth has not changed the minds of hundred thousands of its citizens from migrating abroad seeking economic benefit annually.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) (2013) estimates that at least 540,000 documented labor migrants leave the country for work abroad through legal channels annually. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the top destinations for Ethiopian labor migrants are Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon and Kuwait (Anteneh, 2012). This report also indicated that the large majority of these migrants are women who are needed as a domestic helper in the Gulf States. However, it seems difficult to get the real figure of out-migration. This is because the larger proportion of migrants leave the country through the illegal channels. For instance, the United State Department of State (2014), estimates that at least 60 to 70 % of Ethiopian international labor migrants are smuggled through illegal channels. According to this report, it is only 30 to 40% of migrants that migrate through legal channels. Therefore, basing on this estimate, over 1 million people leave the country as a transnational labor migrant every year.

My study is conducted in two different Ethiopian areas. These areas are Addis Ababa city and Sinana district. These areas are urban and rural areas respectively. There is no official statistics that show the number of migrants that migrate for overseas employment like other parts of the country. However, according to the International Labor Organization, Sinana district is one of the

areas Ethiopia from which a large number of international migrant workers originate (Anteneh, 2011).

As per my observation, the main driving force for overseas employment in my study area is economic. Poverty seems to be the main cause of concern for parents to look for work abroad leaving their children behind. They want to be recruited as a migrant worker in foreign countries to send money back home and support their children and relatives for their daily expense. Part of the plan may also be to save money and establish small-scale business after return home. However, my observation reminds me that not all families succeed as planned. However, there might be other reasons than poverty that trigger migration, too, such as migration as a family culture, migration as a divorce strategy and migration for exposure.

As already mentioned, a huge number of migrants leave the country illegally. Like the number of migrants, there is no official document or report that tells why migrants opt for illegal channels for work abroad given they even have the legal option. As someone who was born and grew up in that society, I can spell out some of the reasons why parents opt for illegal channels. My observation in this regard can be seen in three levels: first, the legal channel of migration is not always open in the sense that it is sometimes banned by the sending or receiving countries. It goes on and off depending on the diplomatic relationship and changing labor regulation laws of the Ethiopian government and receiving countries. Secondly, the longtime bureaucratic procedures one need to pass through to get the process finalized sometimes take about half a year. In Ethiopia, it takes months to get a passport. Moreover, there was only one center in the capital that processes and provides the passport for citizens for a country of nearly 100 million people. Therefore, these migrants are supposed to come and stay in the capital city for longer periods until their paper is issued. This procedure is financially impossible for many of them. Accordingly, they resort to illegal options that will only take a couple of weeks. Lastly, some migrants who cannot fulfill the recruiting criteria also choose the illegal option. These criteria are mainly based on age and health. When potential migrants find they have health problem that is not admissible to receiving countries, they resort to illegal channel that does not require that they undergo medical diagnosis.

The curiosity has been in my mind since my observation of the phenomena from my personal experience in the study area which is the perceptible implication of parental migration on children back home. I found this research work as an opportunity to respond to this challenging empirical question with conclusive evidence.

This study aims to further the understanding on the dynamics of parental transnational labor migration and its concomitant implications on the left behind children in a context of rural and urban community; where a large number of children are growing up in the absence of mothers due to transnational labor migration.

The research problem posited for this study will be examined from the children's point of view. This study explores the experiences and perspectives of the left behind children of international labor migrant parents. To this end, it explored what happened when parents leave among left behind children, remittance from parents and the experience being parented by migrant parents from distance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The issue of international migration has widely attracted researchers from a range of disciplines. Accordingly, a growing body of policy and research literature available in the area. However, these studies (Sabban, 2004; Nga, 2012; Chammartin, 2004; Najjar, 2004; Jureidini, 2004) mainly covered the experience of adjustment and assimilation of migrants in receiving countries.

Studies focusing on the implication of mothers' absence on dependent behind children in labor sending countries are also on the increase. These studies (Parrenas, 2005; Morooka and Liang 2009; Garaham & Jordan, 2011) found that parental absence results multiple impact on the left behind children. Most of these studies examined the psychological impact of mothers' absence on dependent children back home. The studies conclude that mothers' absence has negatively affected the psychosocial well-being of children back home. However, these studies mainly collated their data from Carribbean and Southeast Asian countries, which are the leading labor-sending countries of the world.

Although there are sufficient that shows the increasing number of Ethiopian transnational migrant workers, there is no study that is dedicated to examining the experience of left-behind children of migrant parents in Ethiopia as far as I have seen in my search.

The mentioned studies examined the impact of transnational parental migration on children left behind are pioneers in explaining some aspects of transnational parental migration. However, generalizing the finding of these studies to my study area context is problematic, as the difference in sociocultural milieu can affect the result.

Most importantly, previous studies examined the experience of left-behind children from adult's perspective. These studies are devoid of children's perspective about parental migration (de la Garza, 2010). As a result, little is known about the experience of left behind children.

The need for this research is prompted my ambition to examine the experience of children from children's point of view. In this study, children are viewed as active human beings not only in the construction of their lives but also the lives of those around them and the society in general (James and Prout, 1990). Therefore, this study by focusing on the neglected aspect (thematic, regional and theoretical) of parental migration attempts to fill the gap in the knowledge.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

General Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to investigate the experiences and perspectives of left behind children of migrant mothers in Sinana district and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Specific Objectives

In the light of the above overall objective, this study is intends to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To explore what happens when the mother leaves among the left behind children;
2. To investigate the implication of remittance on the left behind children; and
3. To assess experience of being parented from abroad.

1.4 Research questions

I approached the aim and objectives by the following these research questions:

- What happens when the mother leaves?
- What is the implication of remittance on the left behind children?
- What is the experience of being parented from abroad look like?
- How does parental migration influence the future plan of left-behind children?

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is categorized into seven chapters.

The first chapter is the introduction section. This chapter introduces the reader to the topic and the research problem posited.

The second chapter presents the background information about the study context. It describes some of the spatial and sociocultural aspect of the study areas.

The third chapter deals with the theoretical perspectives and concepts. It introduces the main theoretical perspectives that guides the study. It also discusses the main concepts of the study.

The fourth chapter presents the methodology section. It deals with the methods and procedures of the study.

The 5th, 6th and 7th chapters offer the in-depth presentation of the findings. These chapters examines what happens when the mother leaves, remittance from migrant parents and experience of being parented from abroad.

The last chapter end up by offering the summary and conclusion section of the study. It highlights the major issues addressed in the study, both by the empirical investigation and relevant literature.

CHAPTER 2: STUDY CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction:

This section presents the overall background of the study context. It offers the country's profile, overview of Ethiopian overseas labor migration, and regulation of migration dynamics in Ethiopia. Furthermore, it offers some of the spatial and sociocultural aspects of the study areas.

2.2 Brief description of Ethiopia

Ethiopia, is located in the horn of Africa, shares border with Eritrea on the north east, Kenya on the south, Djibouti on the east, Sudan, including south Sudan on the west and Kenya on the south. Ethiopia is one of the largest countries in Africa with a physical area of 1.2 million square kilometer (MoA, 2010).

Ethiopia, with a population of nearly 85.9 million is the second most populous country in Africa (CSA, 2013). The Ethiopia population increased from 39.9 million in 1984 to 79.3 million in 2007 (CSA, 2007). However, the growth rate is decreasing over time. For instance, it has decreased from 2.9 percent in year 1984 to 2.6 in 2007. With this growth rate, the Ethiopian population is projected to be 183 million by 20150. The proportion of Ethiopian urban population is about 16 percent in 2007 and it is projected to be over 20 percent by 2020 (MoFED, 2010).

Although Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries of the world, the economy is showing robust growth. According to World Bank (2011) Ethiopia's economy has become the second fastest economy in Africa thereby tremendously reduced poverty. Following the robust economic growth the proportion of people below the poverty line (US \$ 1.25 a day) has declined overtime. For instance, it has declined from 39.6 percent in 2004 to 29.6 percent in 2011 (MoARD, 2010). Despite such improvement Ethiopia is ranked 173 out of 183 countries in Human development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2013). The per capita gross national product (GNP) is approximately \$ 130 per year, which is one of the lowest even in sub-Saharan African context (Kebede, 2002).

The economy of the country is based on agriculture, with over 85 percent of the population lives in rural parts of the country in very basic condition (Kebede, 2002). The agriculture is based on

small farm holder farmers produce for subsistence. Agriculture represents over 43 percent of the GDP and of the total employment. It is the back bone of the Ethiopian economy (Kebede, 2002).

Like other developing economies, there is sizable number of unemployed people in Ethiopia. However, unemployment rate is declining following improvement in economic growth. For instance, unemployment rate has declined from 26 percent in 2002 to 18 percent in 2012. The unemployment rate of women is at least 30 percent higher than men (Teller and Hailemariam, 2011). This is because women are less empowered politically, socially and economically (Kebede, 2001). Beside unemployment, underemployment is the other challenge the country faces. Most people engage in unpaid agricultural work in the rural areas (Teller and Hailemariam, 2011).

Ethiopia has a multiethnic federal political governance system with 9 regional states. The Ethiopian constitution allows the regional states to adopt their own constitution as long as it doesn't contradict with the federal constitution (Kebede, 2002).

2.3 A brief overview of Ethiopian migration

Although a large number people emigrate from and to Ethiopia, the issue remained under researched and little is known about it. According to available reports, political repression has induced the highest number of people to flee the country in recent decades.

The first wave of Ethiopians overseas migration was induced by the 1974 Ethiopian revolution and its concomitant unrest that characterizes the political climate of the time. The people involved in the first wave of migration were young, educated urban elite who sought refuge for political reasons in the western world. In the decades followed, the flow of migration continued mainly for economic reasons (Bariagaber, 1997). However, the massive outflow of migrants for economic reasons from Ethiopia started in the mid-1980s to the Middle Eastern countries. At this time, women and people from rural areas started becoming part of the outflow of migration unlike before where migration seems to be the domain of men and urbanites (Bariagaber, 1997).

The 1973 oil price boom of Middle Eastern Arab countries resulted in unprecedented wealth for these nations. This, in turn, increased the demand for foreign workers for various sectors.

Women are also part of this influx to work as a domestic worker helper in these countries (Fernandez, 2011).

The initial wave of Ethiopian female migration to work as a domestic helper in Middle Eastern countries began to Lebanon as early as 1989 (Beydoun 2006). Since the late 1990s increasing number of Ethiopian women are migrating to Middle Eastern countries as domestic workers. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, and Bahrain have become an important destination for Ethiopian women who want to work as domestic worker (Fernandez, 2011).

2.4 Drivers of the supply of Ethiopian migrant workers

The drivers of Ethiopian migrants are individuals' or families' response to adversaries of local political, socioeconomic, physical and environmental conditions (Bariagaber, 1997). Accordingly, the trend and magnitude of Ethiopians' overseas migration in the last three decades have been shaped by political unrest, drought and government resettlement program of the 1980s (Bariagaber, 1997). Similarly, studies of rural poverty in Ethiopia indicated that migration for work is considered as an important way to get out of poverty. Overseas work is important both for the migrant and those left behind. For the left behind family, it is a strategy of livelihood diversification and a buffer against various socioeconomic crises in Ethiopia (Fernandez, 2010). Accordingly, migrants send remittance to their family back home. In 2015, the registered inflow of remittance from overseas migrants worth over \$3.7 billion (National Bank of Ethiopia, 2016). The unofficial remittance is also estimated to be equal or greater than the official figure. The remittance from workers abroad is important for Ethiopian Economy. For instance, the 2015 official remittance figure is more than threefold of the \$ 1.5 billion foreign direct investment registered the same year. Similarly, International Monetary Fund (IMF) remittance is estimated to contribute up to 20% of Ethiopia's annual gross domestic product (Yau and Assefa 2007; cited in Fernandez, 2010).

2.5 Regulation of migration dynamics

During the Derg regime (1974-1991), migration out of the Ethiopia was strictly restricted. This regime was overthrown and replaced by Ethiopian Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991. This is followed by significant social and economic reforms. One of such reform is the removal of restriction on people's right to travel abroad to work and live (Fernandez, 2010).The current Ethiopian constitution, which was adopted in 1994, officially recognizes the right of citizens to work abroad for the first time which led to the surge of labor migrants (Kebede, 2002 & Fernandez, 2010).

Although the recognition of citizens' freedom of movement is a positive thing, there are recurrent and shocking media reports about the abuse and torture of Ethiopian migrates in the Middle East and African countries. It also reported that neither the Ethiopian government nor Ethiopian Embassies based in these countries intervene to mitigate the problems migrants face (Kebede, 2002). There has been criticisms against the government from the public for not intervening to help mitigate the different abuses the migrants face.

The Ethiopian government is trying to stop the flow of out migration in general and illegal migration in particular. in As part of responding to this criticism, the government focuses on providing awareness about the dangers of migrating abroad in general and illegal migration in particular for potential migrants. The media campaign encourages people to look for in-country jobs and to opt for legal channels of migration if they decided to migrate. However, this doesn't does not seem stop the flow of migrants as it does not fundamentally respond to the root cause of Ethiopian migrants.

The condition of left behind families and children of migrant parents is another component of Ethiopian migration dynamic that has been neglected both by Medias and policy literature. My assessment into the Ethiopian social welfare policy reveals that left behind families in general and children, in particular, are given little or no attention at all. The policy document states that necessary socioeconomic assistance shall be rendered to families and children in difficult circumstances. However, it doesn't specify these families and the nature of assistance to mitigate

the said circumstances. The government has no any program that that aims to provide help for left behind the left behind families and children.

2.6 Study area

This study was conducted in two entirely different places, Addis Ababa and Sinana. In both Sinana district and Addis Ababa, there is no statistics that shows the flow of migrants for work abroad. Neither qualitative nor quantitative data are available regarding the implication and nature of parental international migration on families back home. The rate, prevalence, and incidence of migration in general and parental migration, in particular, is not statistically summarized and organized except that there are about 7 – 9 individuals appeal to employment agencies located in the Sinana district and Addis Ababa that send labor forces to other countries. However, according to the Ethiopian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (2013), Sinana district and Addis Ababa are two of the four areas in Ethiopia from which large number international labor migrants originate.

2.6.1 Sinana district

Sinana district is situated at 450 km south of Addis Ababa. The district is located in Oromia regional state; which is the biggest regional state both in terms of geographic and demographic depth. The district is bordered with Agarfa and Gasera ditricts in the North, Goba and Barbare districts in the South, Goro and Ginir in East and by Dinsho district in the West (OBFED, 2009).

According to the 2007 population and housing census, the district has 119,208 residents of which 62,280 and 56,928 are male and females respectively (CSA, 2007). Given the district is a rural district, almost all of its population are rural residents. According to the data from Oromia Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (2009) the average population density of the woreda varies from 84-102 person / km². This made the district as the most populous district in Bale zone and this is mainly because there are high fertility rate and massive resettlement program from other zones of Oromia regional state (OBFED, 2009).

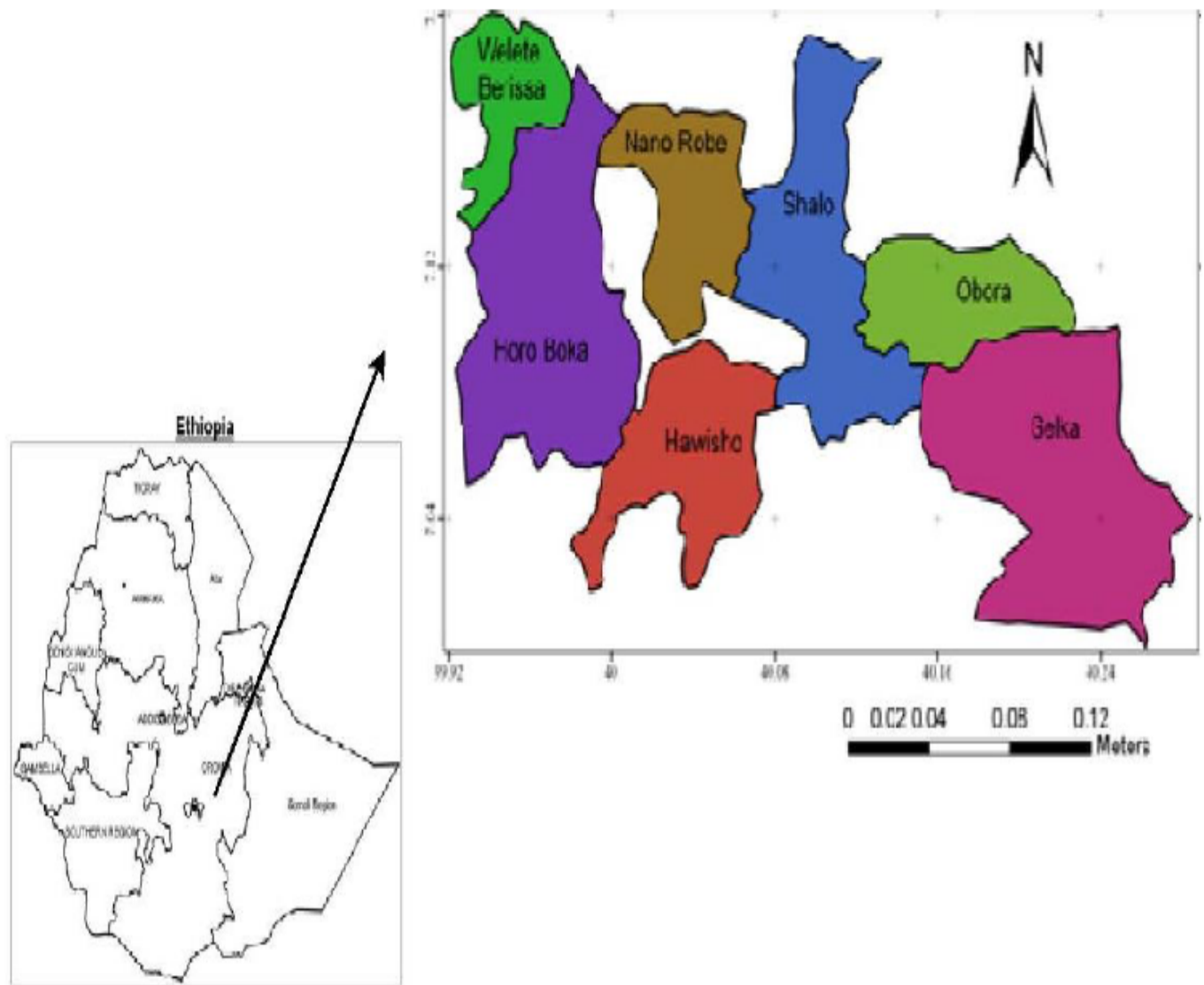


Figure 1. Location of the study area.

The economy of the district is predominantly agriculture whereby 90% of the residents of the residents depend on it. The agricultural practice is based on small family holdings and usually produced for consumption. The district is known for its production of surplus food, of which wheat and barley take the lion share of the district's product (OBFED, 2009). The role of industries

in the district's economy is almost nonexistent. There is no any medium and large-scale industry in the district.

With regard to access to pure water, it is only 59.4 % of the district that has access to potable drinking water. Besides, tap water, well, spring, river pond are also used as a source of drinking water in the district (OBFED, 2009).

Schooling and access to schools is a recent history of the rural residents of Sinana district. As a result, most of the adults are illiterate and cannot read and write. Currently, there are 15 primary schools in the district. The schools are accessible to all children in the district. However, the children have to travel up to one hour on foot from their home to school every day. This being the case, there is no any kindergarten and secondary school in the district. The children who complete primary school have to go to the Robe town (neighboring district) to continue their high school education. Despite having easier access to primary school in the rural areas, a sizable number of students terminate their studies every year to engage in the informal economic sector to generate income for themselves and their families.

I have also tried to assess the family system of the study area. To begin with, family and households are contested terms while discussing the family system. This is mainly because of the existence of a fluid form of family relationship and the continuous change of family forms and meanings (Ansell & Van Blerk 2004). Although families and household are usually used interchangeably, they are not the same. While the family is a kinship group with genetic, emotional and legal relationships, the household is conceived as task-based unit of residence (Boyden, 2006).

The Sinana district is an entirely rural district where extended family is predominant. The society follows patrilocal residence, whereby married women live with the husbands' family. Accordingly, families that have blood ties live close to each other. The prevalence of extended family system in rural areas of wider African context was also reported by Boyden (1994). Polygamy is widely practiced in rural parts of Sinana district. There is a situation whereby multiple wives live in the same compound in the study area. This was also reported by a Norwegian

Anthropologist, Jan Brøgger, (1984) who studied the Sidamas tribe of Southern Ethiopia as quoted by Abebe (2013).

Members of the extended family in the study area have a strong social bond. In most cases, they eat together, share the same household equipment, and help each other in rearing children and in time of crises.

Status in the extended family is mainly determined by one's age and sex. Men and elder people have more power and status than the younger. Husbands are family heads and give the last decision that affects family life, including the migration of their wife.

Economically, almost all families depend on small family farming. My experience and observation in these society reveals that most families struggle to meet their basic daily needs. As they depend on rain fed agriculture, they have been vulnerable to recurrent drought. In sociocultural terms, the society is homogeneous. They speak a similar language, follow similar religion and practice the same culture.

As member of this society, I have also observed that many families in the district want to have as many children as possible. This is mainly because of two main reasons. Firstly, in the non-mechanized traditional agriculture they practice and need a large amount of labor for production. Families need as many children as possible to meet their labor demand. In connection to this, having many children is also considered as an old age insurance for parents. I have also observed that, having many children in general and many male children, in particular, is considered as a guarantee for security. Families with many young boys are highly respected and never experience any form of attack and robbery. Whereas, families with few or no young members are less respected and frequently get attacked and robbed.

2.6.2 Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia is the commercial, cultural and industrial center of the nation. Addis Ababa is the largest city in the country with over 3.6 million people (CSA, 2007). The city also accounts for 30% of the country's urban population. According to the 2007 Ethiopian housing and population survey, 52.4 % and 47.6 % are female and male respectively.

The economy of the city is dominated by the service sector, which accounts for 77% of the city's economy, followed by industry which contributes about 22 percent. According to Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (2010), 61 % of the economically active population is engaged in the informal sector and about 36% of the city's population lives below the poverty line (BoFED, 2010).

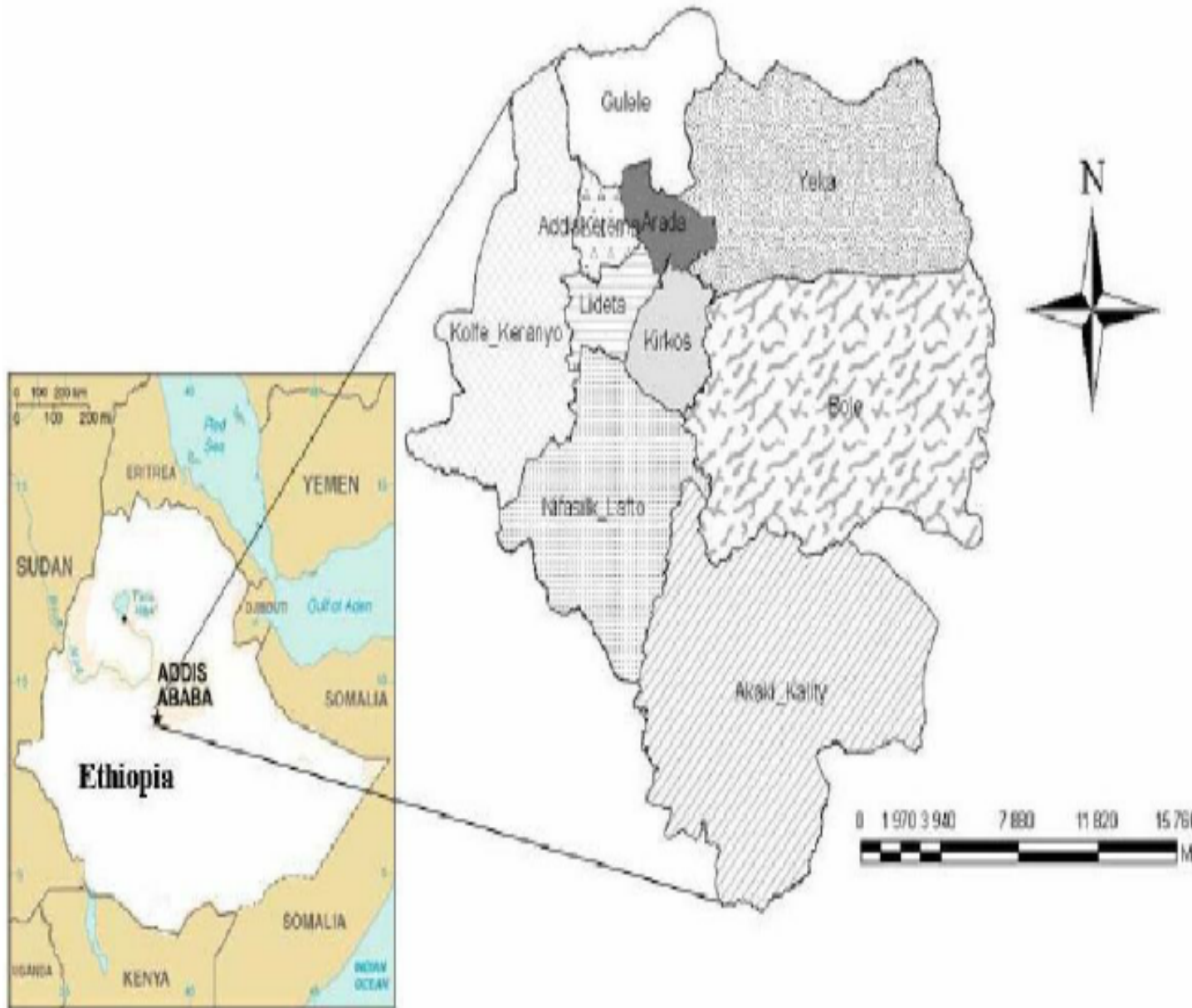


Figure 2. Study area 2 (Addis Ababa).

The city's provision of goods and service does not match the demands of its residents neither in terms of access nor quality. The proliferation of slums inside the city, high population growth, and horizontal expansion of the city are the major factors for the mismatch between the supply and demand between the public goods and services (BoFED, 2010). Despite its economic importance and contribution to the country, Addis Ababa faces various problems including high level of poverty, insufficient and poor quality infrastructure, shortage and deterioration of housing (BoFED, 2010).

According to my experience and observation, most of Addis Ababa city inhabitants are first or second-generation migrants from other parts of the country. This coupled with the economic nature of the city, the extended family arrangement is nonexistent. There is clear physical and social boundary between families. The interfamily relationships in the city are temporal, segmental and a means towards another end. Most of the families have relatives in other parts of the country, especially from where they originally migrated or their parents migrated. Accordingly, both left behind children and children of non-migrant parents have less social support network like their rural counterparts.

I have also observed that families in Addis Ababa are heterogeneous in terms of their economics and psychosocial traits. The families' economic heterogeneity in the city ranges from those who cannot afford to meet their basic needs to those who live a luxurious life by any standard. Like economic difference, families in the city are also diverse in their sociocultural traits. They speak a different language, follow a different religion, and have different cultural practices.

According to my experience, the transnational labor migrants come from all these diverse sociocultural and economic groups of the city. However, the larger proportion of migrants originate from the lower economic class of the society. Besides lower economic status, family breakup another factor that triggers transnational parental migration.

In the next chapter, I will present some of some of the theoretical perspectives and concepts guiding the study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES, CONCEPTS AND

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Theoretical reflection

The study of children and childhood was previously dominated by disciplines that focused on development and socialization that views children as 'becomings' emphasizing development (psychology) and socialization (sociology) (Prout & James, 1990; Woodhead, 2003). The dominant paradigms portray children as incompetent and irrational beings that await temporal passage of time to become full human beings (Prout & James, 1990). These perspectives do not consider children as complete human beings. As Lee (2001, p 38) puts it, "The predominant sociological view tends to highlight children's lack of mental contents (culture, values, and conventions) while the predominant psychological views tend to highlight children's inability, relative to adults, to undertake certain mental processes that amount to rationality". Social studies of children and childhood emerged and challenged this dominant paradigms' marginalizing and stereotyping aspect of children and childhood.

3.1.2 Social studies of children childhood

The philosophy of the social studies of children and childhood is the main perspective that guides the work of this thesis. It advocates the assumption that children are experts in their own lives and they should be studied in their own right. This approach considers children as socially constructed. It, therefore, assumes childhood varies across time and space (James and Prout, 1990). This approach is in sharp contradiction with the developmental theories that consider children as passive, incapable, and vulnerable (Lee, 2001). As opposed to the developmental and socialization theories, the emergent paradigm considers children as active human beings and are not merely passive recipients of adults' view. The new paradigm has also set forth methodological approaches on how children should be studied (James and Prout, 1990).

The key principles of the paradigm include:

- ❖ Childhood is considered as socially constructed
- ❖ Childhood should be a variable of social analysis

- ❖ Children’s culture and social relationships should be studied in their own right regardless of adults’ perspectives and concerns
- ❖ Children are understood as active in the construction of their own lives and the lives of others around them and the society in general
- ❖ Ethnography is particularly a useful methodology for the study of childhood
- ❖ The paradigm of childhood sociology meant for engaging and responding to the process of reconstruction of childhood in society (James and Prout, 1990).

This approach to research is regarded relevant for the study at hand since my study aims to examine the phenomenon from the research participants’ point of view. Understanding how children view their experience as left behind can be best captured by listening to them at their stories. Children are perceived as social actors that are active in the construction of their own lives and worth of studying in its own right (James, 2009).

3.1.3 Structuration theory

The structuration theory goes beyond the agency/structure dichotomy and rather considers them as interlinked and interdependent. Giddens (1984) argues that the main domain of social science theories is neither the experience of the individual nor society in general. It is rather how the practices of a society are ordered across time and space. This is to mean that we do something as an individual within a particular social frame (Giddens, 1984). According to Giddens, there is a dual process between structure and agency in the sense that social structures are created by social actions and social action is possible through social structure.

Structuration theory is relevant for the study at hand because it helps to consider the dual process between social structure and individual agency in shaping children’s experience and perspective. This approach is important for my research as it tries to capture the process between social structures such as the family and other social institutions on the one hand and the left behind children’s agency on the other hand, in shaping the experiences and perspectives of the group under study.

3.2 Concepts

3.2.1 Agency

In the social studies of children and childhood, children are viewed as active human beings not only in the construction of their lives but also the lives of those around them and the society in general (James and Prout, 1990). According to Robson et al (2007, p 135), “agency is understood as an individual’s own capacity, competencies and activities through which they navigate the context and positions of their life worlds, fulfilling many economic, social, and cultural expectations, while simultaneously charting individual or collective choices and possibilities for their daily and future lives”. This concept is relevant for my thesis in the sense that it explores left behind children's capabilities of making choices and decisions affecting theirs and others life. The absence of parents for work abroad in most circumstances enhances the opportunity for children to exercise agency since they usually take up at least part of the activities used to be performed by their migrant parents. Therefore, application of this concept helps to understand left behind children's active role in negotiating with and influencing their caregivers, friends, neighbors, and others in their daily life experience. The concept also helps to get see children capabilities of resistance to the different forms of marginalization and discrimination due to their being left behind.

3.2.2 Social structure

Social structure refers to, the distinctive and stable arrangement of social institutions by which individuals interact and live together in a society (James and James, 2008). In sociology, it is believed that social structure determines the personality of its members. It considers individuals’ experience and perspective as the product of the social institution in which they are brought up. Therefore, children are said to operate within the limit of the normative framework of existing social institutions (James and James, 2008).

Applying the concept of social structure is seen as relevant for my study because the left behind children of migrant parents are influenced and shaped by social structures to act and behave in a certain manner. It gives insight into the role of school, arrangements in the new family and changing economic circumstances in shaping the experience and perspectives of children. As

much as this concept is important to reveal the role of external forces in shaping its members it is also criticized for its deterministic approach entirely neglecting the agency of individuals' capability in doing and making differences on matters that affect theirs and others life (James and James, 2008).

3.2.3 Social constructionism

The idea of social constructionism views children as socially and culturally constructed. Therefore, the way children are constructed is varied as per the philosophies of each and every society (James et al, 1996). Accordingly, social constructions about children and childhood are neither universal nor static, it rather changes across time, space, and society (Woodhead and Montgomery, 2003). The application of this concept in my thesis is important because it helps to understand how left behind children are constructed in the society that I am studying. According to various studies and my informants, there are different prejudices and assumptions specifically targeting the left behind children of migrant parents. The concept helps to examine how these children are constructed in local society, in school, and in their new family.

3.2.4 What is a Child?

The definition of a child varies across history, culture and political dynamics of a particular society. Therefore, there are numerous definitions of a child and it is contextual. However, most often a child is defined based on chronological age (Gillis, 1999). According to United Nations Convention on Rights of Children (UNCRC), a child is defined as any human being below the age of 18.

According to James and James (2008) a child is “a human being in the early stages of its life course, biologically, psychologically and socially; It is a member of a generation referred to collectively by adults as children, who together temporarily occupy the social space that is created for them by adults and referred to as childhood”. In their definition, James and James tried to incorporate both the biological and social description to the concept of a child.

In global north countries, childhood is considered as a time of play, care and schooling (Woodhead, 2003; Punch, 2003). However, due to the socioeconomic and political realities of

countries in the global south, children grow up in a quite different context. The definition of a child by UNCRC, which is only based on the realities of the global north countries has been severely criticized. Furthermore, it has been impossible to implement the principles of the UNRC in global south countries (Burr & Montgomery, 2003). Based on this reality, the African Union adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). ACRWC does not only state the rights of children but, it also incorporates their responsibilities, which is a missing element in UNCRC.

In Ethiopia, like many countries in the global south, children grow up assuming various roles and responsibilities. These children combine work and schooling. In many Ethiopian societies, work for children is considered as part of the socialization for their future (adulthood) responsibility besides current contribution. In a similar vein, (Abate & Abebe, 2013) found that children are actors in the livelihood foundation of most Ethiopian societies.

3.2.5 Children's rights

In the past decades, the rights of children have increasingly gained greater attention, largely because of the adoption of the UNCRC in 2009. UNCRC has been hailed as victory for children by child right advocates. Furthermore, UNCRC has been ratified by all governments but and the United States and Somalia. Today, it has become unrealistic to think about children's rights outside the framework of this convention. This is because the UNCRC is considered as a comprehensive and integrated document on children's rights (Reynaert et al., 2009). However, the UNCRC has also been criticized for being western centered and failing to encompass the context of children in the global south (Pupavac, 2001).

The rights stated in the convention are considered as important for the overall and healthy development of the child. The major general principles of the convention include non-discrimination (Article 2), the best interest of the child (Article, 3), the right to life, survival, and development (Article, 6), and children must be considered in all matters affecting their lives (Article, 12). Like many countries of the world, Ethiopia has ratified the UNCRC. However, in reality, many children are devoid of many of the rights stipulated in the UNCRC because of economic, cultural and political factors.

3.2.6 Transnational labor migration

The migration of people from place to place because of push and pull factors has existed since time immemorial. This movement could be in country movement which is usually rural urban migration or international migration that need to cross international boundaries (UNDP, 2009).

These days, changes in the global political economy has some sort of impact the life of people all over the world. Improvements in telecommunication and transportation have increased the flow of people, commodities, capital, and ideas. Besides, changes in the structure of global economic landscapes have significantly impacted the flow of migrants crossing transnational boundaries (Sassen, 1998 in Tyner, 2002). Nowadays, it is not only the number of migrants that has increased. More countries have increasingly become involved in the global system of migration. While there is a decline of labor migration to traditionally migrant-receiving countries of Western Europe, countries in the Middle East and South East Asia are becoming center for capital accumulation and destination for transnational labor migration (Tyner, 2002).

Migration in general and transnational labor migration, in particular, is becoming a central theme of social and economic development worldwide. Unemployment, war, poverty, conflict, acquisition of prestige and status and the process of recruitment in countries of origin are considered as a pushing factor for people to migrate. Escaping various traditional and cultural constraints are also listed as another pushing factors for people to migrate leaving behind their place of origin (Punpuing, 2007).

On the other hand, the high cost of labor, industrialization, and increasing proportion of elderly people increased the demand for labor workers in developed countries (Punpuing, 2007). In other words, increasing number of transnational labor migration is driven by the economic inequalities of countries, globalization, and differences in demographic structures. Accordingly, migrants cross international boundaries to take up jobs in developed countries to improve the overall economic well-being of their own and their families. Viewing from the economic perspective, migration usually opens the chance for the migrants to improve his/her economic wellbeing and the society in general (Punpuing, 2007; Hadi, 1999; Jones & Kittisuksathit, 2003).

Migration benefits both countries origin and destination. It is a job opportunity for people in sending countries and become the main source of income for millions people in sending countries. Furthermore, it is a source of foreign currency these countries (Chammartin, 2004). In receiving countries, the migrants help to fill the vacant jobs that people in receiving countries do not wat do, yet in need human labor (Chammartin, 2004).

3.2.7 Feminization of migration

Although migration of women has a long history, in recent days, transnational migration has become increasingly feminized. The feminization of migration of in recent decades has resulted in the outmigration of growing number of women for care work in developed countries. For instance in Philipines, women constitute over 55 percent of the total transnational migration (Save the Children, 2006). In Siri Lanka for instance, 600,000 (60 to 80 percent of documented migrants figure) women migrate abroad annually of which 60 to 75 percent of them are married and 90 percent of them have children (Save the Children, 2006). These women usually take up domestic helper jobs in destination countries. For instance, in Saud Arabia alone, the number of domestic workers is estimated to be over 1 million. The growing number of women transnational migration is associated with wage disparity, labor supply and demand and to some extent because of the legalization of transnational work (Save the Children 2006).

In light of the gender perspective, the feminization of migration is also partly because of the feminization of domestic work. Often women are supposed to do domestic work. It is socially appropriate to consider domestic work as the only strength of and women are not considered as successful in other parts of the family economy (Punpuing, 2007).

3.2.8 Left behind children

When individuals leave their country of origin, there might be family members who can be left behind. Families left behind refers to families in which its core member(s) is (are) absent for a number of years because of migration (UNFPA, 2006). For this particular study, it refers to children whose either one or both parents are absent for some or most of their time as transnational labor migrant for work abroad.

In recent years, the plight of left-behind children of migrant parents has received growing attention from people in the academia and beyond. This growing attention is timely and important at the time we are experiencing growing transnational migration driven by uneven economic development and easy flow of people across borders (Yeoh and Lam, 2007). These labor migrants usually leave behind children with their extended family members or others to improve the economic well-being of themselves and their families (Yeoh and Lam, 2007).

Studies that examined the experience of left-behind children of parental migrants reveals changing roles and increasing household chores on the left behind children. For instance, a study in China found that parental migration in China resulted in the rise in domestic duties on left behind children aged between 7-12 (Chang et al., 2011; de Brauw and Mu, 2011 in Meng and Yamauchi, 2015). In similar vein, in Mexico, girls between the ages of 16-18 assume handling domestic duties when their parents migrate (McKenzie and Rapoport, 2011). This study also argued that left behind children of migrant parents are overburdened by work thereby reducing their study hours.

Studies also revealed that parental migration may also lead to divorce. It is found that migration may lead to permanent separation when the migrants establish their own new family in receiving countries. In such cases, left behind children may experience feelings of jealousy and abandonment (Meng and Yamauchi, 2015).

3.2.9 Remittance

Most studies that examined remittance, revealed that migrant parents send high level of remittances for their families back home thereby significantly improving the financial status and living condition of left behind families (Hadi, 1999; Bhandra, 2007; Yeoh and Lam, 2007). Studies also reported differences in the remitting behavior of migrant fathers' versus mothers'. A study by UNFPA (2006) for instance reported that migrant mothers tend to be more concerned about their children and remit more money than their male counterparts.

Most researchers revealed that half of the remittances sent back by migrant workers is used for daily consumption, education, and healthcare. In addition to financial remittance, left behind families also benefit from social remittance such as new ideas, skills and knowledge migrant

parents learned while living and working abroad (UNFPA, 2006). Several studies also reported that most of the migrant parents save money to establish small business with the skills they learned from abroad (Punpuing and others 2005 in Punpuing, 2007).

3.2.10 Communication

Studies reported the existence of regular communication between migrant parents and the left behind children. Communication takes place in the form of phone call, text messages, writing letters and exchanging gifts. A study in the Philippines by Asis (2006b) in Yoah and Lam (2007) revealed that left behind children of migrant parents have increased ownership of telecommunication tools. With the growing income because of remittance, they can afford to purchase these tools. According to several studies, migrant mothers generally tend to sustain the relationship with their left-behind children compared to migrant fathers (Punpuing, 2007).

The migration of one or both parents may also result in the configuration of roles within the left behind family. Such changes also directly or indirectly affect the left behind children. Studies revealed that migrant parents do not relegate their roles of parenting after migration. For instance, according to several studies in Philippines, migrant parents bear the overarching part of caregiving to their children after migrating (Asis 2006b; Parrenas 2002; 2005a; 2005b in Lam and Yoan, 2007). This is more common in societies where child care is considered as the sole responsibility of women. Consistent with this argument, Parrenas (2005b) in Lam and Yoan, (2007) stated that gender and roles persist in Philippines transnational households. He argued that despite women earn more income overseas and remit more, the way fathers view themselves did not easily change. Similarly, studies in Mexico revealed that gender roles in parenting remains unchanged even in transnational families (Dreby's 2006, in Lam and Yoan, 2007). This study also noted that migrant mothers are supposed to provide emotional assistance from distance, while fathers are expected to provide their family with economic security while abroad.

3.2. 11 Impact of parental migration on children's back home

3.2.11.1 Impact on left behind children's education

Various studies have well documented the impact of parental migration on children back home. These studies have investigated the complex relationship between parental absence, remittance flow and educational performance of left behind children. The reviewed literature on the impact of parental migration on children's education back home is mixed.

The positive impact of parental migration is related to the investment in the education of children by the migrants. For instance, in the Philippines, children of migrant parents have the better chance of being enrolled in private schools and perform better compared to children of non-migrant families. This is because private schools are more expensive than public schools and cannot be affordable for most non-migrant families (Cortes, 2005). In a similar vein, Liang (2009) found that children of migrant parents have the better chance of being enrolled in schools than children of nonimmigrant parents.

On the other hand, studies identified that parental absence detrimentally affects the educational performance of left behind children. For instance, it was revealed that parental migration increases children's desire for migration like their parents and decreases their motivation in educational involvement (Morooka & Liang 2009; Chiquiar & Hansen, 2005 as cited in Cortes, 2007) results in deterioration of the performance of left-behind children at school (Cortes, 2007); left behind children of migrant parents overburdened by work which is a cause of concern for poor performance of migrant parent children (Silver, 2006); Children of transnational families perform less than children of non-migrant parents (Save the children 2006; Bhandra, 2007; Ukwatta 2010; Chiquiar & Hansen, 2005 as cited in Cortes, 2007).

3.2.11.2 Psychological impact of mothers on children's left behind

It is well documented by previous studies that parental migration in general and mothers' migration, in particular, is said to have psychological impact on left behind children. It is reported that left behind children of migrant parents feel abandoned, rejected and lost (D'Emilio et al,

2007). In a similar vein, Silver (2006), noted that left behind children experience the feeling of loneliness and insecurity.

The impact of parental migration also depends on the age at which they are left behind. Children whose parents left them at their early age lose their mothers' memory. However, children who were left behind in their later age, may experience anger, abandonment and resentment which cannot be overcome by the flow of remittance from their migrant parents. In addition to psychological impact, the adoption of risky behavior has been observed among left-behind children of migrant parents (D'Emilio et al, 2007).

3.2.11.3 Economic Impact of parental migration on children's back home

The most recognized benefit of parental migration on families and children back home is the economic benefit. This is revealed in terms of improvement in access to goods and services, improvement in consumption pattern and possession of major material assets and improvement in the investment of migrant families and children (Ukwatta, 2010).

Mothers' migration is closely linked to improving the living condition of their children. Remittance sent back home is used for a variety of purposes, however, most of the remittance goes to daily household consumption. Besides daily consumption, remittance also goes to children's health, education and repaying debt. Using remittance to pay debt also raises a question whether it is used for sustainable economic benefit. Furthermore, lack of knowledge in financial management also endangers sustainability of economic benefit of parental migration.

It is indicated that there is a parallel relationship between the length of migrant parents stay abroad and the economic benefit of left behind family and children. The more migrant parent stay and work abroad, the more sustainable economic benefit the left behind family and children enjoy (Ukwatta, 2010).

To conclude on this chapter, children are seen as human beings, not as mere passive recipients of adults' view. They are viewed as active human beings not only in the construction of their lives but also the lives of those around them and the society in general (James and Prout, 1990).

The next chapter discusses the methods and procedures used in the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Researching with children

This chapter describes the research method that was applied to examine the experience and perspective of left-behind children of migrant mothers. The choice of methods and procedures for the study is guided by the research questions in need of investigation. Researching with children in adult-dominated society raises several concerns. The power imbalance between the adult researcher and the child informant is another important area of concern. Therefore, the degree to which this imbalance is addressed and children meaningfully participate determines the quality of research with children (James et al. 1998, Holloway and Valentine 2000, Barker and Weller 2003, Matthews 2003, cited by, Abebe, 2009). The emphasis behind adopting participatory research approach emanates from the objective of getting valid and reliable of children by emphasizing their voice in the research process (Ennew and Plateau, 2004, cited by, Abebe, 2009). Due to the way children are constructed in adult-dominated society, the power imbalance between child informant and the adult researcher may limit the former to freely express his views in the research process that could harm the quality of the result (Punch, 2002). Accordingly, different techniques and approach necessitate to fix or at least soften the imbalance. To this end, different writers have suggested different techniques. All these techniques, underscore the importance of bringing the children research participant to equal footing with the adult researcher (Mandal, 1991, cited by, Abebe, 2009).

As part of reducing the power imbalance, Corsaro (1996), cited by, Abebe, (2009) recommends the 'incompetent adult' approach whereby the researcher approaches the children as incompetent to soften the assumption that adults are wise and know better than children. In other words, the researcher is supposed to take least adult role. Similarly, Abebe, (2009) stated the need for restructuring the way we dress and speak to children in the research process in line with empowering children to freely take part in the process. Coinciding with this fact, (Mandal 1991 cited by, Abebe, 2009) also stated the importance of creating a friendly relationship with children to reduce the impact of the power imbalance between the research and children research participants. To this end, Punch (2002), underscored the importance of

developing rapport by spending longer time with children. However, some researchers are skeptical of totally avoiding the power imbalance between adult researcher and children informants. They further state that it is impossible for adults to fully pretend that they do not have power and influence over children (Abebe, 2009).

As I am the member of the community under study and some of my relatives are also labor migrants leaving their families and children back home, I recognize that I have my own assumption, expectation and biases. However, I reminded myself that I had to listen to my research participants with an open mind and be reflective to this tendency in the research process. While interviewing them, I listened to them with an open mind trying not to allow my personal feelings and biases to influence the stories and interpretations.

4.2 Research design

This study is a cross-sectional study as it examines the experiences and perspectives of left behind children of migrant parents at single point in time (Newman, 2004). The study is descriptive in nature as it ingrates and describes the research problem posited using different data instruments (Newman 2004).

The qualitative research approach was employed. Qualitative research approach helps to grasp people's lived experience and perspective by using their language and statement in their own context (Dyck, 1993). I decided that in-depth investigation was most appropriate for exploring the phenomena in my study.

4.3 Data gathering methods

Given the nature of the issue under investigation, research instruments that permit flexibility, in-depth and participation were the most relevant for this study. Accordingly, in-depth interview and focus group discussion were administered to uncover children's experiences perspectives.

4.3.1 Interview

Interview as a method is intended to gather rich and detailed information from study participants (Kvale, 1996). He also noted that this method helps to excavate inner stories that are often not

accessible by other methods. Similarly, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) stated that qualitative interviews help to understand research participants from their own point of view. This is important because for my study as it seeks to explore children's experience from their point of view. The inspiration for this model of the interview came from a phenomenological paradigm which advocates understanding phenomenon from the research participants' point of view (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Interviews are conducted in various formats and structure. For this particular research, semi-structured interview with some guiding questions before the actual interview process was prepared (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). However, I tried to be flexible and open in modifying my question to follow and probe what my participants would say.

I employed an interview guide that was coherent with the main research questions. I tried to make sure that the questions prepared were motivating to build rapport and tell rich account about the experiences and perspectives of being left behind. Besides, I also tried to make the questions free from academic language and offensive terms.

The narrative interview was applied to gather data for the study. As stated by Wengraf (2011), in narrative interview respondents are asked to tell stories or produce narratives of phenomena or their life experience. Similarly, in this study, the narrative interview had been used to get insight about the experiences of children before and after the departure of their parents for work abroad.

The challenges that are associated with the interview with children in my research can be seen on two levels. For one thing, the parents of the research participant children insist to attend while their children are interviewed. For the other, younger children lack the vocal capability to express their views. I tried to overcome the mentioned challenges by developing rapport and including child-friendly techniques respectively (Ennew et al, 2009).

4.3.2 Focus group discussion

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is the other relevant data gathering method administered to collect information to the problem posited. FGD is a relatively naturalistic conversation and relies

on people's own lived experience, thereby, providing insight that cannot be obtained by other methods (Wilkinson, 2004; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The main focus of FGD is to identify values, ideas, beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes of groups of research participants (Ennew et al, 2009).

For this particular research, I administered 2 separate focus groups for boys and girls in Addis Ababa. This is mainly because of the fact that it is taboo to have boys and girls in one place for any form of discussion and even play in this area. Accordingly, I had a separate group for boys and girls which helped me to run the group discussion smoothly.

I did not give remuneration to study participants except for 2 children (boys) as compensation for the income they missed as a result of engaging in my research process. Nevertheless, study participants were offered some cookies and soft drinks as a form of refreshment in the middle and after the discussion.

I was the only moderator who facilitated the focus group discussion since I do not need translator and secretary. As a facilitator, I tried to make sure that all participants have a say on the issue being discussed and not dominated by few group members. Accordingly, all participants were encouraged to comment or add ideas on each and every issue being raised in the discussion. In addition, I also tried to keep the discussion focused on the themes under investigation. In the whole process, I tried to be so neutral as possible, not to influence the participants in a certain manner.

4.4 Access and recruitment of informants

I started my fieldwork in mid-June after receiving permission and letter of cooperation from government officials in Oromia regional states, Ethiopia. Prior to my actual fieldwork, I made field visits to my study area to find gatekeepers and make contact with local traditional leaders.

The specific technique employed to draw respondents was snowball sampling. I found this technique very relevant given that the nature of the study population is hidden and its identification may be challenging (David and Sutton, 2004). Furthermore, this technique is more relevant when research focuses on the network of interconnected people (Newman, 2004). In this study, the network is guardians and children of migrant parents who experience similar

phenomena. These networks of connection occurs in school, in towns/villages children live and in the process of migration.

I identified my first few research participants (children and their guardians) with the help of a well-known person to the area, local government officials and returnee migrants. Then I carried out interviews with identified informants and continued by identifying informants with the help of already interviewed study participants and by others who could do so. The interview continued this way until the completion of the data collection process.

The sample respondents for this study were heterogeneous in a sense that it incorporated children with diverse social and economic characteristics such as age, place of residence, gender, length of separation and country of destination of parents. This was done for the purpose of investigating at the impact of these characteristics in creating difference in experiences and perspectives among informants. It is important to have research participants from the different category of people to present various experiences and perspectives (Fraser et al. 2004).

For this particular research project, all participants and guardians of left-behind children were made aware in advance of the purpose and objective of the study. In addition, they were asked their willingness to be part of the study. They were also informed of the confidentiality of information given for this particular undertaking.

I had hard time to get access to the study site and research participants in my study area. These challenges can be seen in two levels as I interpret it. The first is political. At a time, I was on field work, the country in general and Oromia region, in particular, have seen massive anti-government protests, that results in hundreds of deaths that prompted the government does declare a state of emergency. Accordingly, people were suspicious of any stranger that come came for any form of consultation. Therefore, I had to explain the matter in detail and seek the help of well-known persons in the area to help me get cooperation from research participants. The second is the unwillingness of research participants. This unwillingness is partly because of the negative attitude some members of society have towards migrant families. They want to take it as a family secret not to be exposed to others. Accordingly, some migrant families even do not

want to recognize that they have migrant family members to strangers. I again used the same strategy I employed to overcome the first challenge.

To explore the research problem posited, 15 children and three adults, and out of these 7 children were participated in the study. The three adults were guardians of the left behind children. Besides the interview, two round FGD were undertaken, each constitutes 4 participants. In addition to interview and FGD, careful observation was also carried out to gather data for the study at hand.

The venue for interview and focus group discussion was chosen by research participants themselves. Accordingly, they could be held in school, inside a parked car, under a tree, and in their house.

The sample respondents for this study were left behind children of migrant mothers aged between 6-12 years. The research includes those children whose mothers are international labor migrant at the time of the study. Besides, the study also included two children whose father migrated and 3 guardians to get more insight into the phenomena. The other inclusion criteria are that the children are those who are separated for at least one year from one or both of their parents at the time of the study.

4.5 Ethical consideration

Researching with children raises additional ethical concerns. Researchers need to consider factors such as gender and sociocultural background of children research participants for instance (Ennew et al. 2009). While conducting research with vulnerable children, the ethical concerns to consider are even more (Ennew et al. 2009).

I tried to make sure the research is compiled with the necessary ethical consideration. Considering the nature of research participants and the research problem posited, the following ethical strategies that guide both the researcher and children research participants were followed for the research at hand.

Firstly, research participants were protected from harm: Due to the way children are perceived in adult-dominated society and its associated power imbalance between children research

participants and adult researchers, the latter have the responsibility of ensuring that children will not be harmed for participating (Morrow and Richard, 1996).

Secondly, research participation must be voluntary: Participation in the research process was entirely voluntary. I provided participants with informed consent. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the possible risks associated with the research process. (Cozby, 2001).

For this particular research, the researcher sought the consent of guardians or caregivers in addition to child research participants. Research tools were used only after I received the consent of participants to participate in the research process. Participants were informed about the research aim and process before they were requested their consent (Ennew, et al. 2009).

Thirdly, respect privacy: I tried not to intrude into the private world of children in issues or themes they do not want talk about, as part of ensuring their privacy. They were also allowed to withdraw from the research process anytime they want (Ennew, et al. 2009).

Fourthly, ensuring confidentiality: Confidentiality refers ensuring the disclosure of personal information that may identify participants. Accordingly, researchers are supposed to be cautious in keeping the privacy of their research participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). For this particular research, all research participants were assured of confidentiality that the information gathered will not be disclosed to third parties without the consent of the participants. I also assured the research participants that the researcher would not collect their names and no names will appear in the report (Ennew, et al. 2009).

The names used in this research are not real names. They are pseudo names used for the purpose of ensuring confidentiality as agreed with my study participants.

4.6 Data transcription and analysis plan

The data gathered from the field presented detailed stories about the experiences and perspectives in these children's lives. For proper management and analysis of the data and to establish a coherent flow of ideas, the interview and FGD conducted with respondents were tape recorded and I also took field notes on my daily fieldwork experience. Following the completion

of data collection, audio materials were transcribed and translated into English by the researcher since interview and discussion were conducted in Afan Oromo language. This is important because, as stated by Kvale & Brinkmann, (2009) researchers doing their own transcription get the benefit of enhancing the quality of transcription. This is because it reminds them the emotional and social dimensions of research participants in the data collection process. To this end, I listened to the recorded audios repeatedly to get the full picture of what is said in its own context. Similarly, I also thoroughly reread the field notes to get the accounts of the children. Although it is a tiresome and time-consuming task, I did it to make sure I get the real picture of the research participants' voice in their own perspective.

The process of data analysis evolves from description to theorizing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Accordingly, I was looking for concepts that give rise to theoretical frameworks to analyze children's experiences. Considering the diversity of research participants, I explored the similarities and differences that exist across gender of migrant parent/s, the number of years migrant parent/s stay/s abroad, the gender of research participants and age of research participants among others. This is followed by categorization and meaning condensation which is a decontextualization process.

Following categorization and meaning condensation, the content of research questions and objectives were revisited in a way it accommodates the newly emerging concept from the field (McCracken, 1988). These categories were enriched based on data gathered from the field. In this process, some similar patterns may appear across stories of participants and the reasons for those appearances were also emerged. The data analysis process started in the field, by focusing and refocusing of research aims and questions, and through the methods used in collecting data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This has been done to make sure that as many details as possible details have been incorporated from the field.

4.7 General background of study participants

The study was conducted to examine the experiences and perspectives of left-behind children of transnational migrant mothers in the study area. To examine this research problem, a total of twenty-one (21) research participants took part in the study. The first group of informants were

interview participants. A total of 13 individuals participated in the interview, of which 10 were left behind children. Except two, the migrated parent of the children are mothers and the age of these left behind children ranges from 8 to 13 years old. The time since the children were left behind also ranges from 1 to 4 years. The other three participants of the interview were guardians/family heads. These include left behind husband, aunt, and grandmother.

Finally, the last major data sources for the study were FGD research participants. Two FGD were undertaken each of which composed of four participants. The first FGD composed of left behind girls of migrant parents who live with their caregiver/s. The second FGD participants are left behind boys whose parents have migrated for work abroad. In the course of the discussion, a wide range of issues pertaining to the experiences and perspectives of left-behind children were explored. In this regard, how the absence of parents was perceived and entertained by the left behind children were explored.

Except for six participants of the study (three guardians and three left behind children), all other research participants were from the city (Addis Ababa). All left behind children involved in the research process are primary school students and most of them can read and write. The three guardians have not attended formal education and they cannot read and write. This being the case; 13 of my research participants are males and the rest 8 are females.

The following table summarizes information about the study participants.

Case	Names of study participants	Age	Sex	Respondent category Migrated Parent/s	Migrated parent/s	Guardian	Study area
1	Kedir	11	M	Left behind child	Mother	Friend, aunt and grandmother	Addis Ababa

2	Lensa	13	F	Left behind child	Mother	Aunt and older sister	Addis Ababa
3	Mesfin	8	M	Left behind child	Mother	Father, uncle and housemaid	Addis Ababa
4	Genet	10	F	Left behind child	Mother	GM	Addis Ababa
5	Tola	13	M	Left behind child	Mother	Aunt	Addis Ababa
6	Jibril	10	M	Left behind child	Mother	Father	Addis Ababa
7	Yadeno	9	M	Left behind child	Mother	Mother	Addis Ababa
8	Melat	12	F	Left behind child	Mother	Father, stepmother	Sinana
9	Musa	13	M	Left behind child	Father	Mother	Sinana
10	Keneni	12	M	Left behind child	Father	Mother	Sinana
11	Abinet	40	M	Guardian	Mother		Addis Ababa
12	Asnakech	53	F	Guardian	Mother		Addis Ababa
13	Kelil	49	M	Guardian	Moher		Sinana

Table 1. Overview of informants- age, sex, migrated parents, guardians, and study area.

As a qualitative research variant, this research looked into the experiences and perspectives of left-behind children of transnational mother worker in the study areas. For this purpose, the study explored how the absence of their mothers for work abroad is perceived and entertained.

What emerged as a main phenomenon from the empirical data could be characterized in three different categories. Firstly, my attention was drawn to accounts of what happens when mothers leave. Secondly, remittance from migrants and its effect on left behind children. Thirdly, I will offer about transnational relationship and parenting from distance. The empirical chapters are presented in this order.

CHAPTER 5: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE MOTHER LEAVES?

5.1 Introduction

The contexts in which Ethiopian parents migrate are quite different. The migration policy of receiving countries does not allow family reunion possibility for migrant workers. As a result, dependent children experience several years of separation from their parents (Graham, et al. 2012).

These families must adjust to the absence of core family members and to the influence of newly gained money, attitude, goods, ideas, behavior transmitted back home by the migrants. Several studies found that the absence of parents for work abroad has a significant effect on dependent children as they depend on their parents for emotional and economic support (Graham, et al. 2012).

The idea of what happens when the mother leaves in the study areas was debated across many vantage points. The debate and discussion around the fundamental revolve around what changes when the mother leaves for work abroad. The changes children experience following the migration of their mother can be synthesized and addressed into two relevant but not mutually exclusive categories as spelled out by research participants. First, changes in roles and responsibilities. In this regard, I explored how the reorganization of familial and responsibilities affect the everyday life of children. Secondly, I present children's emotional reaction due to the separation of their mother. In doing so, I examine the grief, loneliness and the discrimination and stigma children experience in relation to the migration status of their mother. I also try to present children's agency in their reaction to mothers' absence.

5.2 Reorganization of familial roles

Parental migration alters family structure as tasks are reassigned and roles of left behind family members change to fill the gap left by the movers (Hugo 2002; Parreñas, 2005). These changes in roles and responsibilities of family members affect members of the family in general and that of children in particular. The effect of the migration of a family member is worse when the mother is the migrant (Ukwatta, 2010). This is mainly because of the fact that mothers always tend to be

the primary caregivers of children and the focal point of social relationships in a family. Adjustment to the new roles left behind by the movers also depends on factors such as gender, social norms and other pivotal issues (Rigg 2007, cited by, Graham et al. 2012). As they assume new and increasing role following the separation of the mother. In my study, most research participants revealed that the absence of the mother for work abroad disrupts their daily routine as they increasingly assume new roles and responsibilities following the absence of their mother. The new and rising roles and responsibilities children assume following separation can be seen on three levels. These are; domestic duties, care provision, and income generating activities.

5.2.1 Domestic duties

Previous studies well documented that left behind children increasingly assume domestic duties activities following the separation of their mother because of migration. These studies also indicated that children in general and girls, in particular, are overburdened by domestic chores following the departure of their mother (Silver, 2006; Yeoh et al. 2006; Graham et al. 2012).

My study also revealed that most left behind children increasingly assume household chores after the migration of their mother. The children explained to me that increasingly assuming housework during the absence of the mother is associated with the existing gender-based division of labor where the mother confined to the domestic sphere, whereas, the father is a breadwinner working outside the home environment. When the mother leaves without proper pre-departure preparation of who replaces her in carrying out her duties and responsibilities, it is up to the children to fill the gap left by the mother. My observation and discussion with study participants revealed that these children assume some or most of her roles in the aftermath of the migration. The study participants in this category reported that they carry out activities like cooking food, fetching water, cleaning houses, and shopping.

To this one of my research participant said: *After the migration of my mother I carry out all activities used to be performed by my migrant mother. As I'm the only girl in my family, I have to engage in cleaning, cooking and caring for my younger brother as the boys do not engage in women work. I'm doing it like my mother was doing* (Melat, 12 years, Addis Ababa).

This narrative clearly follows the traditional gender-based division of labor in the patriarchal family. It shows the duties and responsibilities performed by left-behind children have gender connotation, as argued by Twum-Danso, (2009). It further reveals that this child considers assuming her mother's duty as normal and her responsibility. This indicates agency of children as social actors and knowledgeable of their social environment (Giddens, 1984). In a similar way, Holloway and Valentine (2000) argue that children utilize their agency to cope the different challenges they encounter in their life.

Research participants further noted that even if they have a housemaid, they partially carry out domestic chores due to the fact that housemaids do not stay with them since they are part-time employees. This because housemaids are only employed to cook food and wash clothes. Accordingly, they only spend few hours a day in their employers' house. Therefore, it is children's responsibility to do part of the housework that is not covered by the housemaid or fill the demand of the household work when the housemaid is not around. Therefore, they still engage in shopping, offering food, grilling food and cleaning plates.

Furthermore, research participants revealed that children experience incidence of risks while attempting to carry out domestic chores. The main cause of concern for such risks is because of the fact that children have no experience of carrying out such activities until their mother leaves for work abroad. In this regard, these activities are beyond the physical capability of these children. In other words, these children are too young to carry out these activities.

To this one of my informants stated: *One day I was preparing bread in our kitchen, I fell on the stove because I was unable to hold the material I was using to prepare the bread. It was too heavy for me to hold it. Then I was admitted to hospital and released from there after a while* (Genet, 10 years, Addis Abeba).

On the other hand, I had a conversation with children who stated that they had not experienced a rise in taking up new roles and responsibilities following the migration of their mother. They noted that the roles and responsibilities they have are the same as the time before their mother migrated. They work the same work they used to work before the migration of their parents. These groups of children are those who live in the rural areas area who have strong extended

family ties. In such cases, extended family provides important contribution to adapt absence of parental migration (Ansell & Van Blerk, 2004). Similarly, Abebe (2010) confirmed that family pulls resources together to meet the needs of children. He further indicated that in Ethiopian society extended families have social, religious and economic obligation towards their lineage. My observation and discussion with study participants revealed that children are placed in a close relative of the non-migrant family. In most circumstances, the left behind children are already familiar with the host family. In such arrangement, the child experiences similar role as the host family children; which is similar to the experience they had before the migration of their mother. Similarly, in urban areas, there are women-headed families where left behind children are placed. These are children's aunt or grandmother that effectively replaces the role of the mother. As a result, there is no increase or changes in roles and responsibilities of children following the migration of their mother. The study also revealed that these group of family have strong social and economic ties with the migrant mother abroad. I will present the transnational ties and its implication for the care of children will be discussed later in the next section.

5.2.2 Care taking role

Children of migrants assume caretaking roles for household members in which they live in following the migration of the mother (Asis, 2006; Abebe, 2010). According to Abebe, (2010) children of migrant parents assume the role of caregiving for younger siblings with whom they live with. He indicated poverty and lack of family support as the main cause of concern for children of migrant parents to assume caregiving role.

My study revealed that giving a care service for others is another new role left behind children assume after the migration of their mother. In order to understand this role, care arrangement should be seen within the social norms and family structures of the society under consideration, as argued by Graham et al (2012). According to the tradition of most Ethiopian societies, the mother is the sole caretaker of children in the study area. This role then becomes the responsibility of the left behind children when there is no extended family member to respond to the care need of family members. Therefore, similar patterns as with domestic duties, my

informants assume the role of care provision for the family members, mainly the younger siblings, the sick and elderly.

The study revealed that older children serve as a caregiver for younger children used to be done by their mother. The children explained to me that they provide care for children replacing their migrant mother. The types of care they provide include cleaning children, offering food and comforting them to sleep.

To this one of my study participant stated: *Following the absence of our mother, I became mother to my younger brother. It is me who provides him what my mother used to provide him. I wash him, wash his cloth and feed him* (Melat, 12 years, Addis Ababa).

The discussion with study participants revealed that younger children's need for care service increases following the migration of the mother. May be this is because children get sick so often due to declining care and emotional problem of separation. The children who provide care told me that they spend long hours treating, feeding, and comforting younger siblings to sleep. This study is consistent with Asis's work (2006) in which data was collected from the Philippines. This shows that children are active agents, who direct their lives in action to survive in the situation set by existing social structure (Giddens, 1984). In other words, parental absence led older children to depend on themselves to survive.

Similarly, I had also a conversation with children who provide care for their grandparents. The participants revealed that grandparents who are supposed to be caretakers of children end up in becoming care receivers from the left behind children. The main reason behind this is as spelled out by study participants is that elderly caregivers usually get sick frequently because of their age-related diseases. Besides, they also get sick because of work overburden since they try to cover all the tasks used to be performed by the migrant mother.

To this one of my informants stated: *My grandmother is also facing many challenges. For instance, she has to travel a long distance from home to the marketplace by carrying some stuff to sell and carrying back them to home. Now she frequently gets sick. I provide her with the care she needs such as cooking her food, buying her drugs. I also sometimes seek the help of my neighbors to help me take her to hospital* (Genet, 10 years, Addis Ababa).

5.2.3 Income generating activities

The study revealed that some left behind children assumes the new role of income generating activities following the migration of their mother. The reason that prompt the children to engage in income generating activities is to supplement the declining financial income of family following the new situation. These groups of children are those who do not hear from their migrant parents. It is identified that the income status of the left behind family declines when the mother doesn't send money because of various reasons (This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter).

The children who engage in income generating activities confirmed to me that they engage in such activities to support themselves and their families economically. They engage in income generating activities like retailing charcoal, potatoes and shoeshine work in the study areas. The children do these activities on the weekends, in time after school and sometimes missing school during the open air market days.

In this regard, one of my informants said: *After we stopped hearing from my mother, I started going to market to make money to buy food. Every Wednesday and Saturday I spent the entire day in retailing charcoal, onion, and pepper that we buy from whole sellers in open market with my grandmother. It is only Saturday and Wednesday the open markets are available in our town. I don't go to school on Wednesday because I have to help my grandmother in carrying the charcoal and other stuff to the market and back home from the market (Genet, 11 years, Addis Ababa).*

These narratives display how children depend on their own capability to make a living, encouraging children's agency to generate income. This is evident from what Giddens (1984) argues in his structuration theory; that the life of children is shaped by society and prevailing condition. Children as rational social actors who engage in income generating activities to support themselves and other family members. This finding is inconsistent with Batistela & Conaco's (1998) findings that found children of migrant parents have better living conditions because of remittance as it helps to reduce child labor.

Another participant indicated that taking the new responsibilities have overburdened them by work. They noted that they spend much of their time carrying out the new roles and responsibilities they take up following the migration of their mother. Similarly, (Yeoh et al. 2006; Graham et al. 2012), argued that mothers migration results in work burden for left behind girls as they assume increasing domestic work.

5.3 The emotional reaction of separation

Emotional suffering of left-behind children of migrant parents has been well documented by several researchers (Yeoh et al., 2006). It is indicated that the migration of the mother results in greater impact than the father's produce (Battistella and Conaco, 1998).

Recognizing the emotional impact of mother's absence produce on children, I resorted to asking children some questions pertaining to this. My discussion with my study participants on this issue revealed that left behind children experience emotional suffering following the absence of the mother.

The cause of concern for emotional reaction of study participants into three relevant, but not mutually exclusive categories as spelled out by themselves. These are: Loneliness, stigma and discrimination and grief and anxiety.

5.3.1 Loneliness

The study revealed that children of migrant mothers feel lonely following separation. This is even worse when the children are resident of a city, as the residents in urban areas have, as already mentioned, loose extended family ties. Unlike children in the rural part of the study area who have strong extended family ties, children in urban areas have close ties only with their nuclear family members in general and their mothers in particular. Customarily, children spend most of their time with their mother, as women in general and mothers, in particular, are confined to domestic activities.

Children revealed that they feel lonely when their mother leaves them for work abroad, as most families do not prepare in advance for the social gap that may occur before the departure of the mother. As a result, children struggle to cope with loneliness following the absence of their

mother. The study also revealed that the children abandoned when they found no one to spend time with them.

One of my informants stated: *I'm confused and frustrated because of being alone. Before the departure of my mother, I used to spend all my time with her both at home and her workplace. Now, I just sit in front of my door and wait for someone to come. But no one comes to meet and appreciates me until the evening comes* (Mesfin, 10 years, Addis Abeba).

The discussion and interview with study participants revealed that some of the children receive less care from their caregivers and feel lonely when their parents stop remittance. This is especially true for children who are placed in families to take care of the child in exchange for financial compensation. In my study areas, almost all caregivers, including extended family members expect financial compensation for taking care of the child from the migrant parent. When the migrant parent for some reason stops sending money, some caregivers reduce or stop providing the needed care for the children.

In this regard, one of my informants said: *I do not have permanent residence/caregiver. When my mother was here, all my relatives and her friends want to be my caregiver. They all want me to be with them. After she stopped sending money to them, no one remembers me* (Kedir, Age 11, Addis Ababa).

Some children also told me that they feel insecure because of loneliness happened to them following separation. They explained to me that they feel unprotected when they are alone. The children fear for the safety of their life during the night time, as there is no adult that protect them from different dangers. This is consistent with (Battistella and Conaco, 1998) study in which data was collected in China. It was found that left behind children of migrant parents feel insecure and helpless due to loneliness and lack of emotional support.

Children both in urban and rural areas revealed that they feel scared of thieves, human traffickers, and others. The study further revealed that their scariness is even worse in the evening when they are alone. This is because thieves usually visit homes where there are no adults in general and men in particular. Therefore, when there are no people with them in the evening they feel scared of being killed and kidnapped by someone.

In line with this one of my study participants pointed out that: *I live with my father and a housemaid. My father is a taxi driver who works all day and comes back home around midnight. The housemaid comes home in daytime and leaves around 6:30 locking me up in the house until my father comes and open it. From the time the housemaid leaves and my father comes, I'm alone and feel scared of my life. When I hear some unusual sound, I hide under the bed* (Mesfin, 10 years, Addis Ababa).

Study participant indicated that loneliness is the cause of concern for the dissatisfaction of their life in the aftermath of their mothers' absence. All research participants unanimously revealed that they feel dissatisfied as they lack physical and emotional care they used to enjoy before the departure of the mothers. Loneliness is not only linked to lack of care and anxiety. Some children mentioned the 'care of food'.

To this one of my research participants stated: *I get everything I need. I get good foods that I can't get before my mother leaves for work abroad. But anything I eat and drink after she left is tasteless. She used to understand my needs before I tell her. She used to make me happy. But now my caregiver is not doing that* (Jibril, 10 years, Addis Ababa).

This narrative illustrates how the lack of emotional support following the absence of the mother affects the everyday life of left behind children. The respondent expresses how material gains do not replace the support children get from their mother. It further indicates that the willingness and ability of the caregiver shape the quality of emotional care left behind children receives as argued by Yeoh et al. (2006).

5.3.2 Stigma and discrimination

Discrimination and stigmatization of left-behind children because of the migration status of their mother were raised as a cause of concern for their emotional suffering. Most children confirmed to me that they are discriminated and stigmatized by the community in general and their friends in particular. My discussion with study participants revealed the existence of widespread rumor that migrant mothers who work as a domestic worker in destination countries are also part-time prostitutes. They are accused of working as prostitutes and the left behind children are referred to as children of prostitutes. In my study area, prostitution is considered as immoral and sinful.

Study participants explained to me that their friends undermine them because of the migration status of their mother. Most of the children consider the rumor as a mere allegation to undermine them in their relationship with their friends. They believe that their mothers are generating income by working 'proper' work.

In this regard, one of my study participants remarked: *My mother is in Saudi Arabia and has a good job. She doesn't work as a prostitute. I tell to some of my friends that my mother is in a beautiful country and has more money than theirs* (Mesfin, 8 years, Addis Ababa).

Some children told me that they use different mechanisms to respond to the stigma and discrimination related to the migrant status of their mother. For one thing, the study revealed that left behind children hide the migrant status of their mother not to be the victim of the stigma and discrimination process associated with the migrant status of their mother. They falsely claim that their mother migrated to Europe or another country where they are not suspected of engaging in such activities. For the other, they avoid friendship with children of non-migrant families in general and children who insult them on this basis in particular.

To this one of my informant stated: *I have changed my friendship from children of non-migrant families to other children whose mothers migrated. When I see children playing in a group, I don't go alone; I go with another left behind children. If I go alone they make fun of me saying I'm a son of prostitute and unwanted. When we are together, we tell them that our mother is better than them* (Kedir, 11 years, Addis Ababa).

This study, which revealed the existence of stigma and discrimination against left behind children and their migrant mother, contradicts with Asis's (2010) study in the Philippines, which found that transnational migrant mother is respected and regarded as 'national heroes' by family members, society, and the state.

The study revealed, as we seen above, that the stigma and discrimination is a cause of conflict between the left behind children and their friends. There are also incidents of fights between the left behind children and others a result of the stigma and discrimination. Such conflict also sometimes extends to parental conflict, when parents of the children in conflict accuse each other's children as causing of the conflict.

In this regard, one of my informants stated: *I don't dare to tell this to my father about the stigma and discrimination related to the migration status of my mother. If I do so, he would beat those who insult me as a child of a prostitute and they would beat me afterward as revenge. I may also make my father get into conflict with the parents of those children* (Kedir, 11 years, Addis Ababa).

Some children raised the existence of mere allegation that left behind children are deviant. This emanates from the idea that left behind children grow up without the supervision of and disciplining of their mother. They are believed to become deviant or engage in the socially unacceptable behavior. They are perceived as if they engage in using drugs, theft and other unwanted behaviors. As a result, some parents do not want their children to be close or friends with the left behind children with the assumption of prohibiting the chance of learning this socially unacceptable behavior from the left behind children.

To this one of my respondent stated: *I'm a good boy. I'm a good student and hard worker. I also respect elders and my teachers. I'm better than many of the children whose parents are not migrants. However, people refer to me as a deviant, only because my mother is a migrant* (Melat, 12 years, Addis Ababa).

Several studies have reported concerns about children risk-taking behavior and delinquency as a result of parental migration. There is a widespread imagination that left behind children are more likely to be involved in risky health-related lifestyles like smoking and drinking. My study is consistent with Graham's et al. (2012) study which found that there is no evidence to support the idea that left behind children of migrant parents involved in risky behavior than non-migrant households.

5.3.3 Grief and anxiety

Previous studies reported the traumatic feeling of left-behind children following separation from their parents (Battistella and Conaco (1998). It is also indicated that the traumatic feeling of left-behind children may be lower among societies where migration is practiced widely and accepted (Suarez-Orozco et al. 2002, as cited in Yeoh et al. 2007).

In my study, grief, and anxiety of left-behind children as an emotional reaction to separation pop out from the empirical data. Grief and anxiety as an emotional reaction to separation were discussed across many vantage points. The debate and discussion are however related to the fate and wellbeing of their mother. The study revealed that the children worry that their migrant parents may be killed, tortured or face different form of abuses in the destination countries or in their way to destination countries. The causes and aggravating factors for the grief and anxiety of children can be seen in three way as spelled out by research participants. The first is media campaign that creates awareness to the general population about the potential harm of migrate to the Middle Eastern countries in general and illegally in particular. Different media outlets in the country regularly report the different abuses the migrant workers face in the Middle Eastern countries. They report about the killings and other forms of abuses of these migrants face. All these media campaigns are attempts by the government to deter potential migrants from migrating in general and illegal migration in particular. However, the left behind children stated that they always associate these reports with the wellbeing of their mother.

To this, one of the respondents said: *I always see the dead bodies and people who lost part of their body which is portrayed as Ethiopian domestic workers in Middle Eastern countries. When I see that, I feel like one is my mother and I worry that she will be killed* (Jibril, 10 years, Addis Ababa).

The second cause of concern for anxiety and grief. These children observe some migrants from their village, neighbor or even close relatives when their bodies are returned from abroad. In addition to dead bodies, they said that they saw returnee migrants losing part of their bodies like leg and eye because of the abuses by their employee in destination countries. They also revealed that there are people whom they know and whose body was reportedly drowned to sea while trying to cross into the Middle East by boat.

The third factor that aggravates children's grief and anxiety is when they lose contact with their mothers. The study revealed that some mothers totally terminate their contact with the left behind family or children for an unknown reason. There are circumstances in which the children lose contact with their mother the following the day they left to destination countries. Some even

don't know whether their mother arrives in destination countries or something happens to her somewhere. Some children and left behind families stated that they unsuccessfully tried to know the whereabouts and the situation of their mother through people living abroad, agencies and smugglers.

In this regard, one of my informants stated: *I don't know what happens to my mother. I never met her since her departure. We tried to contact her friends in Dubai and smugglers to know her whereabouts. But we were not successful. I don't know whether she is alive or dead. I don't need anything from her. I just want her back. I don't want to receive her body back* (Musa, 13 years, Sinana).

The study revealed that the constant worries about the wellbeing of their mothers affect their psychosocial stability. The children cannot focus on their daily life. They reported they lack concentration on their schooling and other issues. In addition, some reported that they have a sleeping problem related to worries about the wellbeing of their mother. To this, one of my informants stated: *My younger brother has a sleeping problem. He screams in the middle of the night saying his mother is killed* (Tola, 13 years, Addis Ababa).

Most children do not want their mother to continue to stay abroad. They explained to me that they feel restless while worrying and longing for their migrant mother. They further told me that they prefer staying with their mother over material gains they receive from her. This is consistent with Parrenas's (2001), study in which data were collected in the Philippines. He argued that left behind children prefer keeping the family "whole" and "staying together" over financial improvement.

The chapter shows that parental absence for work abroad affects the psychosocial wellbeing of left behind children. Parental absence alters family structure as tasks are reassigned and roles of left behind family members change to fill the gap left by the movers. The absence of the mother has greater impact on children than what the fathers absence produce. Children also depend on their own capability to cope with parental absence.

The next chapter discusses about the remittance from parents.

CHAPTER 6: REMITTANCE FROM MIGRANT PARENTS

6.1 Introduction

Studies have found that migration has lifted many left behind families and children out of poverty by the billions of dollars migrants send back home. Migrants consider migration as an investment for the future life of their children (Perera and Rathnayaka, 2013). It is widely reported that parental migration provides economic benefit for left-behind children by improving their financial income, consumption patterns and living standards (Bhandra, 2007; Ukwatta, 2010).

6.2 Who dispose the money?

In finding out who receives remittance, and how it is used most children explained to me that that they do not receive remittance directly from their migrant parents. They revealed that parents send the money to their caregiver or extended family members. The children are only allowed to ask their caregiver to buy them what they need. The main reason as spelled out by the caregivers emanates from the assumption that children less knowledgeable on keeping and utilizing money.

About this one of my research participants stated that: *My caregiver doesn't give me any money. She tells me to ask her to buy me something. I can only ask her to buy something for me. She is old woman and she knows many things. If she gives me the money, big boys will snatch the money from me as I cannot confront them. I also do not have a place to keep the money* (Mesfin, 8 years, Addis Ababa).

This narrative displays that children get remittance through their care giver as the caregivers are responsible for the children's basic needs. The child also believes that the caregiver can better keep and dispose the money. Moreover, the child indicated that he will not able to properly keep and manage if money is given to him. Similarly, some caregivers also told me that, if children are given money, they would use money to engage in unhealthy behaviors.

In relation to this, other respondents remarked that: *My mother doesn't give me money because she thinks that I will waste the money. But I even feel guilty when I use stuff bought by remittance because I know how much my mother suffers to get that money in Arab land. I even need the*

money to be saved because my father is a driver and if something happens we will use the money to maintain our life (Jibril, 10 years, Addis Ababa).

In this reply, the respondent expressed that he is very much concerned about the proper utilization of monetary remittance. He also recognizes and feels pity how his mother gets the money in in the destination country. Moreover, they are aware of the implication of wasting money and think of a better way of using and saving money for difficult times. In this regard, the child unsettles the taken for granted assumption made by adults.

6.3 Remittance utilization

Several studies have found that most of the remittance plays an important role in meeting the daily financial need of left behind families. The studies indicate that remittance is used to meet the daily basic needs of the household finances, build a house, accumulate savings and pay children's school fees, clothing and health care (Bryant, 2015).

Recognizing the role remittance play, I asked relevant questions pertaining to this. During the study, I asked about the role of remittance in their daily financial needs and education. I also tried to explore whether remittance is used for some defined purpose. The study revealed that remittance has improved the living condition of left behind children and boosts the standard of living. The remittance is mainly used to meet the daily financial need of the children. It is mainly used to improve food consumption, purchase clothing, paying school fee and owning basic and major material assets.

In connection to this, one of my respondents stated that: *Before we started to get remittance, we used to get meat and soda only during holidays. However, now I get it every two days. I can also get any food I want to get that my friends don't get. I get what rich people get* (Lensa, 12 years, Addis Ababa).

Similarly, another respondent remarked that: *I had only one school uniform before my father migrated to South Africa. However, I have several different clothes that my mother bought for me with the money he sends from abroad. I have many clothes that my friends do not have. I even give some to my friends* (Kenehi, 13 years, Addis Ababa).

The above narratives display that the living condition of children improves after the migration of their parent. It shows that families are able to purchase food items they could not afford to buy before they get remittance. Many of the respondents stated that they had food constraint before the migration of their mother because of the financial constraints. The narrative also reveals that remittance helped left behind children able to get sufficient and better clothing. Therefore, it is possible to say, not surprisingly that the money is used for the upkeep of left behind children. The study is also consistent with studies conducted elsewhere in the world (Bhandra, 2007; Ukwatta, 2010; Chimhowu et al. 2004).

The children also told me that remittance enhances the owning of major material assets. With the help of remittance, families of migrant parents buy houses, change their place of residence from rural to urban and own several household items.

About this one of my informants stated that: *My mother bought a house with the money my father sends to us from South Africa. Now we live in the town not in the village as before. We have electricity and we use television, cellphones, and fridge. No one uses them in the village as they don't have money and electricity to buy and use them. Recently, my mother also opened a shop with the money my father sends* (Keneni, 13 years, Sinana).

On the other hand, I had conversations with other children who stated that their living condition has deteriorated following the migration of their parent. According to Mafukidze (2006), parental migration may lead to the impoverishment of left-behind children as they may not be able to access their basic needs following separation. Children who reported about the deterioration of their living condition are those who mentioned that they are not getting remittance from their migrant parent. Children in this category dismissed the improvement in their nutritional status. They explained to me that because of declining in income status of the left behind family, their nutritional status significantly declined. They are no more financially capable of buying foods with good nutritional status as when the migrant was here.

In relation to this, one of the husband who lives with his left-behind children said: *When my wife was here, we used to rely on the income we both generate. After she migrated, I only rely on my income to feed my children as I haven't heard anything from her since she left home 2 years ago.*

I'm selling my basic assets as my salary alone is not enough to meet the daily needs of my children (Abinet, 40 years, Addis Ababa).

This quote reveals that the income status of left behind family has declined following the migration of the wife/mother as the left behind family lose the income she used to generate and unable to get remittance from her for unknown reasons. It further notes that the family sells their household durables and major assets to supplement the dwindling income status and meet the basic need of the family members. Similarly, some children also revealed that due to financial constraints, they unable to get school uniform and other necessary school equipment.

6.4 Disagreement on how the remittance should be spent

My discussion with study participants revealed that the balance between guardians perception to behave in the interest of the children and children's agency was difficult to achieve. Most of the children told me that parents/guardians act in what they think are the best interest of the children without consulting them, as argued by Bushin, (2009).

In relation to this, one of the respondents remarked that: *My grandmother does not know what is important to me. When I tell her to buy perfume for me, she tells me that is not good and has no importance for me. However, I need it and other students use it. Then I secretly sell the cereals from home to the nearby market to buy the perfume (Lensa, 13 years, Addis Ababa).*

This narration illustrates that the caregiver decides what is good and what is bad for the children without consulting her. The child complains that her voice is not incorporated when decisions affecting her is made. It is unclear whether the UNCRC implies whether children have right to have a say in the family's decision-making process.

Similarly, other children told me that they are deceived by their caregivers about remittance. They explained to me that the money is not being spent for the intended purpose. In line with this, one of my research participants remarked that: *When I ask my caregiver to buy something for me, she says to me that the money my mother sent for me is over. She claims that she already bought cereals with the money. But I know there is a lot of money in the box. But I don't say that to her since she is old woman. I am a child I should respect her (Jibril, 10 years, Addis Ababa).*

This narration reveals that children know that the money being sent from their parents are to serve their interest. He claims that the money his mother send from abroad is being misused by his care giver. At the same time the child also believes that he should not confront his care giver as the caregiver is an adult. In Ethiopian culture, elders are highly respected and children are encouraged to obey them. Conforming to elders order and request is considered as a characteristic of good children.

Similarly, some caregivers with whom I had conversation also confirmed the existence of disagreement on how remittance should be utilized. They complained that children's demand is beyond what they can offer with the limited finance they have. They revealed that the children request things to be bought for them that cannot be affordable with the available remittance.

In line with this one of the caregiver said: *The child is asking me beyond what I can do for him. I spend the money she is sending me for daily consumption and his clothes. However, he asks me to buy him camera and bicycle, which I cannot afford to buy. He sees these things possessed by other children whose parents migrated to America. I cannot buy these things for him as his mother is in Arab land and cannot send a lot of money as someone who lives in America (Asnakech, 53 years, Sinana).*

6.5 Schooling and remittance

The impact of parental migration on left behind children's education has been well documented by previous studies. Most of the available literature on the impact of parental migration on children found that parental migration has a detrimental effect on the schooling of the children. (Battistella and Conaco 1998; Srivastava and Sasikumar 2003). However, some studies reported the existence of positive relationship between migration and children's education (Asfar, 2003; UNICEF, 2007). In trying to find out the consequences of parental migration, most children told me that parental migration adversely affects their educational performance. During the study, respondents were asked how parental absence affects their school achievement. The main reason for the worsening of their educational achievement is hunger for emotional attachment of their oversea migrant parents and wish for reunion with their absentee parents, as also argued by Prrenea, (2001). Furthermore, it is revealed that improvement in economic status and owning

educational resources did not stop the worsening of their performance in school after separation with their parents.

In line with this, one of my study participants expressed how the absence of his mother affects his achievement in school: *I always think about my mother while I'm in the class. She always comes to my mind. I even do not listen what the teacher says, as I think about her. I was a very good student when she was here, however, now my achievement has declined* (Kedir, 11 years, Addis Ababa).

I had also conversations with some study participants who raised work overburden as a reason for the worsening of their educational achievement following separation. Some of the study participants confirmed to me that they are overburdened by work as they need to assume the jobs used to be done by their migrant parents. My discussion with study participants revealed that girls are more overburdened by work than the boys do. Children who claimed work overburdened are those who live in urban areas and lack the extended family support network. Whereas, boys are more overburdened in the rural areas as they try to replace some of their fathers' role. This finding is consistent most studies conducted anywhere in the world. For instance, (Yebo et al. 2006; Graham, 2012; Bastistella and Conaco, 1998) reported that parental absence increases housework for girls and results in decline in school achievement.

In line with this, a study participant expressed how the absence of his mother for work abroad overburdened her in the following ways: *Since the departure of my mother, I am overburdened by work. I am not attending my studies appropriately. For instance, before the departure of my mother I don't cook food, I don't wash clothes and I don't go to the market to buy and sell stuff. I used to spend my time in studying and playing with my friends. Now I am working the jobs my mother used to work with my grandmother* (Genet, 10 years, Addis Ababa).

Others claimed that they work to supplement the low income of their family members when they don't hear from their migrant parents. As a result, they do not pay due attention as they try to balance between work and schooling. They explained to me that being overburdened diverted their attention from the school to work. They said they do not have time to focus on their studies due to time constraints and tiredness. Besides, they also noted that they miss classes because of

prioritizing work over school. As stated in the first chapter, some children miss classes to work to earn income. Similarly, Ashiabi (2000), argued that left behind children struggle between working and staying in school.

On the other hand, I had a conversation with children who claimed positive relationship between parental migration and education of the left behind children. These groups of respondents are those whose father is the migrant and who live with their mother.

To this one of my informant said: *After our father migrated and start to send us money, I have everything I need. We moved to town and I also moved to the private school. Moreover, my mother also hired a tutor for me that helps me at home. Now my grades have improved* (Keneni, 12 years, Sinana).

This narration reveals that children in my sample who live with their mother are less affected by the absence of their father. This is mainly because of the fact it is the mothers that have close and daily contact with the children. As a result, they are less affected by the absence of their mother. Previous studies (Yeho et al.2007; Battistella and Conaco 1998; Srivastava and Sasikumar 2003) also confirmed that the absence of the mother has greater detrimental effect on children's education than the fathers' produce. Therefore, when the father is the migrant and sends remittance back home and if the children live with their mother, they are less affected. It also reveals that remittance helps children enjoy more educational opportunities as it helps them reduce child labor. This is consistent with Kuhn's (2006) study where data was collected in Bangladesh.

6.6 Why no remittance?

As stated above, some left behind families and children do not receive remittance at all from their migrant family members. This category of respondents revealed that their migrant parents do not send them remittance at all. The reason why migrant parents do not send monetary remittance back home has been debated from many vantage points. The reasons can be seen in the following three categories.

The first the disappearance of migrant parents. As discussed in chapter five, some migrant parents disappear or stop contact with family back home for no known reason. This happens either as soon as the migrant parent departed or after they stated to have transnational contact. However, families and relatives left behind suspect that this happens when the migrants are prevented to contact their families back home or killed or abducted.

To this one of the left behind husband said: *I sold my main assets to send my wife to the Middle East expecting her to send us money back. However, we haven't heard from her since her departure and I haven't received any money from her either* (Kelil, 49 years, Sinana).

The second cause of concern for not sending remittance by migrant parents is misuse by left behind family members. The children explained to me that, some migrant parents stop sending money when they found that the money they send is being used for the unintended purpose. The causes of concern children raised in this regard include using remittance for drinking, spending on weddings to marrying another spouse among left behind husbands. This is consistent with (Gamburg, 2000; in Ukwatta, 2010) study which reported that the waste of monetary remittance by left husbands results in marital break-ups.

In this regard, one of my informants said: *My father married his second wife after my mother migrated. I didn't tell this to her. I know she will get angry and divorce him. But her sister told her and she came and divorced him. And she also stopped sending money at all* (Genet, 10 years, Addis Ababa).

The third cause of concern is divorce. The study revealed that some parents, especially women use migration as a divorce strategy. In Ethiopia, both culturally and religiously men can marry two or more wives at a time. Moreover, due to the prevalent patriarchal family system in the study area, women are less likely to seek divorce and remarry. As a result, they use migration as a divorce strategy when they are unhappy with their marriage life.

To this one of my informant said: *My mother was not happy after my father married another woman. Then she divorced him and migrated to another country. The reason she doesn't send me money is that she doesn't want the money to be used by my father and my stepmother with whom*

she used to fight with when she was here. When she comes back I will live with her in the urban area (Musa, 13 years, Sinana).

This narration reveals that the migrant mother even does not want to live with her husband after return. It also shows that the child understands the reasons why her mother doesn't send her remittance. She is looking forward to living with her mother when she returns. This is consistent with other studies. For instance, it was identified that migration significantly contributed in disrupting marital relationship is among Sri Lanka transnational families (Ukwatta 2010); compared to non-migrant families, migrant families divorced or separated cases significantly higher (Ukwatta 2010).

To conclude on this chapter, the study confirms that parental migration improved the living condition of most children. Remittance has improved the consumption of goods and services of children. However, parental absence may also worsens the living condition of children when they do not hear from their parents migrated parents.

CHAPTER 7: TRANSNATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

7.1 Introduction

The context in which transnational migrant worker parents migrate is typically quite different. Rigid migration policies of receiving countries (temporary migrant workers with no family reunion possibility) mean that left behind children experience long time separation from their migrant parents (Graham et al, 2012).

Improvement in communication technologies has enabled migrant parents' possibility to keep in touch with their left behind children and maintain a distance presence in their everyday lives. Revolution in communication technologies has also increased expectation of the left behind children and the migrants about maintaining the transnational relationship. When the migrant parents fail to maintain contact with their children, maybe it is interpreted as abandonment or lack of care (Graham et al, 2012). This chapter describes the experience left behind children's face by being parented from a distance.

7.2 Patterns of transnational communication

The common means of transnational communication in the study area are the mobile phone. The study, however found that left behind children have very low access to communication technologies here. It is only very few of these children in urban areas that possess mobile phones. Those who have are older children and whom their migrant parent bought in order to maintain direct contact with them. In many rural areas as there is no mobile network coverage and electricity to have access to phone. They have to go to urban areas where they can get access to phone to contact their migrant parents.

In relation to this, one of the respondents stated during an interview: *When I want to contact my father, I go to the nearby town to talk to him through my uncle's phone as there is no phone access in the village I live. Similarly, when my father wants to contact us, he calls my uncle and makes an appointment to meet us in the town. Then with the appointment date our uncle informs us, we go to the town and talk to him* (Keneni, 12 years, Sinana).

The frequency of transnational contact also considerably varies across respondents. Most of the respondents stated that they do not have regular contact with their migrant parents. It is revealed that migrant parents call them during holidays and when some problems occur.

My discussion with study participants also revealed that some migrant parents avoid phone contact with children. They explained to me that their migrant parents mainly contact with their caregiver. The children get information about their migrant parent through their caregiver.

In line with this one of my respondent said: *My mother does not talk to me when she calls my father. They do not tell me what they talk about either. They assume that I would let the information to be heard by other people. I'm not a small child and I do not do that* (Mesfin, 8 years, Addis Ababa).

This comment clearly follows the traditional perception about children in adult-dominated society. It considers children as unwise. The aforementioned narratives reveal that the parents consider the child as a too young to participate in family affairs. They also suspect him that he may expose private information about their parents because of his young age.

Previous studies about transnational parenting in the Philippines have found that migrant fathers have more frequent contact with left-behind children compared with their counterpart, migrant mothers (UNICEF, 2008). The study did not find evidence that shows migrant fathers have more frequent contact with left-behind children than migrant mothers do.

7.3 Care giving from a distance

The meaning of motherhood revolves around the theme which is the experience of caring and nurturing for dependent children (Arendell, 2000 cited by Parreñas, 2001). In other words, motherhood can be understood as emotional, physical, and moral claims of the children on their mother (Leonard 1996, cited by Parreñas, 2001). The literature on parenting from distance reveals that caregiving continues even after the departure of the mother. Transnational parents, particularly migrant mothers, consider caregiving as the major feature of mothering experience.

The previous study in the Philippines found that existing gender norms suggest mothers must maintain their responsibility of nurturing children despite their overseas breadwinner role

(Graham, et al 2012). Similarly, Asis (2002) and Parreñas (2005), reported that majority of Filipina migrants stay connected with their children using long distance telecommunication technologies. The study also confirmed that migrant mother continues to play the role of childcare after leaving their country.

Taking previous studies into consideration, I resorted to exploring left behind children's experience of being cared from distance by their migrant mothers. The study revealed that left behind children usually receive emotional and moral care from their transnational migrant mother.

Most study participants indicated that they seek the support of their migrant mother when they face challenges. They explained to me that their transnational mothers' emotional engagement and moral support has helped them to ease some of the challenges they experience. It is indicated that they avert some of the problems they face by seeking help from their overseas parents.

For instance, one of my study participants stated that: *when my younger brother screams calling the name of our mother, I make a missed call on the number of our mom, then she calls and comforts him and makes him happy and smile* (Melat, 12 years, Addis Ababa).

Similarly, another study participant expressed how he resorts to seeking assistance from his mother when he is discrimination based on the migration status of his mother. *When children insult me saying a child of prostitutes, I call and let my mother know it. She tells me that people who insult me are those who are jealous of the benefits I'm getting from my mother abroad and she tells me to avoid them* (Lensa, 13 years, Sinana).

Most left behind children appreciate their migrant mothers' effort of showing love and affection from distance. However, transnational mothers' emotional engagement brought up painful emotions for some children. As a result, children question the efforts of their mother in understanding and responding to their demand. They especially question why their mothers do not visit them. Similarly, a study in the Philippines found that left behind children of migrant parents question the extent of the effort of their mothers to understand the sacrifice they pay

because of separation. The question about their mother's sporadic visit to Philippines (Parreñas, 2001).

In relation to this, one of the respondents remarked that: *My mother always promises me to come back home. But she does not honor her words. She again promises me for another time. When I meet her on phone, I cry, she also cries. I want her to come back. But she is not coming* (Tola, 13 year Addis Ababa).

Besides providing maternal support from distance, migrant mothers also engage in emotional work and financial compensation with the caregivers of their left behind children to make sure that the children are properly cared (Graham et al. 2012). Similarly, my informants revealed that migrant parents negotiate different aspect of care arrangement with a person who supervises and provide daily care for the left behind children.

In line with this one of a caregiver of left behind child said: *The mother of the child I'm taking care discusses about the need of the child with me. She encourages me to take care of the child very well and promises to reward me for my good deeds for the child* (Asnakech, 53 years, Addis Ababa).

The study participants also confirmed to me that left behind children participate when the migrant parents engage in various form of care arrangement with the "other mothers" that care for the dependent children left behind.

In line with this one of my informant stated: *My mother tells me that she went to Saudi Arabia to help me live a happy life. And she encourages me to demand whatever things I want from the caregiver. The money my mother sending from abroad is for me. If I want anything, I tell to my mother, then she orders the caregiver to fix it for me* (Tola, 13 years, Addis Ababa).

7.4 Disciplining

Several studies have reported concerns about children risk-taking behavior and delinquency as a result of parental migration. These studies revealed that transnational parents worry about whether their children will develop serious conduct problems as they lack strict supervision and guidance following parental separation (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1997). For instance, in South China,

Gao et al. (2013) found that parental migration is a strong factor for cigarette smoking among left behind children. Contrary to this, a study in the Philippines found that children of migrant parents are less likely to suffer from conduct problem than children of non-migrant parents. This is surprising finding given the perception of the public about the left behind children in Philippines (Graham et al. 2012).

My discussion with study participants revealed that their parents engage in supervision and disciplining of their children from distance. There is a widespread imagination in the study area, as already mentioned that left behind children are more likely to be involved in risky health-related lifestyles like smoking and drinking. Most study participants told me that their migrant parents advise them to stay away from people and places that may drag them to engage in such behaviors. However, the left behind children does not appreciate their migrant parents' worries that the children would develop conduct problem. They indicated that they know what is bad for themselves more than anyone else.

To this one of my study participant said: *My mother wants to choose me with whom I should play and where I should spend. There are many bad things they even don't know. She considers me as if anyone can deceive me* (Yadeno, 9 years, Addis Ababa).

The study also revealed that prevailing perception about left-behind children heightens worries of their caregivers that their children will develop behavior problem. They explained to me that some caregivers, especially women are very much concerned that children would develop behaviour problem. As stated in the first chapter, there is a negative public perception about the conduct of left behind children. They are perceived to have deviant behavior.

In line with this, one of the study participants remarked: *When I go to a city center to meet my friends, my mother shouts at me saying that, if people see me in the downtown, they would say it is because there is no man or father that would afraid no to leave home. She warns me to tell to my father who is currently working in South Africa* (Keneni, 12 years, Addis Ababa).

This narration reveals that the father is the authority figure in the family that can take disciplining measures. It is indicated that the absence of the father may lead to power vacuum in the left behind family as the children do not do not consider women caregivers as a threat when they

deviate from their caregivers' expectation. As a result, migrant fathers play increasing disciplinary role from distance.

Similarly, some of my research participants told me that they got relative freedom following the migration of their parents. They cite the restrictive and authoritative approach of their parents towards them. One of my research participants who lives with her sister expressed how separation helps her to get control of her life: *I feel free following the departure of my mother as there is no one that restricts my activity. I can go anywhere and I can make friends from wherever I like* (Lensa, 13 years, Addis Ababa).

7.5 Children's future plan

This section is dedicated to exploring left behind children's future thought within the context of the migrant family. The questions about children's future plan have been debated across many vantage points. The debate and discussion on the subject matter reveal that children are very much concerned about their future life. Most study participants explained to me that they worry about their future because they are told by their migrant parents and caregivers that their parents migrated to make the future of their children brighter. The children also believe that their migrant parents are scarifying their life for the betterment of their children. It is also indicated in the discussion that economic empowerment for themselves and for their parents is the main cause of concern when deciding their future plan. While analyzing children's future plan, I also indicated children's agency. Migration vs education as a future plan pop out from the empirical data.

7.5.1 Children's desire for migration

Previous studies documented that parental migration increases migration desire for left-behind children (Yeoh et al. 2006). The discussion with my study participants indicated that children consider migration as a way out of poverty both for themselves and their family members. Most of these children have a plan to establish business and buy major assets with the money they will get from working abroad.

One of my study participants whose mother is a domestic worker in Dubai said: *I want to go to another country to get more money to buy a car and a house for my mother like my neighbor did for her parents. As my parents are helping me now, I should also help them when I grow up. Even if it is difficult, I will face the all the challenges and work for some time* (Lensa, 13 years, Addis Ababa).

This narration illustrates that the child believes it is his responsibility to earn income and improve the living condition of his parents. In Ethiopian society, children are considered as future economic asset as they are expected to financially support their parents when they retire. He also considers migration as the best option to meet his ambition of meeting his parents need. The excerpt also reveals that the child is aware of the challenge he may face in the process of working abroad to meet his vision of making money.

Most of the children who consider migration as a strategy for better life told me that they don't want to migrate to Arab countries. They rather want to migrate to South Africa and other countries. There is a widespread belief that salaries for migrant workers in Arab countries are less and there is prejudice associated with it, whereas, South Africa, the second destination for Ethiopian migrant workers is perceived as high paying.

Besides wishing to become a future transnational migrant worker, some children also engage in practical preparations to accomplish that end. In line with this, one of my informants said: *I am saving money to travel to Saudi Africa. I have some money and now I'm working as a shoe shiner to get some more money to pay for the guy that secretly takes people to South Africa. I don't tell this plan to my parents as they will not allow me to leave as they only need me to focus on my studies. I will let them know once I reached there* (Ydeno, 9 years, Addis Ababa).

Here the child has clear wish of migrating to South Africa. He also responded that his future goal by working hard to generate income. In this regard, the left behind children displays aspiration and agency. The child generates income to use it to travel to South Africa. The child decides his destiny by his own and making their existence count. Instead of being just following what adults say, the child shows autonomy and agency by moving in their own way undermining the assumption that they are dependent on adults (Bushin, 2009).

7.5.2 Is Education a possibility to gain a better future?

Most children do not see education as a possibility to gain a better future life in the study area. This is associated with the widespread public belief that education has very low financial return.

In line with this one of my study participant said: *I know many people who are educated and got employed here. They are poor. I don't want to be like that. I want to get more money and buy a good house for my parents* (Kenehi, 12 years, Sinana).

The informant explains that he does not want to focus on his studies as education has low return financially. He has a clear vision of becoming a rich guy and he also believes that education will not help him to meet his vision of buying a house for his parents. This is consistent with Yeoh's et al. (2006) study in Thailand which argues that financial benefit discourage left behind children to attend schooling. Similarly, a study in Thailand reported that left behind children consider migration as an alternative to schooling (Curran et al. 2004, cited by, Yeoh et al. 2006).

In line with the above narrative, another participant said: *My father wants me to study hard and become a good student; however, I want to go to South Africa and join my father there. I know that the education I do here will not help me in South Africa. But I don't reject his advice as he may curse me. If he curses me I know that I will not be successful in my future life. I will explain to him later* (Kenehi, 12 years, Sinana).

The narration reveals that the children envisage migrating as their family member. This aspiration also affects their investment in education at home. In the same manner, a study in Mexico found that left behind children of migrant families skip secondary education to join their migrant parent in the United States. It also found that children are discouraged to focus on their studies as they know that the academic credentials they receive in Mexico will not have recognition in the United States (Chiquiar & Hansen, 2005 cited by Cortes, 2007).

On the other hand, I had discussion with some informants who consider education as a hope for better future life. This group of children claimed that there are some professions like doctor which are high paying professions.

In conclusion, migrant mothers continue to maintain a distance presence in their everyday lives of left-behind children using telecommunication technologies. Left behind children receive emotional and moral care from their transnational migrant mother from distance. On the other hand, children who live in the rural areas hardly contact their migrant parents, as they have no access to telecommunication technologies due to the absence of telecom network coverage and electricity to use these technologies.

The next chapter offers the summary and concluding remarks for this study

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary

The experiences and perspectives of left-behind children of transnational migrant parents in my study area have been thoroughly explored. The study revealed a variety of issues pertaining to experiences and perspectives of left-behind children of migrant parents from their own point of view.

Nevertheless, as this is a qualitative research variant, the generalizability of the study result is limited to the study participants in the study area. However, since the study drew representative cases from the study population, the study may potentially provide indicative generalization and the overall pattern of the experiences and perspectives of migrant parents children in Ethiopia.

The study has been dealing with how parental absence for work abroad is experienced and viewed by children left behind. The aim of the study is to understand what changes when the mother leaves and how her absence is entertained among left-behind children in Sinana and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Furthermore, the study has been investigating the implication of remittance in the life of left-behind children; transnational relationship; as well as the impact of parental absence on the choice of activities and future plan of left behind children. This section, therefore briefly highlights each of the aforementioned major issues addressed in the study. However, the implication of parental absence vary in many ways, such as; the gender of the migrant and left behind, the area children live, how caregivers take responsibilities, the access to extended families, the access to communication technologies and the level of stigmatization.

The philosophy of the social studies of children and childhood is the main perspective that majorly guides the overall work of this thesis. Giving voice for the voiceless and meaningfully involving children in the research process is the basic domain of the new studies of the sociology of childhood. It advocates the assumption that children are experts in their own lives and they should be studied in their own right. The emergent paradigm considers children as active human beings, not as mere passive recipients of adults' view. The new paradigm has also set forth methodological approach on how children should be studied (James and Prout, 1990).

The qualitative research approach was employed for this study. Data were gathered both from primary and secondary sources. In-depth interview and focus group discussion were administered to uncover reality for the research problem posited. Alongside with the primary sources; journals, books, reports, and articles were exploited to strengthen both the as well as argument and methodological basis of the present study.

8.1.2 What happens when the mother leaves?

The absence of parents for work abroad has a significant effect on dependent children as they depend on their parents for emotional and economic support. It is even worse when the migrant is the mother. This is because the mother is the primary caregiver for her children and focal point of social relations in the family in the study area.

Migration of the mother alters the family structure and reorganizes family roles to fill the gap left open by the mover. Family members, including children, increasingly assume new roles and responsibilities following the absence of their mother as part of filling the gap left open by the migrant. It is found that children increasingly assume domestic duties as part of replacing their mothers' role. Girls increasingly assume this tasks and are overburdened by work than the boys. This is because housework is a socially inscribed role of women in most Ethiopian societies and girls are supposed to take up the roles used to be performed by the mother. These tasks include; cleaning, cooking, caretaking, and shopping. This groups of children are those who live in the city and have less extended family support. However, children in rural areas do not assume new and increasing roles following the parental separation as they have a strong extended family support network.

In some instances, left behind children also involve in income generating activities to cope with financial difficulties when they do not hear from their migrant parents. The children engage in income generating activities to support themselves and their families economically. They engage in income generating activities like retailing charcoal, potatoes and shoeshine work in the study areas. The children do these activities on the weekends, in time after school and sometimes missing school during the open air market days.

It is also found that work overburden worsens the educational achievement of children. It is confirmed that those children are overburdened by work as they need to assume the jobs used to be done by their migrant parents. While girls are overburdened by work in urban areas, boys are more overburdened by in the rural areas as they try to replace some of their mothers' and fathers' role respectively.

The study also revealed that the absence of the mother triggers feelings of loneliness and insecurity following separation of the mother. The emotional suffering is because of lack or declining of emotional and physical care following the absence of the mother. Customarily, children spend most of their time with their mother. The mother is the sole caregivers of their children and spends most of their time with them. The feeling of loneliness and insecurity is even worse when the children are resident of a city, as the residents in urban areas have loose extended family ties.

The study also found that left behind children are stigmatized and discriminated by their friends and the larger community because of the migration status of their parents, mainly the mother. This is because of mere allegations that migrant mothers who work as domestic workers in destination countries are also part-time prostitutes. They are accused of working as prostitutes and the left behind children are referred to as children of prostitutes. Furthermore, there is a mere allegation that left behind children are deviant. This emanates from the assumption that left behind children grow up without the supervision and disciplining of their mother.

Left-behind children suffer from grief, and anxiety following from their parents in general and their mothers in particular. Grief and anxiety of left-behind children mainly related to the fate and wellbeing of their mother. It is found that the left behind children worry that their migrant parents may be killed or face another form of abuses in destination countries or on their way to destination countries. The cause and aggravating factor for the grief and anxiety of left-behind children are because they see reports of killings of migrant workers in local media. They also observe when local people receive dead and disabled bodies of migrant workers from abroad in study areas.

8.1.3. Remittance and left behind children

Remittance has improved the living condition of left behind children and boosts the living condition of left behind family and children. It has helped left behind families and children in reducing their problem of financial scarcity and making easy access to goods and services. Remittance helped these families to have access to goods and services they couldn't afford to buy before they get remittance. In addition, remittance also used to own major assets like house and land. On the other hand, the study also reported the deterioration of their living condition some left behind children following separation. These group of children are those who mentioned that they are not getting remittance from their migrant parent.

It is also found that most children do not directly receive remittance from their migrant parents. The study also revealed disagreement between the left behind children and their caregivers on remittance utilization. Some children complain that remittance is spent on items caregivers consider appropriate, ignoring children's preference. However, they have to be restrictive, but they simply have to be restrictive on the limited budget they have. It is also revealed that some children's demand for things to be bought for them cannot be answered by the available resource.

The study also found that some migrant parents do not send remittance to left behind family because of various reasons. It is found that misuse of remittance by left behind family members is a cause of concern for not sending remittance by the movers. In this regard, some migrant parents stop sending money when they found that the money they send is being used for the unintended purpose. These includes using remittance for drinking, spending on weddings to marrying another spouse among left behind husbands. In addition, the study revealed that some women use migration as divorce strategy. Some women migration to get out of unhappy marriage as it less likely to seek divorce while living in the village they because of religious and cultural factors.

Furthermore, some migrant stop sending remittance for unknown reason. This group of migrants are those who totally discontinue their contact with family members back home. In such cases, left behind family members assume that the migrant is killed in their way to other countries in

destination countries by their employers. Moreover, it is less likely to know their whereabouts since they migrate illegally and hide their identity from police as most of them live and work illegally.

8.1.4. Transnational relationships

Improvement in communication technologies has enabled migrant parents' possibility to keep in touch with their left behind children and maintain a distance presence in their everyday lives. The study revealed that most migrant parents in general and migrant mothers, in particular, continue to play the role of childcare after leaving their country.

Furthermore, the study found that transnational parents engage in supervision and disciplining of their children from distance. There is a widespread imagination in the study area that left behind children are more likely to be involved in risky health-related lifestyles like smoking and drinking. Migrant parents constantly advise their children to stay away from people and places that may drag them to engage in such behaviors. However, the left behind children does not appreciate their migrant parents' worries that they would develop conduct problem. They believe that they know what is bad for them more than anyone else is. Besides providing maternal support from distance, migrant mothers also engage in emotional work and financial compensation with the caregivers of their left behind children to make sure that the children receive necessary care.

The study reveals that children are very much concerned about their future life. The children believe that their migrant parents are scarifying their life for their betterment. Accordingly, they want to pay back by helping them economically in the future. It is also indicated in the discussion that economic empowerment for themselves and their parents is the main cause of concern when deciding their future plan.

Parental migration influences children's choice of activities and future plan. It is found that parental migration has increased the desire of left-behind children for migration. Most of my informants believe that migration is a way out of poverty both for themselves and for their family members. These children have a dream of becoming rich and buying assets like cars and houses for their parents and for themselves.

Furthermore, these children do not see education as a possibility to gain a better future life in the study area. This is associated with a widespread public belief that education has very low financial return compared to what one gets as migrant worker abroad. Accordingly, children do not pay due attention to their studies. They rather focus on activities that help them become a transnational worker.

8.2 Conclusions

This study has examined the experiences and perspectives of left-behind children of transnational migrant parents. Specifically, the study reflected upon the changes happens when the mother leaves; impact of remittance on the life of left-behind children, and the transnational relationship between the migrant parents and left behind children. The experiences and perspectives left-behind children of migrant parents are mixed. It is difficult to conclude that the implication of parental migration on children's back home is positive or negative.

Nonetheless, with a specific reference to this section, three major points could be made about all the issues investigated concerning the experiences and perspectives of left-behind children of migrant parents in the study area. For one thing, it was found out that the absence of parents for work abroad detrimentally affects the psychosocial well-being of left behind children. The impact is even worse when the mother is the migrant as the mother is the primary caregiver for the children. Parental migration alters family structure as tasks are reassigned and the roles left behind family members change to fill the gap left by the movers.

Secondly, the study confirms that improvement in the living condition of left-behind children is the most recognized benefit of parental migration. Remittance has improved the consumption of goods and services left behind children. However, parental migration worsens the living condition of left-behind children when migrant parents do not send or stop sending remittance back home. It is also found that children's voice is hardly heard on how and what remittance should be spent.

Thirdly, the study revealed that migrant mothers continue to maintain a distance presence in their everyday lives of left-behind children using telecommunication technologies. Left behind children receive emotional and moral care from their transnational migrant mother from

distance. On the other hand, children who live in the rural areas hardly contact their migrant parents, as there is no mobile network coverage and electricity to use telecommunication technologies.

In the end, it is revealed that parental migration increases migration desire of left behind children. Children consider migration as a way out of poverty both for themselves and for their family members. Most children do not see education as a possibility to gain a better future life in the study area. This is associated with the widespread belief that education has very low financial return compared to what the migrants earn abroad.

Limitations of the Study

This study has produced a wealth of information for the in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of left-behind children of transnational migrant parent workers in Sinana district and Addis Ababa city, Ethiopia. However, there are some challenges that limit the comprehensive examination of the study. These limitations and challenges of the study could be seen to involve three issues.

The first is security challenge. The time I was in field work, the country in general and Oromia region, where one of my study area (Sinana district) is located in particular, have seen massive anti-government protests, that results in hundreds of deaths that prompted the government does declare a state of emergency. Travel and contacting people for research in the rural areas without permission was not allowed. More importantly, any form of gathering was strictly prohibited. Consequently, the attempt to gather individuals for FGD in this study area (Sinana district) was difficult and thus it failed.

The second is lack of relevant literature related to my study areas. There are scanty literature and reports about transnational migration in general and left behind children in Ethiopia. For instance, there is no official statistics that show the number of migrants that migrate for overseas employment in my study area like other parts of the country. One of the reasons for the absence of reports on migration statistics is because the larger proportion of migrants leave the country through the illegal channel.

The third is time constraint. When examining how parental absence is perceived and entertained, I found it necessary to compare my finding with non-migrant children in the study areas. However, time and cost factors prevented the collection of information from these control and larger groups.

Recommendation

The investigation into the experiences and perspectives of left-behind children of transnational migrant parents revealed varieties of issues. Based on the investigation, the following points have been communicated as policy, research and service recommendation.

Firstly, for policy implication, my investigation into the Ethiopian social welfare policy reveals that the issue of migrants and their children are ignored. The welfare policy states the need for providing economic and social support for families in difficult economic circumstance. However, the policy overlooked the plight of left behind families and children. Therefore, as for policy implication, the government must develop a comprehensive welfare policy that protects left behind children from the various problems they face as a result of the absent parents. The study also recommends the need for introducing a community awareness program to tackle the stigma and discrimination against left behind children based on the migrant status of their parents.

Secondly, as per my search, there was no research conducted on this topic in Ethiopia so far. Therefore, this study pioneers into the implication of parental migration on left behind children in Ethiopia. Therefore, as for research implication, I urge fellow researchers to conduct similar research with larger sample size to improve the quality of the information gathered. The future sample should include teachers, service giver agencies, government officials and religious leaders as it helps for a comprehensive understanding of the problem and comes up with care plan and support. In addition, in my study, I came across an issue of child abuse. However, I decided not to explore it considering it is outside the scope of my study. I therefore specifically suggest this issue as an area for future research. I also recommend the replication of this study in other regions of Ethiopia most especially Amhara and Tigray region. As Ethiopia is a big country both in terms of geographic and demographic depth there are various different sociocultural milieus. The

result of the study will allow the comparison of the impact of parental absence and coping strategies adopted

Thirdly, as far as its implication for service concerned, two points were made. The study calls for the need of providing child care training for those who take over the role of caregiver following parental migration in general and mothers migration in particular. This should include older left behind children and left behind husbands who have no prior childcare experience. In addition, my study revealed that, left behind children experience emotional suffering because of separation from their parents. Therefore, therefore there has to be a program to provide psychosocial support to left behind children.

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Appendix.1. Informed Consent Form

My name is Jemal Taha, a student pursuing my MPhil studies at Norwegian University of Science and Technology. The main objective of my study is to investigate the day today life and perspective of left behind children of migrant parents. I am interested in to know the thought and perspective of left behind children and how they live their daily life in the local community. For the successful completion of the study, the cooperation of those who experienced the impacts and capable of providing necessary data is crucial.

For this study, I will collect information from the left behind children of migrant parents and their care givers. The researcher records the voice of voluntary interviewees. All data collected from participants will be kept confidential and respondents have the right to refuse responding to some questions or quitting participation in general.

The data process will be facilitated by open-ended interview guides which will be responded by the participants. The researcher will clarify any unclear question(s).

Appendix. II. Interview Guides

I-Interview Guide for Left behind children

Everyday experience

With whom do you live?

How do you relate with the migrant parent?

With whom do you spend most of your daily lives?

Do you go to school? If yes, how do you combine with responsibilities you have to your left behind families?

Please tell me your daily routines?

How do you feel about your daily life?

Interpersonal relationship

How do you relate to left behind family members?

Are you the only child in the family you are living? If there others, how do you relate with them?

Do you have similar experience?

What services do you get from your caregivers?

Who decides what you need?

Do you always get the services you need? If no, why?

How do you feel the level of satisfaction you have with your care givers?

Do you have contact with your extended family member? If yes, please explain?

Do you have contact with your migrant parent/s? If yes, explain?

Do/does the migrant parent/s has role in a family you are living? If yes, please describe it?

Do you have a say in decisions that directly or indirectly affect your life?

Vulnerability

Do you know how did your parent/parents migrated? If yes, please describe?

Why did your parent/s migrated?

Do you have contact with your migrant parent/s? If yes, how?

Do you miss your migrant parent? If yes, what do you do when miss him/her or both?

How do you feel about being left behind?

What is your opinion about parental migration?

How do the community about feel about left behind children?

Do your peers react to you differently because of your being left behind? If yes, describe it?

Have you faced challenges you think because of being left behind? If yes, please describe?

Does disagreement occur between you and the family member you are living with? If yes, please describe?

Do you know anyone who faces challenges because of left behind? If yes, please describe?

Do you feel you are abused? If yes, please describe?

Remittance and lifestyle

Do you get remittance from your parent? If yes, how do you get the money?

Does remittance has any effect on your daily consumption?

Does remittance has any impact on your education?

Does remittance has influence in the power relationship between and the family members you are living?

How do you see education as a source of your future career?

Do you have the aspiration of a migrant worker in a foreign country? Why?

What do you want to do when you grow old?

What do you want to have grown old?

What do you think are the barriers of your dream?

How do you think to overcome those barriers?

II-In-depth interview guide for caregivers of children left behind.

What is your relationship with the left behind child/children?

What is your opinion about parental migration?

What are the daily routines of the left behind child/children?

Are you satisfied looking after the left behind child/children?

What do you feel are the challenges the left behind child/children face in the absence of the parent/s due to migration?

What do/does responsibilities the children/child have/has to the families they are living with?

Do/does child/children face/s any forms of discrimination?

Are there other children whom you care for? If yes, do they get different treatment? How do you see the role of remittance in improving the wellbeing of the left behind child/children?

How do you see the role of parental migration in shaping the lifestyle of left behind children?

How do you see the role of parental migration in shaping the future plan of children?

