



COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE AND CHALLENGES OF  
STREET VENDING FOR WOMEN VENDORS (IN CASE OF  
WOLKITE TOWN)

A SENIOR ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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SOCIOLOGY.

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## **Declaration**

We undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis entitled ``Explore the socio-economic significance and challenges of street vending for women vendors in case of wolkite town`` is our original work, prepared under our advisor Mr`Dagnachew T(MA). All the resources that we have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

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## Acronyms

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- LDCS= Least developed country
- UNDP= United nation development program
- FAO= Food and agriculture organization
- CSA= Central static authority
- GRDI= Gender related development index
- WIEGO= Women in informal development globalizing and organization
- ILO= International labor organization

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## Abstract

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*This study aimed to examine the socio-economic conditions and challenges faced by women street vendors in Wolkite, Ethiopia. It aims to provide insight into the experiences of women traders, particularly in terms of the environment they operate within and the manner in which they navigate the socio-economic landscape. The study employs qualitative research methods, including interviews and focus groups, to gather data on the challenges and opportunities inherent in street vending. The findings indicate that street vending facilitates opportunities for women traders to earn a living and support their households, but they also face numerous challenges such as lack of infrastructure, looting, physical and psychological harassment, problems related with customers, expensiveness and damaging of goods and legal business competitors. This study recommends that the government should focus on improving the socio-economic environment for women street vendors by providing access to credit, infrastructure, education, licensing, and legal protection.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### *1.1. Background of the study*

Informal sector which is defined as “a way of doing things” characterised by various factors such as “small scale, low resource base and entry barriers, family ownership, labour intensive methods of production and adapted technology, skills acquired outside the formal sector and unregulated and competitive markets” (ILO, 1972). Different studies conducted on informal sector by different scholars show that Informal sector is a significant contributor to production, consumption, employment, and income generation of many people in developing countries(OECD, 2002; Pant D. et al., 2009; Joshi et al., 2009; CUTS International, 2009). Informal sector is the most important survival strategy for the urban poor, unskilled, and socially marginalized people. Moreover, it is an important means of survival for majority of people who lack proper social safety nets and unemployment insurance especially those who are discriminated from formal sector jobs as a result of lack of skill and capabilities. In addition to the major source of employment, the sector is significant contributor to the production of most developing countries1.(ILO,1972).

The informal sector has been an important source of supplemental income not only for the unemployed and destitute but also for the urban wage earners who found their salaries depressed as a result of the fall in real incomes (HLCLEP, 2006).

In Africa, strategies developed for promoting informal sector enterprises not only serve employment creation purposes, but can also be taken as measures of “direct attack on poverty” (Dewar and Watson, cited in Elias 2014). The role of the informal economy goes beyond providing employment opportunities for the poor; if properly “engaged”, it could enhance “the fiscal base of local governments” (UN-HABITAT 2009: 2). In view of this, “any analysis of Africa’s economy that does not focus on informality” can be seen as totally deficient (Macharia, cited in Elias 2005). Unfortunately, macroeconomics tends to focus only on the formal

sector, particularly in LDCs. Academic discourse on street vending does not afford to ignore the genesis of the concept and salient features of the informal sector. Street vending engages people (street vendors), essentially the urban poor (resident and domestic immigrants), who sell items of different assortments for pedestrians and irregular customers of the general public in streets, lanes, sidewalks, footpaths, pavements, public parks or any other public place or private areas, from temporary built up structures or by moving from place to place (Pinki, 2015). The literature in this material deals with brief discussions on the informal sector and its theoretical foundations. The discussion extends into the features of street vending with a focus on causes, virtues and challenges of the sector. (piki, 2015).

Street vending in Ethiopia is a very important yet unbridled component of the informal sector. In the context of the current demographic dynamics and absence of sufficient job opportunities, street vending has become an important economic shelter for the urban poor. The key reasons for joining street vending include the small capital requirement, lack of access to credit facilities, and lack of suitable and commercially viable trading outlets. Street vendors use their personal savings, family transfers and informal credits as start-up capital. Street vendors generate by far better income than they used to get in their original villages (elias 2015).

As the socialist Derge regime implemented extensive nationalization of private property, the previously existing private sector almost came to a complete halt. This led to a boom of informal sector activities. The informal market was marginalized and even brutally discouraged. After the change of government in Ethiopia in 1991, several policies were formulated and regulations promulgated relating to diverse social, economic and political issues. Policies and institutional developments that aim at providing minimum biases against the informal sector and also at stimulating various initiatives to support the promotion of the sector were adopted (Ibid). In today's context of economic scenario [as associated to privatization and liberalization] informal sector has taken a new role of employment generation and crucial source of alternative income for large number of households, as a result of substantial decline in formal employment. Aside from its significance as income and employment provider for millions of households, the sector is also a breeding ground of entrepreneurs too, which could flourish if not encountered with a multitude of troubles and uncertainties. (filimon 2017).

The social network is vital for joining the sector. The common narrative that operators in the

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informal sector are mainly with no formal education is frequently attacked as more people with formal education, including school dropouts, high-school completers and college graduates, are rapidly joining the sector. Presence of large crowd of vendors in a given space is the function of the size (volume) of items carried by an individual vendor. Formal shop owners identify street vendors as unfair competitors. Many people in Ethiopia and in our place wolkite are accustomed to “shopping” at the streets since vendors offer merchandise at relatively lower prices. Street vending has unregulated feature whereby the government loses tax income which could have been collected had the transactions taken place legally. Local governments are forced to allocate huge budgets to hire as many officers to control street businesses. However, given the recurrent rise in the crowd of immigrants and weakness of institutions, the task of regulating street business is becoming almost unfeasible. In Ethiopia, the economic and social significance of street vending is not yet well studied and articulated to guide state policy directions aimed at alleviating urban poverty.(elias 2015).

According to Shyama, Ajay, Tamas, Sutapa, & Veena (2013) in most developing countries, growth of employment in the formal sector has stagnated or at best shown a gradual ascent while the informal sector has increased significantly. For instance, in India the informal sector accounts about 73 percent of the total employment, in Mexico about 62 percent and in South Africa about 34 percent of the Employment.

In addition specific studies in Ethiopia like Kebede (2015) show the informal economy accounts about 50-60 percent of the urban employment and about 42 percent of these informal sector operators earn their livelihood from micro enterprises. Further the informal sector including street vending absorbs majority of the urban unemployed growing labor force. Although researches and documents about women who participated in informal sector are very limited in Ethiopia, women who participated in informal sectors generally and street vending particularly, have live for a long period of time as one group of the society. Street vending continues to offer economic opportunities, and remains a source of livelihood for many Ethiopian. Some scholars have examined whether men or women are more likely to work in the informal economy. In line to this, Losby and Kingslow (2002) investigated that women are more likely to work in the informal sector than men as of their household responsibilities, particularly their responsibilities for the care of children. The types of informal work women do as market or street vendors or

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hawkers or home workers, expose them to risks to their physical safety and health than men. In addition, women's participation within the informal economy tends to be even higher when the access and the right to control and own property or land are denied to them. Women remain concentrated in "invisible" areas of informal work, such as domestic labor piece-rate homework, and assistance in small family enterprises, which offer precarious employment status, low, irregular or no remuneration, little or no access to social security or protection, and limited ability to organize and to ensure the enforcement of international labor standards and human rights (Abramo, 2006). As ILO (2008) indicated that the majority of women in the informal sector such as petty trading joined the sector as a means of survival. They turn to the informal business due to low level of economic support from husbands/partners, which force them to find a means of supplementing their low income in order to support the family. Around the world, a large and, perhaps, growing share of the informal workforce operates on streets, sidewalks, and public parks, outside any enclosed premise or covered work space. Among the many manifestations of informal economy, street vending is one of its major. Street vending is a global phenomenon. In cities, towns, and villages throughout the world, millions of people earn their living wholly or partly by selling a wide range of goods on the streets, sidewalks, and other public spaces. Yet today, in most countries of the world, street vending persists – and probably has expanded – even where local regulations seek to ban or restrict it ILO (2002).

According to international labor organization (ILO), there are no labor standards at the international level dealing directly with street vendors. Many countries specifically regulate this activity, providing a clear legal framework and jurisdictional mandates, while others have overlapping jurisdictional mandates, which create confusion and conflict. The case in wolkite town, despite being one of the important components of informal economy in the city, they are simply considered as illegal. Street vendors occupy a significant proportion of the total employment in the city, and street vending is the main source of income for the residents, the street vending activity in wolkite town is mainly dominated by the peoples that comes from peoples from hadiyakembatawolayita and those people earn their livelihood by this activity and also wolkite located at the center of jimma and Addis Ababa for this reason there is high economic flow in this town. As we have observed street vending activity in this town is very common and wide speeded, there are different types of goods and services in street like cloth, fast food, perfume, secondhand books etc are common in this town.

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Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the socioeconomic significance of street vending in wolkite town through the employment of qualitative research approach. In so doing, availability and purposive sampling technique used to collect data from the street venders and key informant interviewees.

## ***1.2. Statement of the Problem***

Different studies were conducted on street vending activities in different countries like Botswana, Mexico, Mongolia, Bangkok, Thailand and Lesotho shows that street vending plays significant role in changing livelihood of peoples and alleviating poverty by creating employment and income generating activities.

Many cities around the world that have realized that street vending is important to urban economies and have started conducting research on this sector for appraisal of its contributions to socio economic and environmental perspectives (ILO, 2002, Mudzvidzwa; 2003; Adhikari, 2011). Street vending in Ethiopia is a growing sector that deserves careful and research attention like any economic activities.

Also, studies were conducted in Ethiopia on the issue of street vending in relation to its socioeconomic causes and consequences. However, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, the available studies are not sufficient to properly understand the issue under study.

According to the study done by Amsale (2017) there are different reason that instigate people to engage in street vending activities. Migration, low education level, no opportunity in finding formal job, social responsibility and absent of family support are among the causes of street vending as per the findig of this study. However, the challenges and consequences of street vending have been left untouched by this study.

Also, Edmealem (2018) in his study stated that the main factor determining the existence of the informal sector are unable to fulfill the criteria enables to engage in a formal business activities and lack of capital to start formal business. And also the study reveals that informal sector are source of income for the poor or means of employment and a base for the establishment of

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formal sector. But his study is limited in assessing why people are engaging in the informal street vending business activities through the employment of quantitative research approach.

Furthermore, Getahun (2015) made an effort to show the role of social networks in facilitating street vending activities. And his study shows that personal identities of vendors like ethnicity and religion has a paramount importance to obtain startup capital and to form strong networks for the sake of exchanging information while working on the street. However, the causes and consequences of street vending has given little consideration in this study.

In developing countries like Ethiopia, the informal sector including street vending absorbs the majority of the urban unemployed growing labor force particularly, women. It creates a wide employment opportunity; it is a means for income generation for the marginalized groups and the urban poor especially for those women. Though it is difficult to state the exact number of women engaged in street vending business activities in Ethiopia, research reports reveal that quite a large number of women earn their living in this business. For instance, 2008 Central Statistical Authority reported that out of the total street vendors, women account for 60%. The number of women engaging in this business is increasing particularly because of alarming rate of migration from rural to urban areas. They search work in the formal sector but most of them find themselves jobless and they join the street vending business to secure employment.

The study conducted in Addis Ababa by Testate (2007) shows the challenges of women in the informal sectors. The research focused mainly on women domestic workers in Addis Ababa. It examines the challenges of these those women in terms of their social, cultural and legal status in the country. It was mainly concerned with the problems that domestic workers undergo in their daily lives as well as the type of legal protections that they are awarded with both in labor and human rights legislations based on qualitative research method. Accordingly, the research found that women domestic workers are dissatisfied with their current situations. They have been either victim of physical, sexual and verbal forms of harassments during their time of working as a domestic worker.

Another study has been undertaken by Etsubdink (2014) in Addis Ababa. The research focused mainly on causes of informal sector: the case of street vendors in Addis Ababa. The findings of the study shown the main factors determining the reasons of street vendors to engage in the informal sector are unable to fulfill criteria of formal sector and lack of job opportunity in the

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formal sector. The study failed to see obstacles of street vendors and their opportunities as they engaged in it as it relied on identifying its causes. 8

In Ethiopia today, there has been limited information and research on the operation and other variables such as how best the sector can be integrated with in the urban economy. Cognizant of the factors and the increment of street vendors from time to time in the cities, and due to the limited nature of research works on the issue of street vending and as we observed there is a development in the nature of the activities in street day to day there is a new product or new type of service is being exchanged in the street and we couldn't find any study in this town as we can see most studies were conducted in Addis Ababa , so we become highly interested to conduct our research on this issue. Thus, this research is intended to fill the gap that we have observed a in above researches by studying the socio economic significances types of street vending activities and challenges of women street vendors in wolkite town.

Therefore, exploring the role of the sector particularly street vending activities on the livelihood of the people is quite fundamental, and this paper explored the socioeconomic significance and challenges of street vending for the vendors and the beneficiaries in Wolkite town through the employment of qualitative research approach.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1. General objective of the study**

The general objective of this study was to explore the socio-economic significance of street vending in wolkite town including its challenges through the employment of qualitative research approach.

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### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

- To know the causes to engage in street vending
- To understand the economic importance street vending for women vendors and the beneficiaries
- To show the social significance of street vending for the women vendors
- To examine the challenges of street vending activities

### **1.4. Research Question**

1. How are peoples pushed to be engaged in informal sector?
2. How much they are satisfied by their work?
3. Why they choose street vending why not other sectors?

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This research can be important in additional input to researchers to know why women engaged in informal sector in the study area and in Ethiopia in general, and it will help the study area administration to improve the working condition of the women vendor that the study might inform stakeholders to empower women and all vendors, it may be by giving better working place and also it can be a policy guideline for the government.

### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

The study was focused on exploring the socio-economic significance of street vending for women vendors in Wolkite town through the employment of qualitative research approach. The researchers collected data from street vendors, some beneficiaries and key informant interviewees to address the various issues central to the study.

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## **1.7. Definition of Important Terms / operational terms**

**Street vending:** Street Vending or “Vending” means selling, offering or displaying for sale, or soliciting another to purchase, for present or future delivery, any goods, wares, merchandise, subscriptions, services, pre-packaged frozen desserts, or any combination, upon, along, or through the highways, streets, or sidewalks, door-to-door on residential property, or in the open air or from a temporary shelter or vending device upon private property.

**Informal trading:** Unorganized small-scale, self-employment creating activities which might involve individuals or unremunerated relatives of the business owner, small number of hired workers or totally without any hired workers which the resource-poor engage in for the purpose of increasing household income generation opportunities.

**Vendor/s:** People who are earning their livelihood from street trading.

**Socio economic significance:** the importance of the informal trading mainly street vending for women who engaged in street vending and for the beneficiaries who buy goods and services from the vendors.

**Challenge:** A problem, obstacle and any kind of challenge that faced by the women vendors during their work.

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## Chapter Two

### 2.LiteratureReview

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#### ***2.1. Introduction: The Role of the Informal Sector***

Informal sector has significant role to the economies of developing countries interims of income generation and employment opportunity for the poor. Some of the roles of the sector particularly to poor include; It provides employment opportunity to the poor and socially marginalized people absorbing some of the labour force that cannot find wage employment in the formal sector. Furthermore it plays a crucial role as supplementary role in employment and income generation as well as a complementary role in the provision of goods and services (Reddy et al, 2002).

According to Fidler and Webster (1996), the urban informal sector is a major provider of employment and income to three categories of socio-economic groups in urban areas:

1. Survivalists- very poor people who work part-time in income generating activities,
2. Self-employed-who produce goods for sale, purchase goods for resale or offer services,
3. Very small businesses- micro-enterprises that usually operate from a fixed location with more or less regular hours.

#### **2.1.1. Theories of Informal Sector in Less Developed Countries**

According to Beatriz (2001), literature regarding informal sector can be classified in to two categories

##### ***2.1.1.1. Traditional literature***

Traditional literature: are those literatures on informal sector (probably literatures on the sector pre 1990's) which are in line with a "dark view" and associate the informal sector with poor, unproductive, and marginalized workers.

##### ***2.1.1.2. Modern literature***

Modern literature: are those literatures on the informal sector particularly (informal sector literature of the 1990's) show and associate the sector a "brighter" side, which is the business initiative and income generating capabilities of informal microenterprises. Hence, the nature and

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behavioral differences of segments within informal sector results in different views about informal sector. In fact, the value of the dichotomy formal informal is currently questioned.

According to Maldonado (1995) the main theories of informal sector that elucidate the development of informal sector in less developed countries are classified:

- ❖ Structural Underemployment
- ❖ Inadequate Institutional Framework
- ❖ Micro-enterprise

**i) Structural Underemployment:** this theory on informal sector argued that Informalization of work arrangements expand due to continuous decline in natural resources prices (in response to contractions of aggregate demand) or as a result of stagnant aggregate demand while there is persistent increase of labour supply. According to this theoretical view, the informal sector has low productivity because is basically disguised unemployment. Furthermore, get rid of labour regulations would not necessarily increase formal employment or obedience by microenterprises. On the contrary, the reduction of informality can be achieved through policies that stimulate domestic aggregate demand and the reduction of natural resource dependency (Beatriz, 12)

## ***2.2. Theoretical and Empirical Evidence of the Informal Sector***

Informal sector is given different name based on different context and point of view like: informal economy, black market, casual work, informal opportunity, shadow economy, underground economy, and unstructured sector.

Because of the nature of the sector there is no common definition found, definitions that are related to this study are summarized below.

According to (Hunda, 1997) the first definition for informal sector is introduced in Ghana as a part of the urban labor force taking place outside the structure of formal labor market. (Tokman V. , 1992) Considers the informal sector will be disappearing once Kenya and Ghana achieve sufficient economic development.

ILO also define informal sector differently in different year and in different context of international business.

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### **2.2.1. Local Context of Informal Sector**

In addition to the world wide definition and the practice in the country is also high, but the local or in the case of Ethiopia the practice is not different from other world practice. CSA defined informal sector as

As per (CSA, 1997) informal sector is defined as:

- ✓ Sector which are mainly engaged in market production.
- ✓ Sector which is not registered companies or corporative.
- ✓ Sector which has less than ten people engaged in.
- ✓ Sector which has no business license.

Generally the informal sector either defined internationally or national has same sense, a way of doing things characterized by easy entry, reliance on indigenous resource, family ownership of enterprise, small-scale operation, labour intensive and adopted technology, skill acquired outside of the formal system and unregulated and competitive market (ILO, 1972).

### **2.2.2. Street Vending**

According to (Lyons & Snoxell, 2005) street vending is one of the most visible activities in informal economy and it is found many where in the world including both in developed and developing countries. It has been defined in many different ways by various scholars. However, the common known form among the definitions is the location of the trade. It may include trading without a permit, trading outside formally designated trading locations and non-payment of municipal/national taxes or self-allocation of shelter for trading. In addition (Saha, 2009) explains street vendors are known to play a very important role in the urban economy by providing employment, income and other items to the public. They sell different kinds of goods such as second hand clothes, shoes, vegetables, fruits, food stuffs, plastic goods, and various household necessities, which are manufactured in small scale or home based industries. In many countries the urban poor prefer to buy clothes and accessories from street vendors because the goods that they sell are usually cheaper and affordable than those found in formal retail shops.

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### ***2.3. Theories about Informal Sector***

There are **four schools of thought** that debate how the informal sector happens

#### **2.3.1. The dualist school**

The dualist school: these schools of thought explain the emergence of informal sector because of not enough modern job opportunity to absorb the existing labor force, slow economic growth and/or faster rate of population growth. This school of thought popularized by ILO in 1970s.

#### **2.3.2 The Structuralism**

The structuralism: this school of thought is opposite to dualist school, argue that informal sector is existed because of the emergency of capitalist development and also this school of thought considers informal sector work to reduce cost and labor force. This school of thought popularized by Caroline and Alexander in 1970 and 1980.

#### **2.3.3. The legalist school**

The legalist school: Hernando De Soto in the 1989 noted that micro-entrepreneurs who choose to operate informally in order to avoid the cost, time and effort of formal registration.

#### **2.3.4. The Illegalist School**

The illegalist school: according Maloney (2004) informal entrepreneur choose to operate illegally or even criminally in order to avoid taxation, commercial regulation, electricity, and rental fees, and other cost of operating formally.

(WIEGO, 2002) Explain on which school of thought work properly to which segment of informal employment. Some poor households and individual engage in survival activities than to have or seem to have very few link to formal economy sector and the formal regulation environment (dualist school). Some micro entrepreneur choose to avoid taxes (illegalist school) and regulation (legalist school) while other informal unit and workers are subordinate to large formal firms (structuralist school).

Based on this school of thoughts the cause of informal sector can be Lack of growth; (Chen, 2012) described according to the dualist school the cause of informal sector is lack of growth.

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This means slow growth rate of economic growth, fast rate of population growth and industrial sector cannot create job opportunity for surplus labour.

In the study of Moser, (1978); Casells and Portes (1989) on the nature of capitalist development; described structuralist believes that the cause of informality is the development of capitalist as government rules and regulation.

While in the study of De Soto (1989) the legalist school believes due to over government rule and regulation entrepreneurs choose to operate informally in order to avoid the cost, time and effort of formal registration. In choice of illegal operation; the il-legalist school believes the cause is purposely the entrepreneur want to avoid regulation fee, taxation.

#### ***2.4. Form of informality***

Because of its heterogeneity classification of informal sector it is a bit difficult to categorize them. But some of the common classifications based on different perspective are presented as shown below (Chandra, 2013).

**1. Labour categories/ employment status perspective:** employer, self-employed, own-account workers, wage workers, unpaid family labour and piece rate worker.

**2. Industrial classification perspective:** trade, service, manufacturing, construction and transportation.

**3. Location perspective:** mobile, semi-mobile' and fixed.

**4. Size classification perspective:** 1 person unit (own account worked), 2-4 person unit (micro enterprise) and 5-9 person unit (small- scale enterprise).

**5. Age group perspective:** <15 year (child labour), 15-24 year (youth) 25-45 year (prime working) and 45+ years (higher age0).

According to (Meine, 2008; Chandra, 2013) informality is also can be categorized in to two exclusionary informality and voluntary informality. Exclusionary informality is happen because of poverty but voluntary is because of cost-benefit analysis.

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#### ***2.4. General Characteristic of Informal Sector Based on Employment and Activity Done***

According to Todaro & Stephen (2003) informal sector is characterized by a large number of small-scale production and service activities that are individually or family owned and uses labor intensive and simple technology.

Moreover, pursuant to ILO (1972) the major characteristics of informal sector is easy of entrance, reliance on indigenous resource, family ownership of enterprise or activity operated by the owner with few or no employee, small scale of operation, labour intensive and adoptive technology, skill acquired outside the normal school system, have little or no access to organized market, to credit institution, unregulated and competitive market.

Informal employment refers to the employment without legal and social protection both inside and outside the informal sector ICSL (2003). According to (2012) there are two type of employment in informal sector.

**Self-employment in informal enterprise:** own account operators and unpaid contributing family workers.

**Informal wage employment:** Employees hired without social protection contributions by formal or informal enterprise (employees of informal enterprise, paid domestic workers, contract workers, unregistered or undeclared worker, industrial outworker, home workers).

The activity in the informal sector requires no or little skill, in accordance with ILO (1992) study on twenty one Africa countries only a quarter of enterprise in the informal acquires their skill from formal school and training centers.

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## **Gender and Informal Sector**

Evidences from different literatures show that both men and women are involved in informal sector. According to the study done by (Jhonson, kaufman, &Shleife, 1997)and (Mudzvidzwa, 2005)informal business is worldwide phenomena engaged around 500 million people with large number of women. Chen (2001) contrary to the formal sector, women are over presented (making up to 50%) in informal sector in developing country. Even though women's were over presented when they become waged employee, their payment is low. (chen, 2001) Explains this women over presence, it is because of women are less able than men to compete in labor, capital and product markets. It is also because of they have relatively low level of education and skill or are less likely to own property or have market know how and women time and mobility are constrained by social and cultural norms that assign the responsibility for social reproduction to women and discourage investment in women's education and training.The reason behind women engaged in informal sector to be large in number. The study done by Mery Jennings (1993) has developed some points as referred below.Family wage: because of the women responsibility around their home let them to stay at home and to use the money generated by their spouse.Migration: men's in search of better economy they live the area where they life but women's stay where they have been.A woman's as reserved army of labour: in developing country women's are used as temporary.

In addition (Ninsin, 1991) also reflects women in many sub-Saharan countries have no choice and are mainly pushed by poverty and lack of employment to fend for live hood in the informal sector, in developed country, informal economy is by choice. According to (CSA), 2003) from the total urban population of Ethiopia 80.15% were informal sector operators which consisted of female 59.99% and males 20.16.

## **Women and Urban Informal Sector**

Urban area can be defined with population above 2000 with rapid growth in rural-urban migration together with a slow expansion of employment in the formal sector has forced the largest share of the workforce into the informal economy. This fact is supported by (CSA,

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2003)50.6% of urban employment is absorbed by the informal sector in Ethiopia. Also Todaro, (1969), Charmes and weeks, (1988) informal employment becomes a natural response to unemployment faced by rural-urban migrants who motivated by survivalist tendencies.UNDP (2012) mentions, in Ethiopia the informal economy account for about 50-60% urban employment. This result is somehow similar with the study of (CSA, 2003). And also it reveals that about 90% or rural-urban migrant to the Ethiopia cities don't get formal employment and thus are forced to join the urban informal sector. Lack of skill, lack of working capital, and lack of working premises forced rural-urban migrants to join the informal and low-earning economic activity such as street vending, domestic work, home base work and other (CSA, 2003)ILO (2012) also reveals informal sector is the major providers of job for the youth in Africa. Similarly CSA (2011) insures 38% of Ethiopian youth engage in informal sector and in Addis Ababa out of totally employed population nearly 26.5% of population engaged in informal sector.

### Pushing and Pulling Factors for Women to be Engaged in Street Vending

According to (Yohannes , 2017) the major economic challenges that women street vendors are facing in work place is the refused to pay for what customers consumed. In line with this, the focus group discussants revealed that in the business of street vending, there are people who want to have money by refusing to pay for their consumption. In addition the (Yohannes , 2017) study revealed that the greatest challenge facing street vendors in the study area were with site of operation and conflict from formal traders, police and municipal authorities which in turn exposed them to pay bribe for them. Most of the spaces street vendors occupy are considered as illegal since the spaces have not been set aside for trade.

In summary, the researcher has tried to assess different literatures and sources of data and noted that there is a limitation in identifying the major pushing and pulling factors for women to be engaged in street vending. Hence, the study has tried to identify and/or assess the major pushing and pulling factors for women to be engaged in informal sector or street vending.

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## **Impact of Informal Sector on Employment Life**

### **Positive Impact**

Informal sector has both positive and negative impact in one country development. According to ILO (1972) developing countries are with high rate of population growth and with low rate of job opportunity to absorb the existing population. In addition existing of migration to urban area and ending up of being jobless play a great role in absorbing this jobless people. It also mentioned the sector provides employment moreover necessary goods and service for the lower income groups. Informal sector play a great role in sub-Saharan economic growth and employment opportunity even though little attention is given in development growth and creating job. It contributes 55 % for GDP and 80% of labor force (ILO, Decent work and informal economy. Geneva, 2002). In Ethiopia according to CSA (1994) 52% of women engaged in informal sector in different form of practice such as street vending, local drink (teji, tela, ateki), retail trade. Which means the contribution of informal sector play great role in giving opportunity as same as with other countries practice. (CSA, 2003) Indicated informal sector absorb 50.6% of urban employee in Ethiopia. In addition informal sector play great role in alleviation of poverty. Even though there is no simple relationship between working in the informal economy and being poor or working in the formal economy and escaping poverty.

### **Negative Impact**

Informal workers typically lack the social protection afforded to formal paid worker, such as worker benefit and typically work under irregular and casual contracts. Informally employed individual experience social, economic, and psychological stress, insecurity and instability and thus they manifest lower level of well-being. According to ferrie et al (2001), Bardasi and (Bardasi & Francesconi, 2004), Benach et al, (2014) and Tay, (2015) as noted from the definition informal sector it is unregistered, unlicensed which is not known by government rather which uses for the purpose to hide tax. In addition it is unsafe type of trade transaction for both employee and customer.

### **Poverty Verses Informal Sector**

Majority of people in developing countries are in problem of chronic poverty and this is not gender neutral. As stated in many studies, informal economy is where the majority of women

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and the poor are to be found, but it is also social protection limited. As ILO (2008) indicates that the majority of women in the informal sector such as petty trading join the sector as a means of survival. They turn to the informal business due to low level of economic support from husbands/parents. Among developing countries, Ethiopia is the least in gender related development index according to GRDI and also (Zelalem A, 2000) indicate women are poorly represent in education, economic activities and political participation. In addition Zelalem in the same year also say Ethiopia poor women are prime victim of poverty due to little access to productiveresource, labour, education etc. There is a lot reason to be list that lead women to take the large portion in part of poverty. According to Lalla et al, (2006) social rules and norms including forced or arranged marriage , lack of access to education , lack of access to health service, denial of their right to property ownership, high unbalance responsibility to look after the family etc... Even though listing this all reason (ILO, 2002) study reveals there is no simple relationship between working informally and being poor and working formally and escaping poverty.

### **Street Venders as a Case of Informal Sector**

Street vending is one of the major activities in the informal economy which has an important role due to its capacity to take the expanding labor which can't be taken by the formal sector. Street vending is practice done in both develop and developing country. Different definition is given by different author about street vending According to (Bhowmik, 2005) street venders as self-employed workers in the informal economy who are either stationary or mobile and also he say street vendor is a person trading from the street who offers good for sale to the public without having a permanent build-up structure from which to sell. (Cross, 1998) say street vending as the production and exchange of legal goods and service that involve the lack of appropriate business permit, violation of zoning codes, failure to report tax liability, non-compliance with labor regulations governing contracts, work condition and/or legal guarantees in relations with suppliers and clients.

On the other hand Street vending defined in the study of (Lyons & snxoell, 2005) is presented as one of the most visible activities in the informal economy and it is found everywhere in the world, including both developed and developing countries. It has been defined in many different ways by various scholars. As mentioned before street vendors are known to play a very

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important role in the urban economy by providing employment, income and other items to the public. They sell different kinds of goods such as second hand clothes, shoes, vegetables, fruits, food stuffs, plastic goods, and various household necessities, which are manufactured in small scale or home based industries. In many countries the urban poor prefer to buy clothes and accessories from street vendors because the goods that they sell are usually cheaper and affordable than those found in formal retail shops (Saha, 2009).

#### **2.4.1. General Characteristics of Street vendors**

In order to conceptualize how street vendors undertake their activities and to locate the factor that push to the sector it is vital to assess the characteristics of street vendors. The informal sector is characterized by a large number of small-scale production and service activities. Mostly they are individually or family owned and uses labor-intensive and simple technology (Todaro & Stephen, 2003). Easy of entry, reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership of enterprises or activity operated by the owner with few or no employees., small scale of operation, labour incentive and adaptive technology, skills acquired outside the normal school system, have little or no access to organized markets, to credit institutions, unregulated and competitive markets (ILO, 1972). The characteristics of informal sector mainly street vendors are categorized based on the employment the labour engaged in the sector and their day to day activities. Characteristics of the actors or labours engaged in street vending.

- ❖ Absence of official recognition (mainly from government bodies),
- ❖ No social security system
- ❖ Consistent job insecurity
- ❖ Poor educational background of the labours
- ❖ Predominance of own account and self-employment works
- ❖ Low income and profit
- ❖ Absence of saving due to equivalence of income and expense.

#### **Characteristics of the activities in street vending**

- ✓ Easy to access customers

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- ✓ Un regulated and competitive markets
  - ✓ Easy to enter to the sector to Family or group oriented business
  - ✓ Absence of access to institutional creditors
  - ✓ Time and location based business

### ***2.5. Specific Characteristics of Street Vendors***

According to street vendors in urban informal sector are categorized basically based on the location, carriers, structures, service and product they have provided.

#### **A) Location**

Studying street vending and local authorities challenges (Alebachew, 2017) argues street vendors choose place where in very close proximity including the walk ways to easily access pedestrians and motorists such places are accommodate heavy human traffic and some place may be crowded with pedestrians and motor traffic. Mostly places selected by street vendors are main roads, streets, parks, near to shopping centers, near to traffic light and road crossings.

#### **B) Mobility and carrying products**

Street vendors use different structures. Most of them are use mats, gunny bags, tables, racks, wheel barrows, handcarts and bicycle seats to display their goods. The other vendors carry their commodities on their hands, heads and shoulders. Some of them are hang their commodities on walls, trees & fences, and significant of them construct temporary shades to displaying their goods (Bhowmik, 2005).

#### **C) Structures**

Street vendors are not paid tax, not registered and they involve very visible structures (Chandra, 2013). These economic activities involve simple organizational, technological and production structures. It is ease of entry and small scale of operate where operates in urban area especially take place at heavy human traffic.

**D) Services and Product in street vending:** According to FAO (2007) the sector has expanded in times of economic growth as urban workers face longer commutes and depend increasingly on

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food vendors to supply their nutritional needs. In many places it has become a cherished part of local culture, and can even become a valuable tourist resource. Most services and product are street food, market retails, technology products, clothes and other product that easily attract pedestrians.

## ***2.6. Review of Empirical Studies in the Informal Sector***

In Ethiopia practice of informal business is becoming usual practice because the country capacity to absorb the present population in the formal sector is difficult. Even though, the practice of informal business in the whole country the practice is high, Addis Ababa has much higher informal business. According to (CSA, 2013) the working condition of informal sector is defined as:

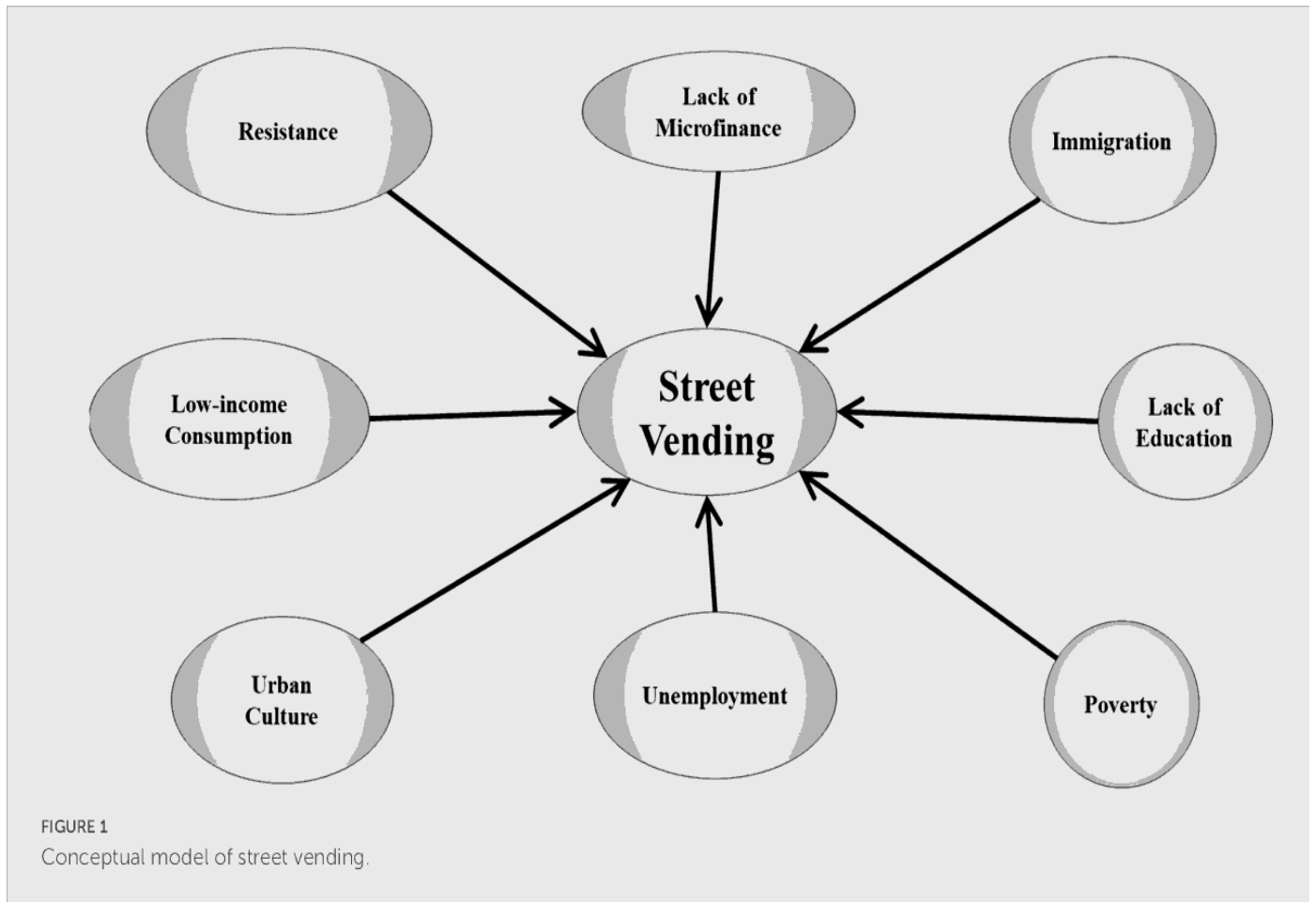
- ✓ Does the enterprise have book of account(Tax)
- ✓ Does the enterprise have a license or
- ✓ Does the product/service of the organization you engage in is mainly for sale

Based on these above lists the sector will be identified as formal sector, informal sector and not identifies. Thus to be formal sector must fulfilled at least one of the above criteria. And the informal sector is which fulfilled the last criteria only that is the product/service of the organization engaged is mainly for sale. So, based on these there are different empirical studies done in informal business in Ethiopia.

According to the study done by (Amsale, 2017) there are different reason which lead one to engage in street vending from this he list Migration, low education level ,no opportunity in finding formal job, social responsibility and absent of family support but he does not recommend a solution for the problem. Also (Edmealem, 2018) in his work stated that the main factor determining the reason in the informal sector are unable to fulfilled criteria of formal sector and lack of capital to start formal business And also the study reveals that informal sector are source of income for the poor or means of employment and also it is a base for formal sector but he is narrowed his studies in quantitative form he is not briefly explain the issue. In refering the work of (Getahun, 2015) homophily in regional and ethnic lines forms the strongest divide among street vendors personal networks followed by sex and marital status homophily.

Many cities around the world that have realized that street vending is important to urban

economies and have started conducting research on this sector for appraisal of its contributions to socio economic and environmental perspectives (ILO, 2002,Mudzvidzwa; 2003;Adhikari,2011).



**Figure 1:- Conceptual framework of street vending**

**Source:- Constructed based on excerpts from literature**

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## Chapter Three

### **3. Research Methodology**

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In this section of the paper, we have made an effort to elucidate the research approach, methods of data collection, sampling techniques and methods of data analysis that will be employed for our study purpose. Also, we have presented a brief description of the study site and the target population.

#### ***3.1. Description of the Study Area***

This study was conducted in Wolkitetown. Wolkite is a town and separate woreda in south western Ethiopia, the Administrative center of the Gurhage Zone of southern nations, nationalities and peoples region. Based on the 2007 census this town has a total population of 28,866 and located 158 km from Addis Ababa

In this area trade is the main source of income for most or all residents although in district areas peoples also engaged in agriculture and and khocho is the main type of food for the guraghae peoples and also they use khocho for trading purpose like khocho, the people use chatte for their own service and for trading purpose. it's the center located between jimma and AddisAbaba for that reason there is high trade and other form of activities in this place.

There are different residents in this area that comes from jimma, hosanna, wolayita, kemebattaetc so those peoples mainly engaged in street vending activities like fast-foodselling, clothe selling, fruit selling etc so in this case migration is one factor for the informal trading.

We choose this place because it is a place where our university is located or it is not far from us and in this city as we know from our previous experience there are many people engage in the street vending. Furthermore, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, the available researches on the issue of street vending are very scant at the national (Ethiopia) level and in our study site. That's why we are highly interested to conduct a study on this issue.

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## **3.2 Research Design**

In this paper we used a case study research design. Case studies, one of the most common qualitative designs, are used to examine a person, group, community or institution. Researchers often use a bounded theory approach that confines the case study in terms of time or space. To conduct the case study, the researcher may draw upon multiple sources of data, such as observation, interviews and documents. All participants chosen must share a unifying factor, which means they all must have a direct or indirect connection to the research question or subject being studied. After collecting the data, the researcher will analyze it to identify common or prominent themes.

## **3.3 Research Approach**

In this study we used qualitative research approach to briefly explain and assess the issue under study. According to Roger and Nall (2003) a qualitative approach is usually employed for deeply rooted studies that attempt to interpret social reality. Since our issue is one part of social reality, qualitative approach and methods are believed to provide an appropriate data that address the objectives of the study. The absence of sampling frame or list of the target population is the main reason behind the selection of qualitative research approach.

## ***3.4. Source of Data***

Literature related to the subject has been reviewed in order to have a deeper understanding of the issue under study. Previous research works, books and journal articles related to the issue of informal trading have been reviewed in order to identify gaps not filled by previous researchers. This task helps the researcher to elucidate important concepts and research problems. Besides, it also helps in the choice of research methods and formulation of a theoretical framework.

In order to collect primary data from the target community and other concerned bodies, in-depth interview and key informant interview, observation methods of primary data collection methods are used.

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### **3.4.1. Methods of Data Collection**

In-depth interview and key informant interview, observation methods used to collect data for this study purpose.

#### **3.4.1.1 In-Depth Interview**

An in-depth interview is a qualitative research data collection tool that allows for a person to person discussion. Such discussion provide the opportunity to have a deeper understanding of one's beliefs, feelings, and behaviors on important issues. So, we will employee in-depth interview to gather more data from street vendors and we will use key informant interview in order to gather data from the persons who have a better experience and knowledge about the issue of street vending. And the actual size of the informants will be determined based on data saturation. An interview schedule will be used to guide the interview session with the informants. Researchers can conduct in-depth, face-to-face interviews with participants. This allows them to gain insights from the participants to best understand their experience.

#### **3.4.1.2 Focus Groups**

Focus groups are similar to interviews, but involve multiple participants at once. They are another route to obtaining responses and making interview observations.

#### **3.4.1.3 Observation:**

A less direct method than interviews or focus groups, this method requires careful attention to participants' activities and behaviors in order to gather data.

### **3.4. Sampling Technique and Instrument of Data Collection**

Convenience or availability sampling technique used to choose informants for this study purpose. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where units are selected for inclusion in the sample because they are the easiest for the researcher to access. This can be due to geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or willingness to participate in the research. Sometimes called accidental sampling, convenience sampling is a type of non-random sampling.

Thus, due to the difficulties of obtaining the sampling frame, informants accidentally chosen while they are at the street for work. The selection will be held based on the consent and

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willingness of the informants. Besides, purposive sampling technique will be used to select key informant interviewees.

### **3.5. Methods of Data Analysis**

The study used thematic method of qualitative data analysis and case study. The researchers find a kind of patterns/themes for the data obtained from informants in line with the specific objectives of the study, and in accordance with concepts which have a resemblance.

According to Alhojailan (2012) thematic analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis used to analyze, classifications and present themes (patterns) that relate to the data. It illustrates the data in great detail and deals with diverse subjects via interpretations. It allows the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme with one of the whole content. This will confer accuracy and intricacy and enhance the research's whole meaning . Marks and Yardley (2004) also stated that thematic analysis gives an opportunity to understand the potential of any issue more widely. It moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas. Codes developed for ideas or themes are then applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis, which may include comparing the relative frequencies of themes or topics within a data set, looking for code co-occurrence, or graphically displaying code relationships.

### **3.6. Ethical Consideration**

Ethics is among the crucial components of social research. According to Yeraswork(2010) research must be regulated by ethical norms and values, even where there is disagreement over which ethical norms are applicable. Research projects which presuppose active participation must as a general rule only be initiated with the freely obtained and informed consent of the participants. Informants are free at any time to discontinue their participation, with no negative consequences for themselves. Also, the subjects of research are entitled to confidential treatment of all information they give on personal matters. The researcher must prevent the use and transmission of information which may harm the individual on whom the research is being carried out Thus, this study carried out in line with the above values, norms and code of ethics which required in scientific academic research.

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# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This part of the research deals with the analysis and discussion of the data gathered from primary data source using interview and observation. It includes the identification of types of street vending and causes for women to be engaged in the informal sector or street vending in addition the socio economic importance and challenges of street vending also is explored.

### 4.2. Causes of street vending

Literature indicates various factors are responsible for the proliferation of street vending activities. According to the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency (CSA), informal self-employment activities, including street vending, account for approximately 70% of employment in the country (CSA, 2012). This suggests that economic factors, such as lack of formal employment opportunities, play a significant role in driving individuals towards street vending. A study by Gizaw and colleagues (2019) found that poverty, lack of skills and education, and limited access to credit were major factors leading individuals to engage in street vending in Ethiopia.

In addition to economic factors, cultural and social factors may also play a role in street vending. A study by Tadesse and colleagues (2016) found that some individuals engage in street vending as a means of preserving cultural heritage and traditions. Additionally, street vending may be a means of social status, especially for women, who may not have access to other forms of social and economic standing (Gizaw et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the lack of proper enforcement by local authorities in regulating street vending also contributes to its prevalence in Ethiopia. A study by Alemu and colleagues (2019) found that informal street vendors in Addis Ababa often had no specific locations to sell their goods, and faced frequent displacement by local authorities.

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Overall, the causes of street vending in Ethiopia are complex and varied, with economic, cultural, and social factors at play. Addressing these underlying factors will be necessary to reduce the prevalence of street vending and provide alternative livelihood opportunities for those engaged in informal self-employment.

Accordingly, the data obtained from our informants confirmed the research findings presented above. Thus, the following are some of the factors behind women involvement in street vending activities.

#### **4.2.1. Economic Survival**

According to the study conducted by Tamirat(2012) in Addis Ababa, thus, as a better alternative to low-wage formal sector employment, some people prefer to be engaged in the informal sector.

Economic survival emerged as the most common cause for women street vendors to engage in street vending. Women street vendors often come from low-income households, and street vending provides them a source of income to support themselves and their families. The vendors reported that their income from vending is used for paying for household expenses, school fees, healthcare, and other household needs.

The study found that street vending is the main source of income for the women street vendors, and it is critical in supporting their families. Most of the women were the sole breadwinners in their households, and they depended solely on the earnings they made from street vending. They used the money they made from this practice to pay for their children's school fees, buy food and other basic needs.

The issue of divorce is the other reason that forced some women to engage in street vending activities.

#### **4.2.2. Lack of Employment Opportunities**

The second most common cause for women street vendors to engage in street vending in the study area is the lack of employment opportunities in their place of origin. 17of our women informants street vendors are either unemployed or underemployed, and street vending provides them an opportunity to earn a living.

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They joined the street vending activity due to the poverty of their family and other problems related to their family economic situations. For some others, unemployment is the factor which has forced them to engage in street vending activity. Since the majority of them have low educational status, they could not get job.

### **4.2.3. Skills and Knowledge Requirements**

Street vending does not require formal education or specific skills and knowledge, making it more accessible to women in the study area who might not have access to education or training. Therefore, street vending becomes a viable option for women to earn a living.

Based on our finding Women street vendors have limited access to education and training, which makes it difficult for them to improve their businesses and increase their income.. One of the interviews replied that:

*“ selling of fruits is my only chance to earn income because I have no any specialization or like my old friends so selling of fruits doesn't require special skill and my daughter also teach me how to count money”.*

### **4.2.4. Income diversification**

According to the interview with women vendors another reason for participating in street vending is to diversify the source of income. This is currently the most important reason for some of people to engage in street vending. and also, economically better off people also engage in the activity for diversification of their source of income. Some others arrange members of their family to be engaged in informal sector even if they have employment in formal sector. Low-wage employees in the formal sector also prefer to be engaged in street vending in order to supplement their primary income. Thus, diversification of the source of income they get from one sector is the reason why some of the street vendors begin to participate in it. The issue of divorce is the other reason that forced some women to engaged in street vending activities.

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#### **4.2.5. Family Breakup**

In addition to the above factors, family breakup is also one factor for our informants involvement in the street vending activities, In this regard, one of the informants engaging in selling of vegetables around menahariyakebele shared her story as follow;

*“I was married before one year but there was disagreement between me and my husband then we divorced and he left our children on me and left after that I started living with my parents but it was so hard then I borrowed some money from my parents also they have low economic status after borrowing money from my parents I started selling avocado and banana around menahariya then step by step I started leaving in rental home with my children.”*

Also a 24 year woman informant came from kambata to she were engaging in vending shoes has shared her view as shown below.

*“I was worked as a maid in different places, Life as a maid is not comfortable for me there were different violence from my bosses. I can't control their behavior and also I wanted to get my own freedom and my intention to run my own business, then I came to wolkite and by using my money which I saved from my salary I started selling shoes.”*

A 27 years old men graduated from university who engaged in selling of books around yejokashare his story about the first situation he engaged in the sector.

*“I was graduated in agriculture from university of hawassa then after graduation I searched for work for 2 years but I can't find any work by my study and at that time I have no interest to work in a sector that is not related with my study, after time it becomes difficult for me to live with my parents then I borrowed some money from my uncle and started selling books to be self reliant then after time I get it profitable and I continued to sell books.”*

A 18 years young female who engaged in selling of tea and coffee and at the same time she study in grade 10 at YABERUS secondary school told us the first time and the reason that let her to engaged in this sector.

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*“I am studying at yaberus secondary school at the same time I’m working on tea and coffee selling at street, my mother and my father was firstly engaged in this activity but before 1 year my mother becomes very sick and in order to get the payment for her medical treatment my father started working in daily laborer construction then in order to supplement father and my teen siblings I continued the activity that my parents quitted.”*

### **4.3. Economic significance of street vending**

In Ethiopia women often excluded from from formal employment opportunities, which limits their access to resources and economic empowerment. Street vending provides an alternative means to earn a living, enabling women to support their families and providing opportunities for entrepreneurship and financial independence and also street vending enables women to acquire new skills, including marketing, customer services and financial management skills, which can be used to develop more profitable business in the future(Aduga, 2017).

Street vending is a common trade in Ethiopia, particularly among women. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 85% of the street vendors in Ethiopia are women (ILO,2019). Despite the challenges they face, street vending provides significant economic opportunities for women, particularly those who are poor and marginalized.

Street vending is an important source of income for many women in Ethiopia. For example, a study conducted in Addis Ababa found that women street vendors earn an average of 1360 Birr (US\$48) per month, which is approximately 40% of their household income (Assefa, 2015).

Furthermore, street vending provides flexibility to women, allowing them to combine work with other responsibilities such as childcare. Unlike formal employment where women may face discrimination and inflexible working hours, street vending allows women to work part-time and at their own pace (Assefa, 2015). This makes it easier for women to juggle their work and family responsibilities.

The study found that street vending provides women vendors with a flexible way to earn a living without needing to invest heavily in education or training. Compared to formal employment opportunities that require education, skills, and experience, street vending provides the opportunity to start earning immediately with minimal starting capital. This makes it an essential

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economic activity for women without formal qualifications or resources. as one of our informant said.;

*“From this business I’m covering all my needs and have running my family including my siblings, and I planned to get married on the coming year.”*

Based on our founding Women street vendors have to engage in street vending to earn income to support their families, Street vending has become an essential source of income for women street vendors hey sell various goods, including food, clothes, and other essential items, and earn a significant amount of income, which they use to cater to their daily needs.

Street vending has contributed to the economic empowerment of women street vendors in our study area. Women who are engaged in street vending have become financially independent and are no longer dependent on their husbands for their daily needs. Moreover, they have gained a sense of self-worth and self-esteem and are more confident in their ability to provide for themselves and their families.

Furthermore, based on our study street vending provides women with the opportunity to gain economic independence. Many women in Ethiopia are dependent on their male relatives for financial support, making it difficult to escape poverty. However, street vending allows women to earn their own income and to control how they spend and invest their money. This study found that economic independence can have a significant impact on their quality of life, including the ability to access education, healthcare, and make their own financial decisions.

Moreover, the study findings show that street vending provides an essential service to the local community in WOLKITE town by offering affordable and accessible goods and services. The goods offered by women vendors in WOLKITE town include traditional clothes, vegetables, fruits, and other household items. These goods are often sold at a lower price than in mainstream markets, making them more affordable for low-income households in WOLKITE town.

### **4.3.1 Economic Empowerment**

Street vending is an important source of income for women vendors in our study area. They use the income earned from vending to support themselves, their families, and their communities. This economic empowerment gives them a sense of autonomy and control over their lives, as

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they are able to contribute to their household income and make independent purchasing decisions.

### **4.3.2. Flexibility**

Our study found that Street vending provides flexibility for women vendors in terms of working hours and location. They are able to sell their goods or services at times that suit them and in locations that are convenient for their customers. This flexibility allows them to balance their work and family responsibilities, which is important for women who are often the primary caregivers in their families.

### **4.3.3. Limited Competition**

Based on our study Street vending also provides opportunities for women vendors to compete in a less crowded and less competitive market, as compared to formal employment. This is particularly important for women who may have limited access to formal employment due to gender-related discrimination.

As revealed above the street vending activity have a golden role for the vendors it is a backbone for their economy for most of them it is their primary source of income and the story of the vendors shared below:

*Another informant also said that:*

*“before joined this activity I had a girlfriend in my birth place hosanna who I love the most but because of lack of money she left me and married another guy south Africa, but now I am well self reliant and have enough capital to run my life so I have planned to marry with my second girlfriend.”*

## **4.4. Social significance of street vending**

Street vending is a crucial source of livelihood for many women in Ethiopia, particularly those with little or no education, and those who cannot access formal employment opportunities. In a country where the unemployment rate is high, street vending provides an avenue for women to earn a living and support their families. According to a study conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), street vending accounts for 16% of employment in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, with women being the majority of street vendors (ILO, 2017).

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Street vending also has a social significance in Ethiopia as it enables women vendors to become economically empowered and gain social recognition. As street vendors, they are able to contribute to the economy, which enhances their social status and respect in society. A study by Ababa (2021) revealed that street vending has created an avenue for women to develop new social networks, learn new skills, and increase their confidence and self-esteem.

The study found that Street vending has the potential to empower women, Women face significant social and economic challenges that limit their ability to participate in the labor market and contribute to economic growth. Street vending provides women with an opportunity to challenge these barriers and become economically self-sufficient. By engaging in street vending activities, women gain greater economic autonomy and control over their lives. Women can earn an income and support their families, providing them with the resources to invest in education their and health. Street vending also provides women with a platform to develop their entrepreneurial and leadership skills. Women who engage in street vending activities often develop skills in negotiation, customer service, and financial management.

Based on the focus group discussion with female vendors revealed that women were interested in participating in street vendors business because they need freedom of operating their own business and after they engaged in street vending and starts to generate income they were flexible in determining household decisions like deciding on using of contraceptive, participating on household decision making process they can use and develop their creativity, they can cover their basic needs like medical care, school payment for their children. Vendors were quite confident about the freedom they felt in their lives after they joined street vending activity.

Thematic analysis of the social significance or importance of street vending for women street vendors found the following key themes:

In line with this, during focused group discussion the discussants shared their experience as follows:

*“before I engaged in street vending I was housewife and I have no any chance to decide anything about house related issues my husband was the only person to decide about everything but after I engaged in this activity and starts generating income my husband attitude towards me was*

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*changed he starts respects me and ask my opinion about our problems and we both decides on it.”*

In line with this, during focused group discussion the discussants shared their experience as follows:

*“ this work create a connection for us as you see we are very closed to each other but before this we don’t know each other we make a friendship not only money in street vending”.*

#### **4.4.1. Social capital**

Our study found that Street vending also contributes to the creation of social capital among women vendors. Women who engage in vending build relationships with other vendors, customers, and suppliers. These social networks provide them with access to information, resources, and support that enables them to improve their business practices and ultimately their livelihoods.

#### **4.4.2. Inclusivity**

The Finding indicates Street vending promotes inclusivity and diversity, providing a space for people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to interact. This inclusivity contributes to the cultural richness of the society by creating a space where people can share their traditions and experiences.

#### **4.4.3. Empowerment of Women**

According to the data obtained from the informants women street vendors have found a significant sense of empowerment through their work. They are able to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families while also breaking free from societal norms and stereotypes that previously restricted them to the domestic sphere. This empowerment has allowed them to become more independent and confident in their daily lives.

As our study found that, street vending provides a means of economic independence and empowerment. It enables them to earn their own income and support their families financially. Street vending provides these women with an opportunity to break free from the traditional gender roles that often limit their economic activities and autonomy and the they become more

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empowered and develop a sense of positive self personality and make them to view the future brighter than before.

In summary, street vending provides an opportunity for economic empowerment, inclusivity, social capital, for women street vendors in Wolkite town, Ethiopia. These women benefit from the sense of independence and community that street vending brings, ultimately improving their livelihoods and contributing to the cultural richness of the society.

*“After I engaged in street vending activity I started supplement my husband in household expense and after sometimes we transformed our life standard and now our children changed their public school to private school.”*

*“Working in street vending activity benefits me not only by financial expenses but also after engaged in this activity my behavior changed, before that I was shy and passive but now I become sociable and active I can communicate perfectly and run my business well because this business requires active social communication skill.”*

#### **4.5. Challenges of street vending**

Despite the importance of street vending for women in Ethiopia, vendors face various challenges, including harassment, eviction, and confiscation of goods by the authorities (Tsegaye, 2018).

One of the major challenges facing women street vendors in Ethiopia is the lack of legal permit for their work. Many women engage in street vending without proper licenses or permits, exposing them to harassment and extortion by law enforcement officers. According to a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO), less than 20% of informal sector workers, including street vendors, are registered with the government and protected by labor laws (ILO, 2018). This makes it difficult for women vendors to operate their businesses without fear of being fined, harassed, or even arrested.

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Moreover, the lack of access to credit is a significant challenge for women street vendors in Ethiopia. Most women who engage in street vending rely on savings or loans from family and friends to start and sustain their businesses. This restricts their ability to expand their businesses or take advantage of new opportunities. Furthermore, women vendors are often excluded from formal credit markets due to lack of collateral, low income, and gender bias by traditional lenders (Admassie, 2014).

The data obtained from the informants is in conformity to what was articulated by Admassie. Thus, one of the informants replied that:

*“we are a clothe sellers our key problem is home and the rising of price for clothes on the days when my husband is not with me it is difficult for me to work and carry clothes to home especially when there is rain it is very difficult”.*

*“I spend 14 years in this work but still I can’t get a credit but if I can get I have the ability and to improve my working condition”.*

In addition, women street vendors in Ethiopia face discrimination and social stigmatization. Due to gender stereotypes and cultural norms, women’s roles are often confined to the household and not viewed as entrepreneurs. This perception affects women’s confidence, access to opportunities, and bargaining power in the market. Furthermore, women are vulnerable to harassment and violence in the informal economy, which deters them from engaging in formal employment or starting businesses (Teshome, 2017).

The data obtained from the informants is in conformity to what was articulated by Teshome. Thus, one of the informants replied that:

*“I’m a coffee seller around bus station and there is a boy who always disturbing me to be his girlfriend but I always refuse him but one day when I was walking to home he attacked me and beat me on my back he will do more if there was no one at that time”.*

Most of the women operated in the informal sector, which meant they did not have access to formal employment benefits such as healthcare and pensions.

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This study found that women street vendors were facing a lot of financial and social obstacles and constraints. Below are challenges that women street vendors have confronted, as the study findings pinpointed.

#### **4.5.1 Lack of skills**

Most women street vendors in Wolkite town lack basic business skills, such as record-keeping, marketing, and financial management. This limits their ability to grow and sustain their businesses. Some women have also reported a lack of financial literacy, which makes it harder for them to access credit and manage their finances effectively.

*“I’m not such a good person at calculation, there are many days that I sold goods with out profit and often I don’t know my profit and my expense”.*

#### **4.5.2 Gender based Harassment**

Harassment was part of their everyday experience and as they said during the interview, they took it as a challenge which so far had not been addressed and do not make them stop their activities. The harassment defines the vulnerability of the sector.

As our study found that women street vendors are facing different problems from their customers. Among them are sexual harassments and physical and psychological violence is the most fundamental problems that they faced, especially during night when they sell their goods and when turning to their home they often attacked by the drunken person. One of our informants articulated that:

*“I’m not such a talkative person because of this many boys around me insult me for keeping silent for their bad words”.*

#### **4.5.3. Limited access to resources**

The study found that Women street vendors in face significant challenges in accessing resources such as land, capital, and financial support. This lack of access to resources makes it difficult for them to start or expand their businesses.

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*“I’m a fruit seller around ye joka my major problem is I have no a place to store my frutes I have to carry my products every day from my work place to home because of this I have a back pain”.*

#### **4.5.4 Seasonality and market/price Fluctuation**

As our interview revealed that Expensiveness of the cost of input products from time to time is a major challenge for the vendors, even there is a time that they forced to sell their products without profit. And also Women street vendors are often unable to earn stable incomes due to fluctuating market prices, seasonal changes, and the irregular demand for their products.

#### **4.5.5. Lack of legal protection**

The study found that Street vending is not recognized as a legitimate occupation in wolkite town and there is no legal protection for women street vendors. They are often subjected to arbitrary enforcement of regulations, which can result in confiscation of goods and fines.

*“we can’t find a protection from the legal authorities because of this a problems like robbery arbitrary attack are common among us we want a legal protection and security like other business peoples especially we are women we can’t control forceful attacks”.*

#### **4.5.6. Lack of social support**

Based on the study Women street vendors have no access to social support networks, such as unions and other organizations. This makes it difficult for them to advocate for their rights and to access resources and information.

#### **4.5.7. Limited access to education and training**

The study found that women street vendors have limited access to education and training, which makes it difficult for them to improve their businesses and increase their income.

Street vending is often stigmatized and perceived as an inferior occupation, which can lead to a lack of respect for women street vendors and their work.

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“There is no any training or education program for us like any other professions there is nothing done that can empower and educated we are not considering us a legal person to have such like things”.

#### **4.5.6. Health and safety concerns**

The issue of Health and safety is the major problem reported by women vendors The study found that Women street vendors often work in unsafe and unsanitary conditions, which can lead to health problems such as respiratory illnesses and infections.

In FGD with women’s the informants shared their experience as below:

*“There is a lot of unsanitary places in street we can say all street is a place where there is unsafe condition so we are facing for a lot of problems like malaria, influenza and even it is very difficult for those who have child”.*

Overall, these themes highlight the significant challenges that faced by women street vendors, and the need for policymakers and stakeholders to take action to address these issues.

Below are some problems reported by women vendors:

*“before today I was the only person who sells shoes but over time may peoples who seel shoes like me occupied this placed who have better skill than me and now the business is not like before”.*

*“I’m spice and coffee seller and Working around formal shop owners is very difficult for me even they push me to leave around their work place because they fear that the customers will prefer to buy from me”.*

*“I sell banana with my two daughter and mostly on weekends when there is so many people it is difficult for us to protect our goods and when I go to home to have a lunch my daughters will stay a place and then when I come back from lunch my fruits looted by a drunker boys around my place because my daughters can’t do anything because they looted it by force”.*

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#### **4.6. Government Response to Street Vending Activities**

According to the interview with vendors the legal bodies and police were not that much involved in raiding and confiscation of the properties of the street vendors in wolkite town. However, when we raise this question, for the authorities according to our key informants Individuals from Legal and Justice Office strongly oppose lawlessness in streets and they consider all forms of informal activities including street vending as illegal and unacceptable by the government and they said that because of the polices and other responsible persons keep silent for the vendors over time this doesn't means that working on street without license is acceptable.

According to the interview with key informants there were 23 peoples started this street vending activity in wolkite town from the beginning and those people were migrated from the neighbor cities like jimma, welayita, haddiya then the government allocated a working place for those people but after a time the local residents began to appear in street in order to seal their goods and services and after a time it becomes difficult to control them even there are a persons who work on the street even if they have their own work place and there are a people who have a shop license but secretly seal another goods inside like gas, bensin and other goods without having of a license for that product until we collected this data there was a list of vendors who have given a warning by the authorities for more than one times because of their refusal to leave their work place/street/, as our key informants the government gives a working place for the street vendors but they refuse to work on that place because according to the vendors the place is not convenience for their work there is no customer and business flow.

The prevention of street vending in larger cities like Addis Ababa and other large cities of the country is explicit and formal but in small towns like wolkite, the prevention is conducted occasionally and implicitly.

Street vendors needed support from the government in terms of formulating vendors-friendly rules and regulations to guide street vendors in a secure and reliable environment without fear of being arrested or of facing the various challenges as they do face today.

the legal bodies and police were not that much involved in raiding and confiscation of the properties of the street vendors in wolkite town.

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## Chapter five

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

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#### 5.1. Conclusions

In conclusion, street vending plays a significant role in the socio-economic development of Wolkite town in Ethiopia, particularly for women vendors who rely on it as a source of income to support their families. Despite its contributions, street vending comes with various challenges, including limited access to infrastructure, lack of legal protection, and gender-based discrimination. Women vendors face these challenges more acutely than their male counterparts, which affects their earnings and their ability to compete in the market. Therefore, addressing these challenges requires a multi-stakeholder approach that involves the government, civil society organizations, and the private sector. It is essential to develop policies that support the needs of women vendors by providing them with access to infrastructure, legal protection, and fair market regulations.

#### 5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded.

The government of Wolkite town considers legalizing street vending and provide location for women street vendors, registering street vending organization, registration and licensing street vendors, build capacity of street vendors, formulate a street vending so below we put our recommendations briefly.

- The research found that women vendors have limited access to critical resources such as credit, information, infrastructure, and services. This limited access leads to an inability to grow their businesses, access opportunities, and improve their livelihoods. Additionally, women vendors face limited access to public services such as healthcare, infrastructure, and education, which directly impacts their health and wellbeing. So Women vendors require access to credit to purchase stock and develop their businesses. Credit unions and microfinance institutions should be more accessible and should offer more competitive rates and terms to support women vendors.

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- The government needs to provide more infrastructures for women vendors. This includes public toilets, clean water, and designated vending areas with shade or shelter from the rain. Street vending is a subsector of the informal sector economy that operates in urban spaces meant for other planned uses. As the study found, street vendors' location depends on attractiveness, accessibility, number of customers, as well as site allocation by the city authority. In order to take some initiatives to assist street vendors, in terms of business locations, the city government should assign and demarcate city specific designated and well planned restriction free street vending zones, restricted street vending zones.
  - Women vendors should be able to access training and education on business management,
  - Women Street vendors in Wolaita they do not have business license, hence they operate illegally. Every street vendor should register his/her activity and be provided with a license for selling along a street or within the designated places. The licensing process for street vending should be simplified to encourage more women to start their own businesses. The fees charged for licenses should also be affordable.
  - Majority of street vendors around the world undertake the street vending business under threats of evictions, harassment and jail because the law does not recognize their operation within the urban areas. Women vendors face harassment and persecution from authorities. The government must provide legal protection and support for women vendors in case of conflict with authorities. There is a need for the Wolaita city to formulate supportive policies and regulations that will take into account the practical reality and current challenges faced by street vendors. This legislation may streamline the rules and regulations for street vending, making it easier to be a street vendor in Wolaita city while complying with wide national and city level requirements.
  - The street vendors should be encouraged to organize into associations which have rules and regulations in order to come up with an organized sector. Street vendors should be made to know the benefits of such associations in their everyday business and in their livelihoods. The street vendors' associations should be strong enough to advocate for their members and to make their voice heard at the city level and national level for the sake of improving thei

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## Appendix I

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WOLKITE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

### UN structured interview Questions

This interview is designed to gather information on socio economic significance and challenges of street vending for women to be engaged in informal sector in street vendors. For better achievement of the research objective and in depth investigation of the case, your response has great value. Hence, you are kindly requested to answer the questions carefully and freely. In the meantime I would like to assure you the interview is only used for the subject research purpose only.<sup>49</sup>

### **Demographic background of the Interviewer**

1. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Educational level: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

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Causes to engage in the street vending

1. Did you remember the first moment how you engaged in street vending? If yes, could You please tell the moment including but not limited to:

a. How and why you did you decided to engage in the sector?

b. What was your financial source and initial capital?

c. please also share how you conducted street vending during the first few months?

2. Before engaging in this sector, what was your background with respect to academics, business and trade?

3. In your opinion, what are the basic reasons to engage in street vending?

4. Mostly what kind of customers do you have? And how do you manage them? How do you characterize their buying behavior? Quantity per person, frequent buyers? One time buyers? When do your most sales happen?

5. How do you source your merchandize for street vending?

6. Are customer satisfied in you service or product you delivered and how you are trying to attract them.

7. Are you satisfied in your current business?

8. What is your next plan in this sector or transforming to others?

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9. What are the basic lessons you have taken from the current sector?

10. Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? What do you plan to do?

Economic significances

11. How long have you stayed in the sector? Staying in the sector lead you to keep in the sector or force you to think to leave the sector?

12. How much income do you get per day on average?

13. Is the amount of the income you generate from the street vender enough for your living expenses? or do you have other source of income?

14. How do you foresee your saving pattern and your future expectations?

15. How much expense do you incur per month on average? What is your main expanse?

16. What is your future plan regarding street vending? You want to continue or to change to the formal sector?

17. If you have any remark to add?

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### Social significance of street vending

18. does your family attitude towards you changed after you engaged in street vending activities?

19. does your social relation weaken or strengthen after you engaged in the sector and what was your social relation before you engaged in the sector?

20. what do you feel when you compare your friends who have high life status with your current life status?

### Challenges in the street vending<sup>52</sup>

21. What are the basic pulling factors (either positive or negative) to engage in the sector?

22. Could you please to clarify your relations with other competitors, and other stakeholders including government bodies?

23. from where mostly you have got the products to sell? And variability of items seasonally? Why?

24. Could you please to mention the supply chain between your supplier and you?

25. How is the flow of your business from day to day?

26. What advantage you got by engaging in the sector?

27. What disadvantages of engaging in street vending for you?

### Appendix II

#### Key informant interview

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28.How the government (wolkite administration) treat the street vendors?

29.what is the government (wolkite administration) attitude towards informal trading specially street vending?

30.does the customers of street vending are satisfied by the street vending trading or not? And how?

*Thank you so much for your time and have a nice work wish you the best in the future.53*

## Appendix II

**Table 1 Socio Demographic profile of in-depth interview participants from Girar Kebele.**

**Source:- Own interview (March2023 –April 2023).**

Code of informants	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Educational level	work	Date of interview
V-1	F	25	Married	Illiterate	Street vendor	12 March. 2023
V-2	F	23	Never Married	Grade 12	Street vendor	12 March. 2023
V-3	F	26	Married	Illiterate	Street vendor	12 March. 2023
V-4	F	25	Married	Illiterate	Street vendor	12 March. 2023
V-5	F	22	Married	Grade 8	Street vendor	12 March. 2023
V-6	F	23	Never Married	Grade 12	Street vendor	12 March. 2023
V-7	F	20	Never Married	Grade 10	Street vendor	12 March.2023
V-8.	F	18	Never Married	Grade 10	Street vendor	07 April.2023
V-9	F	16	Never Married	Grade-12	Street vendor	07 April.2023
V-10	F	22	Married	Grade-7	Street vendor	07 April.2023
V-11	F	20	Married	Grade- 3	Street vendor	07 April.2023
V-12	F	24	Married	Grade-7	Street vendor	07 April.2023
V-13	F	25	Married	Illiterate	Street vendor	07 April.2023
V-14	F	25	Married	Illiterate	Street vendor	07 April.2023

V-15	F	22	Never Married	Grade 11	Street vendor	07 April.2023
V-17	F	17	Never	Grade-10	Street vendor	07 April.2023

**NB:**V stands for street vendor

**Table 2 profile of key informant interviewees from wolkite trade and industry office**

**Source:- Own interview (April.2023).**

<b>Code of informants</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Educational level</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>
V-1	M	42	Married	Masters in business	Trade and human Resource expert	12 April. 2023
V-2	M	32	Married	BSC Degree	Social planner	12 April. 2023

**NB:** KI stands for Key informant