



# Wolkite University

*We Strive for Wisdom!*

An Assessment of Survival Strategies and Situation of Beggars: In Case  
of Wolkite Town.

Prepared By:-Aklilu Petros

Wolkite University

College of Social Science and Humanities

Department of Sociology

Advisor: Kassahun Dejene (MA)

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## Declaration

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By Aklilu Petros

Approved by board examiners

Chairman of the department \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

External examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper assesses the phenomena of the survival strategies and situation of beggars in Wolkite town. In the absence of any means of livelihood, many people were driven to begging; some temporarily, some were permanently. Within this research, the researchers use qualitative research approach and cross sectional research design in order to reach the data. Today as a result, begging became means of livelihood in urban area for hundreds of the people in Wolkite town; it is one of the most readily visible social problems especially in the ceremonial days of the Ethiopian Orthodox religious Church. Like most of the socioeconomic problems begging are one of the social problems and we have no much knowledge on this dimensions; little has been done on the problem of the beggary. In Wolkite, similar with other towns of the country (Ethiopia), beggars with different survival strategies and existence of large number of beggars is much more available or experienced. Beggars are engaged in such like activities because of economic and social problems of factors. Beggars are given the lowest statuses in the social system in the world in general and in Wolkite town in particular. They suffer from challenges that threaten their life while they are begging, they face another challenges like expose to sunstroke, wind blow, rain strike, ostracism, stigmatization. And the future aspiration of beggars is different from beggars t beggars and most beggars need of vocational workshop areas, as well as especially mothers need their children to be safe by government and NGOs. In generally, the researchers interested to recommend that any organized committee with NGO's should assist those who destitute and should establish remedies for their problems.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

FGD-----Focus Group Discussion

MOLSA -----Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

NGO-----Non-Governmental Organization

GZBFED-----Gurage Zone Bureau of Finance and Economic Development

MDG-----Millennium Development Goals

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Begging is an act of asking alms that is essential for survival, for solving temporary problem for fulfilling some cultural and religious sentiment (MOLSA 1992:2). Begging is become a worldwide phenomenon. There is no clear kept record which briefly indicated the historical development of begging over the time and across different parts of the world. However, according to the study conducted MOLSA, little was known as about begging in ancient societies. The disturbance and breaking of the existing social support system due to socio economic disorganization and other changes in diverse place and time opened the door for the begging. For example the black death of medieval Europe, industrial revolution, the crusades and other changes distinguished the existing a social support system as a result of these significant number of people pushed into the diverse social problems like begging, homelessness....etc. (MOLSA1992:4).

According to Mortimer (2005) begging is asking for money, food, shelter, or other things from people they encounter by request without an exchange of service public place. The phenomena of begging have emerged in association with private property and there is no accurate estimating of the number of beggars in the world wide and estimate varies from one source to another (Tsegaynesh 2004).

According to Henderson cited in Wubishet (2003:4) people in different vulnerable categories such as ,those who are affected by warfare ,flood, aged ,blind ,hand caped and other suffering in destitute ,choose different portfolios' of the strategies. Having no alternative means of survival, many of these vulnerable destitute turn to begging on the streets ,around churches, or mosques compounds ,at traffic lights , around commercial areas , and rely on the traditional generosity , rooted in the Ethiopian culture(Mulat2002;10). Now a day, majority of beggars live in urban areas as the developing world (Jelili, 2013).The large number of population involved in begging the heavier the burden on working population involved and lesser the usage of human resource for constructive human development; begging has become a main stay for a quite large section of the population (Action aid report 2000).

Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger is one of the eight pillars of millennium development goals (MDGs) and Ethiopia is mobilizing resources and efforts towards the achievements of this goals. However, the problems of begging is the threatening the achievements of the MDGs (Fitsum 2009:15). Begging on the street has a long history in Ethiopia. Now a day, it has been considered as a good business (work) or alternatives means of survival. Due to this, a huge number of beggars are being engaged in the practice as a means of livelihood and cities and towns are a place where such practice is observed (MOLSA cited in Fitsum 2009:15).

It is believed that Ethiopian populations were interested in charity practice in order to obey the order of God, so that what to enter heaven, but this charity practice also contributes for the expression of begging practice (Wubishet 2003). Begging and the problem associated with begging are common in Wolkite like many parts of Ethiopian towns.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

Nowadays, in cities, and particularly in Addis Ababa and even in every towns in Ethiopia, poverty and the societal changes resulting from urbanization have produced pressing social problem of which begging is the most serious and visible one(Solomon 1993). As such, begging is the most serious and almost unnoticed social events and problems have become the means of livelihood for a large number of peoples. It is a common and day to day experience for us to observe beggars of different sorts of roaming around the street, the major church environment and etc.

According to Demewozu (2003), the beggary problem has a lot to do with country socio economic and historical aspect characterized by low incomes, high unemployment rates, fast population growth, high rising cost of living, in appropriate public policies and etc. The problem of beggars is characterized by many problems like sleeping on road, sun strike, sleeping on veranda, eating inadequate foods and many more problems.

For Wubishet (2003), begging as survival strategy cantering with at the ceremonial day in Addis Ababa. He conducted study on begging by focusing on the contexts of the ceremonial days of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the number of beggars increased during the Ethiopian orthodox

ceremonial days. All categories of beggars from all walks of life and corners of the city show up and present themselves in the ceremonial days. Most of the research was conducted, where explaining external factors, which leads them (beggars) in order to engage in begging rather than internal factors of beggars themselves. For instance, Tesfaye Shiferaw, in 2012 conducted the research on life situation of street children. However, the problem of begging, which is affecting quite a large number of people, has never been studied deeply in previous research.

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

Fitsum (2009) conducted on the life experience style of street beggars by considering it as a means of livelihood for elders, children and youngsters who are found actively engaged in Shashemene town. Wubishet (2003) conducted study on begging as survival strategy cantering with at ceremonial day in Addis Ababa. He conducted study on begging stated that, in the context of religious ceremonial days are the most conducive for social researchers or ethnographers to obtain a full ethnographic insight on it. Unlike ordinary days, the ceremonial days seems the most cherished, looked forward and dreamt about the beggars. Hence, the study was undertaken in the contexts of the ceremonial days of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the number of beggars increased during the Ethiopian orthodox days. However the increment of beggars in any towns and cities increased not only due to the orthodox religious ceremonial days but also increasing at alarming rate due to different reasons. Many of the previous study conducted on differing age and sex groups of the beggars and, Wubishet (2003) conducted the research on the increment of beggars only on Ethiopian Orthodox religious ceremonial days. So my study was interested to see beggars at everyday life style and day to day increment of beggars rather than focusing on only the increment beggars at Orthodox ceremonial days and all level of age and sex group and my title survival strategies and situation of beggars is also the gap between previous research and my study.

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

### **1.3.1 General objectives**

The overall objectives of this study was to identify the survival strategies and situation of beggars in the case of Wolkite town.

### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

- To identify the current situation and future aspirations of beggars.
- To describe the strategies employed by beggars.
- To examine the challenges and the way to relieve from the risks.

## **1.4 Research Question**

What are the current situation and future aspirations of beggars?

What are the strategies employed by beggars?

How they can relieve from the challenge and risk?

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

Since begging is concerned as one social problem in current time; the study will help to promote the people awareness about the situation or to react to this social problem for those interested in and concerned with the issue. And it also a base for other research to conduct their study on this issue (begging) i.e. it will be used as a secondary data for other researcher. In generally, the significance this study is to make visible facts about the life ways and world of beggars and it provides available information about the survival strategies of beggars.

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

Begging and the problem associated with it; is common in many parts of Ethiopia in general and Wolkite town in particular. However, the study was only limited to Wolkite

town due to the existence of the large number of beggars and different strategies they employed in order to win the charity of people in the town.

### **1.7 Limitation of the study**

During the study period, the researchers faced many problems like:

Lack of man power during the data collection process.

The research did not done in well-developed manner due to the time constraints or limitation of time.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. REVIEW LITERATURE

#### 2.1. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITION OF BEGGING

Begging in the streets of urban areas is one of the age long activities and perhaps occupation of the highly vulnerable, poverty ridden individuals in the society of both developed and developing countries. Although the problems of begging is a worldwide phenomenon, and is more pronounced in developing countries (Jelili 2013; Namwata .et al. 2012). According to Lynch (2005) an average of ten people is likely to beg daily.

Qudiz (2005) cited in Gloria and Samuel (2012) noted that an estimated 850 million people are hungry while two billion suffer from mineral or protein deficiencies. In view of this, it was projected that by the year 2030 there will be food related tension with the most vulnerable countries being near and Middle East. Mortimer (2005) asserts that the consequences of begging includes sexual harassment of female beggars, being driven from one location to another, exposure to raw weather ,fear of being captured for sacrifice are reported by the subject themselves. Eyo and Usoro (2007) cited in Yusuf et al (2012) viewed street begging as a national malady that eat into the fabrics of social, economic, religious, political and educational structures.

These results to sexual assault by the prospective male benefactors, misfortune of Being knocked down by passing vehicles, depreciation of societal images, disorder lines And stigma against the nation's social and economic system.

#### 2.2 Causes, categories and lives of beggars

Begging is generally viewed as an activity emanated from poverty and destitution. It is practiced to obtain from other which one is unable to get by one self out of misery and prosperity. The encyclopedia of social work in India (1968:47) viewed beggars as a mobile charity seeker who could easily be noticed by the way they live and earn money easily for survival and most of who are homeless and live in the way they live the open in the impoverished huts. The definition of beggars as given European vagrancy act is quoted encyclopedia of social work in India (1986:49) and read as “a beggars means any person of European extraction fund asking for alms in a threaten on insolent manner or counting to ask for alms of any person after he has been required to desist in his book entitled the” sociology of homeless man.

The conditions and motives that makes people homeless in general and beggars in particular may be classified in to five main heads, (1) unemployment and seasonal worker, (2) the misfit of the industry, when the due to physical hand and cap ,mental deficiency, occupational disease, or lack of vocation, (3) difficulty of personality as feeble mindedness ,constitution inferiority or egocentricity ,child head to conflict of the person with constituted authority in the industry ,society and government ,(4)crisis in the personal as family conflict, misconduct and crime ,which evil a man from home and community and detached him from normal social ties ,(5) racial or national discrimination where race, nationality or social class of the person enter as a factor of adverse selection for the employment.

Accordingly, the following conclusion were reading with explain local fact regarding to the beggars problems and lives of beggars.1 a large number of beggars are migrant who come to Gondar seeking better lives and the majority have very low educational and employment studies,2 most of beggars came from the northern regions, which are affected by manmade disasters, 3 high proportion of beggars resort to begging owing in economic and socio political situation which include escalating in order to supplement their income are engage in marginalized job, 4 family distribution through death, divorce or unknown reason contribution to child begging. In aim to give some clue the measures required to control the problem, Encyclopedia of social work in India classified beggars in to the following categories: Those who beg because they cannot work on account of old age. Those who beg because they are permanently disabled or infirm or chronically ill or otherwise handicapped (including child beg because they are physically or mentally handicapped or are destitute or are without proper guardianship.

Those who though able bodied beg because of unemployment or underemployment or earn livelihood by easy means. In similar way, Anderson (1901:102) divided beggars types in to the able bodied and the non-able bodied. The non- able bodied beggars are more numerous in the cities. They are forced because of their handicaps, to remain where the greater numbers of people are. Some handicapped beggars however, are able to travel with marvelous speed over the country. Anderson (1961:102) goes by names according to their afflictions.

**Peggy**-is a one legged man.

**Stump**-is a legless man.

**Swingy**-is a man with one or both arms off.

**Blind**-is a man with one or both eyes are defected.

**A dummy**-is a man who is dumb or deaf and dumb.

Some of these types do not beg. They make livelihood by peddling or working at odd job.

The large number of beggars is lives on the charity of citizens. Some of the beggars or indigent persons are taken care of in institution, but this number of negligible as would appear from the review of the homes and services established to help the beggars. A large number of beggars are illiterate but there are some who received primary and even secondary education. The methods they employ while begging are plain appeal, singing, and dancing, exposing the sores...etc. Most of the expenditure they incur is on food, smoking and entertainment and intoxicating drugs.

### ***2.3 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF BEGGING IN INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES***

#### ***2.3.1 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE***

There is no clear kept record which briefly indicated the historical development of begging over the time and across different parts of the world. However, according to the study conducted MOLSA, little was known as about begging in ancient societies. The disturbance and breaking of the existing social support system due to socio economic disorganization and other changes in diverse place and time opened the door for the begging. For example the black death of medieval Europe, industrial revolution, the crusades and other changes distinguished the existing a social support system as a result of these significant number of people pushed into the diverse social problems like begging, homelessness....etc. (MOLSA1992:4).

According to Adebibu and Jelili (2011) and Okoli (2009) argued that some governments in Africa have made effort to tackle the problem of begging by force full evacuation of the beggars

from the urban area than they appear. This is because the force full evacuation only shifts or redistributes the begging activity among urban areas, but never addresses the reason why they decide to resort to begging and most importantly, what to be done to get those leaves the street. On the other hand, Gloria and Samuel (2012) argued that in countries where begging has been banned, beggars risk imprisonment for a year, for first offenders or two years for a second or subsequent offence. Religion is an important aspect that shapes the ways in which begging is embedded and contextualized. The perspectives of alms giving in Christian congregation took the role for the spread of the begging, particularly from the end of ancient period. The developing nation, socio economic nation condition characterized by low level of productivity, high level rates of population growth and dependency burden, and high rising level of unemployment and under employment. These socio economic conditions exacerbated the already existed number of beggars in the developing countries (MOLSA1992:5-6).

### **2.3.2 Begging in Africa**

In almost all countries in Africa, the practice of begging is highly experienced and increasing time to time. For instance, begging in Ghana in general and Timale in particular is largely regulated and influenced by social norms and values rooted in religion and culture. Like many phenomena embedded in social norms and values, begging as it manifested in Timale is multifaceted. In Ghana, begging is recognized and caste as a problem by the state as reflected in the legal frame work of the country.

However, at the societal level; though generally perceived to be devaluing, stigmatizing and unacceptable, begging is permissible at least for some groups of people. It is seen as a legitimate activity for the most vulnerable largely the disabled. Various kinds of people are engaged in begging on the street and in the neighborhoods of the Metropolis for varying reasons and rationales. Those who give alms and those who seek for alms are guided by certain key norms and values rooted in religion and culture. Thus, by law, it is illegal but on the ground; it is justified and legitimized by cultural and religious belief of the people (Gloria and Samuel, 2012).

Largely a Muslim society, the conduct and behavior of the people of Temale are very large extent regulated by Islamic values and moral ethos as the findings of the research revealed.

Islamic principle forbids people to beg. Goods and pious Muslims are encouraged to strive and work hard to obtain their means of livelihoods, but at the sometime, they are encouraged to give the needy and poor in order to attain religious piety. Traditional cultural norms and belief system also contribute to the way of begging is observed and practiced in Temale. For instance, apart from majority of the disabled and very few non-disabled aged who generally justify their reasons to begging on the basis of Islamic teaching on alms giving, others (particularly mothers of twins) engage in the activity as a result of belief system embedded in tradition and culture. The mothers with twins are on the street begging because; they believe that the twins want to be used to beg. For many families twins are special creatures whose desire and wishes must be meet else misfortunes will be fall the family. So on many occasions, when these children's are born and usually fall sick, consultations with traditionalists or spiritual leaders may reveal that they want the mother to send them out to the street to beg. The mother has to oblige otherwise they may not heal or may even cause lots of misfortunes in the family (MOLSA. 1992:P.2).

### ***2.3.3 BEGGING IN CONTEMPORARY ETHIOPIA***

Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger is one of the eight pillars of millennium development goals (MDGs) and Ethiopia is mobilizing resources and efforts towards the achievements of this goals. However, the problems of begging is the threatening the achievements of the MDGs (Fitsum 2009:15). Begging on the street has a long history in Ethiopia. Now a day, it has been considered as a good business (work) or alternatives means of survival. Due to this, a huge number of beggars are being engaged in the practice as a means of livelihood and cities and towns are a place where such practice is observed (MOLSA cited in Fitsum 2009:15). There is no evidence kept which could tell us about the actual starting day of begging in Ethiopia. However, a clue from the information found from oral report about the reality of begging in the country for many years around religious institution (MOLSA 1992:6). The first factor is the outbreak of huge disaster which dismissed and properties of many people through the country, this is locally known as “yehidar beshita” which means pandemics of November. The second is during the late nineteenth century and the third was the time right after the war between Italian invaders and Ethiopia. The combination of these three factors cost the lives and properties of many Ethiopian beggars for a long period of time.

## **2.4 PRECIPITATING FACTORS OF BEGGING**

There are several resources of begging. According to Kennedy and Fitzpatrick(2001), the first reason for those who engaged in begging was,(a) failure of the benefit welfare service,(b) route in to begging is harsh street living condition pushing street people towards begging,(c) inability to sustain life as a result of disability in physical condition of absence of social security benefit, they need to make extra earning through begging,(d) the collapse of small scale business,(e) negative effects of urbanization due internal migration and displacement,(f) due to unemployment and under employment and so on.

### **2.4.1 Informal or traditional way of giving charity**

People are giving fractions of money or their kind of alms informally to beggars, when they are asked to help. But, such type of informal charity will causes to increase the number of beggars who need for help rather than improving their life concerning to the idea (Tsegaynesh, 2004). Tewodros (1995:62) argues that giving alms is one of the basic principles and Christianity teaching but this way of giving alms for beggars selfdoms and adequate answer to the problem of needed and the diss.

Summary and generally, begging is closely also cited with religious believe and has a long history of existence. It is woman social problem which arises has a result of multi-dimensional factor related with woman economic and the socio demographic life

## **2.5 Conceptual framework**

There are so many things that come to my mind when I see or hear the world of begging and many beggars faced to different problems and had different living styles and situation. Its definition varies with regard to the types and the purposes of begging because all beggars do not use the same methods in order to win the heart of peoples or passerbies and they do not engage in to begging for the same purposes. Someday for asking alms or gifts that is essential for survival, for solving temporary problem and for fulfilling some cultural and religious sentiments (MOLSA1992:2)

In developing countries, the problem of begging has temporary existence and for fulfilling some economic problem associated with the problems of homelessness and related with the Sociology of Homelessness (Anderson1961).

## **2.6 THEORETICAL FRAME WORK**

### **2.6.1 Social Dominance Theory.**

Research conducted by psychologists and sociologists revealed that, human beings could not have an equal power, status, role, privilege, and resources due to social stratification existed and will persist over a generation and it is an inevitable social phenomenon as far as human beings exist in this world. Because of the above-listed social classification or difference, individuals might enjoy power, prestige, and wealth based on some of their individual traits such as intelligence, luck, or family inheritance and conversely others fully dominate the power and resources to the largest extent. As a result of this, they were treated unequally and discriminated based on races, ethnic group and other social categories by the dominant and powerful groups.

Therefore, according to the social dominance theory, individuals who have less power limited power considered as useless and perceive themselves unequal as well as the dominant and more authoritative individuals can dominate, differentiate, ignore, disregard, prejudice and alienate those with limited or no power and resources. People with this kind problem are exposed move and migrate into their adjacent environment. Thus, their chance could be to make living through involving in different activities such as porters, security guards, messengers, lottery vendors, commercial sex works, beggary and other odd jobs (GutKind, P.1974, cited in Teweldeberhan, 2011p.12).

### **2.6.2 Theory of Reasoned Action /Planned Behavior**

Theory of reasoned action pioneers suggested that "attitudes could explain human actions" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 13). Attitudes were viewed as complex systems made up of the person's beliefs about the object, his feelings toward the object, and his action tendencies with respect to the object. According to the theory of planned behavior individuals behavior is quite rational and makes systematic use of information available to them. Accordingly, individuals consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not engage in a given behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980 at cited Bright, 1993). The decision is then reflected in the behavioral intentions, which strongly influence overt behavior Ajzen, & Fishbein, Ajzen, (Bright, 1993).

Most of social psychologists assumed that human behavior is goal directed or oriented. Individuals are rational and act things by assuming to maximize their wellbeing and pre arranging the constraints according to the economist's point of view, and reasoned action is the same with the rational choice theory in explaining such behaviour. In terms of income earning behavior, we believe individuals to select the occupation that capitalize their happiness among the ones of which they are capable. Therefore, to understand why a person picks a particular occupation, such as begging, one must know which job characteristics are preferred and what factors constrain job choice (Smith, 2005).

### **2.6.3 Social Exchange Theory**

According to this theory, people tend to enter in a relationship if they believe that they will get some reward or benefit that matches with what they do. People engaged in interactions are rationally seeking to maximize the profits or benefits to be gained from those situations, especially in terms of meeting basic individual needs. This theory also described human relation as a mental book keeping that has a ledger of cost and benefit where people demonstrate their tendency to maximize profit and minimize cost.

Similarly, social exchange theory emphasizes a social rule known as reciprocity that orders everyone to help those who helped him/her i.e. scratch my back and I will scratch yours/eye to eye. Therefore, beggars acknowledge, respect, appreciate, and recognize the alms givers to contribute a certain gift as the expense of their psychological makeup (degrading themselves). Finally, the alms givers will expect that we will become elegance in the dreamland and would be salivated for their contributions. This theory of social exchange is a kind of reciprocating and scratching their backs between the beggars and the alms givers in their every day activities.

### **2.6.4 Social Learning Theory**

According to this theory people can learn new information and behaviors by watching other people (Bandura 1977). Human beings learn behavior through interacting with others in a social context. According to social learning theory, people imitate others behavior and involves in performing the actual observed activities. In addition, people also will copy the behavior from their models (Bandura 1977). Therefore, people learn their action, feeling, and attitude and in

general their behavior through imitating, observing and modeling when others are reinforced/strengthened or punished/penalized especially if their observational experiences are positive ones.

Therefore, behavior is goal oriented due to this; people will act and behave by regulating their behavior. In addition to this reward and punishment may affect a behavior directly and indirectly due to this people will be subjected to do different things by their own choices, skills, and abilities through observing their losses and benefits to reduce social, political, economic, environmental and other problems that they were faced. Therefore individuals will participate in begging practice to reduce the above social problems and the cause for begging according to social learning theory (Nabavi, 2012).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA**

Wolkite town is located In southern nation nationalities and peoples region, gurage zone wolkite town at a distance of 155 kilo meters far from north of Addis Ababa and 430 kilometers from hawassa the regional capital city.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The research was designed to make an assessment of the survival strategies and situation of beggars in Wolkite town. To this end a qualitative research approach was used since the study which tries to document the situation of beggars who pursue begging as a way of life in descriptive manner.

#### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design employed in this research was used cross sectional study, because cross sectional study involves observation of the sample made at one point in time. The reason for using this method is that there was a time constraint and it is also difficulty to find beggars at the same place at all the time.

#### **3.4 SOURCE OF DATA**

Both the primary and secondary data source was used in this study.

##### **3.4.1 PRIMARY SOURCE**

The primary data gathered directly from the informants those who are beggar in Wolkite town by using, focus group discussion, interview and personal observation data gathering tools.

##### **3.4.2 SECONDARY SOURCE**

Secondary source of data includes books, magazines and other document that are related to research area.

### ***3.5 SAMPLING STRATEGY AND PROCEDURE***

The techniques of accessing the research participants, purposive sampling were used. The reason for using purposive sampling techniques is that the study is interested to select those who have ability to express and inform without frustration from the informants and it allowed for the flexibility of reaching out to them when compared it with other sampling techniques.

### ***3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS***

To obtain relevant and adequate information from the informants, the following data collection instrument have used.

#### ***3.6.1 INTERVIEW***

Semi structured interview or one to one guide was used to collect the relevant information, the guiding interview question was open ended question with selective respondents who are bagger in the Wolkite town.

#### ***3.6.2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION***

By using this method, I was conducted two FGD with homogeneous informants they are male and female informant. The study conduct first FGD, was held with male informants and the second FGD was held with female informants who are beggars in the Wolkite town. The respondents selected to FGD are randomly selected from the respondents found in Wolkite town.

#### ***3.6.3. OBSERVATION***

The study was used non-participant observation to collect the relevant data, because the study wants some observational experience. And the study was used to describe the strategy they use and general living condition of beggars and also the way and the house they live through personal observation.

### ***3.7 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS***

In this study the thematic data analysis was employed, because the data that obtained through interview, FGD and observation was analyzed by qualitative analysis.

### ***3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION***

The researcher was taking into consideration to protect the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents by voluntary consent and informing participant about over all purpose of the research. Interview, focus group discussion and personal observation was not be intentionally pressure to reveal private or personal details and also the researcher was take care not reveal the identity of individual implicate in research without their permission and treat research participants fairly and show them respect.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Seven able body beggars with the age range between 26-54 years who were purposively selected to participate in study area through prearranged inclusion criteria and comes from different woredas of Gurage zone, SNNPRS and lived at rented house in Wolkite town. Three respondents are male and four respondents are female. This shouldn't be said that female beggars are greater than male in the study since the participants of study were selected purposively.

Considering the religious of beggars in Wolkite town most of them are Muslim and Orthodox Christianity followers which is consistent with the background of original home place of population. According to the marital status of the respondents more than half of the respondents were married, one of them is single and one participant was widowed. Half of the participants had no formal education and three participants can read and write. Only one participant was completed grade 10, but unable to pass next class for the other educational opportunity. (Table 1)

Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics of the respondents

Participant	Sex	Age	Marital status	Religious Status	Educational level	Ethnic background
Alemayehu	M	37	Married	Orthodox	No formal education	Gurage
Fetiha	F	29	Married	Muslim	4	Gurage
Alawiya	F	32	Married	Muslim	Un educated	Gurage
Yeshiwork	F	26	Single	Orthodox	10	Gurage
Yirgalem	M	50	Married	Catholic	No formal education	Gurage
Leyla	F	41	Widowed	Muslim	4	Gurage

Alebachew	M	54	Married	Orthodox	No formal education	Gurage
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#### **4.2 CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS OF BEGGARS**

Most beggars have future aspiration and place even though their aspirations vary from beggars to beggars. On this respect, with the exception of the very old, those with disability who want to continue in life of begging until their death; but others have future plan to lead normal life. As such there are beggars that who think of going back to continue their past lives as farmer or involve themselves in some other activities, the others who is thinking of about to start a minimum business like cleaning shop, some other beggars have thinking to go back to their original birth place. But other beggars are pessimistic and who old negative image about their future life. According to them, they are deciding to live in their current situation until their death. Some beggars on personal interview said that, we will prefer death for the future unless the government or nongovernmental organization will not intervene in our problems.

And one female 32 aged informant said that:

*“If I get care givers for myself and my children, I will stop this activity (begging) immediately”.*

One male informant also said that:

*“If I were rich, I would help or assist those destitute groups or impoverished and beggary people rather than building villas”.* As the research tried to see and understand about the future aspiration of beggars, most of them are pessimistic against begging and want to lead normal life.

*Most of the situations, in the beggars community level do not appears not much as a way for revising the distance goal and values of what is called sub culture and conforming to it model, but rather goals and values of large society . As there was tried to achieve many of the goals and values of the large society as best as they can.*

**4.3 STRATEGIES THAT BEGGARS USE TO WIN THE CHARITY OF PEOPLE**

Beggar’s use a number of strategies so as to make others to them favor or in order to get some attention for charity. The researchers have seen beggars who do something to get the attention of others like that of wearing dirty clothes. The culture of beggars is more dominantly and vividly seen in the strategies that beggars use to win charity of the mass. Beggars in the field order to solicit, they use skill, symbols, humble languages, materials and many kinds of arts.

Beggars use many strategies to win or get attention of possible alms givers. A beggar with severe poverty, wears torn apart cloth with some kind of disability show or exhibit his/ her disabled part of the body, especially women with many children and unable to feed them, carries her children saying that, she couldn’t afford to grow up the children; whether an individual is really poor or not, this is what should be done to gain some kinds of gift.

Beggars are aware of whom to ask for help, when to ask for and how to ask pother help and all their strategies are beggars use in order for earning alms. As indicated in Wubishet (2003:76-77), there are beggars who present themselves in a fake away; for instance, tactically acting as hurt or disabled while doing begging. Other presents themselves wearing old and dirty cloth so as to capture attention of passerby. The logic behind this is no stretch out his/her hands for help for those who dressed well unless they have some observable problems. There are also some beggars who beg with their children, especially women’s, which is the focus of this study, just to win sympathy of potential donors. Some others, especially physical challenged or disabled beggars, found singing song that can attract the ears of the passerby while they are presenting themselves for public. By observing different places in Wolkite town, the researchers tried to summarize the strategies that the beggars employed and used to win the charity of people in the following table.

Table1, Shows the strategies that beggars use to win the charity of the alms givers.

No.	Nature of beggars	Places of begging in Wolkite town	Strategies that beggars used to win the charity of alms givers
1	Elders(old aged)	-Street	-Wearing Poor clothes

		-Near Church  Around church <i>st. gebrel</i>	-Telling their life experiences  -Calling the name of God(saints)
2	Displaced	-Street  -Near the gate of hotels and restaurants  -Near hotel	-Wearing poor clothes  -Poorly wearing unclean and unattractive face seems like mental ill  -Seems look like sick
3	Visually impaired(blind)	-Near Church  -street	-Humbly explaining about the significances of eye  -Poor clothing  -Calling the name of God
4	Disabled(handicapped)	-Near church  -Around street  -Around church <i>st. gebrel</i>	-Poor cloth for on telling I cannot prepare my livelihood because of my hand capped
5	Orphan	-Around market place  -Street  -Near gates of hotels and restaurants  -Near Churches	-Humbly approaches  -Respecting words  -Poor clothing
6	Mother with children	-Street  -Near gates of hotels and	-Poor clothing  -Telling words by “calling the name of God or saints for the

		restaurants  -Around Church ( <i>st. gebrel</i> )	mother of God, Marry
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(Survey, 2020)

#### ***4.4 MAJOR CAUSES FOR BEGGING AS A MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD***

Now days, the beggars’ problem seem to be grave and severe in urban areas of the country in general and in Wolkite in particular. In almost every major towns and cities as well as, men, women and children are observed engaging themselves in begging as way of life. Although, the root causes are complex and cannot be traced as only one cause. What the available literature reveals is that the beggary problem has a lot to do with the poverty situation in the country. This probing for the roots of the problem calls for understanding the poverty in the country at large. As such in the discussion of the major causes of begging in interview result is largely used to assess the different dimension of the beggar’s problems affecting different categories of poor and vulnerable people.

FGD results show that, some beggars are engages in begging as a livelihood because of their disability and some of them are caused by some factors like physical disability. Most became beggar due to poverty and lack of job opportunity or financial resource. As the data indicated that, most of them invoke their family history of poverty as a prerequisite for their engagement in such activity

Besides the major causes explained earlier, the informant’s identifies different problems like:

As one male informant aged 42 years said that:

*“I engaged in begging because I am old age and I cannot prepare my house hold, and I choose begging as a livelihood”.*

At this juncture the participant claimed that in their younger age, they were daily laborer and they had been afforded their livelihood by themselves. However, in their old age, they cannot engage in such work area. As a result they prefer begging for survival of their life. Furthermore of old beggars are engage in begging activity because of being helpless.

According to one male informant aged 43, from interview stated that:

*“Disability is major cause for my engagement in this shameful activity”*. As we know that, the term disability includes any types of individuals who are considered as incapable to do something by his/her capacity. In this study, disability had identified as one of the most influential factor that forced people to begging.

As one female informant aged 38, said that:

*“My main factor to come to begging is poverty”*. For instance, *since I have no any sufficient means to support myself and my families, I used begging as a means of getting alms*.

In addition the above major causes of begging, it is also caused by multiple factors of human life. As to the observations, researchers observe orphan children used begging as a means of livelihood and faced to several social problems and no one worries about them. They might be raped and infected by HIV/AIDS, as a result they will suffer both psychological and health problem, finally, they became beggars. In addition to this, begging also caused by family breakdown (divorce) and disagreement. As one informant who engaged in begging activity because of family disagreement and displaced to Wolkite town and he could not found a job, to this, he chooses begging as livelihood.

As explained on MOLSA (1992:62), there are different type of beggars who are believed to have existed and still continue to exist in Ethiopia; the first include, destitute , who ask for alms around Church, Mosques, public place and rural village. The second category includes the Orthodox religion students and professional beggars and third category includes priests who carry sacred pictures and asks charity for different reasons.

In generally, as the researchers have tried to see from our study, there are no any single causes for begging. Begging is caused by multiple factors like that of family disorganization through death, divorce, disagreement and /or other unknown reason. Contribution to child begging , large

number of beggars are came from local kebeles; beggars also engaged in begging because they face natural and human made accidents and being impaired.

For instance, among the informants, one male informant aged 52, said that:

*“The cause for my engagement in begging activity is accident; as he said, I am house constructor and one day I fell down while I was working, and I broke my leg, so now I cannot work as before and I am helpless and prefer begging as a means of life”.*

#### **4.5 BEGGARS’ PERCEPTION TOWARDS BEGGING**

Beggars whom in the focus group discussion reacted very much differently to the question what would there life be if nobody is willing to offer charity.

According to one male informant said that:

*“My livelihood is depending on begging unless anybody would not offer charity to me, and my chance will be death, so I would not found other way of surviving because I am handicapped”.*

According to FGD result, majority of beggars argued that there is no any chance of earning livelihood other than begging. But some mother beggars want to find other livelihood strategy, if they found any nongovernmental and governmental to help themselves and their children.

#### **4.6 ATTITUDES AND STATUSES OF BEGGARS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

According to informants, local people react to beggars in a number of ways; some welcome beggar’s with cloths, some with food and water. Beggars were given the lowest statuses in the local community of Wolkite town. Some people believe offering something the beggar make to get spiritual benefit. As the researchers have seen from personal observation, the amount of money that local people offers to the beggars depends on the beggars about seriousness of his

problem; majority of the local people offer beggars very much insignificant amount of money. Beggars are mostly being provided with money that range from *5cent to 1birr*, but the beggars only exhibit *5cent, 10 cent or 1birr notes*, they never exhibits the other amount of birr notes to the people. According to the FGD result shows that, they cover and hide the amount of birr which they earn from passerby because they think that if people see other amount of money, they deny giving any thing for us.

As researchers could observe and understand from the information in the focus group discussion again, local people used to keep exchange of one birr in their pocket to provide to the beggars. It is strange for the beggars to be provided with more than one birr. Local people providing clothes to beggars when they have apart cloth wear it for a long period of time. When the people provide food for beggars, they provide remains of food. Whatever kind of gift, given for the beggars, they are expected to give no response other than saying “God bless you” for what provided. What can we understand from these is that what people present to beggars show the value the people have for the beggars. One of the informants said that by his own word...

*“When I sit for begging on the street, many people are telling to me that, I can do other work and not to sit on this street, but they do not know my problem”*

#### **4.7 BEGGARS’ REACTION TO ALMS GIVERS AND GIFT GIVEN**

Based on the data gathered through personal observation, beggars react to alms givers to differently. In Wolkite town, beggars have a good gift give reaction to people whom they begin to extremes is seen reaction to the people whom they extremes with word of blessing, wave murmuring. Beggars are experts in offering blessing; the kinds of blessing may vary from beggar to beggar and place to place and the gifts given to them. Beggars around the gates of the churches, around taxi stations, around hotel gate offers blessing to gift given to them who provided some words they would like to say “God bless you”.

#### **4. 7 BEGGARS’ WAY OF RELIEVE RISK OR ACCIDENT HAPPENS**

The survival strategy and living condition of beggars in general is highly susceptible to various problems like sleeping on veranda, and eats leftover food. Beggars face many problems while begging. Many informants reported that they sleep in plastic made shelter or on veranda; they are

exposed to air borne diseases and malaria as well. Their existing situation, like poor housing condition ,contaminated foods they consume, dirty clothes they wear...etc., are easily exposed them to serious killing diseases. During the interview, one of the beggars said that, when one beggars get sick, they help each other. In generally, most beggars agreed that they put their faith on God to help them during the risky condition.

#### ***4.8 CHALLENGES THAT BEGGARS FACE WHILE BEGGING***

Beggars spend their time where many people should see or observe them. When they spend their time waiting for alms (gift), they face a number of challenges. Beggars faced the combination of challenges like stigmatize physical abuse, and marginalization, when they asking of alms. As researchers have asked, some beggars said that sometimes we faced to lack of any type of food, at that time we contribute some amount of money and buy a little food which is not enough as a food. The other kinds of challenges include sun strike, loss of food, and ... etc. In addition to these, beggars use to walk on bare foot, suffer from cold during rain time; but on the case of wearing, it is created either intentionally for attraction of alms giver or forced to be so.

#### ***4.9 SOCIAL PROBLEM OF BEGGING***

This study revealed that social problems is another and the most exhibited of begging they have been experienced and encountered as a result of conducting begging on the street. According to the respondent, begging leads to various social problems. They were mentioned that the existence and befallen with different social problems such as high competition with in beggars and they have been conflicted each other, limited social interaction between beggars and the low sense of community and discrimination in the area being begging. They were also out of social support network such as Edir, Teskar and the like. Most of the respondents also reported that they have encountered rejection and isolation from society they lived as a result of doing begging (Tewoldeberhan, 2011).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

#### 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Begging is social problem and it is not a recent phenomenon. Many people in our country especially in Wolkite town use begging as the survival strategy. This is reflect in any ways like almost all beggars, is disabling and visually impaired and some beggars have wounded and some are able bodied young who can work. Those able bodied beggars come to the town they find things difficulty and they become jobless and finally begun to begging. As a result Wolkite can be considered and known by having enormous existence of begging and situation of beggars are unable to get their own basic need like food, shelter and even clothes. Even though some beggars have had shelters or homes around the road, it is not appropriate done and living during especially rainy season is worsen or very difficult. The researchers cannot trace back single causes for begging practices because the cause of starting begging is different from beggars to beggars. Some start because of disability, some because of old age, some because of poverty, and some because of family break down or divorce and family disagreement. Beggars use different kinds of strategies in order to win charity from passerby in the town. They employed diverse techniques like humble language; for instance “ Abaye” meaning ‘my father’, “ Emaye” meaning ‘my mother’, “Wogenoche” meaning ‘my relatives’, .etc. presentation and exhibition of the problem they face, they use gestures of different kings select location for begging around church, hotels and bus station.

Some beggars are pessimistic about their future while others are optimistic about their future life. Especially older beggars with physical disability are optimistic about their future.

## ***5.2 RECOMMENDATION***

As the problem of begging is complex and interwoven with many other social problems rooted in the society, it needs integrated and coordinated action that should be brought, so as to heal the problem of begging in that reason the research wants to recommend.

The following recommendation has been forwarded based on the finding in order to eradicate or eliminate begging;

- Any organized bodies should create different opportunities and should encourage those people whose life is based on begging according to their capacity. Among opportunities, the government or organized bodies should create and provide different vocational training like, sewing, weaving, metal and wood work...etc.
- More organize committee effort should be made to eradicate the problem of begging by establishing NGOs and providing assistance to those people who are affected by different problems.
- Effort should be made to create social awareness to the public, about the impact of begging on society and on beggars themselves.
- Health care ministry should give health care service to the beggars.
- The food security sector with the government should extend safety net program and satisfy food
- security and should provide pension to aged individuals (beggars) who are unable to meet basic needs without any precondition for them (beggars) in order to escape from begging activities.
- In generally, the government should establish shelter (home) to those orphans, old aged and disabled people before they start this shameful activity.

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## Appendix

WOLKITE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**QUESTIONNAIRE: An assessment of survival strategies and situation of beggars: In Case of Wolkite town** Dear Sir/Madam I am a graduate student in the department of Sociology at Wolkite University. Currently, I am undertaking a research on “An Assessment of survival strategies and situation of beggars: Case of Wolkite town”. You are one of the respondents selected to participate in this study. Thus, I would kindly request you to answer these questions. Your honesty and kindness would be of great help in many aspects.

*NOTE*; - Information given here kept confidential and only used for the academic purpose

### **Part One: Socio demographic characteristics of the informants**

1. Sex: A. Male.....?                                      B. Female.....?
2. Marital status: A. Married                      B. Single                      C. Divorced                      D. Widow
3. Religious back ground: A. Orthodox                                      B. Muslim                                      C. Protestant  
D. Catholic              E. If other specify
4. Educational level: A. Uneducated                      B. Primary                      C. Secondary                      D. If  
other specify

5. Ethnic back ground: A. Gurage                      B. Oromo                      C. Wolayta                      D.  
Kembata                      E. If other specify

**Part Two: QUESTION FOR INTERVIEW**

1. In what mood do people are willing or voluntary to give alms for you?
2. How do you ask for alms and reacted toward alms giver \_\_\_\_\_?
3. What are the challenges associated with leading the life as a beggar \_\_\_\_\_?
4. How do you see your past life and the way you live with it \_\_\_\_\_?
5. How do you start the life of begging \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Do you participate in any societal affairs in the community that you live?

- A. Yes                      B. No

6.1 If your answer to question number 6 is no, why? -----

**Part Three: QUESTION FOR FGD**

1. What are factors or causes that pushing you to engage in this activity?
2. How you can relive from the challenges and the risk?
3. What are the strategies or techniques that you have used to get alms from the society?
4. Mention the social problems that you have developed because of begging?
5. During your stay in Wolkite, what benefits and challenges do you have encountered?

