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THE ROLE OF ETHIOPIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT:THE CASE OF CHEHA WOREDA,GURAGE  
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The Role of Ethiopian Catholic Church in Community Development: The Case  
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## **DECLARATION**

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

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## ACCRONYMS

CORAT	the Church Organization Research Advisory Trust
ECC-SDCO	Ethiopian Catholic church Social Development Coordination office.
EEA	the European Economic Area
EKHCDP	Ethiopian Kale Heywood Church Development Program
FBO	Fixed Base Operator
GTP	the Growth and Transformation Plan
MDGs	Millennium Development Goal
UNDP	United nation development program
NGO	Non-Governmental organization
NBS	The National Bureau of Statistics
TVET	Technical and vocational Education and Training
UNO	United nation organization
UNDP	United nation development program
EMCS	Emdeber Catholic Secretariat

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study examines the role of the Ethiopian Catholic Church (ECC) in community development in Cheha Woreda, Gurage Zone, Central Ethiopia Region. Despite rapid economic growth in Ethiopia, poverty remains a persistent issue, especially in rural areas. The research focuses on the church's contributions to education, healthcare, and social services, as well as the challenges it faces in executing its development initiatives. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ECC's impact. The study utilized a descriptive research design and a multi-stage sampling procedure, selecting four kebeles and 387 beneficiaries through simple random sampling. Interviews with key informants, including local government officials and ECC representatives, were also conducted. Data collection methods included surveys, observations, and interviews, with secondary data drawn from documents related to ECC activities and local government reports. Findings show that the ECC has significantly improved healthcare services, particularly in maternal and child health, and promoted gender equality in education. However, challenges such as financial sustainability, low community participation, and limited project accessibility were identified. A regression analysis revealed that financial, social, and environmental sustainability are crucial for project success. The study emphasizes the importance of community involvement in project planning and implementation to ensure sustainability and ownership. In conclusion, while the ECC has contributed positively to community development, increasing community participation, improving financial sustainability, and strengthening institutional capacity are necessary for enhancing the long-term impact of its development programs. The study provides recommendations to address these challenges and ensure continued success in the region.*

**Key word/phrase:** Catholic Church, Community Development, Megenasse, Participation, Sustainable Development

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background of the study

Poverty remains a global challenge, affecting both developed and developing countries. According to the World Bank (2019), poverty is particularly severe in developing regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where a significant proportion of the population struggles to meet basic needs. Ethiopia, as one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa, still faces persistent poverty challenges. Over 46% of the Ethiopian population lives in absolute poverty, earning less than \$2 per day (EEA, 2002). This problem is more pronounced in rural areas, where 85% of the population resides with limited access to essential services and infrastructure (Tefera, 2004). Urban poverty is also widespread, exacerbated by high unemployment rates and inadequate social services.

Over the years, successive Ethiopian administrations have attempted to improve community development through various policies and programs. The implementation of Growth and Transformation Plans (GTP1 and GTP2) demonstrated the government's commitment to economic and social progress. However, significant challenges persist, particularly in ensuring access to clean drinking water, quality healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Many rural communities still struggle with poor housing conditions, lack of infrastructure, and high levels of unemployment (World Bank, 2019).

Empirical studies on poverty and community development in Ethiopia highlight the importance of collaborative efforts between the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and religious institutions. For instance, Yimam (2018) noted that government interventions alone are insufficient in addressing poverty and that NGOs and faith-based organizations play a critical role in bridging developmental gaps. Similarly, Teshome (2021) emphasized that religious institutions, including the Ethiopian Catholic Church, have historically contributed to education, healthcare, and social welfare programs across the country. Studies by Abebe (2019) and Mengistu (2020) further confirm that

church-led initiatives have significantly improved literacy rates and healthcare accessibility in various rural regions of Ethiopia.

The concept of community development involves the active participation of local communities in identifying and solving their socio-economic challenges. The United Nations defines community development as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems." This broad concept encompasses civic engagement, social services, and economic empowerment aimed at fostering resilience within communities (UN, 2016). Studies by Ayele (2015) and Bekele (2017) highlight that sustainable community development in Ethiopia is most effective when it incorporates local participation and faith-based contributions.

Jim Ife (2010) identifies six key dimensions of community development: social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, and spiritual development. However, the practical application of these dimensions varies, particularly in regions where political and spiritual development is less tangible in measurable community development projects (Matarrita-Cascante, 2012). In Ethiopia, research by Alemu (2017) has shown that community development programs involving multiple stakeholders, including religious organizations, tend to be more effective in delivering social services and infrastructure.

The Ethiopian Catholic Church has played a significant role in community development, particularly in rural areas where government services are limited. The church operates at the grassroots level, making it well-positioned to address socio-economic challenges. As highlighted by Kioko (2020), faith-based organizations like the Catholic Church provide education, healthcare, and social welfare services, contributing to the well-being of local communities. Furthermore, the Daily Graphic (2009) underscores the indispensable role of the Catholic Church in regional development, particularly in Africa and Latin America, where it has historically supported social and economic transformation.

In the Central Ethiopia Region, specifically in Cheha Woreda of Gurage Zone, the Catholic Church has been actively involved in community development initiatives. These include the establishment of schools, healthcare facilities, and social welfare programs aimed at improving the quality of life for local residents. However, the church also faces challenges in its developmental efforts, including financial constraints, government regulations, and social perceptions regarding the role of religious institutions in development (Ayenew, 2020).

This study aims to examine the role of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in community development in Cheha Woreda, Gurage Zone. It will assess the church's contributions to education, healthcare, and social services while identifying the challenges it encounters in executing its development initiatives. By analyzing these aspects, the study seeks to highlight the significance of faith-based organizations in fostering sustainable development in Ethiopia.

## **1.2. Statements of the problem**

Community development contributes to social, economic, and political advancement and is essential to the nation's overall growth. Without the effective involvement of many stakeholders and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the nation cannot address the issue of sustainable community development. The Ethiopian Catholic Church plays a significant role in Ethiopia's community development by providing water, health care, and education, among other essential services.

Many researchers have attempted to investigate the role of the Catholic Church in community development, particularly in Ethiopia and other developing nations. For instance, Inicnger Chia Christopher (2021), Mwaura Pauline K. and Nzengya Daniel M., Tadele Yaekob (2018), Desalegn Lejio (2018), Kimakwa (2018), David Mwaura Karluki (2018), Nobal Mulugata (2020), and Aniefiok S. Ukommi, Unensi Lawrence Akoronkwo, and Otu A. Ekpenyong have studied various aspects of community development. These

studies demonstrate the complex nature of community development challenges. Empirical findings suggest that even within a single nation, there are regional variations in how community development is implemented, generalizing difficult.

According to Charlie Eke Nwekeaku et al. (2021), low-income families struggle to afford the Catholic Church's education and medical services due to cost constraints. The Catholic Church is involved in community development by constructing roads, providing potable water, healthcare, education, and assistance to underprivileged populations (Rachel Leinyuy Kahnyuy, 2017). However, concerns have been raised regarding the Catholic Church's role in community development, including the perception that service provision is inadequate, low community participation, and lack of project sustainability. These issues necessitate an assessment of the Catholic Church's contribution to community development.

Previous studies in Ethiopia have also highlighted several challenges related to community development facilitated by the Catholic Church. For instance, the sustainability of water supply projects may be negatively impacted by insufficient community involvement during the initial phases (Desalegn Lejibo, 2018). Additionally, literature on participatory development emphasizes the importance of involving communities in the planning and execution of development projects to empower individuals and drive positive change (Tadele Yaekob, 2018).

The variations in research locations and methodologies across different countries and regions make it challenging to generalize findings and develop comprehensive policy recommendations. There is a lack of research specifically focused on Cheha Woreda, which makes it difficult to design interventions that effectively enhance the Catholic Church's role in community development. Like other woredas, Cheha Woreda faces significant challenges in community development projects. However, government interventions lack empirical backing. Furthermore, there is limited information regarding the Catholic Church's community development initiatives in Cheha Woreda, and the existing literature may not be

entirely relevant due to the location-specific nature of the issues (Desalegn Lejibo, 2018). This knowledge gap necessitates further research.

Therefore, this study aims to provide an in-depth examination of the role of the Catholic Church in community development in Cheha Woreda, addressing the aforementioned knowledge gaps and offering practical recommendations for improving community development initiatives. By doing so, this research seeks to enhance and promote effective community development efforts in the region.

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

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

The general objective of the study is to assess the role of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in community development: The case of Cheha Woreda, Gurage Zone, Central Ethiopia Region.

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

Based on the general objective of the study and the research questions, this study will have the following specific objectives:

1. To critically examine the contribution of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in the social development sectors of education and health over the past five years.
2. To measure and evaluate the sustainability of development projects carried out by the Ethiopian Catholic Church over the past five years.
3. To assess the impact of the Ethiopian Catholic Church on enhancing the livelihoods of local community members over the past five years.
4. To quantitatively assess the level of community participation in initiatives of the Ethiopian Catholic Church within the project area over the past five years.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

This study aims to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the contributions of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in the social development sectors of education and health over the past five years?
2. To what extent are the development projects carried out by the Ethiopian Catholic Church sustainable over the past five years?
3. How has the Ethiopian Catholic Church contributed to enhancing the livelihoods of local community members over the past five years?
4. To what extent have local communities participated in the initiatives of the Ethiopian Catholic Church within the project area over the past five years?

#### **1.5. Scope of the study**

This study examines the role of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in community development within Cheha Woreda, located in the Gurage Zone of the Central Ethiopia Region. The scope of the research is defined in four key dimensions: geographical, thematic, temporal, and methodological. Geographically, the study focuses on Cheha Woreda, assessing the various community development initiatives undertaken by the Ethiopian Catholic Church in this specific area. Thematically, it explores the church's contributions to education, healthcare, livelihood enhancement, and community participation, evaluating the sustainability and overall impact of these interventions. Temporally, the study covers a five-year period from 2023 to 2024, providing an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness and long-term viability of church-led development projects within this timeframe. Methodologically, the research adopts a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Primary data will be gathered through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions involving community members, church officials, and relevant stakeholders. Additionally, secondary data will be obtained from relevant literature, official reports, and other documents pertaining to community development in Cheha Woreda. This

comprehensive approach ensures a holistic understanding of the Ethiopian Catholic Church's role in fostering sustainable development within the region.

### **1.6. Significance of the study**

The significance of this study lies in its potential to positively impact a broad spectrum of beneficiaries, from individuals to government entities. First and foremost, the findings aim to empower the Catholic Church, enabling it to enhance the effectiveness of its community development services, thereby directly benefiting individuals within the communities it serves. By offering insights into how the Church can better align its development initiatives with the needs of local populations, the study seeks to foster greater social and economic well-being at the grassroots level.

Furthermore, the data generated will assist Church-based organizations, state institutions, and non-state actors in identifying sustainable pathways for development. This collaborative effort is expected to benefit not only local communities but also regional and national policymakers, who will be better equipped to foster strategic partnerships and build complementary development frameworks. These findings will aid development practitioners, planners, and policy-makers in designing more effective policies that promote inclusive growth and improve governance, particularly at the regional level.

Additionally, academic communities, including researchers and students of development studies, will benefit by gaining a deeper understanding of the role of non-state actors in regional development. This will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field and encourage further research on the intersections of church-based initiatives, state, and non-state actors in community development. Overall, the study holds the potential to strengthen collaboration among all these stakeholders, promoting sustainable development that serves both local and national interests.

## **1.7. Organizational of the thesis**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the introduction, which includes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives, the significance, as well as the scope and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of relevant literature pertinent to the research topic, providing a theoretical and empirical foundation for the study. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, detailing the sources of data, as well as the methods used for data collection and analysis. In Chapter 4, the study presents the results and discussion, interpreting the findings in relation to the research questions and objectives. Finally, Chapter 5 offers the concluding remarks, summarizing the key findings, discussing their implications, and suggesting areas for further research.

## **1.8. Operational Definition of Terms/Variables**

**Role:** The role refers to the function or responsibility that an individual or entity assumes within a particular action, event, or social context. It also encompasses the expected behaviors and actions associated with that function.

**Community:** A community is a group of individuals who share a common interest in achieving certain objectives, whether material, spiritual, or otherwise. Living in proximity to like-minded individuals within a small community fosters complex and multifaceted relationships, creating a collective sentiment and a sense of belonging among its members. Social coherence within this group plays a crucial role in defining communities.

**Development:** Development is the process of implementing structural changes and improvements within community systems, considering economic factors as well as alterations in the functioning of institutions and organizations.

**Community Development:** Community development is a continuous process aimed at empowering individuals and groups by providing them with the knowledge, values, and skills needed for active participation and engagement in societal progress.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Theoretical Review**

Understanding the role of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in community development requires an exploration of several relevant theoretical frameworks. These theories provide insights into how the Church, as an institution deeply rooted in the local community, can contribute to social change, development, and the empowerment of its members. The theoretical frameworks outlined below—Liberation Theology, Social Capital Theory, Community Development Theory, and Network Theory—offer a comprehensive approach to studying the Church’s influence on community development in Cheha Woreda, Gurage Zone, and Central Ethiopia.

##### **2.1.1. Liberation Theology**

Liberation theology, originating from the Catholic Church in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s, emphasizes the liberation of people from unjust economic, political, and social conditions. It interprets Christian teachings in relation to the struggles and suffering of the poor, advocating for a radical reinterpretation of Christian doctrine that focuses on action and justice (Gutierrez, 1971). Liberation theology critiques existing theological traditions for their inability to address the contemporary spiritual and social needs of marginalized communities and instead emphasizes solutions to moral challenges such as poverty and oppression (Boff & Boff, 1987).

For the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Cheha Woreda, Liberation Theology provides a framework for addressing historical and contemporary struggles faced by marginalized communities. The Church can align its teachings with the immediate needs of the poor, advocating for their dignity and rights while engaging in direct socio-political activism.

Through its mission, the Church can promote social justice by challenging systemic inequalities, such as limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. The “preferential option for the poor” principle (Boff, 1987) underscores the Church’s role in advocating for the disadvantaged, ensuring that religious teachings translate into tangible acts of community service and activism.

### **2.1.2. Social Capital Theory**

Social Capital Theory, developed by scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam, highlights the value of social networks, relationships, and community ties as essential resources that individuals can leverage to achieve collective goals (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). In the context of community development, social capital refers to the ways in which individuals and groups within a community form bonds, build trust, and collaborate to enhance social well-being and promote mutual benefits.

For the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Cheha Woreda, Social Capital Theory offers a lens through which the Church’s role in fostering community development can be understood. The Church contributes to both bonding social capital (strong, close-knit relationships within the local Catholic communities) and bridging social capital (connections across diverse social groups). Bonding social capital strengthens mutual support, trust, and shared values within congregations, enabling collective action to address challenges such as poverty and healthcare access. Bridging social capital facilitates broader collaborations with other religious institutions, governmental bodies, and NGOs, enhancing resource exchange and tackling systemic issues like economic inequality and social marginalization (Flap & Völker, 2014).

By fostering trust, reciprocity, and collective action, the Church plays a pivotal role in enhancing social cohesion and civic engagement. These elements are essential for sustainable community development, as they create an environment where individuals can

work together toward common goals, leading to improved social and economic conditions in Cheha Woreda.

### **2.1.3. Community Development Theory**

Community Development Theory, rooted in the work of scholars like Paulo Freire, Robert Chambers, and John McKnight, focuses on empowering communities to take ownership of their development by identifying and addressing their own needs and priorities (Freire, 1970; Chambers, 1997; McKnight, 1995). This theory emphasizes participatory decision-making, where development is driven from the grassroots level through bottom-up approaches.

In Cheha Woreda, the Ethiopian Catholic Church can play a crucial role in fostering community-driven development. By leveraging its influence within the local community, the Church can cultivate an environment where members are empowered to identify their own needs, set priorities, and engage in collective action. Through educational programs, vocational training, and access to resources, the Church enhances self-reliance and capacity building, aligning with the principles of Community Development Theory.

Moreover, the Church fosters collaboration among diverse stakeholders, promoting inclusive and sustainable development. By building bridges between local leaders, religious organizations, and governmental bodies, the Church facilitates partnerships that pool resources, knowledge, and expertise. This ensures that development efforts are not only equitable but also sustainable, addressing complex challenges such as poverty, education, and healthcare through community-led initiatives.

### **2.1.4. Network Theory**

Network Theory, developed by sociologists such as Mark Granovetter and Ronald Burt, examines the patterns of connections and interactions among individuals and groups within social networks (Granovetter, 1973; Burt, 2004). It emphasizes the role of network

structures, relationships, and brokerage positions in determining access to resources, information, and opportunities.

In Cheha Woreda, the Ethiopian Catholic Church serves as a key connector within the community, facilitating resource-sharing and collective action. The Church's extensive network of local congregations allows it to act as a broker, linking local communities with external organizations, government agencies, and NGOs. This brokerage role enhances access to funding, educational materials, healthcare services, and agricultural knowledge, addressing critical community needs.

Additionally, the Church occupies a central position within the social network of Cheha Woreda, enabling it to foster collaboration among community members and external stakeholders. By leveraging its network position, the Church promotes knowledge-sharing, capacity building, and the diffusion of innovative ideas, further contributing to community development.

Community development is a process where community members collaboratively identify and address their common challenges to improve their overall well-being. It involves enhancing social, economic, political, and environmental conditions through collective action (Midgley, 2014). In Ethiopia, religious institutions, including the Ethiopian Catholic Church, have historically played a significant role in fostering social change, promoting moral values, and supporting development initiatives (Kassa, 2014). The Church's involvement in social services, education, and advocacy makes it a vital actor in community development, particularly in rural areas such as Cheha Woreda in the Gurage Zone.

## **2.2. The Concept of Community and Development**

### **2.2.1. The Concept of Community**

The concept of community is broad and has been interpreted in various ways. It is commonly defined by structural, functional, and interactive components within a group of

individuals, as explained by field theories, human ecology, and system theory (Matarrita & Brennan, 2012). Ife (2010) supports this notion, stating, "A community is not just a collection of individuals; those individuals are part of something bigger, which has meaning for them and for others." Additionally, Brennan (cited in the Institute of Medicine, 2012) describes community as a multidimensional entity shaped by a shared history or collective identity among its members.

### **2.2.2. The Concept of Development**

It refers to the process of modernization within a community. It is a multifaceted process involving structural changes in institutions, societal attitudes, and national frameworks to accelerate economic growth, reduce inequality, and eradicate poverty (Todaro, 2006). Development is not solely about economic expansion but ensuring that its benefits enhance the quality of life for all individuals. According to Ake (2001), development is a process whereby people, in alignment with their values and decisions, transform themselves and their circumstances to achieve higher levels of civilization. In the context of this study, development refers to the Ethiopian Catholic Church's role in enhancing community well-being by addressing socio-economic challenges through various initiatives.

### **2.2.3. The Catholic Perspective on Development**

The relationship between religion and development has gained increasing attention. Development cannot be understood solely through a secular lens; instead, religious worldviews significantly influence knowledge production and societal transformation (Haynes, 2005). Many individuals derive a profound sense of identity and belonging from their faith, compensating for material deficiencies (Berger, 1999). The resurgence of religious influence in developing nations highlights its crucial role in fostering social and economic progress.

A study by the World Bank, *Voices of the Poor*, collected perspectives from over 60,000 individuals in 60 countries. Many respondents, despite being economically impoverished, perceived themselves as spiritually fulfilled due to their religious adherence (Haynes, 2005). This demonstrates the significant role of religion in shaping well-being and development outcomes. Consequently, global institutions, including the United Nations, have recognized the role of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in development. In 2004, a UN discussion with religious leaders emphasized the need for cooperation between faith-based and secular organizations to address development challenges effectively (Haar, 2011).

#### **2.2.4. The Concept of Community Development**

Community development is a holistic process grounded in principles of empowerment, social justice, inclusion, and self-determination (Kenny & Connors, 2017). It encourages local participation in development activities, providing opportunities for socio-economic improvement and resource optimization. Community development is defined as "a participatory, people-centered process that involves bringing together, mobilizing, and organizing individuals to address their needs and facilitate comprehensive societal development" (Pawar, 2014).

The community development process encompasses two primary aspects. First, it emphasizes self-reliance, where individuals actively engage in improving their living standards through their initiative. Second, it involves providing technical and social services that foster self-help and cooperative development. Zuofa (2001) states that community development encompasses all aspects of human well-being, including health, education, agriculture, economic stability, and social welfare.

## **2.3. The Role of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Community Development**

### **2.3.1. The Church as a Social Institution**

The Ethiopian Catholic Church serves as a key social institution by providing not only spiritual guidance but also socio-economic services that improve the livelihoods of community members. As a faith-based organization, it acts as a mediator between the state and the community, facilitating resource mobilization, peace building, and social support (Tsele, 2001). Through its network of churches, schools, and health centers, the Church addresses social challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, and inadequate healthcare services (Kassa, 2014).

### **2.3.2. Social Capital and Community Networks**

Social capital refers to the collective value derived from relationships, trust, and mutual cooperation within a community (Putnam, 2000). The Ethiopian Catholic Church contributes to the development of social capital by fostering strong social networks within communities. It enhances bonding social capital, which strengthens trust and solidarity among individuals within the same religious or ethnic group (Coleman, 1988). This is particularly important in Cheha Woreda, where local congregations serve as platforms for social support and mutual aid.

Additionally, the Church fosters bridging social capital by connecting communities with external organizations, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These connections provide communities with access to resources, information, and funding opportunities that contribute to sustainable development (Bourdieu, 1986). By serving as a bridge between local communities and external actors, the Church enhances collaboration and promotes inclusivity in development efforts.

### **2.3.3. The Role of Faith-Based Initiatives**

Faith-based initiatives play a significant role in addressing the social and economic needs of communities. The Ethiopian Catholic Church implements various programs in areas such as education, healthcare, disaster relief, and agricultural development. Its ability to mobilize both local and international resources strengthens its capacity to address pressing social issues (Gifford, 1998). Additionally, faith-based teachings promote values such as social justice, compassion, and charity, which encourage collective action and civic engagement in community development (Banda, 2010).

### **2.3.4 Empowerment and Social Justice**

Empowerment is a central concept in community development, emphasizing the ability of individuals and communities to take control of their own lives and improve their socio-economic conditions (Zimmerman, 2000). The Ethiopian Catholic Church plays a crucial role in empowering marginalized groups by providing education, vocational training, and self-help initiatives. By fostering self-reliance and participatory decision-making, the Church enables individuals to contribute meaningfully to their community's development.

Liberation theology, which promotes the "preferential option for the poor," argues that the Church should actively work towards justice and equality (Gutierrez, 1971). The Ethiopian Catholic Church embodies these principles by advocating for social justice, particularly in addressing inequalities related to land rights, healthcare access, and economic opportunities (Boff & Boff, 1987). Through its development programs, the Church not only provides direct support to the poor but also challenges the systemic structures that perpetuate poverty and social marginalization.

## **2.4. Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development refers to meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own (Brundtland, 1987). The Ethiopian Catholic Church

integrates sustainability into its development initiatives by promoting environmentally friendly agricultural practices, supporting long-term educational programs, and encouraging community-driven solutions to social challenges. By fostering a sense of communal responsibility and stewardship, the Church ensures that its development efforts have lasting positive impacts (Midgley, 2014).

### **Education Program**

Education has long been a fundamental area of engagement for the Ethiopian Catholic Church, which has played a crucial role in advancing human capital development in the country. The Church's commitment to education has resulted in the establishment of numerous educational institutions that have been operational for over a decade. Through its academic programs, the Church actively contributes to the formation of intelligent, competent, responsible, and ethical individuals who serve as agents of national progress (Teklehaimanot, 2019).

Currently, the Ethiopian Catholic Church administers 83 officially recognized educational institutions, including one Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) center, eight primary schools, six secondary schools, and 69 kindergartens. These institutions provide quality education, particularly for underserved communities, helping to bridge educational gaps and foster holistic development (Tadesse, 2021).

### **Health Program**

The Ethiopian Catholic Church has also made significant strides in the health sector. Through its various congregations, it provides primary healthcare services in compliance with government policies and Catholic social teachings. The Church operates a network of health facilities, which are well-structured and staffed by dedicated religious volunteers alongside trained medical professionals (Gebremariam, 2020).

Currently, the Church manages 10 health institutions, comprising four health centers, five clinics, and one hospital. These facilities serve hundreds of thousands of economically disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, with a particular focus on maternal and child health. By delivering accessible and affordable healthcare, the Church plays a pivotal role in improving public health outcomes in Ethiopia (Wolde, 2022).

### **Social Rehabilitation**

Social welfare and rehabilitation initiatives form another key pillar of the Church's humanitarian mission in Ethiopia. These programs target marginalized and vulnerable populations, including individuals living in extreme poverty, persons with disabilities, the terminally ill, orphans, vulnerable children, and the elderly (Hailemariam, 2023).

To date, the Church has established approximately 11 officially registered social rehabilitation and welfare programs. These initiatives provide essential support, including shelter, healthcare, psychological counseling, and skills training, thereby enabling beneficiaries to reintegrate into society with dignity and self-sufficiency (Mengistu, 2021).

### **Water and Sanitation Projects**

The provision of clean water and sanitation services has also been a priority for the Ethiopian Catholic Church. Recognizing the fundamental role of water in public health and human dignity, the Church has implemented various projects aimed at improving environmental sanitation and access to potable water.

Over the past five years, the Church's interventions have reached more than 40,000 individuals through community-based water supply and sanitation initiatives. These projects include infrastructure development, hygiene education, and awareness-raising campaigns to enhance the overall health and well-being of underprivileged communities (Admasu, 2022).

## **Catholic Social Policy and Care for the Poor**

The Ethiopian Catholic Church adheres to the principle that social and economic policies should prioritize the rights and needs of workers and the impoverished over mere profit maximization. Catholic social teaching emphasizes the moral imperative of addressing poverty and inequality, advocating for systemic changes that ensure justice and dignity for all (Kassaye, 2020).

In Catholic thought, special attention is given to the most vulnerable members of society, not merely as recipients of aid but as individuals deserving of structural support that empowers them to improve their livelihoods. The Church asserts that concern for the poor must be an intentional and sustained effort, reflecting the belief that they hold a special place in the eyes of God (Fekadu, 2019).

### **2.5. Empirical literature**

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Empirical studies in Ethiopia highlight the significance of faith-based educational programs. According to Alemu (2023), the Catholic Church's educational initiatives have led to higher literacy rates and increased access to secondary education in rural areas. Similarly, Bekele and Mekonnen (2022) found that Church-run vocational training programs have improved youth employability by equipping students with relevant technical skills.

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Empirical literature on healthcare further supports the Church's role in improving access to medical services. A study by Desta et al. (2022) found that Church-affiliated health centers significantly reduced maternal mortality rates in rural areas. Additionally, a review by Yohannes and Mesfin (2023) highlighted how faith-based health programs complement government efforts in disease prevention and treatment.

### **Social Rehabilitation**

Social welfare and rehabilitation initiatives form another key pillar of the Church's humanitarian mission in Ethiopia. These programs target marginalized and vulnerable

populations, including individuals living in extreme poverty, persons with disabilities, the terminally ill, orphans, vulnerable children, and the elderly (Hailemariam, 2023).

To date, the Church has established approximately 11 officially registered social rehabilitation and welfare programs. These initiatives provide essential support, including shelter, healthcare, psychological counseling, and skills training, thereby enabling beneficiaries to reintegrate into society with dignity and self-sufficiency (Mengistu, 2021).

Empirical studies, such as those by Kebede and Tesfaye (2023), indicate that faith-based social welfare programs significantly improve the economic independence of marginalized groups. Their research found that Church-supported income-generating activities helped reduce reliance on external aid and enhanced self-sufficiency among beneficiaries.

### **Water and Sanitation Projects**

The provision of clean water and sanitation services has also been a priority for the Ethiopian Catholic Church. Recognizing the fundamental role of water in public health and human dignity, the Church has implemented various projects aimed at improving environmental sanitation and access to potable water.

Over the past five years, the Church's interventions have reached more than 40,000 individuals through community-based water supply and sanitation initiatives. These projects include infrastructure development, hygiene education, and awareness-raising campaigns to enhance the overall health and well-being of underprivileged communities (Admasu, 2022).

Recent empirical research has reinforced the importance of these efforts. A study by Hailu and Wondimu (2023) found that Catholic Church-led sanitation projects led to a 30% decrease in waterborne diseases in targeted communities. Additionally, Fekadu (2023) noted that integrating local participation in water resource management improved long-term sustainability.

## **Catholic Social Policy and Care for the Poor**

The Ethiopian Catholic Church adheres to the principle that social and economic policies should prioritize the rights and needs of workers and the impoverished over mere profit maximization. Catholic social teaching emphasizes the moral imperative of addressing poverty and inequality, advocating for systemic changes that ensure justice and dignity for all (Kassaye, 2020).

In Catholic thought, special attention is given to the most vulnerable members of society, not merely as recipients of aid but as individuals deserving of structural support that empowers them to improve their livelihoods. The Church asserts that concern for the poor must be an intentional and sustained effort, reflecting the belief that they hold a special place in the eyes of God (Fekadu, 2019).

Empirical literature has further explored these dynamics. A study by Negash and Berhanu (2023) found that Catholic microfinance programs contributed to economic empowerment by increasing access to small business funding for disadvantaged populations. Similarly, Girma (2023) highlighted how faith-based advocacy efforts have influenced social policies on poverty reduction in Ethiopia.

### **2.6. Conceptual frame work**

The conceptual framework visually represents the role of the Ethiopian Catholic Church (ECC) in community development by illustrating the interconnected pathways through which its interventions contribute to social and economic progress. At the core of the framework is the ECC's role, which influences key sectors such as education, health, sustainability, and community participation. These domains serve as primary drivers of livelihood improvement, social development, and economic development.

Education and health initiatives directly contribute to social development by improving access to essential services, while sustainability efforts ensure long-term viability.

Community participation plays a crucial role in fostering local engagement and ownership of development projects, thereby strengthening economic and social structures. As a result, the framework highlights a dynamic process where ECC's interventions create a ripple effect, ultimately leading to improved living standards. This structured approach underscores the Church's holistic contribution to community well-being, emphasizing the necessity of sustainable and inclusive development practices.

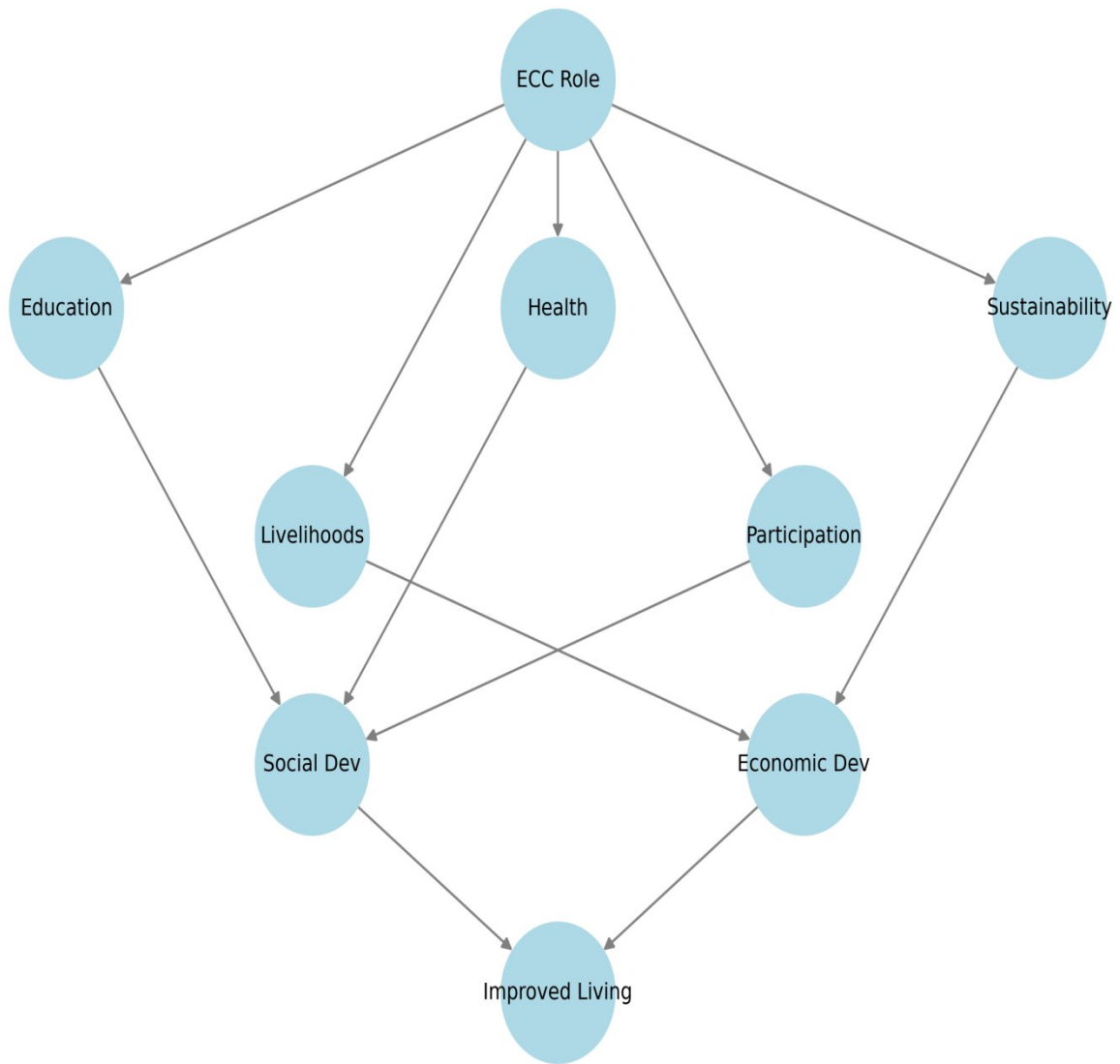


Figure 1: conceptual frame work of the study

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

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

The study was conducted at cheha woreda Gurage zone central Ethiopia Region. This woreda is named after one of the sub-groups of the Sebat Bet Gurage, the Cheha. Part of the Gurage Zone, Cheha is bordered on the south by Enemorina Eaner, on the west by the Oromia Region, on the north by the Wabe River which separates it from Abeshge and Kebena, on the east by Ezha, and on the southeast by Gumer and Geta. The administrative center for Cheha is Enderber; other towns .

Cheha Wereda Agro ecologically the Woreda lies under dry highland and mid highlands with altitude range from 1000masl- 2730masl. The Woreda has bimodal rainfall pattern and the annual rainfall ranges from 800mm-1168mm. The main livelihood of the people in the Woreda lies in agriculture and the major staple food of the Woreda are Enset, maize, wheat, Teff (Woreda information desk, 2014).

The most dominant livelihood of the community are depends on mixed farming, Maize, 'Enset' (false banana), potato, wheat and 'Teff'. Other than these crops, economically less important crops are also grown. Maize is the most common staple crops next to Enset. As per food security project (project survey, 2010) food access in the Woreda is highly seasonal and depends upon rainfall pattern and crop production levels. In most years, the hunger season lasts from April, when main season crops run out until June. Although better-off households produce more crops and cover a higher proportion of needs from their own production, all wealth groups depend on markets for the purchase of food items at some point during the year, particularly from April to June. the researcher select in cheha woreda because of the church center is locate this woreda start in the previous time this leads project found in this woreda compare to other woreda.

### **3.2. Research Design**

A descriptive research design was appropriate for the study as it aimed to explore the existing situation and understand the Ethiopian Catholic Church's role in community development in Cheha Woreda. It provided a detailed account of the church's activities without altering the environment. The study examined the church's roles and functions, particularly in social, educational, and health services. Additionally, it incorporated both qualitative (interviews, observations) and quantitative (surveys) data, offering a comprehensive view of the church's impact and identifying patterns in community development outcomes.

### **3.3. Approach**

The mixed methods approach was appropriate for this study as it provided a comprehensive understanding of the role of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in community development in Cheha Woreda. This approach integrates both qualitative and quantitative research, allowing for a more holistic analysis. The qualitative aspect helped explore the church's contributions by capturing community perceptions, experiences, and in-depth insights into its social, educational, and health-related activities. Meanwhile, the quantitative component enabled the measurement of the church's impact through statistical data, such as the number of beneficiaries and development outcomes. By combining these approaches, the study was able to examine both the depth and breadth of the church's role, ensuring a balanced and well-rounded perspective. Furthermore, the mixed methods approach allowed for triangulation, where qualitative and quantitative findings complemented each other, enhancing the validity and reliability of the results. Given the complexity of community development, which involves multiple social and economic factors, this approach was essential in capturing the full scope of the church's influence in Cheha Woreda.

### **3.3. Target population**

Target population is the entire group of persons, units or elements to which the researchers is interested in generalizing the conclusions. It is a population used for research purposes and may comprise an aggregate of individuals or objects that is the main target of a scientific enquiry (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). It is also considered a population as a collection or completeness of all things, themes or groups, which fit in certain descriptions. The population for the study includes Households of Cheha Woreda, who is the prime beneficiaries of the Ethiopian Catholic Church services, all selected kebeles committee members, and government officials of Emdeber town.

### **3.4. Sampling technique and Sample Size Determination**

Sampling is concerned with the choosing of a portion of individuals from within an entire group to estimate the characteristics of the population. A multi stage sampling procedure was employed as to selection of study area, Key informants and sample households. As a first stage, out of thirty two kebeles in Cheha woreda, four kebeles namely Daqune, Emdeber town, Megnassa, and Sisena ematye were selected purposively with the justification that the most of the catholic projects were found at these kebele and the researcher's familiarity with the these area. As a second stage, thirteen key informants (officials) were selected purposively with the reason that they have better understanding about catholic projects and study issues better than any other local communities do. Therefore, cheha woreda administrative manager, educational office management, administrative officer of emdeber town, cheha woreda development office management, ECC Education coordinator, ECC health coordinator, Attate hospital and clinic administrator CC, Megnassa clinic administrator and other officials were selected as key informants. As a third stage, 387 beneficiaries were selected on a simple random sampling technique from the selected kebeles. In order to determine an adequate sample size, the standard statistical approach equation was employed. In this study simplified formula

provided by Yamane (1967) was used to determine the required sample size at a 95% confidence interval, degree of variability = 0.5, and level of precision =5% are recommended to get a sample size which able to represent a true population. Accordingly, the size of the sample (n) was given by;

$$n = N/(1 + N(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 9675/(1 + 9675(0.0025)) = \frac{9675}{25} = 387$$

Where

- n= signifies the sample size(387)
- N =total population under study(9675)
- e = signifies the margin error (0.05)

**Table 1:** lists the sectors and Catholic Church in Cheha woreda that involved in, interview (the key informants)

No.	Name of the Sector	Participants position
1	Cheha Woreda Administration Head office	High level management
2	Cheha Woreda Administration Education office	High level management
3	Cheha Woreda water and mineral office	High level management
4	Cheha Woreda Town development	Expert
5	ECC head of department ,the water coordinator	High level management
6	ECC Education coordinator	High level management
7	ECC health coordinator	High level management
8	cheha Woreda Education Office	High level management
9	ECC Administration head	High level management

No.	Name of the Sector	Participants position
10	cheha Woreda Education Office	Middle level management
11	Cheha Woreda Health offices	High level management
12	Attate hospital and clinic administrator CC	High level management
13	Megnassa clinic administrator	High level management

**Table 2:** Participants in the questioner are listed as respondents from the Catholic Church Project Implemented area.

Name of the kebele	Total population	Sample size proportion	Sample size
Megnassa	877	$=877 * 387/9675$	35
Sise and ematye	750	$750 * 387/9675$	30
Emdibir towen	6976	$6976 * 387/9675$	279
Daqune	1071	$1071 * 387/9675$	43
Total	9675	387	387

Source: Cheha woreda plane and development administration Burro, 2015

### 3.5. Source of data

To guarantee the successes of the study, both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Primary data were gathered through Observation, Survey Questioner and interviews. On the other hand, the secondary sources data was mainly from the documents of Catholic Church, from the annual reports of cheha woreda Administration, published articles, textbooks, magazines, internet and other source related to the study issues

### **3.6. Instruments of Data Collection**

To achieve the objective of the study the researcher used different research tools such as Structured questionnaires, interview and observation,

#### **3.6.1. Interview**

Interviews were made with the key informants and they were specifically chosen due to their familiarity with the opportunities and difficulties present in the study issue.

#### **3.6.2. Questionnaire**

The researcher gathers information on locals' involvement in the project from its start to finish, its sustainability, and their thoughts on the development project for the Catholic Church using a standardized questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to the participant to collect the necessary information related to study issue.

#### **3.6.3. Observation**

The researcher visited project sites to observe directly some ongoing and completed projects with the concerned body in the sites.

### **3.7. Methods of Data Analysis**

Data collected using quantitative and qualitative approach were categorize into research themes, coded and analyze qualitatively through description or narrations and entered and analyze using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social sciences) program 24 version. Finally the results were presented by percentage and frequency.

### **3.8. Ethical Considerations**

Throughout the research process, the investigator was adhered to protocols that are deemed ethically appropriate. The study's purposes were communicated to participants prior to any data collection, in accordance with the principle of voluntary and informed consent. In this sense, the responders' names wereremaining private, and no one not directly involved in the study was access to the information. Additionally, the researcher was making an effort to ensure that every source used in this research report is appropriately acknowledged and cited in the reference list and text citation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

The study surveyed 387 respondents, with 211 (54.5%) male and 176 (45%) female participants. The age distribution was somewhat uneven, with the majority (165 respondents, 42.6%) falling within the 26–33 age range, followed by 34–41 years (33.3%). A smaller percentage were between 42–49 years (9.0%), 50–57 years (8.8%), and under 25 years (6.2%). The mean age value (2.72) suggests that most respondents were between 26 and 41 years, considered youth in Ethiopia, indicating their ability to engage deeply with the study topic. The standard deviation (1.019) reflects significant variability in the respondents' age groups.

Regarding educational background, 47.3% of respondents were degree holders, followed by master's degree holders (24.3%), TVT graduates (19.6%), secondary education (2.8%), and primary education (5.9%). This suggests that most respondents had attained higher education, indicating their ability to provide informed responses to the study.

##### **4.1.1. Employment and Socioeconomic Status**

In terms of occupation, 187 (48.3%) respondents were civil servants working in different sectors within Cheha Woreda and surrounding areas, followed by NGO employees (21.2%) and Catholic Church employees (11.9%). The remaining respondents were self-employed, merchants, or farmers. The prevalence of degree holders in professional roles suggests that the majority of participants had the knowledge to understand and respond effectively to the study questions.

Religious diversity was observed, with Ethiopian Orthodox Christians making up 39.3% of respondents, followed by Catholics (36.2%), Protestants, and Muslims. This diversity

highlights that the Ethiopian Catholic Church's community development efforts benefit individuals from various religious backgrounds. The mean value for religion distribution lies between Catholic and Orthodox Christian respondents, reflecting the inclusion of both church employees and local residents in the study.

Marital status data revealed that more than half of the respondents were married, while 36.4% were single, 9.6% were divorced, and 2.3% were widowed.

#### **4.1.2. Work Experience and Residence**

Work experience distribution showed that 37% of respondents had 6–10 years of experience in or around the study area, followed by 26.9% with over 15 years, 20.4% with 0–5 years, and 15.0% with 11–15 years. This indicates that a significant portion of respondents had substantial familiarity with the Ethiopian Catholic Church's role in community development.

Most respondents (57.6%) held officer positions in various organizations, followed by coordinators, office heads, and directors. Additionally, 72.2% of respondents resided in urban areas, while 27.6% lived in rural areas, suggesting that the Ethiopian Catholic Church considers both urban and rural communities in its initiatives.

Regarding length of residence, 36.4% of respondents had lived in the study area for eight years, 33.6% for 9–16 years, 12.1% for 17–24 years, 9.0% for 25–32 years, and the remaining respondents for more than 33 years.

**Table 3:** demographic characteristic of the respondents

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St.dev.</b>
Male	211	54.5	1.45	.499
Female	176	45.5		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sd dv</b>
18-25	24	6.2	2.72	1.019
26-33	165	42.6		
34-41	129	33.3		
42-49	35	9.0		
50-57	34	8.8		
<b>Education</b>				
			<b>3.81</b>	<b>1.027</b>
1-8	23	5.9		
9-12	11	2.8		
Tevt	76	19.6		
Degree	183	47.3		
Masters	94	24.3		
Total	387	100		
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St dev</b>
Farmer	24	6.2	3.81	1.027
Merchant	23	5.9		
Civil servant	187	48.3		
NGO	82	21.2		
Catholic church employee	46	11.9		
Self employed	25	6.5		
<b>Religion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St dev</b>
Muslim	36	9.3	2.60	.856
Catholic	140	36.2		
Orthodox	152	39.3		
Protestant	59	15.2		

Total	387	100.0		
Marital status	Frequency	Percent	Mean	St dev
Single	141	36.4	1.78	.711
Married	200	51.7		
Divorced	37	9.6		
Widowed	9	2.3		
Total	387	100.0		
<b>Work experience</b>	Frequency	Percent	Mean	St dev
0-5 years	79	20.4	2.48	1.095
6-10 yeres	146	37.7		
11-15 years	58	15.0		
more than 15 years	104	26.9		
Total	387	100.0	100.0	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Frequency	Percent		
Officer	223	57.6	1.62	.895
Coordinator	119	30.7		
Director	13	3.4		
office head	32	8.3		
Total	387	100.0		
Residence	Frequency	Percent	Mean	St dev
Rural	107	27.6	1.62	.895
Urban	280	72.4		
Total	387	100.0	100.0	
Length of stay in the area	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-8 years	141	36.4	1.72	.448
9-16 years	130	33.6		

17-24 years	47	12.1		
25-32 years	35	9.0		
33-40 years	34	8.8		
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

#### **4.2. The Contribution of the Ethiopian Catholic Church (ECC) in Health over the Past Five Years**

Religious institutions, particularly the Ethiopian Catholic Church (ECC), have played a significant role in healthcare provision across Ethiopia. Their contributions are particularly notable in maternal and child health, which remains a priority due to high maternal and infant mortality rates. Over the past five years, the ECC has actively supported mothers by providing essential healthcare materials, promoting household hygiene, and offering direct healthcare services. The church has also made substantial efforts in improving child health by expanding healthcare services, creating awareness about preventive measures, and facilitating access to medical support. The findings of this study indicate that the contribution of the ECC to health in Cheha Woreda has significantly improved over the past five years compared to the previous decade. Based on survey responses, 61.2% of participants acknowledged a high level of improvement in maternal and child health services, while 27.4% noted moderate improvements, and 11.4% perceived minimal changes.

The ECC's role in healthcare service provision in Cheha Woreda has also been positively evaluated by the community. When asked about the quality of health services offered by the church, 61% of respondents rated them as excellent, 21.7% as very good, and 6.2% as good. However, a small percentage of respondents expressed concerns, rating the services as either poor or fair. These findings align with broader global studies on faith-based healthcare. According to Gordon (2021), Catholic health institutions have consistently provided high-quality and inclusive healthcare in various countries, particularly in resource-limited areas

such as Liberia, Eritrea, and Zimbabwe. Similar to the findings in Cheha Woreda, religious health institutions in these countries are recognized for their compassionate, patient-centered approach that prioritizes both medical treatment and holistic well-being.

Another critical aspect of the church's involvement in health is the implementation of health extension services and awareness creation programs. These programs focus on preventive healthcare, family planning, nutrition, and hygiene promotion. The survey results show that 51.7% of respondents confirmed that the church regularly implemented health extension services, while 33.6% stated that these initiatives were carried out occasionally. However, 9.3% of respondents claimed that there were no such programs in their area, suggesting that while the ECC's efforts are impactful, they may not yet be fully accessible to all residents. This finding aligns with studies in sub-Saharan Africa, where religious institutions often complement government efforts by providing healthcare awareness programs but face challenges in ensuring equitable coverage (Kagawa et al., 2012).

A key element of this study was an evaluation of the quality of ECC healthcare services in comparison to other healthcare providers in Cheha Woreda. Findings indicate that 39.8% of respondents rated the quality as very good, 39.3% as excellent, and 9.3% as good. A small proportion rated the services as fair or poor, highlighting areas for potential improvement. These results are consistent with research from other African contexts, such as Kenya, where Theuri (2013) found that mission-based hospitals are often recognized as some of the best healthcare providers due to their holistic approach, which integrates physical, spiritual, and psychological healing. Similarly, studies conducted in Ethiopia (Teshome et al., 2020) have shown that faith-based healthcare institutions often outperform public healthcare facilities in terms of patient satisfaction and service quality, despite challenges related to resource availability.

One of the most critical aspects of healthcare sustainability is funding allocation and its correlation with health outcomes. This study found that 76% of respondents believed that increased financial allocations for healthcare initiatives had led to improved health

outcomes. However, 21.7% of respondents claimed that there was no clear correlation between budget allocation and health improvements, primarily due to the lack of transparency in financial management. Many respondents were unaware of the specific proportion of church funds allocated to health services. This highlights a broader issue in faith-based healthcare systems, where financial sustainability and accountability are often key concerns. Studies conducted in Africa (Olivier & Wodon, 2014) emphasize that while religious organizations provide crucial healthcare services, financial sustainability remains a challenge due to reliance on donor funding and limited transparency in budget allocation.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of ECC healthcare interventions, this study applied a healthcare sustainability model that considers financial, institutional, social, environmental, and technical factors. The results suggest that financial and institutional sustainability are the most pressing challenges. While the ECC's healthcare services have been highly effective, future sustainability depends on securing consistent funding, enhancing institutional capacity, and improving monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Comparative studies from other regions (Jimenez & Gamage, 2019) indicate that religious healthcare institutions that integrate sustainable financing models—such as income-generating activities and public-private partnerships—tend to achieve better long-term outcomes.

**Table 4: the role and improvement has the Ethiopian Catholic Church had on the health of Cheha Woreda mothers and children during the last five years**

Question item	High	Moderate	Low		
1. What improvement has the Ethiopian Catholic Church had on the health of Cheha Woreda mothers and children during the last five years?	237(61.2%)	106(27.4%)	44(11.4%)		
2. How has the supply of health services in Cheha Woreda by the Ethiopian Catholic church done during the past five years?	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
	236(61%)	84(21.7%)	24(6.2%)	24(6.2%)	19(4.9%)
3. Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church implemented health extension service and awareness creation in communities it serves over the past five years?	Regularl	Occasion ally	No	Unsure	
	200(51.7%)	130(33.6%)	36(9.3%)	21(5.4%)	
4. How would you rate the quality of healthcare services provided by the Ethiopian Catholic Church compared to other healthcare providers in your area?	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
	152(39.3%)	154(39.8%)	36(9.3%)	35(9%)	10(2.6%)
5. Has funding allocation towards healthcare initiatives by the Ethiopian Catholic Church corresponded with improved health outcomes?	Positivel	No correlati	Unclear		

	294(76%)	84(21.7%)	9(2.3)	

### **4.3. The Contribution of the Ethiopian Catholic Church (ECC) in Education over the Past Five Years**

The Ethiopian Catholic Church (ECC) has played a significant role in the educational sector, particularly in capacity-building initiatives, gender equality in education, infrastructure development, values-based education, and school expansion. Over the past five years, its contributions have been evident in various aspects of education in Gurage Zone, especially in the study area.

One of the major contributions of the ECC has been in teacher and educational administrator capacity building through training programs and workshops. The survey findings indicate that 36.7% of respondents reported that the church regularly contributed to capacity-building initiatives, while 42.6% stated that the church contributed occasionally. However, 20.7% of respondents noted that there was no contribution in this regard. This suggests that while the ECC has played a vital role in improving educational standards through professional development, there are still gaps in ensuring consistent and widespread training opportunities. Similar findings have been reported in other parts of Africa, where religious institutions have been involved in training educators to improve the quality of instruction (Kärkkäinen, 2017).

The church has also worked to reduce gender disparities in education by promoting equal educational opportunities for men and women. The findings show that 60.7% of respondents

acknowledged the church's strong engagement in this area, while 15.2% stated that the church participated moderately, and 5.4% reported no involvement. This aligns with global trends where faith-based institutions have played a crucial role in promoting female education. For instance, in Bangladesh, Catholic schools have provided education for the Adivasi population, who would otherwise be excluded from mainstream education (Gordon, 2021). Similarly, in sub-Saharan Africa, religious institutions have been key drivers in increasing female enrollment in schools (Buchmann et al., 2008).

Regarding budget allocation for educational projects, the church has primarily directed its financial resources towards infrastructure development. According to respondents, 70-89% of the allocated budget was used for infrastructure development over the past five years. Additionally, 42.1% of respondents indicated that 50-69% of the budget was used for infrastructure, while 9% stated that 90-100% of the budget was fully allocated for educational infrastructure. This shows the church's strong emphasis on improving school facilities, which is critical for enhancing learning environments. The role of religious organizations in education infrastructure development has been widely documented. For example, Peter Sheehan (2004) found that Catholic schools consistently invested in infrastructure, helping bridge educational gaps in disadvantaged communities.

A notable aspect of ECC's educational contribution is the integration of values-based education into its curriculum to promote ethical and moral development. The survey results reveal that 51.2% of respondents believed the church fully integrated values-based education, while 45.7% stated that it was partially integrated. Only 3.1% of respondents indicated that the church had no role in values-based education. This highlights the church's role in instilling moral and ethical values in students, which aligns with findings from other religious institutions globally. According to Gordon (2021), faith-based schools are popular due to their emphasis on character development, community service, and ethical education, as observed in El Salvador and Eritrea. Similarly, a study by Hull (2005) on faith-based

education in the United Kingdom found that religious schools produce graduates who are more ethically conscious and socially responsible.

The Ethiopian Catholic Church has also expanded educational access by opening new schools, vocational training centers, and kindergartens over the past five years. The survey results indicate that 35.9% of respondents reported the opening of more than ten new schools, while 24.5% mentioned that 6-10 new schools were established. Additionally, 24.3% of respondents noted that 3-5 new schools were opened, while only a few respondents stated that 1-2 schools had been established. However, 9% of respondents reported that no new schools were opened, but rather, existing schools were repaired. These findings suggest that ECC has made a significant impact on educational access, similar to Catholic educational institutions in other regions. For instance, in Kenya, Catholic schools have played a crucial role in expanding educational opportunities, particularly in rural areas where public schools are limited (Theuri, 2013).

The overall impact of the ECC in education has been substantial, particularly in Gurage Zone. Graduates from Catholic schools tend to be high achievers, ethical, and open-minded, reinforcing the importance of values-based education. This observation is consistent with global research. Gordon (2021) noted that Catholic schools tend to have a strong societal impact, fostering community development, offering alternative opportunities outside of crime and violence (as observed in El Salvador), and providing access to quality education for marginalized groups (as seen in Bangladesh). Moreover, UNDP (2015) emphasized that education plays a critical role in leadership development, civic engagement, and socioeconomic advancement, and faith-based institutions have been instrumental in achieving these goals.

**Table 5:** The contribution of ECC in education over past five years

1.	Have there been instances of capacity-building initiatives (training programs, workshops) organized by	Re gul ar	Oc cas ion	No		
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the Ethiopian Catholic Church for teachers and educational administrators					
	142(36.7%)	165(42.6%)	80(20.7%)		
What work has the Ethiopian Catholic Church done in the last five years to reduce the differences between the educational opportunities of men and women?	Usually	Moderate	Small bit	Not at all	
	235(60.7%)	72(18.6%)	59(15.2%)	21(5.4%)	
What percentages of the budget allocated by the Ethiopian Catholic Church for its educational projects have been directed towards infrastructure development over the past five years?	90-100	70-89	50-69	Less than 50	Unsure
	35(9%)	164(42.9%)	163(42.1%)	1(0.3%)	24(6.2%)
4. To what extent has the Ethiopian Catholic Church integrated values-based education into its curriculum to promote ethical and moral development among students?	Fully integrated	Partially integrated	Not integrated		
	198(51.2%)	177(45.7%)	12(3.1%)		
5. How many new educational institutions, such as schools, vocational training centers and kindergartens have the Ethiopian Catholic Church established or supported over the past five years	None	1-2	3-5	6-10	>10
	35(9%)	24(6.2%)	94(24.3%)	95(24.5%)	139(35.9%)

#### **4.4. The role of Ethiopia Catholic Church in enhancing the livelihood of local community members the past five years**

The Ethiopian Catholic Church has played a significant role in enhancing employment conditions and economic empowerment in the study area. While 45.5% of respondents reported that the church provided moderate support for employment, 30.2% indicated minimal assistance, and 18.3% acknowledged a high contribution. In terms of economic empowerment, 54.3% believed the church had a moderate impact, while 33.9% saw it as highly significant. Triangulation of data confirms these findings, with both survey and qualitative insights highlighting the church's role in training, community building, and economic development projects, including income-generating activities and credit access. Over the past five years, 63.6% of respondents recognized the church's involvement in asset-based community development, supporting previous research by Worku (2018), who emphasized the church's role in improving livelihoods in poor communities. Similarly, Hahn et al. (2017) found that religious institutions contribute significantly to local development through asset creation and community-oriented projects. Additionally, 69.5% of respondents confirmed the church's contributions to income generation through vocational training, though some noted a lack of tangible job opportunities. The church has also facilitated credit access, with 69.5% acknowledging its role in promoting financial inclusion and entrepreneurship. While the findings highlight the church's positive contributions, perceptions remain mixed, suggesting room for further improvements in long-term job creation and financial support (Worku, 2018; Hahn et al., 2017).

The provision of credit aligns with findings from Worku (2018), who highlighted that the church's microfinance programs targeted the improvement of socio-economic conditions through access to financial resources. Similarly, Bebbington et al. (2007) discussed the transformative impact of microcredit initiatives led by religious institutions, which provide a sustainable pathway for local communities to break the cycle of poverty by fostering small businesses.

The study's key findings align with its objectives of assessing the Ethiopian Catholic Church's role in employment, economic empowerment, and local development. The church's support for employment was found to be moderate to low, with many respondents feeling that only limited assistance was provided. However, its impact on economic empowerment was moderate to high, as many acknowledged its role in improving livelihoods. The church also contributed significantly to asset enhancement and community development projects, as well as income generation and credit access, although some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with job availability. Qualitative analysis further revealed that initiatives such as agricultural training, vocational skills development, and microfinance programs positively influenced economic conditions. However, limitations were noted, particularly in long-term job creation and financial support, highlighting the need for more comprehensive and sustained programs to enhance the church's economic impact.

**Table 6: The role of Ethiopia Catholic Church in improving the livelihood conditions**

1. In what ways do you think the Ethiopian Catholic Church's actions have helped the employment conditions in the area?	Not	In small amount	Moderate	High
	23(5.9%)	117(30.2%)	176(45.5%)	71(18.3%)
2. In your opinion, what is the overall impact of the Ethiopian Catholic Church on the promotion of economic empowerment in your community?	Small	Moderate	High	
	46(11.9%)	210(54.3%)	131(33.9%)	
3. Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church actively engaged in projects to enhance the livelihood of locally owned assets in the past five years	Yes	No		
	246(63.6%)	141(36.4%)		
4. Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church implemented in the past five years to support income generation among	Yes	No		

local community members	269(69.5%)	118(30.5%)		
5.Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church significantly contributed to improving access to credit for local community members in the past five years	Yes	No		
	269(69.5)	118(30.5%)		

**4.6. Community Participation in Catholic Church Development Projects**

The participation of community members in development initiatives led by the Ethiopian Catholic Church has been relatively low, despite the church’s efforts to improve local livelihoods. Survey results indicate minimal involvement in key stages of the project cycle, with **67% of respondents** reporting low participation in **problem identification**, **66.2% in planning**, **63.6% in progress monitoring**, and **51.4% in implementation**. Notably, no respondents reported **high or moderate participation**, suggesting a general lack of engagement in the church’s development projects. Limited community involvement in **problem identification** means that the church may not fully address the most pressing local needs, while **low participation in planning** raises concerns about project sustainability, as lack of ownership often leads to reduced long-term support. Similarly, weak engagement in **implementation** may hinder the effectiveness and continuity of these initiatives. Community participation can be categorized into **high, moderate, and low levels**, with **low participation** characterized by **minimal engagement, lack of leadership, infrequent volunteering, and weak ownership of church-led projects**. The study findings align with previous research by **Hahn et al. (2017)**, who identified similar patterns of **community disengagement in religious development initiatives**, often leading to weak project sustainability. Likewise, **Worku (2018)** emphasized the importance of **community involvement in planning and implementation** for long-term success, particularly in **income-generating and agricultural projects**. Qualitative data further support these

conclusions, with informants highlighting that **strong leadership and community ownership are crucial for project effectiveness**. Without adequate participation, church-led initiatives risk being perceived as externally imposed, reducing commitment and long-term impact.

The study's main findings, aligned with its research objectives, highlight **low community participation** in key phases of church-led initiatives, including **problem identification, project planning, progress monitoring, and implementation**. This lack of engagement suggests a gap in **community ownership**, which may impact the long-term sustainability of development efforts. The findings indicate that without active participation, the community may struggle to fully **own and sustain** these initiatives, posing challenges to their effectiveness. To address this, the Ethiopian Catholic Church should focus on **enhancing community engagement**, particularly in the planning and implementation stages, to improve project success and sustainability. Qualitative data analysis further supports these conclusions, revealing that respondents desire greater transparency and inclusion in decision-making. Some informants attributed the low participation to the **church's top-down** approach, where decisions are primarily made by a small group of leaders. Others suggested that the church could improve engagement by organizing participatory forums and involving the community from the outset in the planning process.

**Table 7 :Level of community participation on the initiatives of Catholic Church**

Participation in	Level of Participation		
	High	Medium	Low
In identifying local problems	93(24%)	35(9%)	259(67%)
In planning project	61(15.8%)	70(18.1%)	256(66.2%)
In process project implementation	82(21.1%)	106(27.4%)	199(51.4%)
In monitoring project progress	105(27.1%)	36(9.3%)	146(63.6%)

#### **4.7. Understanding Community Participation in Catholic Church Development Projects**

Community participation is essential for ensuring the effectiveness, inclusivity, and alignment of development projects with the core values of the Catholic Church. Interviews and surveys highlighted several key aspects of community involvement that contribute significantly to the success of Church-led initiatives. One major benefit is **alignment with Christian values**, as active engagement ensures that Church teachings on **social justice, solidarity, and the common good** are reflected in development efforts. Respondents emphasized that participation allows communities to act as stewards of their own development, promoting **dignity, equity, and care for marginalized groups**. Additionally, community involvement fosters **empowerment and ownership**, enabling individuals, especially marginalized groups, to take responsibility for their well-being and actively contribute to the success of development projects. This empowerment aligns with the Church’s emphasis on **human dignity and personal agency**, strengthening social bonds and encouraging self-reliance.

Another significant advantage is the ability to **tailor projects to local needs**, ensuring that initiatives address pressing issues such as **poverty, education, health, and infrastructure** rather than imposing externally driven solutions. This participatory approach enhances the **relevance and effectiveness** of development efforts. Furthermore, community engagement contributes to **sustainable development**, as active participation in planning, implementation, and monitoring ensures long-term commitment and maintenance of resources even after the Church's direct involvement ends. Respondents noted that sustainability is reinforced by the Church's **holistic development approach**, which integrates material, social, and spiritual well-being.

Community participation also plays a vital role in **promoting social cohesion** by fostering unity and collaboration across religious, ethnic, and social divides. Respondents observed that participatory development projects help bring diverse groups together, enhancing collective efforts toward shared goals. In conflict-prone areas, such initiatives contribute to **conflict resolution and peacebuilding** by encouraging dialogue, reconciliation, and mutual understanding. The Church's emphasis on participatory decision-making creates platforms for peaceful engagement, reducing tensions and fostering harmony.

Another key aspect is **transparency and accountability**, as community involvement ensures that resources are used effectively and that projects align with the actual needs of the people. Respondents emphasized that when community members participate in oversight and decision-making, there is **greater trust, reduced corruption, and improved project outcomes**. Additionally, participation facilitates **capacity building**, equipping local people with essential skills in governance, leadership, and advocacy, which extend beyond specific projects and contribute to **long-term community resilience and self-sufficiency**.

Inclusivity is another critical factor, as the Church's commitment to serving the marginalized ensures that vulnerable groups—including **women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities**—are actively involved in development processes. Respondents highlighted that this inclusivity promotes **justice and equitable distribution of**

**development benefits**, aligning with the Church's mission of caring for the least fortunate. Finally, many Catholic development projects integrate **spiritual and social aspects**, creating opportunities for **prayer, reflection, and faith-based community building** alongside economic and social development. Respondents noted that this approach fosters a **holistic sense of well-being**, strengthening both individual faith and community cohesion. Overall, community participation enhances the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of Church-led development initiatives, ensuring that they truly serve and uplift the local population.

The triangulation of findings with previous studies confirms the significance of community participation in development initiatives. Hahn et al. (2017) emphasized that engaging local communities ensures that projects align with local values and needs, thereby enhancing their relevance and sustainability. This aligns with the perspectives of respondents in the current study, who highlighted the importance of participatory approaches. Similarly, Worku (2018) underscored the positive impact of community engagement on project sustainability and empowerment, reinforcing the idea that active involvement fosters ownership and long-term maintenance of development outcomes. These findings collectively affirm that the Ethiopian Catholic Church's commitment to **social justice, solidarity, and human dignity** is most effectively realized when local communities are engaged throughout the project cycle.

Aligned with the study's research objectives, the findings highlight several key points. First, **community participation plays a crucial role** in ensuring that Catholic Church-led development projects remain effective, inclusive, and consistent with the Church's core values. Second, **active participation fosters empowerment and ownership**, allowing local people to take responsibility for their own development. Third, **sustainability and inclusivity** are enhanced through engagement, ensuring that vulnerable groups benefit from these initiatives. Finally, **positive social outcomes** emerge from Church-led participation, including improved social cohesion, conflict resolution, and strengthened unity within communities.

The qualitative data further supports these findings, illustrating the broader impact of community participation. Respondents noted that involvement in Church-led initiatives strengthens community ties, fosters collective responsibility, and enhances relationships among diverse groups. The integration of **faith-based principles** into development projects was also identified as a motivating factor that encourages unity and long-term commitment to the success of initiatives. Despite challenges in participation, the Church's **inclusive approach**, particularly its focus on marginalized groups, was recognized as a key driver of **community resilience and empowerment**

## **4.8. Project sustainability**

### **4.8.1. Model summary for project sustainability**

The model summary indicates that the independent variables—**Environmental Sustainability, Financial Sustainability (FSS), Social Sustainability (SSS), and Institutional Sustainability (ISS)**—have a significant impact on **Project Sustainability (PSS)**. The **R-value of 0.69** suggests a moderately strong positive relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. The **R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.617** means that **61.7% of the variation** in project sustainability can be explained by these four sustainability factors, indicating a good model fit. The **Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> (0.609)**, which accounts for the number of predictors, is slightly lower but still confirms the model's robustness. The **standard error of 0.33469** suggests a reasonable level of accuracy in predictions. Additionally, the **Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.82** is close to 2, indicating that there is no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, which strengthens the reliability of the regression analysis. Overall, the results suggest that sustainability factors—particularly financial, social, institutional, and environmental—play a crucial role in enhancing project sustainability, reinforcing the importance of integrating these dimensions into project planning and implementation.

**Table 8: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
	.69 <sup>a</sup>	.617	.609	.33469	1.82

a. Predictors: (Constant), (**Environmental Sustainability**), **Financial Sustainability(FSS)**, **Social Sustainability ( SSS)**, **Institutional Sustainability(ISS)**; Dependent Variable: project sustainability(PSS)

#### **4.8.2. The ANOVAs results**

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant in explaining variations in **Project Sustainability (PSS)**. The **F-statistic of 27.081** with a significance level (**Sig. = 0.000**) suggests that the overall model provides a good fit to the data and that at least one of the predictors—**Environmental Sustainability (ESS)**, **Social Sustainability (SSS)**, **Institutional Sustainability (ISS)**, and **Financial Sustainability (FSS)**—has a significant effect on project sustainability. The **regression sum of squares (12.134)** compared to the **residual sum of squares (43.799)** indicates that a substantial proportion of the total variance (55.933) is explained by the predictors. Given the large **F-value and the highly significant p-value ( $p < 0.001$ )**, we can conclude that the sustainability factors collectively have a strong and meaningful impact on project sustainability. This reinforces the importance of integrating environmental, social, institutional, and financial sustainability into project planning and implementation to enhance long-term success.

Table 9: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> Results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.134	4	3.034	27.081	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	43.799	391	.112		
	Total	55.933	395			
a. Dependent Variable: PSS						
b. Predictors: (Constant), ESS, SSS, ISS, FSS						

### 4.8.3. Regression coefficient analysis (multiple regression results)

$$PSS = \beta_0 + 0.197\beta_1 + .150\beta_2 + \beta_3 \text{ SSS} + \beta_4 \text{ ISS} + \epsilon$$

$$PSS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ ESS} + \beta_2 \text{ FSS} + 0.124\beta_3 - 0.150\beta_4 + \epsilon$$

#### Interpretation of Coefficients

The coefficients provided represent the relationship between the independent variables (aspects of sustainability) and the dependent variable (project sustainability). Each coefficient has an associated p-value, which helps assess its statistical significance. A p-value less than 0.05 indicates that the relationship is statistically significant.

**Financial Sustainability (B = 0.150, p = 0.007).** The positive coefficient of **0.150** suggests that financial sustainability positively influences project sustainability. The p-value of **0.007**, which is less than 0.05, indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. This means that projects with stable financial resources—such as consistent funding, effective

budgeting, and revenue generation strategies—are more likely to sustain themselves in the long run. Financial sustainability is often seen as the backbone of any project, ensuring that resources are available for continued operations. Studies in similar contexts often emphasize the critical role of financial resources in sustaining projects. For example, research by **Hahn et al. (2017)** highlights that long-term funding stability is a fundamental factor in the success of social and environmental projects. Financial management practices that include risk mitigation and contingency planning have been shown to improve project sustainability.

**Social Sustainability (B = 0.124, p = 0.011).** The positive coefficient of **0.124** indicates that social sustainability positively impacts project sustainability, with a p-value of **0.011** showing statistical significance. Social sustainability involves maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders, community involvement, and ensuring the social equity of the project. Projects that engage with local communities and prioritize social welfare often experience better long-term success due to strong community support and trust. Previous research, such as the work by **Dyllick & Hockerts (2002)**, stresses that social factors—such as public involvement, stakeholder engagement, and social equity—are crucial to ensuring the longevity and acceptance of projects. Their study points out that when a project positively impacts the community, it has higher chances of long-term viability.

**Environmental Sustainability (B = 0.197, p = 0.001).** With a coefficient of **0.197**, environmental sustainability shows the strongest positive impact on project sustainability, with the p-value of **0.001** indicating a highly significant relationship. Projects that are environmentally sustainable—through practices such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and conservation—tend to perform better in the long run. This is particularly important as the global focus on sustainability intensifies, and projects that harm the environment may face backlash, legal challenges, or lack of support. Numerous studies, including **Elkington (1997)**, underscore the importance of environmental sustainability in project success. According to Elkington, projects that incorporate environmental goals and engage in

practices that promote ecological balance are more likely to receive support from stakeholders, regulatory bodies, and consumers, leading to greater sustainability.

**Institutional Sustainability (B = -0.150, p = 0.005).** The negative coefficient of **-0.150** suggests that institutional sustainability has an inverse relationship with project sustainability, with a statistically significant p-value of **0.005**. This negative relationship could indicate that rigid institutional frameworks or inefficient governance structures hinder project success. Bureaucratic barriers, lack of flexibility, and slow decision-making often create obstacles for projects, preventing them from adapting to challenges or changing environments. Rodrigues et al. (2013), who highlighted, reported a similar finding that institutional inefficiency could undermine project success, especially in the context of large-scale development projects. Their study showed that excessive regulation and institutional bureaucracy often limit the ability of projects to adapt to real-time challenges, thus hindering long-term sustainability. Additionally, **Müller et al. (2018)** note that institutional structures that lack responsiveness or alignment with project needs lead to delays and complications in project execution.

### **Implications and Comparison with Other Studies**

The analysis of these coefficients reveals critical insights into what drives project sustainability. Financial, social, and environmental sustainability all have positive relationships with project sustainability, highlighting the need for a well-rounded approach to managing projects. The negative effect of institutional sustainability, however, raises concerns about the potential drawbacks of bureaucratic inefficiencies. This aligns with findings from other studies, which emphasize the importance of flexibility in institutional structures and governance.

For instance, **Hahn et al. (2017)** emphasize that robust financial strategies and stakeholder engagement are key for long-term success, aligning with the positive coefficients of financial and social sustainability in this study. **Elkington (1997)** similarly advocates for

integrating environmental considerations into every project, echoing the strong positive relationship between environmental sustainability and project longevity found here. However, as suggested by **Rodrigues *et al.* (2013)** and **Müller *et al.* (2018)**, institutional sustainability can create significant barriers if institutional frameworks are too rigid, an issue also highlighted by the negative coefficient for institutional sustainability.

**Table 10: project sustainability**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
FSS	.150	.055	.391	2.709	.007
SSS	.124	.048	.187	2.558	.011
ESS	.197	.057	.482	3.479	.001
ISS	-.150	.053	-.327	-2.821	.005
a. Dependent Variable: PSS					

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1. Conclusion**

The Ethiopian Catholic Church (ECC) has made significant contributions to healthcare, education, economic empowerment, and community development in the study area over the past five years. In healthcare, the ECC has been instrumental in improving maternal and child health, with health extension services such as preventive healthcare, family planning, nutrition, and hygiene promotion positively impacting the community. Despite these successes, challenges related to financial sustainability, accessibility, and equitable coverage remain, particularly in rural areas. Furthermore, concerns over financial transparency and inconsistent funding may undermine the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of ECC's healthcare initiatives.

The ECC has also played a key role in education, making notable strides in capacity-building, gender equality, and infrastructure development. However, gaps remain in ensuring consistent training opportunities for educators and addressing gender disparities, particularly in rural areas. In terms of economic empowerment, the ECC has supported job creation and economic development through vocational training, microfinance initiatives, and income-generating projects. However, the challenge of providing sustainable job opportunities persists, necessitating more comprehensive and long-term programs.

One of the study's significant findings is the limited community participation in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of development projects. The lack of ownership and engagement at critical stages can undermine the sustainability of these initiatives. Although the Church has made positive strides, it is evident that the effectiveness and sustainability of its projects can be enhanced by greater community involvement, particularly in the planning and decision-making processes.

The study also identified critical sustainability factors affecting the success of ECC-led initiatives. Financial, social, and environmental sustainability have a positive impact on project longevity, while institutional sustainability, particularly bureaucratic inefficiencies, appears to hinder the effectiveness of some initiatives.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

### **Enhancing Community Participation:**

- The ECC should prioritize increasing community involvement in all stages of development projects, particularly planning, monitoring, and problem identification. This will ensure that initiatives are better aligned with local needs and have long-term support and ownership.
- Fostering inclusivity, transparency, and participatory decision-making processes, particularly involving marginalized groups, will enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of projects. Platforms for community dialogue and engagement should be expanded to promote active participation.

### **Improving Financial Sustainability:**

- To ensure the long-term sustainability of healthcare, educational, and economic empowerment programs, the ECC should explore alternative funding sources such as income-generating activities, public-private partnerships, and donor diversification.
- Increasing transparency in financial management and creating clear budget lines for specific services will help build community trust and support the success of initiatives. Regular financial audits and transparent reporting processes will enhance accountability.

**Strengthening Institutional Capacity:**

- The ECC should work on improving the efficiency of its institutional frameworks by reviewing and streamlining governance structures. This will allow for quicker decision-making, flexibility, and responsiveness to challenges that arise during project implementation.
- Capacity-building initiatives for staff, particularly in leadership, governance, and financial management, are essential to strengthen the institutional capacity of ECC's development programs. Regular training in project monitoring and evaluation will ensure that initiatives remain effective and adaptable over time.

**Expanding Access and Coverage:**

- The ECC should focus on expanding its services to rural areas, ensuring that healthcare and educational programs are more accessible to underserved populations. Efforts to reduce barriers related to distance, cost, and awareness will help improve equity in service delivery.
- Providing consistent health extension services and expanding vocational training opportunities in rural communities will further contribute to economic empowerment and community development.

**Fostering Partnerships:**

- Collaborating with government bodies, non-governmental organizations, and local stakeholders is crucial for maximizing the impact of ECC-led initiatives. Partnerships can strengthen resource mobilization, ensure broader service coverage, and bring in expertise that enhances the quality of services.
- The ECC should also explore collaboration with international development organizations to tap into additional funding and technical resources to bolster the sustainability and reach of its initiatives.

By implementing these recommendations, the Ethiopian Catholic Church can further strengthen its role as a key player in development, ensuring that its projects not only meet immediate needs but also contribute to lasting change, empowerment, and social justice for the communities it serves. Enhanced community engagement, stronger financial management, and improved institutional structures will be essential for sustaining and scaling up the ECC's impact across healthcare, education, and economic empowerment initiatives.

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# **Appendix A**

**Wolkite University**

**College of Social Sciences and Humanities**

**Department of Governance and Development study**

## **Questionnaire for Beneficiaries**

### **Dear respondents**

The main objective of this questionnaire is to collect data regarding the role of catholic church community development: The case of Cheha Woreda, Gurage zone central region of Ethiopia for partial fulfillment of an M.A. Degree in Development planning and management. Dear respondents the information you provide is believed to have great value for the successful accomplishment of this study. Thus, you are kindly requested to give me an answer freely and openly and your information will be kept confidential and be used only for academic purposes

Thank you very much for your collaboration

### General Instructions

1. There is no need of mentioning your name, anywhere in the questionnaires
2. In all cases where answer options are available please choose in the appropriate one
3. For open ended questions if any, please your response on the space provided

## Part -1

### Socio-demographic background information of Respondent

1. Gender 1. Male 2. Female
2. Age 1. 18- 25 2. 26 – 33 3. 34 – 41 4. 42--49 5. 50--57
3. Education level 1. 1-8 grades 2. 9-12 grades 3. TEVT (level 1-5) 4. First degree  
5. Master's.
4. Occupation 1. Farmer 2. Merchant 3. Civil Servant 4. NGO  
employee 5. Catholic Church employee 6. Self-employed 7. other
5. Religion 1. Muslim 2. Catholic 3. Orthodox 4. Protestant 5. Other
6. Marital status? 1. Single 2. Married 3. Divorced 4. Separated
7. Work Experience
  - 1) 0 - 5 years
  - 2) 6 - 10 years
  - 3) 11- 15 years
  - 4) More than 15 years
8. Responsibility 1. Officer 2. Coordinator 3. Director 4. Office head 5. Other
9. Residence
  1. Rural
  2. Urban
10. Length of stay in the area 1. 1-8 years 2. 9-16 years 3. 17-24 years 4. 25  
32 years 5. 33-40 years

## **PART -2**

### **Detailed questions for target beneficiaries**

#### **The contribution of Ethiopian Catholic Church in the Social Development Sectors of Health over the past five year**

1. What improvement has the Ethiopian Catholic Church had on the health of Cheha Woreda mothers and children during the last five years?

1. High    2.The middle    3.low

2. How has the supply of health services in Cheha Woreda by the Ethiopian Catholic church done during the past five years?

1) Excellent 2) vary good 3) good    4. Fair    5.poor

3. Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church implemented health extension service and awareness creation in communities it serves over the past five years?

1) Yes, regularly 2) Yes, occasionally 3) No 4) Unsure

4. How would you rate the quality of healthcare services provided by the Ethiopian Catholic Church compared to other healthcare providers in your area?

1. Excellent 2.Very Good 3. Good 4. Fair 5.. Poor

Give justification about answer to this question -----  
-----

5. Has funding allocation towards healthcare initiatives by the Ethiopian Catholic Church corresponded with improved health outcomes?

1. Yes, correlated positively

2. No correlation

3. Correlation unclear

The contribution of Ethiopian Catholic Church in the Social Development Sectors of Education over the past five years

6. Have there been instances of capacity-building initiatives (training programs, workshops)

organized by the Ethiopian Catholic Church for teachers and educational administrators

1. Yes, regularly

2. Yes, occasionally

3. NO

7. What work has the Ethiopian Catholic Church done in the last five years to reduce the differences between the educational opportunities of men and women?

1. Usually 2. On a moderate 3. A small bit 4. Nothing at all

8. What percentage of the budget allocated by the Ethiopian Catholic Church for its educational projects have been directed towards infrastructure development over the past five years?

1) 90-100%

2) 70-89%

3) 50-69%

4) Less than 50%

5) Not sure

9. Was the Ethiopian Catholic Church involved in any measurable improvement of  
The educational infrastructure (schools, classrooms, etc.)?

1. Important improvements

2. Some improvements

3. No improvement

10. To what extent has the Ethiopian Catholic Church integrated values-based education into  
its curriculum to promote ethical and moral development among students?

1. Fully integrated

2. Partially integrated

3. Not integrated

11. How many new educational institutions, such as schools, vocational training centers and  
kindergartens have the Ethiopian Catholic Church established or supported over the past five  
years?

1. None

2. 1-2 institutions

3. 3-5 institutions

4. 6-10 institutions

5. More than 10 institutions

**To evaluate the sustainability of a development project carried out by the Ethiopian Catholic Church considering over the past five years**

12. Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church's involvement in healthcare resulted in sustainable community health programs?

1. Yes, highly sustainable

2. Moderately sustainable

3. Not sustainable

13. To what extent has the project promoted environmental sustainability in the community?

1. Not at all

2. To a small extent

3. To a moderate extent

4. To a large extent

5. To a very large extent

14. How sustainable are the project outcomes beyond the duration of project funding?

1. Not sustainable at all

2. Slightly sustainable

3. Moderately sustainable

4. Highly sustainable

5. Extremely sustainable

15. Did the project improve access to clean water and sanitation facilities in the project area?

1) Yes 2) No 3) Partially

16. Has the development project created sustainable livelihood opportunities for the local residents?

1. Yes, definitely

2. Yes, to some extent

3. No, not really

17. Do you believe the project has adequately considered and addressed social equity and inclusivity within the community?

1. Yes

2. No

18. In the development activities carried out by the Ethiopian Catholic Church, if the aid of donor individuals are cut off, will teachers' salaries and other activities continue? 1. Yes 2. No If yes How

-----

19. Does the Ethiopian Catholic Church consider the next generation in its developments?

1. Yes 2. No if yes how-----

if No why-----

-----

**The role of Ethiopian Catholic Church in Enhancing the Livelihood of local community members the past five years**

20. In what ways do you think the Ethiopian Catholic Church's actions have helped the employment conditions in the area?

1. not.
2. A small amount
3. In a moderate level
4. Highly

21. In your opinion, what is the overall impact of the Ethiopian Catholic Church on the promotion of economic empowerment in your community?

1. Small 2. high 3. Moderate

22. In the past five years, have you received any support or assistance from the Ethiopian Catholic Church for improving your livelihood?

1. Yes
2. .No

23. Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church actively engaged in projects to enhance the livelihood of locally owned assets in the past five years? 1.yes 2. No

If yes justify-----

24. Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church implemented in the past five years to support income generation among local community members 1.yes 2. No if yes how-----  
-----

25. "Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church significantly contributed to improving access to credit for local community members in the past five years?" 1. Yes 2. No

**The level of community participation in initiatives of the Ethiopian Catholic Church within a project area the past five years**

26. The Ethiopian Catholic Church involves the community in identifying local problems.

1. High

2. medium

3. Low

27. The Ethiopian Catholic Church seeks input from community members when planning projects.

1. high

2. Medium

3. Low

28. The Ethiopian Catholic Church encourages active participation from community members

during project implementation.

1. High

2. Medium

3. Low

29. The Ethiopian Catholic Church involves the community in monitoring project progress.

1. High

2. medium

3. Low

**Thank you very much for participating in this research**

## APPEDEX B

### Interview questions tailored for government administration and for Catholic Church administration officials

#### Socio-demographic background information of Respondent

1. Gender 1. Male 2. Female
2. Age 1. 18- 25 2. 26 – 33 3. 34 – 41 4.42--49 5.50--57
3. Education level 1. 1-8 grades 2. 9-12 grades 3. TEVT (level 1-5) 4.First degree 5.Master's.6.PhD
4. Occupation 1. Farmer 2. Merchant 3. Civil Servant 4. NGO employee 5. Catholic church employee 6.Self-employed 7.other
5. Religion 1. Muslim 2.Catholic 3.Orthodox 4.Protestant 5. Other
6. Marital status? 1. Single 2.Married 3. Divorced 4. Separated
7. Work Experience1) 0 - 5 years 2) 6 - 10 years 3) 11- 15 years 4) More than 15 years
- 8.. Responsibility 1. Officer 2.Coordinator 3.Director 4. Office head 5. Other
9. Residence1. Rural 2. Urban
10. Length of stay in the area 1. 1-8 years 2. 9-16 years 3.17-24 years 4. 25-32years 5.33-40years6.other

**The contribution of Ethiopian Catholic Church in the Social Development Sectors of Health considering over the past five years**

1. What role has the Catholic Church played in reducing communicable diseases?
2. What is the role of the Catholic Church in the provision and access to medicines and pharmaceuticals?
3. "What impact do Catholic Church-sponsored training programs have on the professional development and ethical practices of health professionals?"

The contribution of Ethiopian Catholic Church in the Social Development Sectors of Education considering the past five years

4. Are there sufficient classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other educational facilities available in Catholic Church-supported schools?
5. Does the Ethiopian Catholic Church provide financial support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access education?
6. How have students and families directly or indirectly benefited from the program

The sustainability of a development project carried out by the Ethiopian Catholic Church considering the past five years

7. Has the project influenced income generation opportunities for local communities?
8. How has the project contributed to the development of skills and capacity among community members?
9. What specific practices were implemented in the project to effectively conserve natural resources such as water, soil, and forests?"

**The role of Ethiopian Catholic Church in Enhancing the Livelihood of local community member the past five years**

10. Are there any savings or microfinance programs facilitated by the church

11. Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church contributed to enhancing the livelihoods of local community members through income source diversification in the past five years?"

12. Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church undertaken in the past five years to enhance the livelihoods of saving local community members?

The level of community participation in initiatives of the Ethiopian Catholic Church within a project area the past five years

13. Has the Ethiopian Catholic Church actively engaged with the local community over the past five years? If yes, in what ways? (e.g., community meetings, workshops, events

14. Were there any notable changes in the level of community involvement over the past five years? If yes, please describe.-----  
-----

15. Have there been any instances of feedback or suggestions provided by the community regarding church initiatives? If yes, please describe.

**Thank you very much for participating in this research**