

## **Socio-economic Impacts of Human Trafficking among West Asia Returnee Young Women in West Shewa Zone of Oromia, Ethiopia**

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### **Abstract**

*The impacts of human trafficking are currently high across the world albeit different policies are designed to combat it. Yet, governments are not working hard practically and jointly as they write strategies and programs on the paper to reduce the impacts of women trafficking. Even though men are victims of human trafficking, scholars agree that women are the most vulnerable to human trafficking. This study describes the socio-economic impacts of human trafficking among the west Asia returnee young women in Ethiopia by taking Oromia Region's West Shewa zone as a case study. The study used the mixed-method approach. A descriptive case study research design was applied for a detailed description of the socio-economic impacts of human trafficking among west Asia returnee young women. Feminism theory was employed to scrutinize the oppression of young women. The finding reveals that human trafficking caused the divorce of marriage and exposed children to the street because of unwise savings and disagreement of spouses; psychological and physical threats of young women on the way to work, at the workplace and after return; wastage of income as a result of saving money in the wrong place; economic crisis because young women had to pay back the loan to brokers – traffickers – and could not repay the money for lenders; and school dropout. From the finding, it is concluded that although young women exposed to human trafficking by the vision of having their job in the future and the income they could generate in West Asia. They had a dream to improve their lives, they could not realize their dream since they were unable to save the money thereby leading them to social and economic crises. Hence, it is recommended that issues of human trafficking should be incorporated into the school curriculum, at least at the elementary level, so that young women get better awareness about the negative consequences of human trafficking and abstain from traffickers. It is also recommended that young women who work abroad legally should open their formal bank account to save their wages to escape social and economic crises when they return.*

**Keywords:** *Human Trafficking, Irregular Migration, Returnee Women, Ethiopia, West Asia*

### **Introduction**

The issues of human trafficking have been contemplated by different scholars at different times. Human trafficking is a humanitarian problem on a global scale (Mahmoud & Trebesch, 2009; Mahmoud & Trebesch, 2010; Niewiarowska, 2015; WHO, 2012). It is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by social, economic and cultural factors (Abdul Basit, 2018; OSCE, 2005; UNICEF, 2005, p. 5) and has become 'slavery of 21<sup>st</sup> century' (Aronowitz, 2016, p. 2).

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Trafficking of women and children, in particular, has become an alarming rate concern at global arenas (Shewly, 2013). Albeit recent media coverage of the global refugee and migrant crisis has used the terms trafficking and smuggling of migrants interchangeably, they refer to different things in the context of movement of people (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Hence, human trafficking and smuggling are two distinct but interrelated phenomena (IOM, 2018) that require different policy responses (Kleemans, 2011). Human trafficking is recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people that brings high profits to traffickers through the acquisition and exploitation of human beings by improper means such as force, fraud and/or deception. On the other hand, the smuggling of migrants involves the facilitation of illegal entry of a person into a state of which that person is not national or resident for financial or other material benefits (Human Rights Watch, 2015; IOM, 2018; Kleemans, 2011; UNODC, 2020).

Trafficking can occur within a country and/or across borders. Women, men, and children are trafficked for forced and exploitative labor in factories, farms and private households, sexual exploitations, and forced marriages. It affects all regions and most countries of the world (UNHRHC, 2014). There are two sets of factors that are responsible for human trafficking: push factors that include corruption, conflict, poverty, and vulnerability and pull factors such as employment opportunity and life betterment (Bales, 2007). While both factors lead to trafficking and increase vulnerability, the root causes of female trafficking are gender discrimination, large family size, and poverty. Children are recruited from rural areas, usually poor families, for placement in the wealthiest family, usually urban areas, for domestic or sexual purposes (OSCE, 2005).

By the same token, Peerapeng *et al.* (2013) argued that factors such as exchange rate, democracy, migration, and population induce more traffic flow. Besides, Koettl (2009, p. 8) asserted that 'economic exploitation is due to monopolistic labor markets.' Economically speaking, the victims of trafficking redirect the financial benefits of migration from migrants, their families, communities, and governments to traffickers and their associates (UN, 2008). Economic exploitation is probably the biggest motivation behind most cases of human trafficking (World Bank, 2009). In the human trafficking market, the 'consumers are employers of trafficked labors and the products are human beings' (Wheaton, 2010, p. 114). If the fight

against trafficking is successful, funds currently used to fight trafficking crimes may be channeled towards alternative development initiatives (M' Cormack, 2011).

The human and social consequences of trafficking are compelling (UN, 2008, p. 4). Trafficking resulted in high social and economic costs of crime (Reed *et al.*, 2018, p. 26). The impacts of human trafficking on individuals and societies include physical abuse and torture; psychological and emotional trauma; sexual abuse; economic exploitation; gender discrimination; and political implications (Abdul Basit, 2018; UN, 2008). Trafficking undermines extended family ties and in many cases, the absence of women leads to the breakdown of families and neglect of children and the aged members of the family (M'Cormack, 2011).

Individuals, circumstances, situations defenseless to traffickers comprise of homeless persons, runaway teenagers, refugees, displaced homemakers, job seekers, kidnap victims, tourists, and drug/alcohol addicts (Abdul Basit, 2018, p. 78). The majority of transnational human trafficking victims are women – female teenagers, young and adults. When people have no choices, they may have no alternative but to subjugate themselves to exploitation (Koettl, 2009).

Africa faces a challenge as a region of origin for trafficked women and children as well as a region of destination in the sense that most trafficking appears to occur within the continent itself (UNICEF, 2005). Trans-national trafficking of human beings has been a serious problem for years particularly in West Africa (Sawadogo, 2012). To combat human trafficking in Africa, the African Union (AU hereafter) has not had a strong impact on the effect of reducing the seriousness of human trafficking because of state sovereignty practices and lack of the right incentives beyond human right assertions or positions for AU nations to change their migratory and trafficking practices (Mensah-Ankrah & Sarpong, 2017). The experience of African states demonstrates the extent to which effective counter-trafficking measures require to be comprehensive, integrated and targeted at multiple levels within society (UNICEF, 2003).

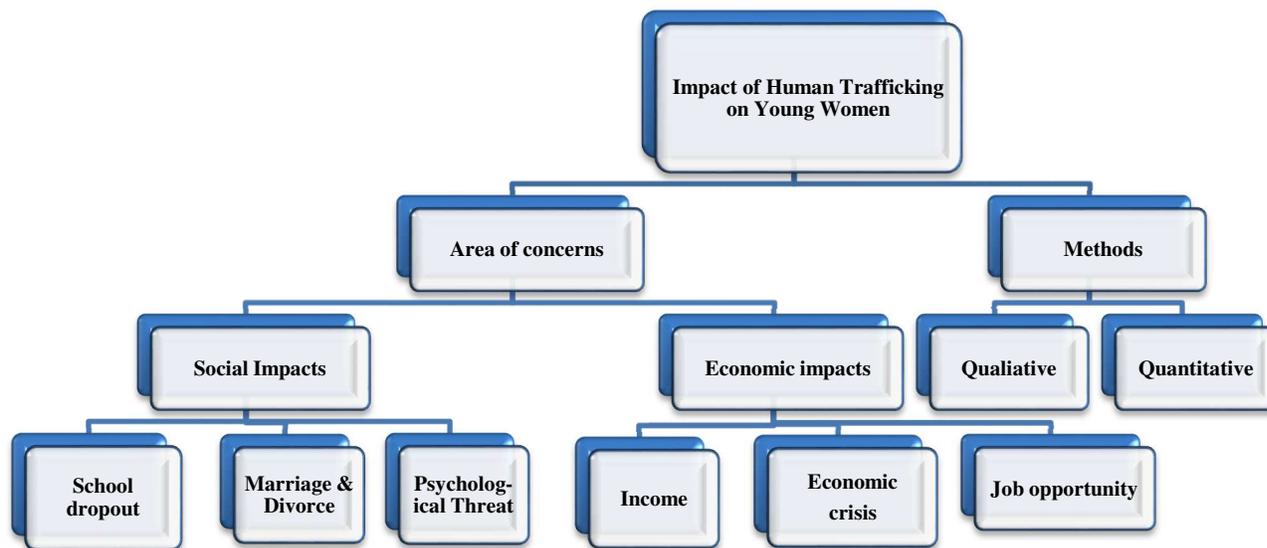
In Ethiopia, structural factors that motivate people to human trafficking are excessive social pressure for pecuniary success, family expectation, institutional submission to economic drives, the impact of migrant networks, the proliferation of migration institutions/employment agents, and peoples' bounded economic calculations. Likewise, poor children, young men, and women have been easily trapped in the trafficking net every day (Murugan & Biniam, 2014). Hence,

trafficking is becoming one of the social, economic and political issues in Ethiopia (Gudetu, 2014). Besides, Ethiopia is a source and, to a lesser extent, a destination and a transit country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Migrants are trafficked through the country *via* three major routes in the east, north, and south (IOM, 2015).

Currently, more than 225,000 women and children are trafficked, which accounts for more than one-third of global human trade in Asia (Perry & McEwing, 2013, p. 1). The number of trafficked Ethiopian women in the Middle East has dramatically increased (Gudetu, 2014). Hence, it needs attention to find the reason behind the increment of women trafficking to the Middle East and its impacts on the socio-economic condition of the returnee young women. This is the primary reason that motivated the researcher to conduct this study. Further, Gezie *et al.* (2019) asserted that the majority of migrants who went under trafficking were from Oromia regional state, making it the second motivational factor to undertake the study in this area. As a result, this study is designed to assess the impacts of human trafficking on socio-economic conditions among west Asia returnee young women in Ethiopia by taking West Shewa *zone* as a case study.

Different studies have been conducted on human trafficking in Ethiopia at different times. Gezie *et al.* (2019) found that half of the returned Ethiopian migrants were trafficked, and the associated factors with human trafficking were sex, household wealth quintile, smuggling status, exposure to seductive information about oversea life, risk-opportunity imbalance before departure, and feeling hopelessness for success at home. Besides, Gudetu (2014) studied that poverty and unemployment are the main causes of human trafficking. Albeit both studies contributed their parts to human trafficking in Ethiopia, they did not discuss the socio-economic impacts of human trafficking among returnee young women. Consequently, the present study is designed to describe the socio-economic impacts of human trafficking among west Asia returnee young women in West Shewa *zone* by using qualitative and quantitative methods. The theoretical framework of this research is summarized as follows.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Research**



Source: Own Summary, 2019

### **Methodology**

To conduct this study, the researcher used a mixed-method approach, *i.e.*, qualitative and quantitative methods. Further, a descriptive case study design was applied for a detailed description of the socio-economic impact of human trafficking among west Asia returnee young women. The qualitative method was used to collect information through a semi-structured interview and focus group discussions from West Shewa *Zone's* Women, Children and Youth Affairs Offices, selected *woredas'* women, children and youth offices and west Asia returnee young women. Besides, the feminist theory was used to analyze qualitative data, particularly, to describe the challenges those women faced on the way, at the workplace and after they return. 'Feminist research is described in terms of its purposes of knowledge about the lives of women, advocacy for women, analysis of gender oppression, and transformation of society' (McHugh, 2014). Feminist research draws upon the struggles and insights of oppressed and disempowered groups, in particular, women, placing them at the center of the research inquiry (Whillsher & Goel, 2017).

The quantitative method was also used to describe the effect of the human trafficking on the income of returnee young women, their livelihood, and ways of life, kinds of the job the returnee created after they had returned. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires from

west Asia returnee young women. In this study, both open-ended and close-ended questionnaires were distributed to 436 west Asia returnee young women and discussed under the analysis section.

The target population of this study included young women who returned from west Asia like Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Yemen and were victims of human trafficking. The researcher purposively selected six *woredas* where the rate of trafficking is said to be high in the West Shewa zone. The *woredas* include *Adea Berga*, *Dandi*, *Ejere*, *Jaldu*, *Meta Robi* and *Meta Welkite*. A stratified sampling technique has been used in such a way to draw the sample size of each *woreda* independently. Yet, for each *woreda*, the sample size was determined by using Yemene (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where: N = total number of the target population

n = sample size

e = level of precision = 0.1

The data of the participants did not include those who are still working in West Asia. The sampled participants were only returnee young women as explained in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Sample Participants**

No.	<i>Woredas</i>	No. of Returnees	Sample Participants
1.	Adea Berga	400	80
2.	Dandi	216	68
3.	Ejere	275	73
4.	Jaldu	280	74
5.	Meta Robi	198	66
6.	Meta Welkite	300	75
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1669</b>	<b>436</b>

Besides, 6 focus group discussions, each consisting of 10 participants, were made with returnee young women to learn from their experiences. For each *woreda*, one focus group discussion was conducted. Therefore a total number of 60 participants shared their experiences. Finally, the collected data were analyzed by the multi-stage method, qualitative and quantitative, data analysis. The qualitative data were analyzed by the content and thematic method of analysis, whereas the quantitative data were analyzed by SPSS version–20 by using simple statistical

frequency distribution. Then, information obtained from the quantitative method was triangulated with information obtained through qualitative methods.

## Results and Discussion

### Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Most of the victims of human trafficking are women, especially, those who are influenced by peer pressure and brokers – usually by human traffickers. Koettl (2009) argued that the majority of transnational human trafficking victims are women, *i.e.* female teenagers, young and adults. The demographic characteristics of the participants were summarized as follows in Table 2 below, focusing on their educational backgrounds, marital status, work status, and age.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Personal Information	Respondents by <i>woreda</i>												Total	
	Adea Berga		Dandi		Ejere		Jaldu		Meta Robi		Meta Welkite			
	<i>f</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>		
Educational status	Write and read	39	48.8	33	48.5	36	49.3	36	48.7	32	48.5	36	48	<b>212</b>
	10 completed	28	35	23	33.8	25	34.3	25	33.8	23	34.8	26	34.7	<b>150</b>
	12 completed	11	13.8	10	14.7	10	13.7	10	13.5	9	13.6	11	14.7	<b>61</b>
	Diploma	2	2.5	1	1.5	1	1.4	1	1.4	1	1.5	2	3	<b>8</b>
	Degree	--	--	1	1.5	1	1.4	2	2.7	1	1.5	--	--	<b>5</b>
Total	80	100	68	100	73	100	74	100	66	100	75	100	<b>436</b>	
Marital status	Single	19	23.8	16	23.5	17	23.3	17	24	15	22	17	22.7	<b>101</b>
	Married	36	45	30	44.1	33	45.2	33	44.6	30	45	34	45	<b>196</b>
	Divorced	16	20	14	20.6	15	20.6	15	20.3	14	21.2	15	20	<b>89</b>
	Widow	9	11.3	8	11.8	8	11	8	10.8	8	12.1	9	12	<b>50</b>
	Total	80	100	68	100	73	100	74	100	66	100	75	100	<b>436</b>
Work status	Traders	29	36.3	25	36.8	27	37	27	36.5	25	37.9	27	36	<b>160</b>
	Homeworkers	20	25	17	25	18	24.7	18	24.3	16	24.2	19	25	<b>108</b>
	Dependent	31	38.8	26	38.2	28	38.4	29	39.2	25	37.9	29	38.7	<b>168</b>
	Total	80	100	68	100	73	100	74	100	66	100	75	100	<b>436</b>
Age	16-26	36	45	31	45.6	33	45.2	34	46	30	45.5	34	45	<b>198</b>
	27-37	29	36.3	25	36.8	27	37	27	36.5	24	36.4	27	36	<b>158</b>
	>38	15	18.8	12	17.7	13	17.8	13	17.6	12	18.2	14	18.7	<b>80</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>436</b>

N.B.: ‘f’ stands for *frequency* in numbers, while ‘p’ refers to the *percentage* of the same.

*Source:* Own Computation Based on Field Data, 2019

### Educational Background of Participants

Regarding the educational background of participants, the majority of them can write and read in all *woredas* under discussion. It is indicated in table 2 above that 48.8% in Adea Berga, 48.5% in

Dandi, 49.3% in Ejere, 48.7% in Jaldu, 48.5% in Meta Robi and 48% in Meta Welkite *woredas* have attended at least elementary school (grades 1–8) studies, and hence, can read and write. It is also evident that about one-third of the participants in almost all of the *woredas* have completed grade 10. Some post-high school diploma holders were exposed to human trafficking in all *woredas* because they preferred to go to west Asian countries in search of jobs. Moreover, a few degree holders were exposed to human trafficking in all *woredas*. Adea Berga and Meta Welkite *woredas* have no degree holder participants subjected to trafficking. Nonetheless, the number of women holding diplomas and degrees was extremely low when compared with those who can write and read, and grade 10 completed in all *woredas*. Due to pressure from peers and traffickers, most of them dropped their education and went to west Asian countries illegally. As the level of their education increases, the chance to be exposed to human trafficking decreases. Hence, there is an inverse linear relationship between women trafficking and levels of education.

### ***Marital Status of Participants***

The marital status of the participants showed that the majority, in all *woredas*, were married. Most of them are those who married as soon as they returned because men believed that returnee young women are rich. Meanwhile, this also exposed others to traffickers as it motivated other women to migrate presuming that they would marry as soon as they return home with the saved money. However, as indicated in the above table 2, a little less than one fourth (ranging from 22% – 24%) of the participants in all *woredas* are still unmarried (single) young women. The variation among single young women across the *woredas* is almost the same. Those women are also exposed to traffickers because their money is consumed either by their parents or spouses. It is also apparent that divorced and widows were exposed to human trafficking.

### ***Work Status of the Participants***

Concerning the work status of the participants, the majority of them in all *woredas* are still dependent on their parents since their money is consumed by others. Others – 36.3% in Adea Berga, 36.8% in Dandi, 37% in Ejere, 36.5% in Jaldu, 37.9% in Meta Robi and 36% in Meta Welkite *woredas* – are traders. Some of them opened small shops with the money they saved in small rural towns. In contrast, some of the participants in all *woredas* are working as housemaids – babysitting, preparing food, cleaning the house, fetching water and collecting firewood.

### ***Age Status of Participants***

Most of the participants – 45% in Adea Berga and Meta Welkite, 45.6% in Dandi, 45.2% in Ejere, 46% in Jaldu and 45.5% in Meta Robi *woredas* – were young women whose ages varied between 16–26 years. This indicates that traffickers focused on young women whom they can pursue, convince and traffic easily. Further, women whose ages are between 27–37 years old participated in all *woredas*. Productive women were exposed to traffickers for the search of better income and life without identifying the places of destination and how they arrived there. On the other hand, the degree of being exposed to human trafficking among women aged greater than 40 years old was low when compared with other participants. As their age increases, the possibility of women being exposed to human trafficking decreases, indicating an inverse relationship between the age of participants and human trafficking.

## **Social and Economic Effects of Human Trafficking on Young Women**

### ***Marriage and Divorce***

The finding revealed that human trafficking has two effects on the marital status of young women – positive and negative. Positively, young women who had returned from west Asian countries got a chance to marry since they came with money. Most young men were looking for females who had money. Men assumed that west Asia's returnee young women accumulated much amount of money. Hence, they want to marry them and take the money of those young women to become rich. Here, men could not understand or care about those females who put their all efforts to save the money. They were simply hurrying to marry them to own the money which they thought would realize their dream of becoming rich. This has become a habit in all areas under investigation. When we compare returnee young women with those who did not go to West Asia, the returnees have a wider chance to marry than the latter. Focus group discussants posited that the possibility to marry is high for returnee young women.

Negatively, the returnee young women ended their marriage for two reasons – the influence of social media and wastage of remittances by recipients. The main cause of divorce was the influence of social media. The married young women who went to west Asian countries were highly influenced by social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Imo and Viber, and divorced their marriage and preferred to marry other men. While they were using social media, they were influenced by men who used social media. Most of those young women were from rural areas.

They were easily convinced by males who advertised themselves to such women carefully and wisely on social media. The interview results from West Shewa Zone’s Women, Children, and Youth Affairs Office Administrator showed that most of the males who did such activities are those who were living in urban areas.

Further, the living conditions and status of rural areas are not the same in urban areas. In west Asia, they worked in the house of the wealthiest people so that the living standard is high – they slept on a clean bed, worked in a clean environment and they easily accessed both electronic and social media. In contrast, they could not get such access and opportunities when they returned to their rural home – the place where they grew up and married former husbands. Hence, the returnee young women had to divorce their former marriage to abandon rural life, and then get married men from towns as a way out towards a better life.

The second reason for divorce was the misuse of the money sent by returnees from West Asia. The focus group discussants argued that ‘we preferred to send money to our brothers or parents believing that they could save money for us than to our husbands.’ Besides, the interview with returnee young women revealed that the money they sent to the members of their family spent for different purposes. Albeit their trust in their parents and brothers than their husbands, in terms of saving money, they could not get that money when they returned since it was totally consumed by their parents and/or brothers. On the other hand, their husbands expect money from them. When their husbands realized that the money they sent to either their brothers or parents was consumed, they preferred to divorce the marriage. Interview results of all *Woredas*’ Women, Children and Youth Offices exhibited that unless that money was saved carefully, it often resulted in suspicious relationships between spouses who led them to divorce.

**Table 3: Responses on Remittance as a Factor of Divorce**

<i>Remittance as Factor of Divorce</i>	<i>Respondents by Woreda</i>												<b>Total</b>
	<b>Adea Berga</b>		<b>Dandi</b>		<b>Ejere</b>		<b>Jaldu</b>		<b>Meta Robi</b>		<b>Meta Welkite</b>		
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	
Yes	60	75	51	75	55	75	56	76	49	74	56	75	<b>327</b>
No	20	25	17	25	18	25	18	24	17	26	19	25	<b>109</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>436</b>

*Source: Own Computation Based on Field Data, 2019*

Table 3 above shows that the majority of the young women in all *woredas*, about 75%, responded that the money that was sent from west Asia proved to be a leading factor of divorce except in cases where it was wisely saved. This partly arose from husbands' expectations that their spouses would return with some lump sum amount of money which might be useful to improve their livelihood. Contrarily, there is a probability in which divorce was initiated by the husbands when they realized that there is no saved money and the money was consumed by someone else. Some women, who trusted their husbands, often directly sent money to their husbands. Most of the young women sent their remittance to their parents, husbands, brothers or sisters, relatives, fiancés, and brokers as indicated in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Recipients of Remittance**

Remittance Recipients	Respondents by <i>Woreda</i>												Total
	Adea Berga		Dandi		Ejere		Jaldu		Meta Robi		Meta Welkite		
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	
Parents	21	26	18	27	19	26	20	27	17	26	20	27	<b>115</b>
Husbands	20	25	17	25	18	25	19	26	17	26	19	25	<b>110</b>
Fiancés	13	16	11	16	12	16	12	16	12	18	11	15	<b>70</b>
Brothers	17	21	15	20	16	22	16	22	14	21	16	21	<b>95</b>
Brokers	7	9	6	9	7	10	7	9	5	8	7	9	<b>39</b>
Own account	2	3	1	2	1	1	--	--	1	1	2	3	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>436</b>

*Source:* Own Computation Based on Field Data, 2019.

As indicated in Table 4 above, only a few young women had opened their accounts and managed to deposit their earnings directly to the accounts. Specifically, only 3% of participants saved money in their account in Adea Berga and Meta Welkite *woredas* whereas only 2% of participants saved money in their account in *Dandi woreda*. In Ejere and Meta Robi *woredas*, only 1% of participants saved money in their accounts. However, no participants saved money in their account in Jaldu *woreda*. Almost all of them sent their money to their relatives to save.

The finding also revealed that the money which was sent to the parents, husbands, fiancés, brothers, and brokers has been consumed by the recipients. Besides, in cases where some amount is saved, refusal by the recipients to transfer to the returnees is also common. It is even found out that husbands have used the remittance of their wives to marry other women since their wives were abroad. Further, the possibility of divorce is higher for spouses who have no children. The cumulative effects of all these among the returnees led to the cycle of migration.

### **Income**

The main reason that motivated young women to human trafficking was/is the difference in income between the home country and destination countries. The large difference between the United States Dollar (USD hereafter) and Ethiopian Birr (ETB hereafter) aggravated the issues more because the money is paid by the USD in west Asia. The currency exchange between the USD and ETB is currently around 30 ETB. If one young woman earned an average of 200 USD in a month in West Asia, it amounted to 6000 ETB, which is so difficult for one person to earn such much money monthly in Ethiopia. The interview results of Women, Children and Youth Office Administrators of all *woredas* under investigation showed that those young women did not realize the challenge they face on the way to the destination and at the workplace after arrival. In the destination countries of west Asia, the available job opportunities included housemaid, babysitting, food preparation, cleaning, *etc.* One of the focus group discussants explained that:

*The money we could get in west Asia is much greater than the money we could get in Ethiopia. The majority of us have no diploma or degree, but we get more money there than people who hold a degree and work in Ethiopia. The minimum money one female could get monthly in west Asia was 4500 ETB. Such money is paid for women who have no work experience or for those who work as housemaids. Women who have experience could get more. For instance, women who have experience could get a net monthly income of 200 – 400 USD, an equivalent of 6000 – 12000 ETB. Accordingly, the annual net income of one female was between 72,000 ETB and 144,000 ETB, which is very high when we compare with domestic incomes. Further, we have no additional expenses since the employers covered the expense of food, clothes and mobile cards [Translated to English by the Author].*

The quantitative results of the data revealed that the mean income of trafficked young women is attractive in west Asia so that other females are being motivated.

**Table 5: Income of Returnee Young Women in west Asia (in ETB)**

No.	Woredas	Mean	St. deviation
1.	Adea Berga	8081.25	2542.60
2.	Dandi	7963.24	2489.26
3.	Ejere	8034.25	2517.07
4.	Jaldu	8067.57	2516.15
5.	Meta Robi	7863.64	2455.05
6.	Meta Welkite	8080	2501.41
	Total	48,089.95	15,021.54
	<b>Average</b>	<b>8014.99</b>	<b>2503.59</b>

*Source:* Own Computation Based on Field Data, 2019

As indicated in Table 5 above, the mean monthly income of returnee young women of Adea Berga *woreda* is 8081.25 ETB, whereas in Dandi, Ejere, Jaldu, Meta Robi and Meta Welkite *woredas* the mean income is 7963.24 ETB, 8034.25 ETB, 8067.57 ETB, 7863.64 ETB, and 8080 ETB respectively. Overall, the mean average monthly income of all sample returnees is 8014.99 ETB. From the respondents, it happened to be clear that the ‘success stories’ of the return migrants is a major motivational factor leading to migration decisions among young women at home thereby increasing their exposure to traffickers.

***Psychological and Physical Threats***

It is already indicated above that most of the money of returnees was consumed by recipients leading to psychological deprivations thereby exposing the majority of young women to mental problems. It was found out from the interview that women who traveled by buses along the migration route of Sudan and Djibouti faced physical problems. The traffickers asked them the money in each corridor. Hence, young women forced to call their parents, husbands, and relatives to get extra money to pay for traffickers in each corridor. Since most of them came from rural areas, they could not contact the people whom they want through the phone. This further intensified psychological pressure. The focus group discussants also reported that those women who could not get and pay money were exposed to various forms of physical harassments including rape. Besides, all the traumas they faced on the way to the destination, they are often subjected to sexual harassment at the home of employers. Most of the time, wives of employers suspected them of having sexual relations, which in turn caused serious punishment like burning faces or cutting legs, hands/fingers including assassination. For example, the dead bodies of more than 10 young women came within one year from west Asian countries. Respondents also reported that many are missing while some of the returnees have lost their sanity and others became beggars.

**Table 6: Psychological and Physical Effects**

Effects	Respondents by <i>Woreda</i>												
	Adea Berga		Dandi		Ejere		Jaldu		Meta Robi		Meta Welkite		Total
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	
Body injuries	25	31	21	31	23	32	23	31	21	32	24	32	
Forced to sex	19	24	16	24	17	23	17	23	15	23	18	24	101
Psychological	5	6	5	6	5	7	5	7	4	6	5	7	30
Arrested & Jailed	14	18	12	18	13	18	14	19	12	18	13	17	78
No threat	17	21	14	21	15	20	15	20	14	21	15	20	90
Total	80	100	68	100	73	100	74	100	66	100	75	100	436

*Source: Own Computation Based on Field Data, 2019*

Table 6 above shows that West Asia returnee young women faced different kinds of threats during traveling and at the workplace. The majority of the participants in all *woredas* faced bodily injuries including hand, leg and other body injuries because they were tortured by traffickers to get extra money and coerced them to have sex with traffickers and their friends. Besides, they were tortured by wives of their employers while working abroad. About one-fourth of participants in Adea Berga, Dandi, and Meta Welkite *woredas*, and 23% of participants in Ejere, Jaldu, and Meta Robi *woredas* were forced to sex during traveling by traffickers and at the workplace by people who employed them. Moreover, 6% of participants in Adea Berga, Dandi, and Meta Robi *woredas*, and 7% in Ejere, Jaldu and Meta Welkite *woredas* of returnee young women faced psychological deprivation due to the aforementioned reasons. Likewise, 18% of participants in Adea Berga, Dandi, Ejere, and Meta Robi *woredas*; 17% of participants in Meta Welkite *woreda*, and 19% of participants in Jaldu *woreda* were arrested by the police in the destination country and put into jail while they were attempting to change the workplace. Only some participants in all *woredas* were free from psychological and physical threats, as clearly stated by a young woman:

*Some of our friends became abnormal due to the psychological threat they faced both on the way to destination countries and at the workplace abroad. Some of our friends were thrown from a high distance of buildings to the floor and passed away. Unless their names are registered through the Ethiopian embassy in the destination country, it is difficult to get the dead bodies since the killers buried them secretly. Parents are waiting here for their return home with money whereas they have passed away. Others face various challenges while trying to change workplaces in an attempt to escape the unbearable workload to which they are subjected. These are the challenges that caused the psychological and physical threats to the young women making them hopeless [Translated to English by the Author].*

Moreover, the interview with West Shewa Zone's Women, Children, and Youth Office Administrator revealed that such psychological and physical effects on women resulted not only in hopelessness but also in suicide.

### ***Living Conditions***

Those women who managed to save a greater proportion of their income lived a good life. Hence, there is a direct and strong relationship between income and living standards of people. In this study, an attempt has been made to identify trafficking affected the living standards of young women either positively or negatively. The findings disclosed that even though improving

their livelihood is the original motive that led to migration decisions, most of the victims of human trafficking still lived the worst life since most of them returned to their home country without enough money. In some cases, they paid much money for brokers but returned home in a few months. Further, some young women borrowed money from others to pay for traffickers, but could not repay so that they worked for the lenders until they repay the loan. Since most of the trafficked young women got jobs illegally, they could not save their earnings in banks besides the fact that employers often refused to pay their wages or pay them irregularly. In a nutshell, the life of trafficked young women was deteriorated as trafficking exposed them to extra expenses during travel towards destinations. Finally, it resulted in the wastage of their savings by recipients at home, often leading to an inability to repay travel loans that only exacerbated their social and economic crises.

### ***Job Opportunity***

Job opportunities can be seen as the causes and consequences of human trafficking. The researcher approached it from the consequence viewpoint – whether the returnee women created job opportunities for themselves by using their savings in case they were successful. In fact, the main driving force that led young women to migrate is the search for job opportunities and better pay. However, only some returnees managed to create job opportunities for themselves. It is found out that the majority of the returnee young women could not create a job for themselves forcing them to re-migrate thereby putting them in the trap of trafficking. It has been found out from the FGDs that many returnees dreamt big because of misinformation about the real living condition in destination countries. However, many of them could not realize their dream because they had very small or no saving in end.

**Table 7: Kinds of Created Job by Returnee Women**

Jobs Created	Respondents by Woreda												Total
	Adea Berga		Dandi		Ejere		Jaldu		Meta Robi		Meta Welkite		
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	
Beauty house	20	25	18	26	19	26	19	26	17	26	19	25	<b>112</b>
Wood works	--	--	--	--	1	1	1	1	--	--	--	--	<b>2</b>
Cafeteria	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1.5	2	3	<b>9</b>
Mini/big shop	17	21	14	21	15	21	15	20	14	21	16	21	<b>91</b>
No job	41	51	35	51	37	51	38	52	34	51.5	38	51	<b>222</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>436</b>

*Source: Own Computation Based on Field Data, 2019*

As indicated in Table 7 above, only half of the returnee young women managed to create job opportunities for themselves in all *woredas*. This exposed them to another trafficking in search of a further job. The kinds of jobs being created by returnee young women are almost the same across *woredas* evident in the fact that about a quarter of returnees in all *woredas* have managed to open beauty salons.

The results also revealed that those who created temporary jobs are located in small towns in rural areas. Consequently, the created jobs – the majority of them are small shops – could not generate a significant amount of income since the demands were very low. Such shops usually had no license that the municipalities often shut them.

On the other hand, the number of returnee young women who opened woodworks, and cafeteria are low when compared with other jobs in all *woredas*. This indicates that many returnee young women could not open permanent jobs which can create job opportunities for others. West Shewa Zone's Women, Children, and Youth Affairs Administrator explained that those young women who created job opportunities not only for themselves but also for others are few. Yet, these are areas of engagement that should be encouraged for its potential to reduce the probability of exposure to traffickers.

### ***School Dropout***

Most females dropped-out of their education and went to west Asia in search of a better life. The main causes were found to be peer influence and brokers' misinformation about the living condition in the destination, exaggerating the benefit of working abroad. However, few success stories of earlier migrants have also motivated young girls to quit their studies and leave for any west Asian countries.

The data revealed that the degree of school dropout and exposure to trafficking is high in the lower classes. The reason behind this is that they could be easily manipulated by brokers. Further, since they are young enough, they can easily follow the footsteps of their friends. As captured by one returnee young woman, the fact remains that continuation of school after the return was also impossible. She pointed out:

*We quit the school and went to west Asian countries. The brokers told us that we would change our life easier if went there. The brokers used unemployed university graduates to further convince us and in fact, we were convinced. Because attending school for several*

*years that finally gives us no jobs, we preferred to go west Asia, earn money that we thought would help us to lead our life without analyzing the challenges we were to face on the long journey to the destination. After we had returned from west Asia, we tried to continue it. But our minds were still bound to think about the money that made the possibility to continue our education is very low [Translated to English by the Author].*

Besides, an interview with West Shewa Zone's Women, Children and Youth Office Administrator confirmed that returnees had a low willingness to continue their education partly because of age factor that forces them to give priority to other aspects of life, thereby diverting their attention away from education.

### ***Heavy Loans***

Most of the young women who had undergone trafficking were from rural areas because the brokers could convince them easily since they were far away from information. In contrast, young women from urban areas are low when we compare with rural areas because they have better awareness that reduced the rate of trafficking among urban women. Most of the young women who were exposed to trafficking in rural areas did not have sufficient money to go to West Asia. The only option for those young women was to obtain informal loans to repay lenders with high interest in the future.

The borrowers use lands and cattle as collaterals. Since using the lands for collateral is not allowed legally in the Ethiopian context, the lenders often use the land for a farm as a mechanism of interest repayment, not principal money. For instance, the interest rate of 1000 ETB was calculated to be 200–400 ETB per month, which is too much for borrowers. If the borrower got 15,000 ETB loans, the interest would be 3000–6000 ETB monthly that is greater than the interest of the bank loans. To get 15,000 ETB, the borrower could get to provide at least a hectare of land that later yields a harvest with a value twice the principal money to benefit the lenders. And the farming continues until the principal money is fully repaid. A deported young woman regretted in the following manner:

*Some of us went to West Asia with a loan. Unfortunately, our employers usually forced us to work beyond our capacity – we worked days and nights without getting rest. We did not know their language since we had not taken training before we went there. To communicate with them, we used symbolic communication. Hence, we obliged to leave those houses where we were working. Any attempt to leave had a consequence of being in the hands of the police without our passports and got imprisoned because our passports were in the hands of people who hired us so that we could not leave without their permission. I was in prison for six months that I was finally deported. And, upon return, I*

*found my families working for lenders as a repayment of the interests of loans that I used for travel. I am now a deportee and my family had no money to repay, making us all servants of our lender [Translated to English by the Author].*

The finding further verified the arguments of M' Cormack (2011) that human trafficking causes society crisis which includes the impacts of family and communities left behind, and gender relations in receiving countries in which women are often sold into sexual slavery. Economic results of human trafficking cause significant remittance losses, particularly in contexts where people seeking migration opportunities for employment end up being trafficked. The borrowers gave different services for lenders instead of interests – fetching water, collecting fire-woods, sweeping houses, preparing food, farming lands, harvesting crops, building houses and compounds. In general, like the law of attraction, human trafficking caused both social and economic crises of young women, which in turn led to family crisis because young women borrowed the initial money from lenders with heavy interests to pay for brokers, use for transportation, and pay at different corridors to pass the border.

### **Conclusion**

Human trafficking, which is also called modern slavery, is a dangerous activity in which persons trade other persons. In today's world, the money motive among traffickers is by far eroding the values of humanity. This study verified that young women are the main victims of human trafficking. Although most returnees dreamt of improving their livelihoods *via* savings and creating jobs, they were exposed to various social and economic problems during the travel to West Asian countries and at the workplace in the destinations. The returnees often tortured, raped and faced other abuses including various forms of physical injury that resulted in psychological deprivation and health threats among the victims. It also caused the divorce of family and thus many children become street dwellers. Many girls dropped out of school because of human trafficking often due to peer influence and misinformation given by brokers or traffickers.

Albeit the money that young women earned in West Asia were attractive wages, they could not save it since it has been consumed or wasted by the recipients including parents, brothers, fiancés, husbands, and brokers. Some paid much amount of money for brokers, but their stay was short to save a meaningful amount of money. Thus, many women were caught in the cycle of

irregular migration that exposed them to another phase of trafficking. Besides, some returnees could not even repay the initial travel loans that they had to become the servant of their lender as a means of loan repayment.

In sum, the returnees' migration decision was justified by personal motives of opening own business and job from their earnings generated abroad; they could not realize their dream as they were unable to save money. On the contrary, the study has found out that most young women who were victims of human trafficking were still living the worst life since most of them returned to their home country without enough savings.

Lastly, it is recommended that issues of human trafficking should be incorporated into the school curriculum, at least at the elementary level, so that young women will have better awareness about irregular migration that could expose them to human trafficking and hence of its consequences. It is also recommended that young women working aboard should possess a bank account to be able to save their earnings to avoid any inconvenience that may arise from sending money to other individuals upon trust. This would reduce the probability of getting savings consumed or wasted by recipients, thereby helping to overcome associated social and economic crises that women face upon return.

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