

DETERMINING THE ETHIOPIAN WOMEN'S STATUS & PRIORITIES

A Study Report
[Summary]

October 2024,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



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PROJECT FINANCE

European Union (EU)

PROJECT DIRECTION

Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA), OXFAM International & High-Level Advisory Panel headed by the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA)

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ABOUT MoWSA, NEWA & OXFAM

The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) is a Federal Ministry established under the proclamation number 1263/2014. It is responsible for the affairs of women, children, youth, and other vulnerable and marginalized sections of the community which includes but is not limited to persons with disabilities, the elderly, the urban destitute, and community members with low socio-economic status.

The Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit network established in 2003 by a group of women aspiring to create synergy and a stronger advocacy voice for women's advancement. It is one of the pioneer national civic society networks working for the respect of the political, economic, social, and legal rights of women.

Similarly, since the early 1970s, OXFAM has been working to address the underlying causes of poverty and marginalization by focusing on sustainable livelihoods, water and sanitation, agricultural development, climate research, gender, and humanitarian assistance.

NEWA and OXFAM implemented this research project in collaboration with the MoWSA.

The European Union (EU) funded the study and provided oversight support through an Advisory Panel constituted of senior experts and gender advocates.

For more information, visit

www.mowsa.gov.et

www.newaethiopia.org

www.Oxfam.org

| PREFACE

The government of Ethiopia has made significant strides in fostering an enabling environment for gender equality and women's empowerment, evidenced by the design and implementation of various policies and strategies aimed at addressing gender inequalities. Despite this effort, social norms entrenched in traditional practices and protracted conflicts in certain regions continue to pose challenges to advancing women's empowerment. Women and girls continue to face the harsh realities of conflict often falling victim to sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

While there exists a broad understanding, there is a lack of comprehensive evidence on the status of women, particularly in crisis settings. Previous studies while useful have been fragmented, resulting in a lack of comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of women's experiences. The absence of a holistic study addressing various dimensions of women's lives has hindered informed decision-making and effective interventions. Recognizing this gap, the current study synthesized from two field research reports, i.e., The Survey of the Ethiopian Women 2023 (SEW 2023) and the Participatory Action Research (PAR), emerges as one of the largest and landmark initiatives in the study of the status of women. By using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study engaged 36,367 women across the country for the survey study and 480 women organized in 24 discussion groups for the qualitative.

We hope that the fresh data collected through the present exercise will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, gender advocates, the media, and researchers. Policymakers can use the findings to craft evidence-based policies, while gender advocates can leverage the results to raise awareness and advocate for policy changes. Development partners can also use this report for country policies and programming. The media personnel can highlight key issues, fostering public discourse and increasing accountability, while scholars can use the work as a stepping stone to generate further knowledge.

The research report indicates the commitment of MoWSA, EU, OXFAM, and NEWA to understanding and addressing the diverse challenges faced by women in Ethiopia today. The investment made in this exercise reflects a shared vision of shaping a more equitable future for women in Ethiopia.

NEWA & OXFAM



| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The successful implementation of the study on Ethiopian Women's Status and Priorities (EWSP) was made possible through the contributions of several individuals and organizations. We extend our deepest gratitude to the EU for their generous financial support, which made the national study possible. Their commitment to empowering Ethiopian women and advancing gender equality is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

NEWA and OXFAM are indebted to the High-Level Advisory Panel headed by the MoWSA, for their guidance, expertise, and unwavering dedication throughout this project. We also acknowledge the support from Women and Social Affairs Bureaus and Offices in regions, towns, and woredas. Women's rights organizations, associations, and structures not only assisted the study but also participated in the Participatory Action Research (PAR).

Special thanks also go to the authors, i.e., Ziade Hailu, Tilahun Girma, Kidist Gebresilasie, Daniel Nigatu, and Tirsit Sahledingil; to the data manager and programmer Girum Getachew, and the quality control officer, Amanuel Kiros. We also extend special recognition to the survey management teams at ECON M. Consultants & ABAMELA Business Consulting for their exemplary coordination, logistical support, and commitment to the success of this survey. Lastly, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the study participants who generously shared with the study team their time, experiences, and insights.

This endeavor would not have been achieved without the collaborative efforts and dedication of each individual and organization mentioned above. Collaboration of partners is indispensable to the advancement of knowledge and understanding of Ethiopian women's concerns.

NEWA & OXFAM



ACRONYMS AND BBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BGRS	Benishangul Gumuz Regional State
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DG	Discussion Group
EA	Enumeration Area
ESS	Ethiopian Statistics Service
EU	European Union
FCV	Fragility, Conflict, and Violence
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IUD	Intrauterine Device
LMS	Labor Force and Migration Survey
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprises
NEWA	Network of Ethiopian Women Associations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
PwD	Persons with Disability
SEW	Survey of Ethiopian Women
SHG	Self-Help Group
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STATA	Statistical Software for Data Science
TV	Television
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WGD	Women Group Discussion
WG	Women Group

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DETERMINING THE
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1

Background

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Overview of the Study

The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). It has adopted several institutional and policy measures that support these goals. It's positions of GEWE as a national priority and is at the centre of its policies as well as legal and institutional frameworks.¹ Apart from mere adoption, the GoE has also implemented a wide range of these policies, laws, and strategies in favour of women to advance and address gender inequalities. It has laid down institutional structures in place for coordinating and monitoring gender mainstreaming, and gender is mainstreamed within key national development and sector-specific plans such as health, education, and industry.

Despite these efforts, gendered norms and practices, as well as conflict and violence hinder progress. Women and girls continue to bear the brunt of conflict and they remain victims of sexual violence and other forms of abuse. This report comes up with a comprehensive assessment of the status of women, their priorities, and the nature of their problems within the current context of Ethiopia, such as when the country grapples with present conflicts and women and girls are major victims.

Previous efforts to study the related topics have been useful but are inadequate – only giving fragmented results on certain conflict hotspots, conducted only on certain gender issues, and are not sufficiently up-to-date. For instance, Zonal level representative data were rarely collected by the national surveys previously done, highlighting the necessity for a deeper understanding of local dynamics. In addition, some data remain outdated, necessitating the current study. This all has hindered informed decision-making and effective interventions.

This Study on the Ethiopian Women's Status and Priorities (EWSP), thus, emerges as a landmark initiative and makes several contributions. In response to the fragmented nature of existing data, the study adopted a holistic approach and gathered data across a spectrum of dimensions offering a comprehensive overview of women's lives using both qualitative and quantitative information. It represents one of the most extensive and comprehensive efforts to date by interviewing 36,367 people all over the country and engaging 440 women in group discussions across eight regions.

The study will serve as a resource for several stakeholders, including policymakers, gender advocates, the media, and researchers. Policymakers can utilize the findings to craft evidence-based policies that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender advocates will find the study useful in their efforts to raise awareness, advocate for policy changes, review and the implementation of existing ones to drive societal transformation. The media personnel can use the information to highlight key issues and foster public discourse, contributing to increased awareness and accountability. Scholars can use the information to generate more knowledge by building on the findings of this report.

¹ The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2019), Fifth National Report on Progress made in the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +25). Document available at <https://shorturl.at/3JsU3>

This exercise stands as proof of the commitment of MoWSA, EU, OXFAM, and NEWA to understanding the diverse challenges faced by women by investing funds and time in the study that can serve as a vital tool in shaping a better future for women in Ethiopia.

1.1.2 Objectives of the Study

The overarching objective of this study is to gather detailed evidence on the status and needs of women across multiple dimensions, i.e., economic conditions, education, health, sexual and gender-based violence, psychological well-being, political participation, peace and security, and access to justice. The data is collected through quantitative surveys conducted in households across 12 regions and 2 City Administrations, covering 119 zones, towns, and sub-cities in Ethiopia. Additionally, by using PAR, qualitative data is collected from 22 women's groups in eight regions. By combining these two methodological approaches, the report aims to generate a comprehensive report and contribute to women's empowerment efforts by informing policy and programming initiatives that address various dimensions essential to women's well-being

1.1.3 Organization of the Study Report

The report provides an overview of a study on Ethiopian women's lives, focusing on demographics, economic indicators, health, education, and resilience. It discusses the prevalence of gender-based violence, women's psychological well-being, and access to justice. The report also explores women's aspirations and agency, including income, security expectations, and political engagement. The report draws conclusions and offers recommendations for policy and programmatic interventions.

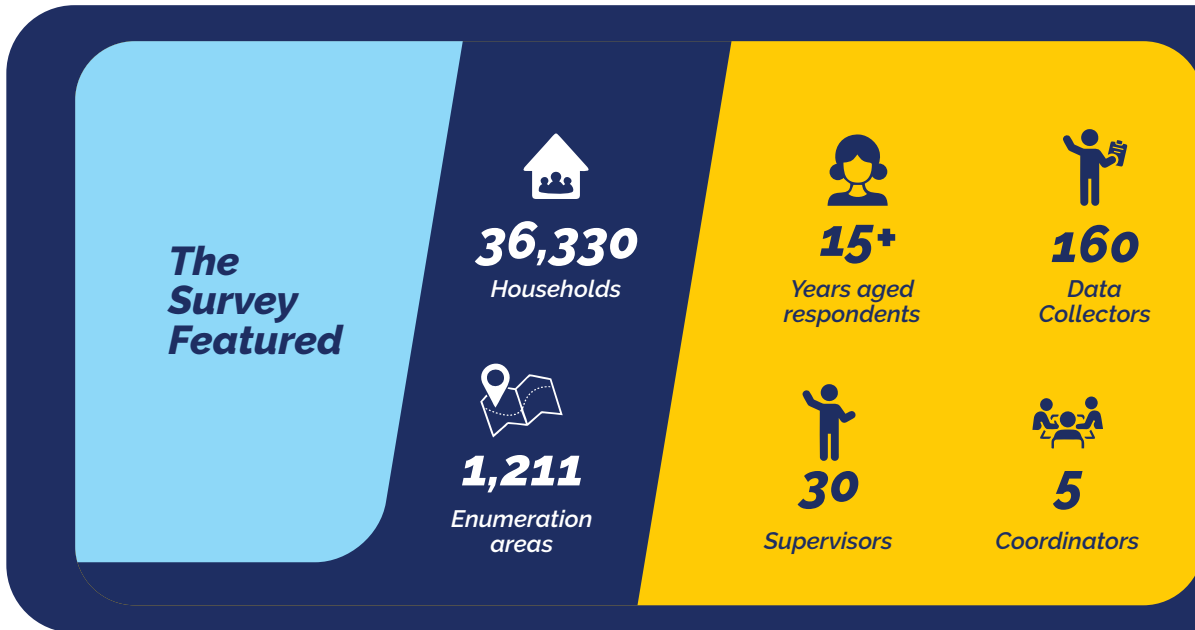
1.2 Methodological Overview

1.2.1 The Survey Methodology

The SEW employed a comprehensive sampling design covering households with individuals aged 15 years or older in urban and rural Ethiopia, excluding insecure areas. The survey featured a representative sample of 36,330 households from 1,211 enumeration areas (EAs), utilizing a sampling frame prepared by the Ethiopian Central Statistics Agency (CSA) in 2018/19. The frame listed 147,602 EAs with location details and estimated household numbers, employing a three-stage stratified cluster sample design for selection.

The survey questionnaire was meticulously developed to capture various aspects of women's empowerment, and was digitized using Kobo Toolbox for efficient data collection. The questionnaire encompassed seven thematic areas, including socio-economic conditions, gender-based violence, psychological well-being, access to justice, women's priorities, political engagement, and peace and security. The survey was conducted face-to-face with respondents aged 15 or above. For field staff, 160 data collectors, 30 supervisors, and 5 coordinators were recruited and trained by experienced professionals, including a pre-test conducted to ensure the questionnaire's validity and reliability.

Fieldwork for the survey commenced promptly after training. It spanned from October 3 to December 1, 2023 across 1233 enumeration areas with 36,990 households in urban and rural areas. Data collection involved face-to-face interviews using structured questionnaires, supported by a Microsoft dashboard for progress tracking and supervision. Subsequent data analysis included thorough cleaning and utilization of SPSS, STATA, and Excel for analysis, with a tabulation plan guiding the creation of statistical and summary tables, graphs, and charts. Data from women's group discussions were transcribed, summarized, thematic analysis conducted.

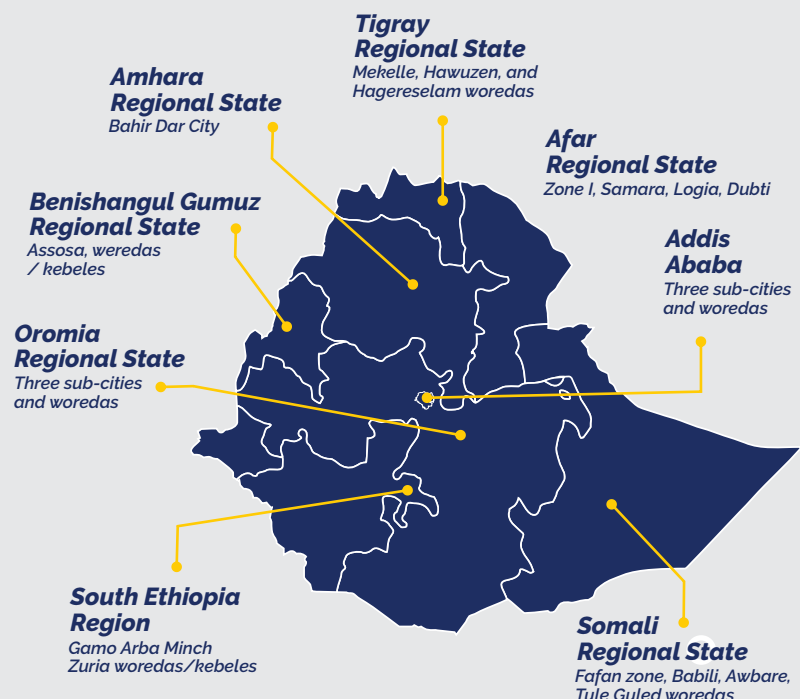


1.2.2 The Qualitative Research Approach

The Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology employed a comprehensive and collaborative approach to data collection and analysis. It was carried out in eight regions of Ethiopia, with the formation of regional hubs comprising Lead Research Supervisors, Project Officers, and representatives from Women Rights Organizations (WROs) starting from September 20, 2023 to December 31, 2023. The regions where the PAR was conducted, along with the specific zones, woredas, and kebeles within each region, are the following:

- Addis Ababa City Administration: Three sub-cities and woredas
- Amhara Regional State: Bahir Dar City
- Oromia Regional State: Metu, Ilu Aba Bora zone, Metu woredas and kebeles
- Benishangul Gumuz Regional State: Assosa, woredas/ kebeles
- South Ethiopia Region: Gamo Zone, Arba Minch Zuria woredas/kebeles
- Tigray Regional State: Mekelle, Hawuzen, and Hagereselam woredas
- Afar Regional State: Zone I, Samara, Logia, Dubti
- Somali Regional State: Fafan zone, Babili, Awbare, Tule Guled woredas

Regions where PAR was conducted



Three women's groups were established in each region, except for Amhara, giving a total of 22 women's groups across the eight regions. Each Women's Group consisted of 20 women members, totaling 60 members in each region. Therefore, with three groups per region and 60 members per group, 180 women participated in women group discussions (WGDs) in each region, contributing to a total of 440 women members spread throughout the eight regions. Additionally, a five-day workshop on PAR guidelines and tools was organized to train the PAR actors on the research process and their roles. The PAR methodology utilized various data collection techniques, including WGDs, key informant interviews, daily routines, transient walks, and timelines.

1.2.3 Mixed Methods /Approaches

The current report was generated by using a mixed-methods research approach. The mixed method is chosen because it allows for drawing strengths inherent in both qualitative and quantitative research approaches and minimizing their limitations. The approach can also help generate a more comprehensive study than otherwise only one approach is employed.²

1.2.4 Challenges and Limitations of the Study

This study encountered some challenges that necessitated strategic planning and adaptive measures. The research was carried out against the backdrop of conflict in some regions, creating a complex environment for data collection. Besides, the dispersed nature of the data collection areas posed logistic challenges. In addition, in regions like Somali, the rainy season made the mobility of field personnel difficult. Furthermore, limited Internet access in the Amhara Region required data collectors to travel back to major towns for data uploading, causing delays in the data collection process. The recruitment of sufficient female data collectors in hard-to-reach areas proved to be also a challenge. Also, during the qualitative data collection, the State of Emergency in the Amhara Region constrained movement and social gatherings. Consequently, the PAR was conducted only in Bahir Dar, involving 20 female discussants.

To address these challenges, the study benefitted from the commitment and experience of data collectors who had previously collaborated with the Ethiopian Statistical Service (ESS) and have overcome similar challenges. A decision was also made to avoid active conflict zones so that unnecessary risks were avoided and the quality of data collected in such contexts wouldn't be valid and reliable. However, the research team did not avoid altogether data collection on such conflict hotspots; instead, data was collected through PAR.

The following zones were excluded from the survey: two Zones in Amhara (South Gondar and East Gojam), two Zones in Tigray (West Tigray and South Tigray), as well as four zones in Oromia (Horo Gudru Wollega, Kelem Wollega, Mirab Wollega, and East Wollega). Similarly, in response to the dispersed location of data collection areas, some hard-to-reach Enumeration Areas (EAs) were replaced to streamline logistics. A robust risk and mitigation plan was developed to proactively manage unforeseen obstacles and enhance the overall resilience of the survey operation.

Some limitations inevitably arise given the fieldwork challenges discussed above. These limitations include potential biases that might have been introduced, especially in domains like psychological indicators, due to the influence of prevailing conflict conditions, potentially inflating certain data points. Despite efforts to mitigate these effects using professional data collectors, social desirability bias (respondents conceal their true opinion to look good to others) might still play a role, particularly with Likert-type questions. Therefore, careful interpretation of, particularly, the survey results was crucial. Also, the report heavily relies on percentage points. While this is the standard practice for survey reporting, interested individuals may conduct a deeper analysis using higher-level statistical methods. Further, the qualitative aspect of the study has also tried to answer some aspects of the "why" and "how" questions that cannot be otherwise answered by quantification.

² John W. Creswell (2017). "Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches." Sage publications

1.2.5 Analytical Framework

The Women’s Empowerment Framework (WEF) is a comprehensive conceptual framework designed to assess and promote various dimensions of women’s empowerment. Originally developed by gender and development scholars such as Kabeer (1999)³, Rowlands (2016)⁴, and others, the framework provides a multi-faceted approach to understanding the factors that contribute to women’s empowerment and the barriers that hinder it.

The WEF encompasses several critical components. Economic empowerment is a central aspect, focusing on women’s access to and control over financial resources, their participation in the labor market, and their economic decision-making power. Educational empowerment is another vital element, involving access to education, completion rates, literacy levels, and opportunities for lifelong learning and skill development. Health empowerment addresses access to healthcare services, reproductive health rights, mental health support, and overall well-being.

Psychological empowerment is also integral to the WEF, relating to self-esteem, confidence, personal autonomy, and freedom from psychological abuse or coercion. Political and civic empowerment is concerned with women’s participation in political processes, representation in decision-making bodies, and engagement in civic activities. Social and cultural empowerment examines the influence of gender norms, cultural practices, family support, and access to social networks. Legal and judicial empowerment pertains to women’s access to justice, legal awareness, protection from gender-based violence, and the enforcement of legal rights.

Finally, the peace and security dimension. This dimension involves understanding the extent to which women are safe from conflict and violence, their participation in peace-building processes, and their overall security in public and private spheres. Moreover, the framework’s components on legal and judicial empowerment, as well as health empowerment, align well with assessing issues related to sexual and gender-based violence. This provides a framework to evaluate the effectiveness of current legal protections and support systems. The WEF supports the use of both quantitative and qualitative data, as they are applied in this study’s methodology.

Conceptual framework

2023

Ethiopian Women's Status and Priorities

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Social & Economic Themes

Economic Empowerment
Health Empowerment
Educational Empowerment

Aspirations & Agency

Political & Civic Engagement
Attaining Peace & Security

Opportunities & Resilience

Safety from SGBV
Psychological Empowerment
Access to Justice

³ Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women’s empowerment. *Development and change*, 30(3), 435-464.

⁴ Rowlands, J. (2016). Power in practice: Bringing Understandings and Analysis of power into Development Action in *Oxfam*. *IDS Bulletin*, 47(5), 119-130

2 Key Findings

2.1 THEMES IN WOMEN'S LIVES

This summary covers a wide range of topics related to women's lives, starting with economic data and moving on to women's health and wellbeing. Important data about education and learning opportunities are also included, with special attention to literacy, digital literacy, educational goals, and barriers to education.



2.1.1 WOMEN'S ECONOMIC STATUS

- Despite some progress in women's economic participation, a significant gender gap remains, with a majority of women engaged in self-employment or unpaid family work. Inquired about their work engagement in the 7 days preceding the survey, 27.3% of women reported being involved in productive economic employment, 41.3% in domestic work, and 17.8% in both productive and domestic activities. This means about 45.1% of women operate in productive employment. The findings for productive employment are comparable with those obtained for Labor Force and Migration Survey, LMS (ESS, 2021), which found that 42.4% of employed women were working during the 7 days before the survey.
- The data shows that cooking and preparing meals were the most common domestic activities of women across all age categories, regions, and household headship statuses, with 82.5% of the women engaged in these tasks. This figure is significantly higher than the next most common activity, cleaning utensils and the house, which was reported by only 4.1% of women.
- According to the data, 59.6% of women own residential housing. Among those who own, joint ownership is the most common type, accounting for 75.0% of ownership cases. This is followed by women who own their homes alone at 19.8%, while 5.3% have both sole and joint ownership.
- About 40.4% of women possess agricultural land. Among these, 74.8% of them own it jointly, while 21.7% hold it individually and 3.6% have both joint and individual ownership. Additionally, nearly 15.0% of these women do not have any documentation for their agricultural land, whereas 61.1% claim to possess a land certificate.

THEMES IN WOMEN'S LIVES

RESILIENCE AND RESILIENCE

ASPIRATIONS AND AGENCY

Women's Economic Status

Women's Access To Education

Health Status



Women Employment

27.3%

Productive Works

41.3%

Domestic Works

17.8%

Productive and Domestic Works

- The majority of the Ethiopian women participants in the study reported using agricultural inputs, including improved seeds (57.7%), chemical fertilizers (65.5%), pesticides/insecticides/herbicides (60.9%), and plough oxen (51.7%). Additionally, 51.5% are aware of soil and water conservation methods. However, a significant number of these women lack access to irrigation (73.6%) and extension program services (62.3%). Although some women participate in joint decision-making regarding assets and finances, a significant number of them still lack control over key economic resources and decisions, particularly in male-headed households. The vast majority of married women reported making property disposition decisions jointly with their husbands, with the distribution of shared decision-making ranging from 83.5% for borrowing (using the house or land as collateral) to 92.2% for controlling income from sales of products;
- Nearly 12.7% of married women do not participate in decisions regarding borrowing by using the land as collateral, whereas 9.7% of them do not participate in decision-making to transfer (bequeath, inheritance, etc.) or rent out the household land.
- Also, a large number of married women are excluded from decision-making on the income they earned (33.1%), income earned by their spouses (31.6%), big household purchases (32.3%), selling produce (29.4%), and how to spend the loan she received (24.0%).
- About 42.8% of women in male-headed households own agricultural land; however 4.1 to 12.7% of married women are excluded from various land-related decision-making activities. Additionally, 33.1% of married women cannot decide on income generated from IGAs. While 2.8% use credit from formal sources, 24.0% of married women lack decision-making power regarding loan expenditures. This indicates that women's ownership of assets and access to finance do not ensure their control over these resources, which has significant implications for women's empowerment.

- Majority (57.3%) of women do not own a bank account, and of those women who own it, only 38.4% own exclusively, and 4.3% jointly.
- The data shows that women's membership in organizations is limited. The highest percentage of women's membership is found in women's associations (9.6%), followed by SHGs (4.3%), youth associations (2.4%), professional associations (1.5%), MSEs, and trade unions (1.4% each). Notably, women seem to have higher participation rates in women's associations compared to other types of organizations. However, overall, the data across all categories indicate that there is still significant room for improvement in women's representation and involvement in various organizations.
- The majority of women who participated in this research reported being affected by various shocks, with 60.3% citing unusual rises in food prices, 42.6% facing rising inputs costs or unavailability, 20.9% facing local unrest or violence, 20.8% affected by war, 14.4% by drought, and 13.1% by illness of a household member. The top two sources of shocks show no discernible difference between women in male-headed and female-headed households. However, variations do exist: war is more impactful for women in female-headed households, and illness of household members is more significant than drought.
- Results show that 8.2% of women are currently enrolled as PSNP beneficiaries. The figure is consistent with PSNP's targeting of nearly 10% of the population of Ethiopia with a focus on food insecure beneficiary households and woredas. In addition to the social protection program, 11.5% of women reported benefitting from humanitarian aid over the 12 months before the survey.
- In addition to survey results, the findings from PAR also show significant barriers to Women's Economic Empowerment. These barriers encompass challenges at the individual, family, and community levels, such as limited vision, time mismanagement, and unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities as indicated by WGDs conducted in regions such as in three sub-cities of Addis Ababa and Assosa (Benishangul-Gumuz). Additionally, women encounter obstacles in accessing business ideas, training, and financial literacy, impeding their economic advancement as highlighted by WGDs in Arba Minch Zuria woredas (South Ethiopia).
- Moreover, conflict and post-conflict situations exacerbate economic difficulties by disrupting markets and infrastructure, leading to heightened unemployment rates. Results of WGDs in Mekelle, Hawuzen, and Hagereselam woredas (Tigray region) indicate that gender-based violence, family disruptions, and the rise of female-headed households in conflict-affected areas further compound women's challenges, restricting their access to paid employment and investment opportunities as well as perpetuating their social and economic inequalities.



2.1.2 WOMEN'S HEALTH STATUS

- The results show that while most women (73.6%) believe they can receive healthcare services, the majority of them (81.5%) are only aware that such services are available.
- Gaps exist in healthcare infrastructure, particularly in post-war areas, rural, and underserved areas, affecting women's access to SRH services. Findings from PAR show that in urban areas like Addis Ababa, while healthcare services are physically accessible, challenges related drug availability and affordability persist, including the shortage of essential medicines. In Tigray, especially in IDP sites, women encounter limited access to healthcare services due to both medication shortages and inadequate facilities.
- High cost of healthcare services (30.2%) and the lack of health insurance (26.3%) also cause significant barriers especially to women's healthcare access. Additionally, the lack of transportation (15.1%) and long waiting times (10.9%) pose significant obstacles, indicating logistical and infrastructural barriers. The problem was more pronounced in rural areas.
- 36.3% of women said they had received information regarding sexual and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS during the past 12 months.
- The qualitative findings also emphasized the challenges women face in accessing sexual and reproductive health information. Cultural barriers and healthcare providers' attitudes hinder open communication about these topics, particularly in rural areas where discussing sexual and reproductive health remains taboo.

- The data reveals that 60.7% of women use some form of family planning method. The regional analysis uncovers substantial differences in family planning utilization, with particularly high rates in Southwest Ethiopia (80.4%) and Addis Ababa (73.5%), while the Somali Region records a markedly lower usage rate of 20.5%.
- The Survey provides information about various types of sanitary pads among women in the reproductive age group (15-49), showing that 57.7% use disposable pads, 9.3% use recycled, and 29.2% use locally made ones. The main reasons cited for not using disposable sanitary pads include limited accessibility (42.9%), affordability issues (17.1%), and lack of awareness (27.2%).



2.1.3 WOMEN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- The literacy rate for women in Ethiopia is 55.1% which is relatively low compared to other sub-Saharan African countries. For instance, Kenya and South Africa have higher female literacy rates, often exceeding 70%.
- Women in the 15-29 age group have the highest literacy rate at 76.3%, while those in the 50+ age group have the lowest at 17.1%. Also, women in urban areas are more likely to be educated than their rural counterparts.
- In terms of digital literacy, 15% of women can use computers, 21.8% can use the internet, and 53.8% say they own a cell phone.
- The analysis of women's educational challenges shows that 45.3% faced obstacles in pursuing their desired level of education. Key constraints include lack of family support (30%), financial constraints (27.2%) and unpaid care work responsibilities (15.6%).
- In terms of women's perception of girls' education, 72.9% want equal opportunity for boys and girls while 10.9% want better opportunity for boys. Only 10% say that female children should get more opportunities.
- The survey showed a stark contrast in literacy rates across wealth quintiles, with those in the high-wealth quintile exhibiting the highest literacy rates, while those in the low-wealth quintile significantly lagging.
- Qualitative findings from Assosa (Benishangul Gumuz) and Bahirdar (Amhara) further reveal that despite advancements, women and girls encounter several factors affecting their education. These factors include cultural norms and practices, gender stereotypes, gender-based violence, early or child marriage, and teenage pregnancy, all of which affect girls' access to and completion of education. Vulnerable groups, particularly women with disabilities face additional hurdles, and unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) responsibilities emerged prominent in most discussion groups.
- WGD participants in Samara, Logia, and Dubti (Afar) highlight that the cultural norms of their community prioritize early marriage over girls' education. In Bahir Dar (Amhara), the identified challenges include long distances to schools and safety concerns exacerbated by armed conflicts. In Tigray, the war-induced destruction of schools has affected access to education.



Literacy Rate (15-29 Years)



Literacy Rate (50+ Years)



Use Computers



Faced obstacles in pursuing education



Want Equal Opportunity

2.2 CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE

This part highlights women's challenges and resilience, particularly spotlighting SGBV, psychological indicators, and access to justice.

2.2.1 SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

- The prevalence of all forms of gender-based violence during the 12 months before the survey was 20.2%, with Sidama, Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions leading in the incidence.
- As to the physical violence, 9.3% of women who participated in the survey had experienced it within 12 months preceding the survey. The most common perpetrators of physical violence were intimate partners, with husbands or partners being the primary offenders in most categories.
- In terms of sexual violence, the survey result indicates that 6.0% of women had experienced one or more forms of sexual violence in the 12 months prior the survey, which is nearly similar to 6.5% result reported by DHS 2016. The survey also shows that 13.3% and 5.8% of women had experienced some form of psychological and economic abuse respectively within 12 months preceding the survey.
- The survey revealed that 14.0% of women attempted to seek help after experiencing violence. Among them, more than half (55.2%) said that were unable to get any.
- Overall, 81.0% of women reported having heard of female circumcision, with 48.5% of them stating that they have been circumcised. Somali (83.5%) and Afar (70.2%) regions show the highest FGM prevalence.
- Using evidence from Tigray, the PAR findings show how all types of violence could be worsened during armed conflicts. The PAR findings show a big challenge in this regard.
- The research further uncovers the extent of response made to SGBV in war-torn areas and among displaced populations. GBV survivor discussant in Mekelle and Hawuzen (both in Tigray Region) underscored that stakeholders' attention to SGBV victims is insufficient to meet their needs. Not only is there a lack of accountability against the victims, but survivors also urgently need essentials like food, shelter, counselling, and access to safe houses to seek refuge and support.

2.2.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND COPING MECHANISMS

The study also explored key dimensions of women's mental and emotional well-being using various constructs including women's self-efficacy, psychological well-being, self-esteem, satisfaction levels, and stress levels:

- Results on self-efficacy dimensions suggest a predominance of positive responses, with the mean values ranging from a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 60, and an average score of 48.8. However, Women's Group Discussion results suggest pervasive gender inequalities that persist in most communities, perpetuating low self-efficacy among women. For instance, participants from Logia (Afar) shared experiences of constant self-doubt due to cultural prejudices hindering their confidence and decision-making skills. Likewise, discussions in Oromia-Metu focused on the detrimental effects of psychological violence stemming from harmful practices.
- Satisfaction was captured using standard measures related to family, friends, job, earnings/income, the house women live in, and overall life. The average reported mean score is 27.7, indicating that Ethiopian women generally experience a moderate level of satisfaction across the six measured dimensions. The minimum and maximum mean values recorded were 7 and 49 respectively.
- Stress and anxiety levels among Ethiopian women were also assessed by using various standard concerns such as job security, financial stability, finding a suitable partner, and facing unexpected expenses. The results indicate an average score of 14.6 suggesting that Ethiopian women experience a relatively high level of stress and worry across the five elements measured. The mean score ranges from a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 25.

- The survey result on psychological well-being and self-esteem among Ethiopian women shows an average mean score is 23.6, with a possible range from 12 (minimum) to 60 (maximum). This indicates a moderate level of psychological well-being and self-esteem among the surveyed population.

2.2.3 WOMEN'S ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- The total percentage of women who reported disputes within 12 months preceding the survey is 5.1%. The sources of these disputes include land (21%), family members (45%), divorce (9.5%), and property, among others. Urban areas had a higher percentage of dispute cases at 5.9% compared to 4.7% in rural areas.
- Among those who had dispute cases, 45% received support to resolve their dispute. Local mediation (61.8%) was the most significant form of support, followed by legal service (21.4%) and legal Aid (12.6%).
- Out of those who received support, 66.6% said they were satisfied but 21.2% were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

2.3 ASPIRATIONS AND AGENCY

This part presents women's aspirations and agency, encompassing their priorities, aspirations in governance structures, their political and civic engagement, and perceptions of peace and security as follows.

2.3.1 WOMEN'S PRIORITIES AND ASPIRATIONS

- 69.30% of women who participated in the survey reported low or very low aspirations to engage in government leadership positions, while just 13.8% expressed high aspirations. While the majority of women feel they don't have access to power and are disconnected from structures leading towards it, the small number of them (13.80%) who expressed high expectations suggested some women still seek to break barriers.
- The survey identified women's priority agenda across regions in Ethiopia. Safety and security emerged as the most significant concern, prioritized by 71.6% of women. Economic opportunities were the second most significant concern, with 61.1% of women prioritizing it. Access to healthcare was another key priority, with 55.5% of women prioritizing this issue. Infrastructure and basic services were also a significant concern prioritized by 36.2% of women. Other priorities include social welfare and support networks (17.8%) and participation in politics (2.4%), and other issues (0.4%).

2.3.2 POLITICS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Regarding women's awareness of laws and policies, the Ethiopian Constitution has received highest level of awareness, with 52.40% of respondents stating they know some rights enshrined in it. This was followed by awareness about land laws and Criminal Law (48.90%), Family Law and Women's Rights (45.90%), and women's policy (35.60%). The lowest level of awareness was observed for Labour Law, with only 24%.
- While the survey findings suggest that nearly half of the women possess some understanding of laws, a compelling anecdote from WGDs (e.g., Assosa in Benishangul-Gumuz) illustrates the difficulties women face such as in terms of their land rights because of lack of legal awareness.

- The survey revealed that 84.1% of women know the name of the current prime minister, 35.8% are aware of the president's name, and 44.5% know the name of the ruling party.
- In terms of political attitude, 53.1% of women disapprove of the belief that men are better leaders while 34.4% of women still hold that belief. Also, 67.2% believe that it would be beneficial to elect a woman in leadership positions in the country and 71% support electing women as woreda chairperson.
- The survey found that 77.1% of women plan to vote in the next election and 71.6% were registered and voted in the last election. Out of those who failed to vote (n=9162), the major reasons for not voting included being underage (49.2%), reluctance to vote (13.1%), failure to get voting card on time (10.2%), illness (8.3%), lack of time to vote (5.8%), and fear of violence at electoral polls (3%).
- Among the survey participants, 8.4% of them reported they are members of women groups, 1.9% members of Woreda or kebele administration or council, 2.1% members of local judiciary or Woreda council, and 2.1% members of Political parties.
- While PAR results show improved women's participation (e.g. Awbare woreda in Somali region, Semera in Afar) in politics, some WGD participants (e.g. in Assosa) reported that they feel confused by the political system, including they believe their voices are not or cannot be genuinely or adequately represented.

2.3.3 THE STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY

- Regarding women's perception of the state of peace, 56% of the respondents described their environment as peaceful, while 10% think that the peace situation is improving in their neighbourhood. In contrast, about 16.6% feel that the peace situation is deteriorating over the past year, and 17.2% say there is no peace at all. The Amhara region has the highest percentage of respondents indicating that there is no peace at all (52%), followed by 48.4% of women believe the peace situation is worsening.
- Despite the statistics painting a relatively upbeat picture, WGD discussants from urban areas in Addis Ababa, Tigray, Benishangul and Amhara showed challenges women face in their sense of security and safety.
- Major types of conflict that women face include: armed conflicts (29.5%), conflict over resources (12%), ethnic-based conflicts (14.1%), religious conflicts (6%), conflicts over boundaries (16.5%), and robbery (13.4%).
- Among women who participated in the surveys, 30.2% of them said they worry about the safety of themselves and their family always or often, while 47.4% said they worry rarely or never. Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz and Tigray regions have a high percentage of fear emanating from armed conflicts, while the Afar region shows a particularly high level of fear due to robbery.
- The survey shows that 17.4% of women suffered from armed conflict during the past year. Women in Benishangul Gumuz, Afar, Amhara and Tigray had the highest prevalence of suffering from armed conflict. Out of those who faced armed conflict, 47.4% were internally displaced.
- Women's role in peace initiatives is minimal, with only 0.9% participating as leaders or organizers, and 15.5% participating as volunteers or participants. Additionally, 37.7% of women expressed interest in being involved in peace initiatives, while 45.9% were not interested or unable to participate.
- In addition to the survey results, the findings from discussions with participants from IDP camps in Mekelle (Tigray) reveal a distressing lack of security, particularly impacting the safety of women and girls. Residents describe a concern /climate of fear, where theft, harassment, and lack of protection are the norm.
- Even if some women demonstrate a strong interest in participating in peace initiatives, the study reveals several barriers to it. WGD conducted at Bahir Dar (Amhara) and Arba Minch Zuria Woreda (South Ethiopia) suggests social norms, inadequate education, and limited access to resources affect their participation.

3

Conclusions and Recommendations

As mentioned hitherto, the objective of this study was to generate comprehensive evidence on women's status and priorities on an array of dimensions essential to their wellbeing. The study used quantitative data from households in 12 regions and 2 City Administrations, covering 119 zones, towns, and sub-cities. Additionally, the study gathered qualitative information from 8 regions engaging women groups using PAR methodologies. Based on the results and discussions presented in the preceding sections, we draw the following conclusions.



Economic

Persistent gender inequality in employment: Despite some progress made in women's economic participation, a significant gender gap remains, with a majority of women engaged in self-employment or unpaid family work, reflecting ongoing cultural resistance to women's productive employment and their disproportionate responsibility for unpaid domestic and care work.

Low participation in local organizations: Women's participation in local organizations and trade unions is notably low, which limits their access to information, opportunities, and platforms to voice their concerns, thereby increasing their vulnerability to various forms of violence and hindering their economic empowerment.

Unequal decision-making power: Although some women participate in joint decisions regarding assets and finances, a substantial number of them still lack control over key economic resources and decisions, particularly in male-headed households. This means having a certificate of asset ownership and access to financial resources by women does not necessarily translate into their decision-making power over the use of those assets and resources. This undermines their economic empowerment and overall well-being.

Barriers to agricultural productivity: Women face significant challenges in accessing essential agricultural inputs and services, such as irrigation and extension services, which hampers their ability to contribute effectively to agriculture and food security, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support female farmers.

Access to energy: some women still rely on biomass for cooking fuel, which poses them health risks and raises concerns of environmental sustainability. This persists even in urban areas like Addis Ababa, indicating a critical need for expanding access to cleaner energy sources.

Impact of economic shocks and conflict: Women are disproportionately affected by economic shocks, such as rising food prices, input costs, and conflict. These events exacerbate gender-specific vulnerabilities, including increased gender-based violence, family disruptions, and psychological trauma, necessitating a comprehensive



Health



Geographic disparities in healthcare access: Significant regional disparities exist in healthcare access among Ethiopian women, with some regions like Sidama facing more pronounced challenges.

Financial barriers to healthcare: A substantial number of Ethiopian women face financial barriers that prevent them from accessing necessary healthcare services. This financial burden is exacerbated in female-headed households and low-income groups.

Decline in health extension services: There has been a notable decline in the effectiveness of Health Extension Workers (HEWs) in rural areas. This reduction in service quality and outreach is impacting women's health, particularly in remote regions where HEWs are often the primary source of healthcare information and services.

High levels of healthcare discrimination and stigma: Ethiopian women frequently experience discrimination and stigma within healthcare settings, which discourages them from seeking the necessary care. This systemic issue underscores the need for significant improvements in healthcare training and policies to create a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Insufficient sexual and reproductive health education: There are disparities in women's awareness of sexual and reproductive health information. Challenges like cultural barriers and limited resources persist, particularly in rural areas.



Education



The literacy rate for women in Ethiopia is low at 55.1% even compared with some sub-Saharan African countries. For instance, countries like Kenya and South Africa have higher female literacy rates, often exceeding 70%. This suggests the need for more effective literacy programs and policies to close the gap and improve educational outcomes for women.

Age-related disparities in literacy rates: The findings show that literacy rates among Ethiopian women significantly vary with age. Younger women 15-29 exhibit the highest literacy rates, whereas older women, especially those aged 50 or above, face much lower literacy rates.

Impact of socioeconomic and regional factors: Educational attainment for women in Ethiopia is heavily influenced by socioeconomic status and regional location.

Urban-rural educational divide: There is a notable difference in educational achievements between urban and rural areas, with urban women generally achieving higher levels of education. Additionally, women face diverse and complex obstacles in pursuing education, such as economic challenges, unpaid care and domestic work, child marriage, and difficulties faced by women with disabilities.

3.1 Challenges and resilience

SGBV

The prevalence of violence against women varies across different age groups, with the highest rates observed, as expected, among younger women. Moreover, those women who are engaged, married polygamously, and separated stand out with higher percentages. Regionally, disparities are evident, with Sidama, Afar, and Gambella exhibiting the highest rates of DGBV. Additionally, women in low wealth quintiles and those residing in rural areas experience higher levels of violence, underscoring the intersection of poverty and vulnerability.

The overall prevalence of violence against women stands at 20.2%, but the figures may not fully reflect the true picture of this problem because the perpetrators of violence may underreport or conceal the problems. Besides, victims themselves may not always be aware of certain forms of violence or do not recognize such problems are in fact forms of violence, such as economic deprivation and emotional manipulation. This leads to not capturing all forms of violence on official statistics. Further, women in IDP camps and those in active conflict areas are highly vulnerable to all types of gender-based violence while this violence is not comprehensively reported.

Psychological factors

Self-efficacy: Results on self-efficacy dimensions suggest the dominance of positive responses but they also reveal that factors such as traditional gender roles, limited access to education and economic opportunities, and societal expectations undermine women's struggles toward their self-esteem. Women often express feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy, impacting their confidence and decision-making abilities.

Life satisfaction: Findings suggest that many Ethiopian women experience lower levels of life satisfaction due to various factors in their current life situations, citing challenges related to financial stability, access to healthcare, and conflict context, among others. These factors contribute to a sense of dissatisfaction and hinder women's overall well-being.

Stress and worry: Stress and worry are common psychological experiences faced by women, particularly in the face of social and economic challenges such as poverty, gender-based violence, and limited access to resources.

Well-being and self-esteem: Ethiopian women, mostly struggle with low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness, influenced by societal norms and cultural beliefs. Women reported facing discrimination, violence, and marginalization, which negatively impacted their sense of well-being and self-esteem.

Aspirations and Agency

Perception of security prospects: Women in Ethiopia not only face significant security concerns, with a considerable number feeling unsafe, but also anticipate the situation to worsen in the future.

Aspirations to engage in governance structures: The majority of Ethiopian women have low aspirations to engage in local governance structures, indicating systemic barriers to it such as lack of education, resources, and cultural norms.

Major priority issues: Safety and security are the top priority concerns for Ethiopian women, reflecting their actual experiences against a backdrop of conflict, violence, and fragility. Economic opportunities and access to healthcare are also significant concerns.

Politics and civic engagement

Political awareness and attitude: The majority of Ethiopian women feel they cannot understand what is going on in politics, indicating difficulties in their engagement. Education has a significant positive impact on political awareness and attitudes towards the exercise of power. Educated women are more likely to question authority and believe women should have the same chance of being elected as men.

Awareness of policies and legislations: There are varying levels of awareness among Ethiopian women regarding key laws and policies, with notable differences across age groups.

Peace and security

Participation in peace processes: Women's participation in peace and security processes in Ethiopia remains alarmingly low. Despite the critical roles they play in conflict prevention, mediation, and post-conflict reconstruction, their voices and perspectives are consistently marginalized. This gender imbalance reflects deeper societal inequalities and patriarchal norms that continue to restrict women's access to positions of political and military leadership.

Regional disparities in safety and security: There are notable regional differences in women's perceptions of safety. Women in regions like Afar and Harari feel safer compared to those in Benishangul Gumuz and Amhara where security concerns were heightened in previous years.

Impact of armed conflicts: Armed conflicts are a major concern, especially in Amhara, Tigray, and Benishangul Gumuz regions. These conflicts have severe implications for women's safety, leading to high levels of fear, displacement, and a breakdown of social order, necessitating urgent conflict resolution and peace-building efforts.

GBV and structural barriers: GBV remains a significant problem, along with structural barriers like limited access to job opportunities, education, and healthcare.

Varying perceptions of the state of peace: While majority of women describe their neighbourhoods as peaceful, others feel the situation is deteriorating or that there is no peace at all. This split perception points to uneven experiences of peace and security, influenced by regional and local dynamics, and highlights the need for targeted peace-building initiatives.

3.2 Recommendations

Economic empowerment and livelihood

Government Stakeholders:

- A. **Customized support for women:** Considering the diverse status and priorities of women across different geographic locations and demographic profiles, it is important to customize interventions suitable to the different demographic and geographic characteristics.
- B. **Practical measures:** Ownership and access to resources alone do not guarantee women's decision-making power, rather additional measures should be taken to practically empower them to make decisions on their assets.
- C. **Strengthen access to land ownership:** In line with Strategic Pillar 8 (Gender and Social Inclusion) of the ten-year national development plan (2021-2030):(i) Strengthen regulatory frameworks supporting women's access to assets (land and housing) ownership and implementing the policies to ensure equitable asset ownership rights for women; (ii) Expand land and housing certification efforts by including women's names in documents, especially for women in male-headed households, to protect their land rights..
- D. **Enhance social protection programs:** The findings suggest that social protection programs such as the PSNP and UPSNP can be enhanced to reach more women in need and provide them with financial support during times of economic hardship. It is also important to establish gender-sensitive robust early warning and crisis response systems to strengthen women's ability to cope and enhance their resilience to sustain their livelihoods.
- E. **Provide women with access to inputs:** It is important to increase access to inputs for women e.g., irrigation, extension programs and technology-related information to reduce their vulnerability to climate-related shocks, etc.
- F. **Support women's entrepreneurship:** It is imperative to promote financial inclusion through initiatives that increase women's access to financial services, such as savings accounts, microfinance, and insurance schemes. To this end, it is important to increase their financial literacy such as through training and mentorship to enhance their financial management skills. Besides, funding opportunities should also be made available to support women entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses. The support may also consider linking women to available job/employment opportunities. Special attention maybe given to emerging regions and rural contexts where opportunities are limited.
- G. **Promote financial inclusion laws:** It is important to ensure that financial regulations are responsive to women's needs and priorities and enforcement mechanisms are put in place to enhance women's decision-making over the allocation of financial resources such as loans;
- H. **Increase access to women's education:** It is important to increase women's access to education and adult education in particular to help enhance their agency and access to employment opportunities.
- I. **Alternative sources of energy:** It is necessary to strengthen the provision of women with access to alternative energy sources including support with the necessary technical training to reduce unfavorable health and environmental implications of using biomass as a source of light and for cooking fuel.
- J. **Develop supportive policies and programs that enable women:** For instance, it is necessary to enact a gender equality and women's empowerment policy under revision; implement and enforce labour laws that promote gender equality to participate fully and fairly in the labor market; promote the practice of gender-responsive budgeting and implementation among policy- and decision-makers at various levels; and promote and enforce employer-based childcare facilities (indicated in strategic pillar 9 of the Ten-year development plan) to enhance women's participation in productive employment.

NGOs/ Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):

- A. **Advocate for women's rights:** NGOs and CSOs can bring impact in collaboration with grassroots organizations and women's groups to advocate for policies and legislation that promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Also, they need to work towards creating awareness to influence the overriding community misperception about women's engagement in income generation activities.
- B. **Capacity building:** NGOs/CSOs need to enhance training and capacity-building programs for women on entrepreneurship, financial management, and leadership skills to augment their economic opportunities and empowerment. It is also important to provide need-based support to women to use their land to get credit based on the newly announced Rural Land Use and Management Proclamation (2024).

Development Partners:

- A. **Support policy reforms and economic development:** Provide technical assistance and financial support to enact and implement policies that promote women's economic rights and opportunities, particularly support projects that promote women's land rights, financial inclusion and economic empowerment.
- B. **Foster partnerships:** Collaborate with local organizations and government agencies to implement gender-responsive programs and interventions that address the specific needs and priorities of women in different regions of Ethiopia.

Health

Government

- A. **Improve healthcare accessibility:** It is necessary to enhance investment in healthcare infrastructure, particularly in post-war zones and rural and underserved areas, to increase access to healthcare services for women. This can be done through building back better government initiatives, especially in the war-affected areas. This includes addressing barriers such as the high cost of healthcare services, lack of health insurance, and transportation challenges.
- B. **Strengthen sexual and reproductive health education:** It is recommended that the state should implement comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education programs in schools, communities, and healthcare facilities to ensure women have access to accurate information and resources to make informed decisions about their reproductive health.
- C. **Enhance family planning services:** It is also recommended that the state should expand access to a variety of family planning methods, including contraceptives and reproductive health services, and ensure availability in all regions. Additionally, it is important to invest in targeted campaigns to raise awareness about family planning and address cultural barriers to its use. Mother and Child health (MCH) and SRH services need particular focus.
- D. **Address menstrual health needs:** It should be emphasized that the state should develop initiatives to improve access to affordable and hygienic menstrual hygiene products, such as sanitary pads, and provide education on menstrual hygiene management to girls and women, including information on available options and proper disposal methods.

NGOs & CSOs:

- A. **Conduct community health education programs:** For a greater impact, it is important for NGOs/CSOs collaborate with local communities to implement health education programs focused on sexual and reproductive health, family planning, and menstrual hygiene management. These programs should be culturally sensitive and tailored to the specific needs of different regions and populations.
- B. **Advocate for policy change:** It is important to advocate for the adoption and implementation of policies that prioritize women's health, including measures to address barriers to healthcare access, improve reproductive health services, and ensure access to affordable menstrual hygiene products.
- C. **Provide support services:** It is necessary to offer support services for women's health, including counseling, reproductive health clinics, and community-based healthcare initiatives, to address the diverse needs of women across Ethiopia.

International Partners:

- A. **Support health infrastructure development:** Provide technical and financial support to the Ethiopian government to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and improve access to quality healthcare services for women, particularly in rural and remote areas.
- B. **Fund reproductive health programs:** Allocate funding to support reproductive health programs and initiatives that aim to improve access to family planning services, maternal healthcare, and sexual and reproductive health education for women and girls.
- C. **Partner with local organizations:** Collaborate with local organizations and government agencies to implement women's health programs and interventions, leveraging local expertise and resources to maximize impact and reach diverse populations.

Education**Government**

- A. **Enhance access to education:** The study results suggest that it is crucial to implement policies and programs aimed at increasing access to education (e.g. adult education) for women and girls, particularly in rural and underserved areas, and mostly focus on those above 30 years. Invest in educational institutions that have been affected by war; Address the observed gap in literacy rates across wealth quintiles must be prioritized to ensure equitable access to education for Ethiopian women. To effectively tackle this issue, targeted interventions should be implemented to provide tailored educational support and resources for women in the low-wealth quintile.
- B. **Address barriers to education:** The government needs to develop initiatives to address the barriers faced by women and girls in pursuing education, including lack of family support, financial constraints, and unpaid care work responsibilities. Provide targeted support and incentives to encourage girls' enrollment and retention in schools.
- C. **Promote digital literacy:** Integrating digital literacy programs into the education curriculum is also essential to ensure that women and girls have the skills to navigate and utilize technology effectively. Provide access to computer and internet resources in schools and communities to bridge the digital divide.

NGOs & CSOs:

- A. **Advocate for gender-responsive policies:** NGOs//CSOs need to strengthen advocacy for the adoption and implementation of gender-responsive policies and legislation that promote equal access to education for women and girls. It is also imperative to raise awareness about the importance of girls' education and the benefits of gender equality in education.
- B. **Provide educational support services:** NGOs/CSOs should also play role in offering educational support services, such as scholarships, mentorship programs, and tutoring services, to empower women and girls to overcome barriers to education and achieve academic success.
- C. **Conduct community outreach:** It is important to consider conducting community outreach and awareness campaigns to promote the value of education for women and girls, to challenge gender norms and stereotypes, and to mobilize support for girls' education at the grassroots level.

International Partners:

- A. **Support education initiatives:** It is recommended to provide technical and financial support to education initiatives aimed at improving access to quality education for women and girls in Ethiopia. Additionally, investing in initiatives that cater to the unique requirements of marginalized and vulnerable populations, such as rural girls, girls with disabilities, and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, is essential.
- B. **Promote gender equality in education:** It is advisable to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment principles into education programs and policies, with a focus on eliminating gender disparities in education access, retention, and completion rates.
- C. **Collaborate on capacity building:** Collaborating with local organizations and government agencies is essential to strengthening capacity within education systems and institutions. This partnership can encompass various initiatives, including teacher training, curriculum development, and monitoring and evaluation, to ensure the adoption of gender-responsive and inclusive educational practices.

SGBV and Safety

Government

- A. **Enhance access to justice:** The government should improve the responsiveness of the justice system to GBV cases by establishing specialized courts, providing training for law enforcement officials and legal professionals on gender-sensitive approaches, and ensuring survivors have access to legal aid services, mainly in the setting of post-conflict justice agenda. To ensure justice for GBV survivors, it is important to expedite legal proceedings and bolster law enforcement efforts. This includes specialized training for personnel and establishing dedicated units within law enforcement agencies to address GBV promptly and effectively. Particularly, there is a need to strengthen and institutionalize one-stop centers and create more access to safe houses, as well as promote women's representation in GBV response.
- B. **Implement prevention programs:** It is recommended that the government develops and implements comprehensive prevention programs that address the root causes of GBV. These programs should aim to challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes, and promote gender equality and respectful relationships.
- C. **Expand Support Services:** The government needs to increase funding and resources for support services for GBV survivors, including shelters, hotlines, counseling, and medical and psychosocial support.

NGOs & CSOs:

- A. **Raise awareness:** NGOs/CSOs should conduct awareness-raising campaigns to educate the public about the prevalence and consequences of GBV, encourage survivors to seek help, and mobilize communities to take action to prevent violence.
- B. **Provide support and advocacy:** They should also offer support services for GBV survivors, including counseling, legal assistance, and safe spaces, and advocate for the rights and needs of survivors at the local, national, and international levels. They may also advocate for the implementation of Transitional Justice policy.
- C. **Engage men and boys:** Interventions should engage men and boys as allies in the fight against GBV through education and awareness programs that promote positive masculinity, challenge harmful gender norms, and encourage men to speak out against violence. It is also important to advocate so that gender issues are integrated to school systems.

International Partners:

- A. **Provide technical and financial support:** International partners may offer technical assistance and financial support to strengthen national GBV response systems, including capacity building for government agencies, civil society organizations, and service providers. This assistance and service should include the affected population in IDP camps.
- B. **Foster collaboration:** International partners need to also foster partnerships and collaboration between governments, civil society organizations, and international agencies to coordinate efforts, share best practices, and maximize resources for GBV prevention and response.
- C. **Advocate for policy change:** International partners should advocate for policy reforms at both national and international levels to emphasize the prevention and response to GBV, allocate sufficient resources, and ensure governments are held accountable for addressing GBV effectively. Additionally, they may support the implementation of the recently enacted Transitional Justice policy.

Psychological Wellbeing

Government

- A. **Invest in Mental Health Infrastructure:** The government needs to allocate resources towards expanding mental health facilities and services, especially in underserved rural areas, to ensure accessibility for all women.
- B. **Implement mental health policies:** The government should also develop and implement policies that prioritize mental health awareness, education, and support programs, integrating them into existing healthcare systems. It should provide trainings and counseling services on trauma healing in regions like Tigray, Amhara and BGRS.
- C. **Address socioeconomic stressors:** To address the stressors identified in the research, the government should implement socioeconomic policies that target issues like job insecurity and financial instability, alleviating pressure on women's mental wellbeing. Additionally, it is crucial to support the establishment of comprehensive rehabilitation centers and safe spaces with service referral linkages. Furthermore, strengthen and expand counseling services (individual, peer, group, and societal) to effectively address the trauma experienced by women and society.

NGOs/CSOs:

- A. Provide mental health support services:** To enhance mental health care accessibility for women, NGOs/CSOs are recommended to establish community-based support services such as counseling, therapy, and support groups that are culturally appropriate. Initially, focus on Tigray, Amhara, BRG, and communities in select areas of Oromia to address immediate needs effectively.
- B. Advocate for women's mental health rights:** For NGOs/CSOs, it is advisable to advocate for policies and programs that prioritize women's mental health rights. This advocacy should include initiatives aimed at addressing gender-specific stressors and promoting gender-sensitive mental health care.
- C. Raise awareness:** NGOs/CSOs can also conduct awareness campaigns and educational workshops to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and encourage women to seek help when needed.

International Partners:

- A. Provide technical and financial support:** International partners should provide technical assistance and financial support to strengthen mental health infrastructure and capacity-building efforts. This support should be targeted at rural and marginalized communities, as well as post-war areas like Tigray, to improve mental health services and accessibility.
- B. Capacity building:** International partners can also support capacity-building initiatives for local mental health professionals, including training programs, workshops, and exchanges with experts from other countries.
- C. Research and Data Collection:** Research and data collection are crucial for understanding the mental health needs of Ethiopian women. International partners can support these efforts to inform evidence-based interventions and policies, ensuring targeted and effective support for women's mental health.

Access to Justice

Government Actions:

- A. Strengthening legal frameworks for dispute resolution:** The government should focus on enhancing legal frameworks and mechanisms for resolving disputes, particularly addressing issues related to land, divorce, and property rights that disproportionately affect women.
- B. Improving access to legal services for women in rural areas:** To enhance access to legal services and legal aid programs, especially in rural areas where women may encounter greater challenges in seeking justice, it is essential to invest in training and capacity-building programs for legal professionals and community mediators. This ensures they are well-equipped to handle cases involving women's rights effectively.
- C. Ensuring justice for gender-based violence cases:** It is necessary to establish specialized courts or tribunals dedicated to handling cases of gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination against women to ensure swift and impartial justice. Additionally, the government should strengthen the capacity of police personnel in investigating GBV cases and consider organizing separate GBV case benches or waiting rooms for enhanced support and efficiency.

NGOs/CSOs:

- A. **Legal awareness and education:** NGOs/CSOs may work on legal awareness and education programs to inform women about their rights and available legal remedies.
- B. **Promoting policy reforms for women's access to justice:** NGOs/CSOs may also advocate for policy reforms and enhancements within the justice system to address systemic barriers and biases that impede women's access to justice. The advocacy should emphasize the active participation and benefits for women, including survivors and victims, in the Transitional Justice policy and its processes.
- C. **Promoting community-based dispute resolution for women:** NGOs/CSOs may also facilitate establishing community-based mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms that prioritize the needs and interests of women, guaranteeing their meaningful participation throughout the process.

International Partners:

- A. **Promoting gender-responsive justice systems in Ethiopia:** International partners may support initiatives aimed at enhancing the rule of law and fostering gender-responsive justice systems in Ethiopia through technical assistance and capacity-building programs.
- B. **Enhancing women's access to justice in marginalized communities:** International partners may also allocate funding to projects offering legal assistance and support services to women, especially in rural and marginalized communities, to improve their access to justice. There should be a collaborate with local stakeholders to assess and enhance the effectiveness of legal aid programs and dispute resolution mechanisms, identifying areas for improvement and successful practices to replicate.

Politics and Civic Engagement**Government:**

- A. **Enhance legal literacy programs:** To enhance women's awareness of laws and policies, especially in less-known areas like Labor Law, the government should implement comprehensive legal literacy programs. These initiatives should provide accessible and culturally sensitive information through community outreach and educational campaigns to empower women with knowledge about their rights and protections.
- B. **Promote women's political representation:** To enhance women's representation in political leadership roles across all levels of government, the government should implement affirmative action policies. This can include the establishment of gender quotas in electoral systems to guarantee equitable representation of women in decision-making bodies. Such measures can help promote gender equality and ensure diverse perspectives in governance.
- C. **Ensure electoral participation:** To promote women's participation in elections, the government should improve electoral processes by addressing logistical challenges and providing security measures at polling stations to create a safe and inclusive voting environment.

NGOs/CSOs:

- A. **Empower women's political participation:** It is recommended that NGOs/CSOs enhance training and capacity-building programs to empower women to effectively engage in political processes. Offering leadership training, advocacy skills development, and mentorship programs can equip women with the necessary tools to navigate political spaces successfully.
- B. **Promote women's rights awareness:** To promote awareness of women's rights, including their constitutional rights and relevant laws in Ethiopia, NGOs/CSOs need to conduct awareness campaigns and community workshops. Additionally, fostering grassroots activism and advocacy initiatives can amplify women's voices and advance gender equality effectively.
- C. **Strengthen civic education:** Collaboration between NGOs/CSOs and other stakeholders including the government is indispensable to enhance civic education programs, focusing on women's rights, citizenship responsibilities, and electoral processes. Women's participation in politics can be enhanced also by engaging men.

International Partners:

- A. **Support women's political leadership:** International partners need to provide technical and financial support to initiatives that promote women's political leadership and participation. They need to also fund capacity-building programs for women leaders, electoral observation missions, and civil society organizations advocating for gender-inclusive governance.
- B. **Advocate for gender equality policies:** These partners can also advocate for the adoption and implementation of gender equality policies and legislation at the national level, including measures to enhance women's representation in political institutions. They should also support efforts to mainstream gender considerations in electoral laws and regulations.
- C. **Monitor and evaluate electoral processes:** To enhance monitoring and evaluation of electoral processes, especially with a focus on gender-sensitive indicators and women's participation, it is recommended that the international partners support initiatives that promote transparency and accountability. This support can be made, for example, by providing funding for independent electoral observation missions and supporting efforts that prioritize gender equality within electoral systems.

Peace and Security

Government Actions:

- A. **Promoting peace and security:** Needless to mention, it is the responsibility of the government to strengthen efforts to promote peace and security across the country through conflict resolution mechanisms, peace-building initiatives, and community dialogue platforms. It should invest in conflict prevention and resolution programs that address the root causes of conflict and promote social cohesion, particularly in conflict-affected regions. Even though the conflict geography varies from time to time, the current state of conflict shows that focus should be made on Amhara, BGR, Tigray, Gambella regions and parts of Oromia. Women should be engaged in all peace processes, dialogue and initiatives.
- B. **Implement policies:** It is important to strengthen policy implementation to create more job opportunities and improve access to education and healthcare, addressing key concerns raised by women. It is also recommended to invest in infrastructure development, especially in providing access to clean drinking water, roads, and healthcare facilities, to improve security and well-being in communities. Additionally, developing comprehensive strategies to prevent and address GBV, such as enhancing support services, raising awareness through campaigns, and implementing legal reforms to safeguard women's rights, is crucial.

NGOs/CSOs:

It is recommended that CSOs/NGOs need to work to enhance community-driven peace-building initiatives by implementing conflict mediation and reconciliation programs that target deep-seated tensions and foster social cohesion at the grassroots level. Women should be actively engaged as integral participants in peace-building endeavors, leveraging their roles as peace ambassadors and community influencers. Empowering women through tailored training and assistance can enable them to actively engage in peace-building activities and advocate for their rights both locally and nationally. Supportive networks and secure environments should be established for women impacted by armed conflicts or violence, providing counseling, legal aid, and economic support to strengthen their resilience and aid in their recovery.

International Partners:

The study findings underscore the importance of providing both technical and financial support for peace-building and conflict resolution initiatives in Ethiopia. This support should focus on enhancing the capacity of local peace actors, facilitating dialogue processes, and promoting inclusive approaches to peace-building. International partners are encouraged to offer technical and financial assistance to bolster government and civil society efforts in advancing peace, security, and gender equality in Ethiopia. It is essential to fund programs aimed at improving women's access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, while also addressing the root causes of insecurity and violence. Furthermore, supporting capacity-building initiatives to strengthen local institutions and empower women to participate in decision-making processes related to peace and security at all levels is crucial.

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