

**Ethiopian Economics Association
(EEA)**



***Women's Economic Empowerment in Ethiopia:
A Semi-systematic Review***

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R., Tesfaye Z., Dilu Shaleka, and Assefa S.**

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Summary

This semi-systematic review is based on 40 articles published between 2010 and 2021 in peer-reviewed journals. The review also considered different theoretical, methodological, and conceptual frameworks relevant to women economic empowerment. The review has identified communalities in gender gaps in economic empowerment and the underlying determinants of these gaps in different areas. The review indicated women in Ethiopia are facing with various constraints such as limited access to: management and control over agricultural resources and technologies, agricultural extension and financial services and institutional support. Moreover, although women supply agricultural labor, in most cases they have limited decision making power on issues that affect their economic welfare. Women's limited access to productive assets and decision making also results in women's lowered market participation. On the other hand, women's involvement in running MSEs enabled women to be more involved in decision making, both at home and in the community.

It has also been noted that self-help groups (SHGs) and collective action have positive effects on three dimensions of women's empowerment. Female SHGs showed higher mobility, more socially empowered and able to participate in decision-making, better access to resources, and rights and entitlements within communities, hence were more politically empowered. However, in pastoral community, men were said to own more livestock than women because they were perceived to be more knowledgeable about the subject. As a result, men had more decision-making power over livestock and land and the final say about their management. On the other hand, women make decisions about how to use and when to sell milk, butter, chickens, and eggs without consulting male household members. In the pastoral community, although men dominate most of the pastoral livelihood diversification activities, women are also playing significant roles in petty trade, poultry farming, and selling of firewood, which increases women's workload and income and improves their decision-making power in the household. However, more men than women participate in animal trade which is traced back to the inequality between women's and men's access to live animals. The low participation of women in such remunerative activities has negative impacts on women's agency and economic empowerment.

1. Background

1.1. Introduction

Closing gender gaps has continued to be a critical dimension in global development circles. The Sustainable Development Goals framework call for renewed efforts to reduce gender discrimination and increase empowerment, with a stronger emphasis on the promotion of a more active role for women as decision makers and owners of economic resources. In this regard, Ethiopia has demonstrated a strong political commitment to advance gender equality and women's rights with the aim to close the gender gaps. As a case in point, the country has registered an increasing women's participation in political and public life and gender parity in the cabinet. Yet, both in Ethiopia and beyond, women face unprecedented barriers in joining formal jobs, have lower levels of education than men-particularly at secondary and tertiary levels-and have significant wage gaps compared to men (World Economic Forum, 2021).

In Ethiopia, women's productive role and labor force participation has increased consistently in the recent two decades. However, the gender differential in terms of paid employment, productivity and success in entrepreneurship shows that women are significantly disadvantaged when compared to men. The World Bank's 'Ethiopia Gender Diagnostic Report' of 2019 documented that:

Women are less likely than men to be paid for their work: over half of all women engaged in the agricultural sector, for example, receive no payment. ...In small-scale manufacturing, 58 percent of female workers are unpaid family workers, relative to 40 percent of male workers. Female farmers have lower rates of agricultural productivity than their male counterparts, and in entrepreneurship, female owned firms underperform than those owned by men in an array of critical dimensions including profitability, survival rate, average size, and growth trajectory. (p. 8)

Women in Ethiopia are still experiencing gender inequalities and economic marginalization. This marginalization includes limited access to, and control over, resources (such as land) and services (access to finance, extension, and training) (IDRC, 2020). Such marginalization and discrimination of women in Ethiopia has restricted women's roles in economic development and impeded their human development. In the Ethiopian economy, women do not participate in high growth sectors and a majority of women, if employed, work in the agriculture sector with

substantially unequal access and control over productive resources (Walker & Kulkarni, 2021).

According to the World Economic Forum (2021), Ethiopia has closed 69.1% of its gender gap, which was 66.2% in 2016 and ranks 97th out of 156 countries (an improvement from a rank of 109th in 2016). The country has made significant progress on the health and survival sub-index (97.1% gap closed) and 38.2% of the gap has been a share portion from Women's Political Empowerment. In terms of economic participation and opportunity, 56% of the gender gap has been closed (a 3.9 percentage point drop from 2016) which ranks Ethiopia 128th globally. This corroborated the fact that Women's economic participation is still too limited. Facts depict that 87.7% of the labor participation gender gap has been closed, but only one-third of professional and technical roles (29.9%) and one-fourth of senior roles (26.5%) are assumed by women, corresponding to a 63.9% gender gap among legislators, senior officials, and managers. Beyond inequality in access to labor force opportunities, financial disparities continue to represent a major area of concern for working women and their dependents. In these conditions, wage and income gaps remain relatively large: 50.9% of the wage gap and 42% of the income gap are yet to close as compared to countries in Africa such as Rwanda. It ranked 5th globally as the country closed 80.9% of the gap (World Economic Forum 2021). Moreover, Ethiopia ranked 123rd out of 162 countries on the UNDP's Gender Inequality Index (2019). This is an indication that gender gap continues to exist between men and women in economic opportunities in Ethiopia. As a result, women's lower status in the society significantly constrains the effort to attain sustainable development goals in Ethiopia (Bayeh, 2016). Even though Women's economic empowerment (WEE) has attracted high-level policy interest, it lacks a standardized definition and standard, measurable, and comparable indicators, and is plagued by large data gaps, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Williams et al., 2022).

This empirical literature review provides analysis of empirical literature on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) in Ethiopia to narrow the evidence gap and highlight potential priority areas for policy and programme interventions. The subsequent part of this review is organized and structured into seven parts; the second chapter is about conceptualization of gender and economic empowerment, where the different approaches to gender and economic empowerment are discussed. The third part deals with overview of review methodology and approach. The fourth part deals with the analysis and synthesis of relevant literature and, implications from the review. Finally, the fifth part deals with gaps in literature, sixth part conclusion, and part seven deals with implications.

1.2. Objectives of the review

The review aims to give a clear picture of the state of knowledge on women's economic empowerment (WEE) in Ethiopia and propose research agenda specifically, in addressing the following questions.

1. How is WEE conceptualized in scientific literature so far?
2. What are the major barriers, drivers, and enablers on WEE in Ethiopia?
3. What are the key gaps in the empirical literature? Are there areas that need to be addressed and covered?
4. What are the key suggestions for future research in the area?

1.3. Scope of the review

The review considers works relevant to Women Economic Empowerment (WEE). These include empirical literature such as research reports and journal articles searched from Taylor & Francis, Elsevier's Science Direct, JSTOR, Wiley, SAGE and World Bank. Temporally, the review focused on empirical works on Women Economic Empowerment published in the last ten years (2010-2021) available as full text in the English language. specially, it picked more of the empirical studies published on Ethiopia including urban and rural settings, as well as research on agricultural and pastoral systems. Thematically, women's economic empowerment dimensions: access to resource, decision, and control over resources; agency and power of women were key pillars in this review.

2. Conceptualization of gender and economic empowerment

2.1 Definition of Women Economic Empowerment (WEE)

This section of the review focuses on the definition of women's economic empowerment as a process, with dimensions such as resources, agency and power, and achievements constitute the main areas in which women exercise choices previously denied to them. Several development agencies have come up with definitions of women's economic empowerment to help guide their work. In this section the review examines the definition of women's economic empowerment given by various development agencies thereby identify the overlap and common elements of focus by development actors. In section two the paper reviews theoretical, conceptual, and methodological frameworks on women economic

empowerment based on prominent theoretical literature and, at the end a synthesis of conceptualizing women economic empowerment is provided.

International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW): According to ICRW's (2018) definition, a woman is said to be economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions. For instance, to succeed and advance economically, women need the skills and resources to compete in market, as well as fair and equal access to economic institutions. Similarly, to have the power and agency to benefit from economic activities, women need to have the ability to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits. In this definition, economic empowerment is comprised of two inter-related components: (i) economic advancement and (ii) power and agency.

OXFAM's Definition of Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Oxfam asserts that effective economic empowerment for women occur when women enjoy their rights to control and benefit from resources, assets, income and their own time, and when they have the ability to manage risk and improve their economic status and wellbeing. However, for WEE to translate into meaningful empowerment, women must also have the autonomy and self-belief to make changes in their own lives, including having the agency and power to organize and influence decision making, while enjoying equal rights to men and freedom from violence (OXFAM, 2017).

Investing in Women Initiative Design Document: Economic empowerment is the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways which recognizes the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth (Investing in Women Initiative Design Document, 2015).

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI): ODI adopts the following definitions of WEE: the economic empowerment of women and girls is understood by us to be a process whereby women and girls experience transformation in power and agency, as well as economic advancement (ODI, 2014).

CARE's Definition of Women Economic Empowerment: CARE defines women's economic empowerment as the process by which women increase their right to economic resources and power to make decisions to benefit themselves, their

families, and their communities. This requires equal access to and control over economic resources, assets, and opportunities as well as long term changes in social norms and economic structures that benefit women and men equally (CARE, 2020).

Donor Committee on Enterprise Development’s (DCED), World Bank’s and OECD-DAC’s Definition of Women Economic Empowerment:

DCED defines WEE as: a woman is economically empowered when she has both: a) access to resources: the options to advance economically; and b) agency: the power to make and act on economic decisions (DCED, 2014). World Bank (2006) defines women’s economic empowerment as: economic empowerment is about making markets work for women (at the policy level) and empowering women to compete in markets (at the agency level) (World Bank, 2006). The OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality defined women’s economic empowerment as their ‘capacity to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth process in ways that recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth’ (OECD, 2011).

SIDA’s Definition of Women Economic Empowerment: A paper by SIDA on women’s economic empowerment defined WEE as: the process which increases women’s real power over economic decisions that influence their lives and priorities in society. Women’s economic empowerment can be achieved through equal access to and control over critical economic resources and opportunities, and the elimination of structural gender inequalities in the labor market including a better sharing of unpaid care work (Tornqvist & Schmitz, 2009).

As seen in the preceding sections, there are clear overlap in the definitions and conceptualization of women’s economic empowerment, with much accentuation on economic advancement, choice and access to resources, control over resources, agency and power, and decision-making as a common theme. The definitions by the institutions also implicate on women’s role in creating formidable institutions that accelerates the processes of empowerment. Hence, for the review team, WEE entails processes, acts and outcomes that enables women to access and use resources, control over resources, and sustainably transform their lives, undermining all discriminations directed against women.

2.2 Theoretical of WEE Analysis: The Concept of Feminist Economics

Feminist economics is a school of economic thought and political action that gained important visibility during the 1990s. Since then, feminist economics has developed its own concepts, analytical frameworks, and methodologies. With gender as a central category, it seeks a more integral and humane comprehension of the economy and of the processes of inclusion and exclusion taking place in it. In addition, feminist economics has grown into a political practice that aims at improving the functioning of the economic system so that all people can have access to a dignified life on the basis of equality (Agenjo-Calderón & Gálvez-Muñoz, 2019). Feminist economics aimed to emphasize the institutional constraints that had burdened personal and interpersonal choices, customs, habits, and peer pressure, which had shaped social conventions as well as social sanctions applied to unconventional choices. Feminist economics focused on the critique of male supremacy as well as on the struggle for women's emancipation in any field, including science and academic disciplines and, more recently, on the fundamental role of gender connotations to explain social dynamics (Becchio, 2020). Feminist economics conceived the notion of gendered-biased norms as a constraint on both women's voice and gender equality. Hence, feminist economics developed an alternative model of rationality able to overcome the masculine notions of objectivity, logic, and abstraction that led to social inequalities that had especially involved women's conditions in life (Becchio, 2020).

According to feminist economics, the main fault of new home economics' approach was that it did not consider the role of nonmarket institutions in the emergence of gender inequality. Patriarchy, property rights, and social norms against women had been powerful nonmarket institutions that perpetuated and reinforced men's dominance over resources: "social norms like the sexual division of labor are not simply solutions to the problem of coordinating family production, but rather a way to organize family labor in terms that benefit men" (Braunstein, 2008 as cited in Becchio, 2020). According to feminist economists, neoclassical models had internalized gender inequality as a natural outcome of the specialization in reproductive labor. Consequently, standard economics had perpetuated patriarchy (Becchio, 2020).

Feminist economists have long argued for expanding the definition of the economy to include unpaid work in the household. Unpaid caregivers who are dependent on wage-earners for access to income, pensions, and other resources can

be economically and socially vulnerable. Unpaid caregivers' relative disadvantage puts them in a subordinate position both in terms of intra-household bargaining and in the labor market (Folbre, 2018b as cited in Moos, 2021). In contrast to the optimizing agent of mainstream economics, which is devoid of power, heterodox feminist economics place power relations at the center of inquiry. It includes power differentials in shaping economic outcomes as part of economic analysis. For example, in examining gender wage discrimination the analysis incorporates broader institutional constraints, such as gender norms, workplace rules, laws, collective action by employers, and power dynamics in the home. Feminist economists have also examined conditions under which women can be empowered to reduce gender inequalities (Berik & Kongar, 2021).

Feminist economics places at center stage inequalities between socially constructed groups, based on gender, race, ethnicity, and other factors. It recognizes the importance of nonmarket activities, essential to the functioning of the economy and people's well-being. It not only emphasizes the role of collective action and collective identities but also stresses the importance of individual agency (Balakrishnan & Heintz, 2021). In summary, the rise of feminist economics was shaped around the following key tenets: the rejection of a masculine notion of rationality adopted by neoclassical economics; the demystification of social norms that had perpetuated and reinforced patriarchy; the recognition of traditional women's subjection in stereotyped roles that had justified gender inequalities in economic matters such as market labor, wage, access to finance, and so forth.

2.3 Conceptual Framework in WEE Analysis: Kabeer's Framework

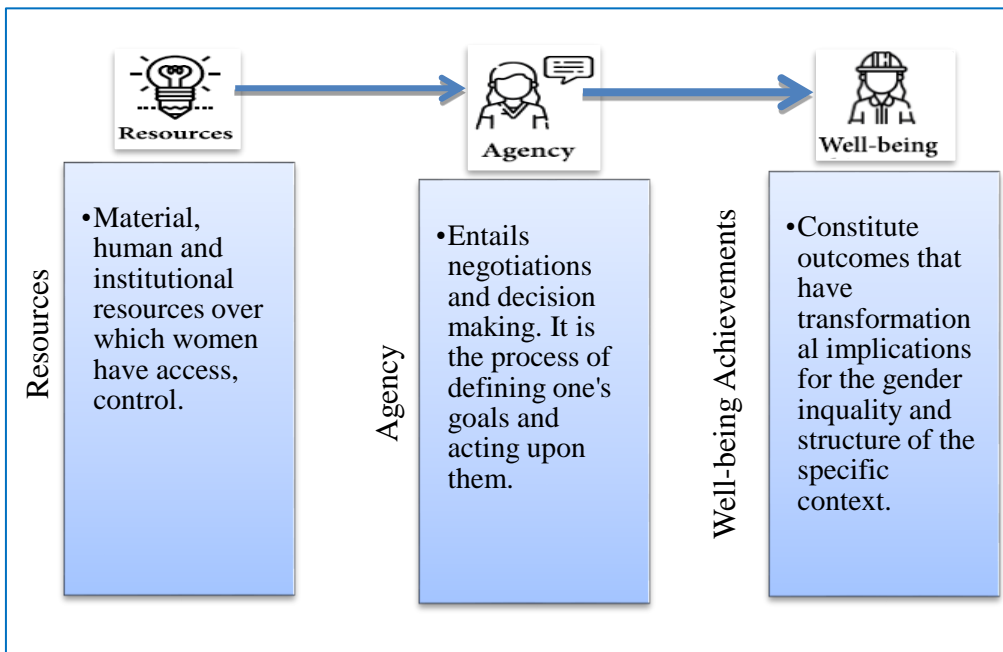
There is a significant body of literature discussing how women's empowerment has been conceptualized. Despite the diversity in the emphasis and agenda in the discussions of empowerment, it is evident that there is a nexus of key overlapping terms that are most often included in defining empowerment. These terms include options, choice, agency and control. Among them, Kabeer's framework related to WEE analysis is described in the following section.

Kabeer (1999) offers a useful definition of empowerment that effectively captures the key elements of the concepts which help distinguishing empowerment from other closely related concepts. Kabeer (1999, p. 437) defines empowerment as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them." According to Kabeer's framework, empowerment incorporates three dimensions - resources, agency, and achievements

- each of which interacts with the others and, hence, change in one dimension can lead to changes in the others. Empowerment is a dynamic process, in which women acquire resources that enable them to develop voice and the capacity to articulate preferences. Resources, referred to as “precondition”, can be material, human or social, including physical resources, individual capabilities and claims that the individual can make on others.

According to Kabeer (1999), simply having access to resources is not sufficient as a precondition for economic empowerment, women also need to have a say in what happens with the resources in question. The second dimension, agency, is the process by which someone can set goals, negotiate, make strategic decisions and choices, and act upon the choices. However, if woman is living in a much-disempowered community, it will be difficult for her to gain access to the resources to develop voice and agency. Achievements are well-being outcomes that positively transform the gender relationships, customs, and social structure of a specific culture. This means that women would improve their well-being during the processes of empowerment as a result of certain resources and the power to make strategic choices, and as a consequence achieving greater economic autonomy.

Figure 1: Economic empowerment process (Kabeer, 1999)



2.4 Analytical/Methodological Framework in WEE Analysis

2.4.1 The Social Provisioning Approach (SPA) and the Capability Approach (CA)

The Social Provisioning Approach (SPA) in feminist economics outlined by Power (2004) and the Capability Approach (CA) (Robeyns, 2021) provide useful methodological framework to analyze women economic empowerment in Ethiopia. There are five core features to the SPA to feminist economics. First, economic analyses incorporate caring and unpaid labor as fundamental economic activities. One implication of this view is that interdependent and interconnected human actors are at the center of the analysis, rather than the isolated individual. Second, well-being is a measure of economic success. Properly evaluating economic well-being requires attention not only to aggregate or average distributions of income and wealth, but also to individual entitlements and heterogeneity of human needs. Third, agency is important, and analysis focuses on economic, political, and social processes and power relations. This emphasis on agency means that questions of power, and unequal access to power, are part of the analysis from the beginning. Fourth, ethical goals and values are an explicit and intrinsic part of the analysis. And finally, the analysis interrogates different lived experiences by intersectionality of gender, class, race-ethnicity, and other dimensions of human diversity (Power, 2004).

The capability approach (CA) is a comprehensive, multidimensional normative approach that postulates that when making analyses about people's lives, we should ask what people are able to do and what lives they are able to lead. The CA is concerned with aspects of people's beings such as their health, the education they can enjoy, and the support from their social networks they can count on. The approach is also concerned with what people can or cannot do, such as being able to work, raise a family, travel, or be politically active. It cares about people's real freedom to do these things, as well as the level of achieved well-being that they will reach when choosing from the options that are available to them (Robeyns, 2021).

The core characteristics shared by the CA that are particularly important for applications with WEE analysis are: first, the CA ultimately values different aspects of reality than other normative frameworks. It claims that we should focus not on how much money or other resources a person/woman has, nor on their happiness or their welfare (understood theoretically as preference-fulfillment and utility maximization, and empirically as disposable income), but rather evaluate their well-

being and their substantive freedom by assessing their functioning and capabilities. A second important commitment of CA is the move from means to the ends of well-being. Instead of focusing on the resources at a person's command valued for being a means to achieve what the person has reason to value in life, the focus of evaluation is directly on the ends, hence the freedom to achieve the doings and beings a person has reason to value, which is reflected by their capabilities. A third important commitment of CA is its commitment to pluralism. Pluralism is captured by the term "multidimensional analysis," and essentially posits that the key notions in the CA (i.e., well-being and freedom) and those concepts that build on those notions (such as poverty, riches, inequality, and distributive justice) can never be reduced to a single dimension, but will consist of a plurality of dimensions such as being healthy, being educated, enjoying basic liberties, and so forth (Robeyns, 2021).

2.4.2 Commission on Women in Development, 2007, "The Women Empowerment Approach: The Methodological Guide"

The methodological guide developed by Commission on Women in Development of Belgium, 2007, is a product of a two-year research on approach to measure women empowerment outcomes in development works. The guide is reportedly inspired by the theoretical works of Kabeer in the definition of women empowerment and its indicators. The guide considers empowerment as a process working at two levels, individual and collective, and as such is described as:

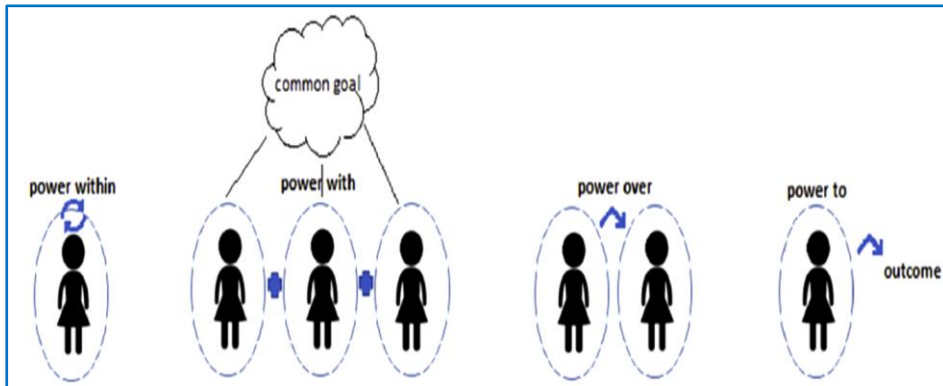
- *"Individual: the acquisition of greater independence and capacity for self-determination, as well as means to allow individuals to broaden their opportunities, and*
- *Collective: the capacity of a group to influence social change and move towards a fair and equal society, in particular in its relations between men and women."*

It further identifies four levels of power to be acquired in the process of empowerment as: power over, power to, power with and power within, described as below:

Power over: this power involves a mutually exclusive relationship of domination or subordination. It assumes that power exists only in limited quantity. This power is exerted over someone or, less negatively, allows "someone to be guided". It triggers either passive or active resistance.

Power to a power which includes the ability to make decisions, have authority, and find solutions to problems, and which can be creative and enabling. The notion therefore refers to intellectual abilities (knowledge and know-how) as well as economic means, i.e., the ability to access and control means of production and benefit (the notion of assets).

Figure 2: Representation of the four definitions of power (Galie & Farnworth, 2019)



Power with social or political power which highlights the notion of common purpose or understanding, as well as the ability to get together to negotiate and defend a common goal (individual and collective rights, political ideas such as lobbying, etc.). Collectively, people feel they have power when they can get together and unite in search of a common objective, or when they share the same vision.

Power within this notion of power refers to self-awareness, self-esteem, identity, and assertiveness (knowing how to be). It refers to how individuals, through self-analysis and internal power, can influence their lives and make changes.

Each definition implies that there is an empowerment boundary which is intrinsically associated with individuals. At the same time the definitions fundamentally recognize that an individual empowerment boundary is capable of expanding to accommodate an increase in personal empowerment. In the case of ‘power with’ individuals come together to act intentionally towards a common goal, the aim of which is to expand the boundary of empowerment of each person which can only be achieved through the empowerment of the whole (Galie & Farnworth, 2019).

2.4.3 The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) – Conceptual Model for Women and Girls’ Empowerment (2017)

The BMGF is one of an international development organization that extensively works and supports countries in the advancement of women and girl’s empowerment. In order to make its engagement in the advancement of women empowerment more systematic and holistic, the foundation found it necessary to establish a clear and comprehensive understanding of the concept of Women Empowerment and formulate a Model, particularly by drawing from the experiences and works of various stakeholders including academics, NGOs, country case studies, state interventions, and grass root local community works.

BMGF’s Definition of Empowerment: Choice, Voice, and Power

By way of definition of women’s empowerment, in the BMGF model (2017), it was stated that:

Women’s empowerment is the expansion of choice and strengthening of voice through the transformation of power relations, so women and girls have more control over their lives and futures. It is further stated that empowerment is a process of on-going change-through which women and girls expand their aspirations, strengthen their voice, and exercise more choice (p.4).

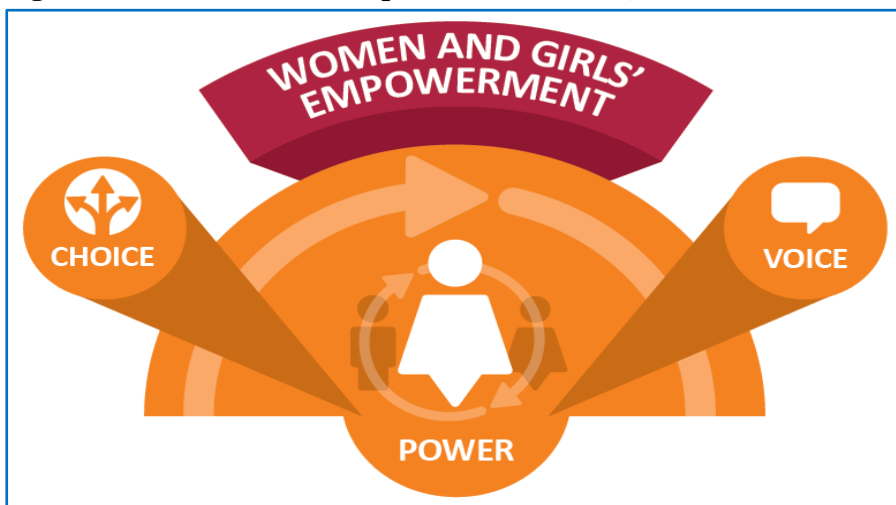
Here in the conceptual definition of empowerment, three core elements are put as corner stones, Choice, Voice and Power.

Choice: when a woman or girl’s choices expand, an array of opportunities open up to her, many of which she may never previously imagined. Expansion of choice is particularly important for strategic life choices that greatly affect her current conditions and future opportunities-such as when and whom to marry, whether to have children and how many, where she will live, her friends and network, and her livelihood. The desired outcome is increased freedom for her to make informed and voluntary choices based on her own preferences.

Voice: when a woman or girl’s voice strengthens, she is able to speak up and be heard in discussions and decisions that shape her life and future in both public and private settings. Voice can be strengthened through greater participation and representation of women in political and economic decision-making and through collective organizing, in which women and girls express their interests and concerns

and create social and institutional change. Through strengthened voice in her household, a woman or girl may gain greater influence and control over key decision that affect her life and the lives of those around her.

Figure 3: Core elements of empowerment (BMGF, 2017)



Power: expansion of choice and strengthening of voice entail a transformation of unequal power relations. Unequal gender power relations characterize patriarchal societies. As such social systems demonstrate that men hold primary power in political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property and other resources. Thus, the unequal gender power relations shape disempowerment and the disadvantages experienced by women and girls. The process of empowerment therefore is gaining power in its different forms. The BMGF model views power not just as power over women and girls by men and others in authority, but also as:

- Power to- a woman or girl's ability to make decisions and act on them
- Power within-a woman or girl's sense of self-esteem, dignity, and self-worth
- Power with-a woman or girl's strength gained from solidarity, collective action, or mutual support.

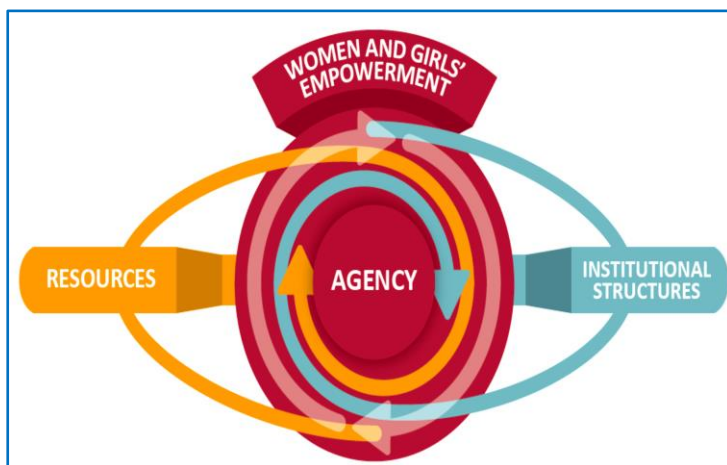
Key Elements of Empowerment

The model further identified three key elements or inputs for the process of women empowerment, namely, Agency, Resources, and Institutional Structures. Transformation of power relations occurs when women and girls exercise **agency**

and take action, through expanded access to and control over **resources** and changes to the **institutional structures** that ultimately shape their lives and futures.

Agency is at the heart of BMGF model of empowerment; it refers to the capacity of women and girls to take purposeful action and pursue goals, free from the threat of violence or retribution. The three core expressions of agency are decision-making, leadership, and collective action.

Figure 4: Elements of empowerment (BMGF, 2017)



Institutional structures are the social arrangements, including both formal and informal rules and practices, that shape and influence women and girls' ability to express agency and assert control over resources. They comprise formal laws and policies as well as norms that shape relations among individuals and social groups.

Resources are tangible and intangible capital and sources of power that women and girls have, own, or use individually or collectively in exercising agency. The key resources highlighted in the model include women and girls' bodily integrity (health, safety, and security), critical consciousness, and assets (financial and productive assets, knowledge and skills, time, and social capital).

2.5 Features of Women's Empowerment: A Synthesis on the Conceptual understanding

The body of frameworks on the conceptualization of women's empowerment presented above offers a range of terms that have been used in relation

to empowerment. These include issues such as control, women's autonomy, agency, status, domestic economic power, bargaining power, and power, among others. Often there is no clear demarcation between these terms. While some researches treat any of these terms and empowerment interchangeably or consider them as more or less equal terms (Jejeebhoy, 2000; Mason & Smith, 2000), others contend that these terms are not equivalent to empowerment (Govindasamy & Malhotra, 1996; Malhotra & Mather, 1997). Notwithstanding the similarities in the concepts underlying many of these terms, the concept of empowerment can be distinguished from others based on its unique definitional elements. The major distinctive features of empowerment are presented below.

Empowerment as a process: The first essential element of empowerment is that it is a process which involves some degree of personal development and moving from insight to action (Kabeer, 2001; Oxaal & Baden, 1997; Rowlands, 1995). Empowerment is a dynamic and on-going process which can only be located on a continuum; it varies in degrees of power. One can move from an extreme state of absolute lack of power to the other extreme of having absolute power. The extreme ends of the continuum are of course "idealized" states. None of the other concepts explicitly encompasses a progression from one state (gender inequality) to another (gender equality). The process of empowerment is also a spiral in its nature. It involves changing consciousness, identifying areas to target for change, planning strategies, acting for change, and analyzing action and outcomes, which leads in turn to higher levels of consciousness and more finely honed and better executed strategies.

Agency: the central notion of women's empowerment: The second element of empowerment that distinguishes it from other concepts is agency - in other words, women themselves must be significant actors in the process of change. At the institutional and aggregate levels, it emphasizes the importance of participation and "social inclusion" (Chambers, 1997; Friedmann, 1992). At the micro level, it is embedded in the idea of self-efficacy and the significance of the realization by individual women that they can be the agents of change in their own lives. This requires reversal of the values and attitudes, indeed the entire worldview, that most women have internalized since earliest childhood. Women must recognize the true value of their labor and contributions to the family, society, and economy and be convinced of their innate right to equality, dignity, and justice.

Redistribution of power and the associated anxiety: The third distinctive feature of empowerment is that it is a process that enables to change the distribution of power between men and women, both in interpersonal relations and in institutions throughout society. Associated with this, there is widespread confusion and some degree of anxiety about whether women's empowerment leads to the disempowerment of men. In poor households, most men tend to support women's empowerment processes that enable women to bring much-needed resources into their families and communities, or that challenge power structures that have oppressed and exploited the poor of both genders. Resistance, however, occurs when women compete with men for power in the public sphere, or when they question the power, rights, and privileges of men within the family by challenging patriarchal family relations. Mosedale (2014: 1121), in her case study of a large international non-governmental organization's empowerment practices in selected developing countries including Ethiopia, cited "*many men expressed anxieties about women becoming educated and losing their dependency on them. Unsurprisingly, these feelings were sometimes based on fear. [M]any males expressed a fear of rejection if women were free to choose*".

The process of women's empowerment, as it challenges the patriarchal relations, inevitably leads to changes in men's traditional control over women, particularly over the women of their households (body, sexuality, or mobility). Under this circumstance, women's empowerment poses threat to the current distribution of power which does mean the loss of the privileged position that patriarchy allotted to men. An important point- but often missed, is that women's empowerment also liberates and empowers men, both in material and in psychological terms. This notion is often articulated highlighting the constraining nature of patriarchy and recognizing that empowerment is about working to remove the existence and effects of unjust social inequalities. First, women's empowerment greatly strengthens the impact of political movements, which is often dominated by men, not just by their numbers, but by unleashing their full capacity that enables them to provide new energy, insights, leadership, and strategies. Second, women's access to material resources and knowledge directly benefits the men and children of their families and their communities, by opening the door to new ideas and a better quality of life. Third and most important are the psychological gains for men. Women's empowerment frees men from unjust value systems and ideologies of oppression. When gender equality is maintained, men are freed from the roles of oppressor and exploiter, and from gender stereotyping, which limits the potential for self-expression and personal development in men as much as in women. Furthermore, experiences worldwide

show that men discover an emotional satisfaction in sharing responsibility and decision making; they find that they have lost not merely traditional privileges, but also traditional burdens (Batliwala, 1994).

Emphasis on collective action: The other important feature of empowerment is that it is a political process, fraught with challenges. It, thus, requires a comprehensive and integrated approach whereby women address their own objectives in the domestic and public spheres, and take collective and mass action. Feminist writers argue that, to transform society, women's empowerment must become a political force, that is, an organized mass movement that challenges and transforms existing power structures. Batliwala (1994), for example, stresses that changes will not be "sustainable if limited to a few individual women, because traditional power structures will seek to isolate and ostracize them," and so advocates for women organizing into collectives and ultimately into mass movements. Collective action is an important demonstration of agency, and it can lead to progress in other areas of women's lives. The link between agency and collective action exists at a number of levels (Contrearas-Arias et al., 2013):

- actions to *solve public goods problems* that directly impact on women's lives and livelihoods, such as managing a shared water source or maintaining community forests;
- actions that *expand the set of opportunities and enhance women's decision-making power* within the household and community for example, through self-help savings and loans groups that boost the flow of capital and support women's businesses;
- actions that explicitly *challenge the social norms and behaviors* that, often irrespective of social status, continue to constrain female agency within the public domain and within the family context.

3 Review Methodology

3.1 Literature search strategy

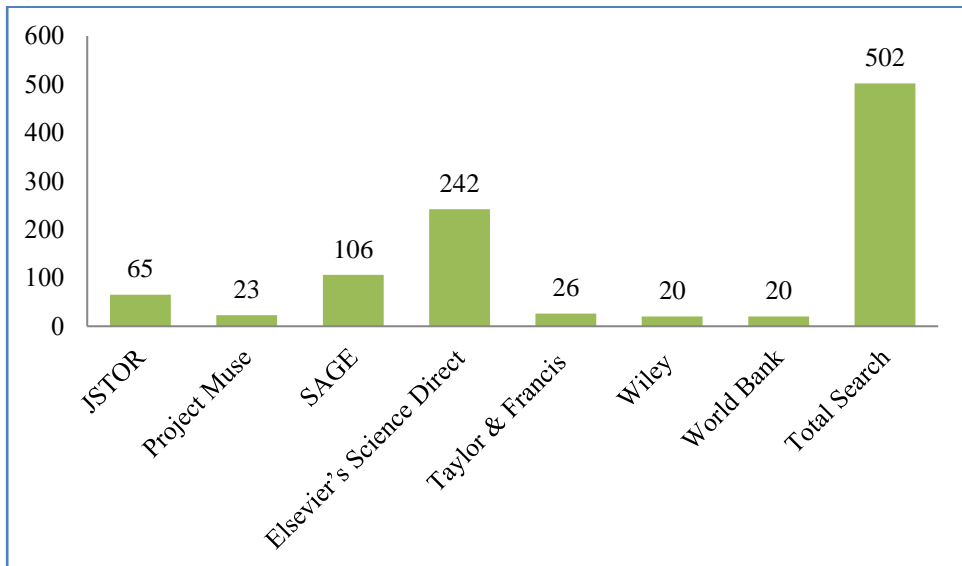
The methodology has adopted a semi-systematic review approach (Snyder, 2019) to ensure a comprehensive search of the literature and to identify as many relevant resources as possible. Moreover, the approach combines different research traditions that help to map out a field of research, synthesize the state of knowledge, and create an agenda for further research. This approach helps understanding how

different perspectives applied in the review process and synthesize them in an overarching narrative.

3.1.1 Initial literature search

The search strategy used pre-defined terms related to Women Economic Empowerment to identify evidence from across disciplines that generates and reports research results on Women Economic Empowerment. The key strings used in the electronic search were ‘women’s empowerment’, ‘women’s economic empowerment’, ‘agency’, ‘decision-making power’, ‘bargaining power’, ‘access to resources’ [land, employment, finance, etc], ‘control over resources’ [land, income, assets, etc], ‘women’s self-worth’, and ‘women’s wellbeing’ along with Ethiopia. These keywords were used to begin searching for sources and Boolean Operators [AND, OR NOT] were used to help narrow down the searches. The databases used were JSTOR, Project Muse, SAGE, Elsevier’s Science Direct, Taylor and Francis, Wiley and World Bank. The systematic search with the above key strings produced an aggregation of 502 articles, out which 125 duplicate articles were deleted. The remaining articles were subjected to the inclusion and exclusion criteria indicated below.

Figure 5: Initial literature search, Year (2021)



During the processes of search, nearly 250 articles were removed because some were not available as full text and others were published in a language other than English, or not related to women economic empowerment or not even conducted in Ethiopia. Articles which were published before the year 2010 were not included in the scope of the current systematic review. Finally, 127 articles were selected for detailed review.

3.1.2 Selection and appraisal of documents

To narrow down the themes of search from the 502 empirical reports identified in the first stage, the research team used the following criteria:

- Studies focusing on women economic empowerment using search strings ‘women’s empowerment’, ‘women’s economic empowerment’, ‘agency’, ‘decision-making power’, ‘bargaining power’, ‘access to resources’ [land, employment, finance], ‘control over resources’ [land, income, assets], ‘women’s self-worth’, and ‘women’s wellbeing’ along with Ethiopia;
- WEE focusing on the Ethiopian geographical region (or origin) with the inclusion of Ethiopia to the search strings; and
- Published in the last ten years (2010-2021) time frame matches with the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I and GTP II) of the country. Both GTP I and GTP II clearly emphasize the economic empowerment of women and youth mainly through promoting micro and small enterprises.

3.1.3 Classification of Literature

A full text review of the 127 articles were considered as a primary sampling unit and 40 articles were considered for the systematic review. Articles focusing on women empowerment, but not specific to women economic empowerment were excluded from the final review. Further, classification of the selected 40 articles was done on the basis of databases, sector, study design and region. There were 15 articles included from Taylor & Francis, Elsevier’s Science Direct (12), JSTOR (9), Wiley (3) and SAGE (1). In terms of sector, 17 articles were related to women owned micro and small business and savings group (which indicates the biggest number to come from this sector), 16 articles focus on women economic empowerment in the agriculture sector and 7 were on women economic empowerment in the pastoral community (this also corroborates the marginalization and shallow focuses on pastoral studies so far). Regarding study design, 16 of the articles used mixed study

designs, 15 qualitative approaches and 9 quantitative approaches. In terms of region, 14 of the articles were written on Oromia, SNNP (8), Amhara (5), Tigray (4), National (3), Addis Ababa (1), Amhara & Oromia (1), Amara and SNNP (1), Amhara & Tigray (1), Oromia & SNNP (1) and Oromia & Tigray (1).

4. Major Barriers, Drivers, and Enablers of WEE in the Agricultural Sector

4.1 Productive Asset Ownership & Control of Income

The reviewed articles proved that access to, and control over, land and other resources were among the key constraints for WEE in the agricultural sector. Women in this sector are severely constrained by ownership of land, livestock or other agricultural resources, management of agricultural resources, use of agricultural inputs and technologies, limited access for agricultural extension and financial services. A qualitative study on gender relation in changing agroforestry home gardens in rural SNNPR (Mersha et al., 2018) found customary institutions in the study region are discriminatory for rural women. The patrilineal inheritance and patrilocal marriage practice impose unequal access to land and inheritance; thereby constituting the most important source of inequality between men and women in the rural SNNPR. The superior position of men in terms of natural, financial, and social capital is a consequence of a prevailing inheritance and marriage practice. The formal institutions have not been able to modify such malpractices neither (Mersha et al., 2018).

An empirical study on gender-based constraints and opportunities of women's participation in the small ruminant value chain (Mulema et al., 2017) finds Ethiopian women smallholders are particularly disadvantaged because they have limited access to productive assets including irrigation water, credit, extension services, and rural institutions and thus find it harder to implement innovations. Household headship and the amount of natural capital in the form of small ruminants brought in during marriage give men more political capital in terms of voice, decision-making, and bargaining power over small ruminants and the benefits derived from production-except milk from goats which is solely controlled by women.

Women's access or use rights, to agricultural land, is a key to implement gender mainstreaming in agriculture as land rights facilitate women's uptake of agricultural technologies for improved gendered livelihood outcomes. However, a

study on gendered constraints for adopting climate-smart agriculture amongst smallholder women farmers in rural Ethiopia (Meseret et al., 2020) shows although legal documents allow women to access or use agricultural land, they do not enjoy these privileges in practice. Limited access to land has a negative impact on women farmers' uptake of climate-smart agriculture technologies (CSA), as customary laws deny them user rights and inheritance of farmland. Access to collateral, which is required for accessing credit, is limited for both men and women users but is more inaccessible for women in male-headed households, as women are culturally prohibited from inheriting land and are not customarily accepted as landowners. This situation further limits women smallholders' opportunities to be involved in off-farm activities and employment opportunities, vital to buying agricultural inputs for the proper use of CSA. Similarly, a study by the same authors (Meseret et al., 2020) also demonstrated the presence of gender inequality in accessing land between men and women users of CSA in the study areas (SNNPR and Oromia). The regression result of the study showed that men have higher odds in accessing agricultural land compared to women (OR=10.35, 95% CI (1.08-98.94)). Moreover, in-depth interviews in all the study areas revealed that customary laws dictate that land must be transferred from the man's kin. As a result, access to collateral and credit is lower among women CSA and small-scale irrigation schemes (SSIS) users and non-users.

A qualitative study in Southern Ethiopia (Esayas et al., 2017; Esayas et al., 2017) finds while 65% of interviewed men reported their wives have equal control over income, 85% of women interviewed said that men made decisions on their own. On the other hand, more than 70% of women outlined that they control the small money that they earn from the sale of crops (which they take in baskets), and control the income they generate from running small enterprises located in their homes. From this, it appears to be evident that men dominate control over income generated including the decisions how to use the money. Similarly, a study by Mulema et al., (2021) indicates women's autonomy over income from agricultural production was limited to "small assets". Men's recognition as farmers gives them more privilege to control proceeds.

Research conducted in Selale (Lenjiso et al., 2015) studied the effect of household milk market participation on intra-household time allocation in rural Ethiopia, by observing 156 households-78 milk market participants and 78 non-participants-for 2 consecutive days. The findings of the study show that men/husbands sign the contract with the milk company, and thus control income generated from selling raw milk in the formal market, whereas women/wives control income generated from selling processed milk in the local/informal market. Although

total household income is indeed substantially higher in participating households, the shift towards selling raw milk in the market is associated with a decrease in the amount of milk locally processed and sold by the wives, and hence with a reduction of the income controlled by them.

Overall, as extracted from the literature showed, women's access to productive assets, ownership and control of income generated from the agricultural practices were found to be constrained with several factors. Hence, envisaging women's economic empowerment in this aspect requires much more investment and institutional basis.

4.2 Access to Technology, Agricultural Inputs, and Extension Services

There are several initiatives that are underway to improve women's access to innovations, technology, and extension services in the agricultural sector in Ethiopia. Studies find agricultural extension services have been generally biased towards men, with information targeted mainly to male members of a farming household than female members. Though knowledge and training in farming methods and techniques are critical for both women and men, women are often not considered as farmers. Women farmers tend to have less access to agricultural information and particularly information attuned to their needs. Women farmers tend to receive second-hand information from husbands and other male relatives or from a child if they are female heads of their household. They also do not attend training activities due to household responsibilities or mobility constraints. The studies we have reviewed showed women in Ethiopia have lower access to and control over agricultural inputs and technologies than men. Such limited access to agricultural extension services and inputs, contributed towards lower agricultural productivity for women.

A qualitative study in two Kebeles of Oromia region found a gendered difference in access to extension agents. Men farmers mentioned 'government attention and support,' 'follow up by experts,' 'success of model farmers,' and 'information from experts and the media' (and money) as key support factors to innovation. Women farmers did not mention any of these factors. Rather, they stated that women in male-headed households are not invited to extension meetings, and that female-heads of households are also not invited, though *'if she has a male child then he goes. But they often do not pass on the information fully. It is difficult to get*

that information'. The study found men are considered as farmers and decision-makers while women are almost entirely excluded by this meta-narrative. Their exclusion is reinforced by deep socio-cultural normative ethos which does not acknowledge women as farmers in their own right (Farnworth et al., 2018).

A study on gendered constraints for adopting climate-smart agriculture amongst smallholder women farmers (Meseret et al., 2020; Meseret et al., 2020) shows that different marriage systems affect women's access to agricultural inputs and rural institutional services. Women in monogamous marriage possess limited access and decision-making rights over agricultural inputs and land as they work under the supervision of their husband, who is acknowledged as the household head. First wives in polygamous marriages have better access and use rights over land and other agricultural inputs, as they often live separately on a small plot of land assigned by the husbands are considered as household heads. Conversely, the presence of men as household heads means that women are not considered as legitimate receivers of rural institutional services.

Women in male-headed households have limited access to extension services. Customary law promotes that men are the main "owners" of land. This indirectly limits women's access to extension services as development agents (DAs) anticipate providing extension services and information to the "owner" of the land (Meseret et al., 2020). A study by same authors (Meseret et al., 2020) on empirical analysis of the practicality of policies for agriculture-based gendered development in Ethiopia revealed that women smallholders have restricted access to extension services. Men are found to have 18.95 times higher odds ratio in accessing agricultural extension services compared to women. Crop cultivation in general, and the use of agricultural technologies, in particular, is linked mainly to household heads in the extension delivery system. This demonstrates that formal rural institutions continue to perpetuate the patriarchal thought that perceives men as "the proper farmers". Excluding women in male-headed households from extension services is a common practice. Moreover, membership and the services offered by cooperatives are often directed to male household heads. The study further show that men are traditionally considered as input buyers, which is connected to women's restricted access to and control over household incomes. The findings show that in the study environments, DAs and cooperatives are not involved in identifying and addressing women's needs regarding the use of agricultural technologies (Meseret et al., 2020).

In Ethiopian societies, men and women have clearly defined roles that are dictated by the dominant ideology which is patriarchy. Most of the time men are considered as breadwinners; head of the household who has the authority to represent

the family outside of the home. In support of this, a study in Lemo, Ethiopia (Theis et al., 2018) reported that men were described as the “pioneer,” “supervisor,” “manager,” or “leader,” while women are considered the “helper” for agricultural production activities, to “lead her army after my orders.” Men typically control management rights, applying mechanized technologies to plots they control.

A study from Oromia and SNNPR (Meseret, 2019) revealed that in all the study societies, almost all men consider themselves as the only head of their household, and most women (87%) similarly believe that husbands are the legitimate head of the household and that the head of the household is the primary decision maker on the use of agricultural inputs and outputs. As a result of their better social capital, men are relatively better positioned to use climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technologies; this advantage again results in better control for men over production outcomes within the household. Women have limited access or use rights to farmland and ownership of livestock, compared to men. Men are accepted as the “real” farmers, and this view results in limited control for women and restricts their involvement in gendered household bargaining over the use and control of production inputs and outputs. Women and men smallholders are unequal decision makers in regard to agricultural inputs and outputs in all study areas. Agricultural land, physical assets, and farm incomes are more accessible by men than by women farmers and men are the ones who traditionally buy agricultural inputs (Meseret, 2019).

A study in Tigray region (Smur, et al., 2021) reported that small-scale irrigation significantly increases female-headed households’ income from crop and vegetable production. Female-headed households’ income increased from livestock and crop production by 24.3% and 68.8%, respectively. This leads female-headed households to have access to more diversified food, health, and education services and improved housing. For instance, housing/corrugated iron roofing and purchasing power increased by 38.2% and 37.2% respectively. This led female-headed households to have access to control of household resources, financial independency, profit, employment opportunities, psychological well-being, and community participation. However, the adoption of the scheme is challenged by factors such as labor shortage, low education level, poor extension service, poor information system, and low access to credit services.

The reviewed literatures indicate besides the gender disparities in agricultural land ownership, women have limited access to credit, agricultural inputs, extension services and technologies. Males are more likely receive advice from development or extension agents and have more access to technologies than females.

Women's limited access to credit, inputs, extensions services and technology again is a major challenge for the attainment of women's economic empowerment. These factors play quite a crucial role in ensuring women economic empowerment. In a way, constraining agricultural technologies, inputs and services mean jeopardizing women's economic empowerment.

4.3 The Power to Decide, Women Decision Making and Gender Equality

Though women provide labor to agricultural production, they are largely side-lined from having decision making power on issues that affect their economic welfare. The studies reviewed documented a low level of female participation in decision-making over productive assets. A qualitative study on gender relation in changing agroforestry home gardens in rural SNNPR found men had a dominant position in a rural society, while women had no voice in decision processes at the household level, and limited participation and representation in public rural organizations, such as, for example, Kebele Administrations (Mersha et al., 2018). Decision at the household level was perceived as a man's role and responsibility as this was strongly supported by the customary rules and norms. Men make decisions on how to use farm, including what to produce, without communicating their decisions with their families. For example, change in the traditional agroforestry home gardens towards khat monoculture in the study area was a decision predominantly made by the respective husbands in each household without consultations with their wives (Mersha et al., 2018).

An empirical study on gender-based constraints and opportunities to women's participation in the small ruminant value chain (Mulema et al., 2017) illustrated that group membership strengthens the bargaining power of both individual men and women farmers, as well as their collective bargaining power. Across the value chains studied, men have more political capital than women, as demonstrated through their decision-making power and membership in cooperatives. A study by Belainew and Surafel (2020) evaluates the impact of the adoption of small-scale irrigation technologies on women empowerment and found women adopters are more disempowered in terms of indicators like control over the use of income, leisure and access to and credit decision. The possible explanation given by the researchers is that empowerment of women because of irrigation technology treatment depends on the situation whether women in the household are farm

decision-makers or simply family laborers as women in the study area are inadequate in decision-making.

A qualitative study in Southern Ethiopia (Esayas et al., 2017) indicated that most of the interviewed men claimed that they make decisions on what to produce because they believe that women do not know about agriculture and do not plough land. Men argued that they decide on what to produce because they undertake the hard task of ploughing the land. They rationalize their power over agricultural decision-making on the basis of ploughing the land. On the other hand, interviewed women outlined that, although in theory they have control over the land registered under their name, in practice their power to exercise their rights over land and property was very limited. Despite their right to inheritance, when they get married, women often leave their land to their brothers or male relatives. Also, after they get married, in theory women get equal rights over land inherited or owned by their husbands. However, in practice, they have limited direct power to make decisions over the use and management of land. According to custom and practice, husbands and male family members and relatives have culturally made decisions regarding land use.

A qualitative study in Southern Ethiopia (Esayas et al., 2017) shows while women provide the labor for agricultural activity, men dominate the management and decision-making regarding agricultural activity. About 90% of women who participated in the research noted that they do not participate in decision making over what type of crops to produce. Men have always made the decisions on what to produce, including the production of chickpeas and haricot beans. A study from South-East Tigray (Kifle & Solomon, 2013) indicated that women participation in cooperative enhances women's empowerment (training, monthly income, and asset ownership). The study also found that monthly income, education level, training and years of membership are the most influential factors that enhance women's empowerment and concluded cooperative had a positive and significant role in the economic empowerment of the members. Participation in cooperative has also enhanced women's decision-making power in the household with respect to socio-economic issues.

4.4 Access to Market and Marketing of Agricultural Products

For agrarian households whose main activity is crop production, the ability to participate in agricultural markets, especially as net sellers of crop produce, is an indicator of the potential for achieving improved productivity and income. Women's limited access to productive assets and decision making also results in women's lowered market participation. For example, a qualitative study on gender relation in changing agroforestry home gardens in rural SNNPR found women were responsible for trading surpluses of food crops, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and firewood to supply their households with additional food products. Men dominate the livestock and cash crop market; women had never been involved in the buying or selling of livestock. Men controlled the wholesale and export market of coffee, while women were responsible for small scale trading in the local market. Cultivation and trade of *khat* was fully controlled by men, and women were totally excluded from the business (Mersha et al., 2018).

A qualitative study in Southern Ethiopia (Esayas, et al., 2017, Esayas et al., 2017) with a focus on women's access to and participation in markets revealed that markets are noticeably dichotomized into men's and women's domains. While the women's section of the market often provides consumables and some relatively cheaper products such as eggs, cheese, butter, *khat*, pepper, and utensils such as *Akenbalo* (baking lids), the lucrative market for farm animals and fattened cattle is under men's control. With respect to purchases, while women are in charge of going to market to buy household necessities such as soap, vegetable oil, and table salt, men undertake the buying of farm animals, cattle, and farming tools.

4.5 Labor Division and Time Use

Studies reviewed indicate gendered division of labor in rural areas and rural women spend much of their day engaged in domestic chores with no or minimum support from men, agricultural activities and these tasks are unpaid and restrict a woman's time and mobility. Rural women face constraints in engaging in economic activities as a result of the gender-based discrimination and social norms, involvement in unpaid work, and unequal access to resources. For example, a study conducted in SNNPR described that in the traditional agroforestry homegardens women were dominantly responsible for production and processing of *enset*, vegetables, fruits, dairy products, and control over for the equal distribution of food among their family members. Men were responsible for tilling, livestock

management, cultivation, and wholesale trading of cash crops. It was culturally dishonor for men to be involved in the production and processing of household food, such as *enset* and dairy products (Mersha, et al., 2018).

An empirical study on gender-based constraints and opportunities to women's participation in the small ruminant value chain (Mulema et al., 2017) indicates gender and cultural norms and labor burden restrict women's mobility, hinder their capacity to build business networks; access knowledge and information which would enhance their management practices, bargaining skills, and participation in decision-making; and effectively participate in income-generating activities. The study also finds that household chores, childcare roles, and distance from markets limit the frequency of their market visits, thus restricting their ability to source current price information.

A qualitative study in Southern Ethiopia (Esayas et al., 2017) reported despite men's assertion that women do not know about ploughing and agriculture, women are over-burdened by agricultural and domestic work, which is often not recognized and respected. In fact, as a result of being subjected to exploitative cultural relations, the majority of the women not only suffers from extreme resource poverty and deprivation, but also are victims of time poverty. The study also indicates women were found to spend more than 15 hour per day on agricultural and domestic work, whereas men spent only about 8 hours on agricultural and domestic work. Men spend about one third of their time on socialization, whereas women have very limited time for socialization and for rest. Compared to men, women have very little time to go out and establish networks and links with other women. Married women's access to information is predominantly through their husbands. Men had greater mobility and established networks with local community leaders, local government officers, agriculture and health extension workers, and crop retailers and buyers. While men's mobility and their networks give them power, women's limitation within the domestic domain is a major cause of their disempowerment and marginalization. Despite women's active and direct involvement in agricultural activities, men often do not assist women with the household activities. Some men spend their day chewing *khat* whereas women undertake most of the household activity and the minding of children as well as cattle. Hence, it is evident that the nature and structure of property ownership and the division of labor disadvantage women (Esayas et al., 2017; Esayas et al., 2017).

Even where women got more involved in economic activities traditionally male dominated, they took on more workload freeing men some of their traditionally expected economic tasks. This led to long working hours for women with

implications for their health and other life opportunities (Mulema et al., 2021; Zenebe, 2010).

Research conducted in Selale (Lenjiso, et al., 2015) studied the effect of household milk market participation on intra-household time allocation in rural Ethiopia, by observing 156 households-78 milk market participant and 78 non-participant-for 2 consecutive days. The findings of the study show that members of milk market participant households allocate significantly more hours to dairying and non-dairying activities compared with members of non-participant households. Women's dairying and domestic work time increased more than men's dairying and wage work time. The extra time spent on dairying activities is added to their domestic responsibilities, which for wives means an increase of their working time by about 12 hours in the 2-day period covered by the study. For men the increase was about 7 hours, and hence market participation raised women's workload substantially more than that of men. An important reason for this is the shift in the cattle management system, from freely grazing to feeding and watering them in the backyard. In market participant households the cows are kept in the backyard and feeding and watering the cows goes to the women as an extension on their domestic activities.

The above empirical studies indicate a gender difference exists in time use between men and women in Ethiopia. Women tend to dominate the care economy and in work that is not recognized as productive. Women carry a heavy burden of care work because of their reproductive roles and household chores. Rural women, besides contributing to agricultural production, spend more time in reproductive and household chores. Unfortunately, the care work done by women is unpaid. Caring and nurturing are considered women's roles, alongside the domestic work. As a result, women work more hours than men, with consequences for their leisure time and well-being. They spend more time each day in care and housework than their male counterparts. The heavy burden of care and housework is largely due to culturally assigned roles that severely limit women's participation in economic and employment opportunities.

5. Women-owned Small and Micro Enterprises (MSEs) and Women Economic Empowerment

5.1 Barriers of economic achievement for women-owned small and micro enterprises (MSEs)

Women entrepreneurs running Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) play a meaningful and significant role in contributing to economic development by creating jobs, promoting greater economic growth, and harnessing the productive capacity of women. Increasing women's economic opportunities and entrepreneurship can also boost gender equality and reduce poverty. However, there are significant financial and non-financial barriers which block women-owned SME's potential as economic drivers. Studies reviewed indicate having access to financial resources, human capital, institutional support, and access to market are the major constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia.

5.2 Financial Barriers

The available evidence in indicate women owned businesses are known for their low start up and working capital. For example, an interview made with women entrepreneurs and officials show that most of the women entrepreneurs are involved in the less capital-intensive business activities or low investment businesses because of lack of capital (Yodit et al., 2021). Similarly, a study by Belete (2016) shows women's small businesses suffer miserably from lack of capital, a place or land to work, professional support, information on value chains, collateral to access credit and credit at a lower interest rate.

Most financial institutions require collateral and women who do not own assets (such as land) or some form of income cannot access loans while those who own property can easily get access to loans through forming micro-groups. A study in Amhara region emphasizes although Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) do not require collateral to provide loans for groups, the chance of becoming a member of a group depends on economic status, that is, it is hierarchical. In accepting group responsibility for defaulting, members of a group prefer to have a member who has assets or other forms of income, for example, a woman who has a husband with income. This means that the economic capital of loan applicants determines their success in becoming members of a micro-group for accessing Amhara Credit and Saving Institution (ACSI) loans. Whereas those who own property can easily get

access to loans through forming micro-groups, the destitute are suspected of using the loans for consumption purposes, and hence they are marginalized from credit access. Unless the poor women own property such as land, they often get excluded from credit access (Esayas, 2016). For those women who access credit, as the business activities in which women are engaged are of a small scale, the amount of loans that they receive has also been small. In contrast, men have better control over assets and hence they get more credit than women (Esayas, 2016).

A study by Tarozzi et al., (2015) on the impact of microcredit in rural Amhara and Oromia finds that households with low socioeconomic status were less likely to borrow from Amhara Credit and Saving Institution (ACSI) and Oromia Credit and Saving Share Company (OCSSC). This is consistent with MFIs lending preferentially to households more likely to be able to repay the loans and possibly more likely to offer collateral. Lack of credit facility is the main bottleneck for women business improvement and livelihood change. In addition, even if the credit facility is available, getting the loan is very difficult due to cumbersome government bureaucracy (Yodit et al., 2021). A study of Self-help Groups (SHGs) notes that internal savings remain low and unable to meet the growing demands for loans which can only be addressed through external loan provision. However, the institution could not satisfy the ever-growing loan demands of SHGs due to a shortage of capital, of staff, and the limited loan ceiling (Gebre, 2015).

Though rural financial institutions could play a vital role in enhancing gender-equality in agricultural development, a relative comparison of men and women users' access to credit indicates that men have better access to credit from rural institutions compared to women indicating access to credit is restricted for women (Meseret et al., 2020; Shackleton et al., 2011).

5.3 Human Capital

Human capital is an important principle for entrepreneurship. Lack of human capital is one of the most prominent constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia. Education level for women entrepreneurs plays an important role in their participation in small businesses and their entrepreneurial performance (Beshir, 2021; Endalew, 2020; Yodit et al., 2021). Educational level of women entrepreneurs, previous business experience and offering entrepreneurship training are significant factors of women entrepreneurs' economic growth. This implies that women entrepreneurs who have experiences and offered entrepreneurship training were generating more income as compared to those who do not have experiences and not

trained. The two studies indicate that enterprises owned and managed by women entrepreneurs with higher formal education experience higher performance in terms of profit than their counterparts.

Moreover, the studies indicate that women entrepreneurs perform better in their business when they access business training to develop the relevant skills and knowledge needed to increase business performance. Similarly, women entrepreneurs in MSEs having access to business information grow faster than their counterparts because using business information can improve and strengthen customer relationships, enhance firm image, enhance market linkage, and enable them to compete with other firms. With regard to entrepreneurial experience and training, women entrepreneurs who have experiences and offered entrepreneurship training were generating more income as compared to those who do not have experiences and not trained (Beshir, 2021). A study on gender, entrepreneurial characteristics, and success (Mersha & Sriram, 2019) reported that compared to their male counterparts, women entrepreneurs who participated in the study appeared to have lower skills-which may be due to lower level of education and experience-and scored lower on most personality trait indicators. This probably explains the relative success of the two groups, with men outperforming their female counterparts in all three success measures used in the study-sales growth, growth in the number of employees, and profitability.

5.4 Market

Women entrepreneurs lack the networks of peers that would enable them to develop business ideas and obtain market information due to the social norms, limited mobility and household responsibility. Four studies indicate lack of market access is another major challenge for women owned MSEs in Ethiopia. A study by Esayas (2016) illustrates that women are engaged in running small-scale economic activities at home that produce low returns, and they have limited access to lucrative markets. Regarding market access, research conducted by Malepati & Gowi (2016) indicates most of the female owned enterprises supplied their output to home/nearby home and traditional marketplaces (61% and 31% respectively), whereas male owned enterprises were able to access commercial market. Traditional and customary practices around market control (which is dominated by men) limit women's success as micro-entrepreneurs (Esayas, 2016).

A study on women engagement in non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in northern and north-western Ethiopia, indicate that the roles played by women in the

value chain are generally poorly supported. The study finds it is primarily men who are involved in tapping and collection of gum olibanum. Although trading is dominated by men, women are involved in retail at the local rural and in informal urban markets, with the latter consisting of low-grade gum olibanum rejected at the sorting process in exporters' warehouses (Shackleton et al., 2011).

Similarly, a study conducted in Mekele city (Gidey et al., 2017) indicated that women participating in MSE are still facing financial constraints to manage risks and survive temporary cash-flow constraints. Lack of workplace, lack of availability of input on time/raw material, lack of information and technology and lack of basic infrastructure like supply of water, power, transport, and communication were still the challenges faced by women working on MSEs.

5.5 Benefits of women-owned small and micro enterprises (MSEs)

A) Women decision making power and access to resources

Women in Ethiopia are responsible for most of the household activities that limits women's capacity to engage in income-earning activities and later they depend on their husband's income affecting their decision-making power. The findings of the reviewed literature indicate mixed results of women economic empowerment on women's decision making. Three studies described below, show women's involvement in running MSEs enabled women more involved in decision making, both at home and in the community. One study noted women's disempowerment in making decision and one indicated no change of women empowerment as a result of owning MSEs.

A study by Hirut et al. (2012) shows that microfinance programmes may empower women in three of the four dimensions of empowerment: expenditure decisions, ownership of assets (jointly or independently) and reduction of domestic conflict. The study also demonstrates that microfinance may cause marital conflicts when men pressure their wives to bring loans for their "household". An increase in conflict may be interpreted as a sign of women's resistance to male dominance or as an indication of the shifting balance of power between husband and wife. Moreover, the study indicates that marital conflicts over finance decreased when women made substantial contributions to household expenditure and became financially independent (Hirut et al., 2012).

Independent income improves women's ability to fulfill gender-role expectations (food), to address their practical needs (clothing) as well as their strategic needs (personal assets, savings, and social networks). This increases their

bargaining power in household decision-making. In the Amhara location, where women are already engaged in household decision-making (although not in equal terms with men), the results of microfinance programmes can best be described as expanding women's decision-making power regarding household expenditure and increasing their ownership of assets and savings (Hirut et al., 2012). Most women who are engaged in income-generating activities (IGAs) started to participate in decision making at family level. The women participating in the Wadla Woreda Council represented 50% (50) and 50% (150) at kebele level (Belete, 2016).

An empirical study by Collier et al. (2014) on microfinance and women's health: an evaluation of women's health behaviors in Jimma, finds decision-making within the family is an integral component of women's empowerment. Their study shows that 59% of women in the sample control family possessions together with their husbands and that 21% of women in the sample have sole control over family possessions. With 68% of sample married, and 59% that share control of their possessions together with their husbands, the authors reported that a very high percentage of women in the sample exert control over their own belongings, even when married. Similar percentages are found with large sales or purchases, suggesting that these women exhibit personal autonomy and can influence decision making in their households.

Even if women in the Amhara region get access to loans, most of them do not control the decision-making on the use and management of the loans as well as the income they generate from running small enterprises. Rather than running their own enterprises, women often serve as transmitters of finance to men. Even when women control the loans, they receive from ACSI, the ultimate impact of microfinance on expanding their economic capital is limited. This is because women are engaged in running small scale economic activities located at home that produce low returns. In addition, the study indicated that traditional and customary practices around market control (which is dominated by men) limit women's success as micro-entrepreneurs (Esayas, 2016). An empirical study by Tarozzi et al. (2015) finds no evidence that the substantial increase in borrowing led to nonfarm business creation in areas assigned to treatment. Moreover, the authors find that increased access to loans was not associated with significant improvements in indicators of women's empowerment (decision making and economic).

A study conducted in Mekele city (Gidey et al., 2017) indicated that the decision-making power of women in the household was relatively low before starting their own business. Even though women had a tradition of making decision on the household resources together with their husband, the level of decision making

independently has been showed an improvement after starting their own business. Around 70.4 percent women acquired the ability to make an independent decision on how to utilize the money generated from their business, as well as on matters that affect their business. The study also revealed the majority (77.2 percent) of respondents have gained an access and control over the household resource and income generated after running their own business. Before they started their own business, majority (70 percent) of the women did not have active role in deciding on the household resource use and control. Since starting the business, almost 82.1 percent of women have acquired the ability to actively use and control the household's resources. More specifically, the chance of women's participation in decision making in income of the household was low before starting their own business; only 29 percent of women had high level of decision making on how to use and control over the income of the household. After running the business, around 78 percent of them have acquired high level of involvement to use and control over the household income (Gidey et al., 2017). Similarly, another study from Tigray region (Biru, 2014)) reported that the majority of women entrepreneurs (84.4%) perceived that there is improved access to use and control resources due to their participation in SME-indicating women resource access to use and control had increased due to their participation in MSE.

B) Household responsibility and labor

In Ethiopia, the traditional role models impose large amounts of unpaid care work on women, making it difficult for women to reconcile expectations of their families with running MSEs. The studies reviewed indicate this unbalance in the division of family work implies greater barriers in women's economic achievements and causes additional work burden. Yodit et al. (2021) find that family responsibility in the household prohibits women from working freely outside. This in turn discourages them from seeking information on better economic opportunities. A study on women engagement in non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in northern and north-western Ethiopia find family responsibilities is a barrier to women's involvement in the bulking and upward sale of gum olibanum as it prevents them travelling (Shackleton et al., 2011).

A study of microfinance and female empowerment (Hirut et al., 2012) find there are also negative effects in addition to its benefit. The study demonstrated that women's borrowing perpetuated the traditional division of labor and increased women's workloads. As they tended to cut down on leisure and sleep, they eventually suffered from fatigue and got health problems. Pressure from credit group members

and lending agencies may have added to women's workload, as they underlined the need for hard work in order to realize loan repayment and poverty reduction, with little sensitivity to women's domestic responsibilities. Despite their increased workload in relation to loan-financed enterprises, women continued to perform the bulk of domestic and childcare activities with the help of their daughters. Domestic tasks were generally redistributed among female household members only and not across genders (Hirut et al., 2012). Women's lack of time and restricted mobility due to family responsibilities remains a barrier to many women engaging in markets as well as in marketing groups (Baden, 2013).

Another study of microfinance also highlighted that microfinance has not transformed the nature of discriminatory household division of labor in the Amhara region. Some of the women clients of ACSI are burdened by overwork in their households and in their enterprises (Esayas, 2016). Tarozzi et al. (2015) find the number of hours worked by adult women remained similar in treatment and control areas, and do not find impacts on time spent by teenagers in self-employment.

5.6 Self-help Groups/Collective Action and Women Empowerment

Six studies reviewed focuses on the impacts of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and collective action with a range of collective finance, enterprise, and livelihood components on women's economic, political, social and psychological empowerment. The evidence indicates that SHGs and collective action have positive effects on three dimensions of women's empowerment. Women were more economically empowered, female SHG showed higher mobility, so were more socially empowered and able to participate in decision-making focused on access to resources, rights and entitlements within communities, hence were more politically empowered.

With the support of Oxfam's Enterprise Development Programme (EDP), women's trading groups control the local market distribution of the factory's edible oils, organized under each primary co-operative of the union in Assosa. This has increased women's access to, and control over, household income, while improving community perceptions about the economic contribution made by women. The women's trading groups have helped members to practice leadership roles in a supportive environment, easing the transition to leadership positions within larger organizations, such as the Assosa Farmer's Union. The union and member co-operatives have now created more favorable conditions for new women entrants (King et al., 2012).

Women participants indicated that the advantages of taking loans from SHGs (as opposed to banks, micro-finance institutions or private money lenders) are multiple: no collateral requirements, low interest rates, fast disbursement, non-bureaucratic procedures, and flexibility in repayments. SHG members are engaged in different business activities often as individuals. Common activities are fattening/rearing cattle, sheep, and goats; raising chickens; weaving; cotton spinning; producing and selling handcrafts; selling food and drinks; producing and selling fuel-saving and smokeless stoves and selling secondhand clothing (Gebre, 2015).

Members of SHGs reported greater psychosocial well-being (finance, education, family and social). In terms of economic well-being, members were asked about their financial assets before and after joining the SHG, and they reported an average increase in asset value of 143%. One of the strongest themes reported by the study is an ending of social isolation. Before their SHG membership many of the women spent their lives at home, isolated and without a social network. The SHG has been a vehicle to end this isolation, providing a cohesive social network which also acts as a springboard for wider engagement in the community. A strong change in psychological well-being was also indicated by the study. The most commonly reported change was greater self-confidence – “I do what I want to do. I developed self-confidence. I can go here and there for work purposes”. Most members identified the ability to generate income as one of the key ways in which the SHG had changed their lives – “able to run a business by my own capital, feeding my family better, able to send children to school, able to improve house quality and utensils” (Fagan et al., 2021; Belete, 2016).

The SHGs approach focuses on establishing strong social bonds and fostering mutual support among members. Some of the social matters that SHGs offer assistance with include: the rearing and protection of children, the education of children, sickness and death of family members, home management, psychological state of members, business activities of members, and celebrations such as births, weddings and graduations (Gebre, 2015).

A study by Mulema et al. (2021) spiraling up and down: mapping women’s empowerment through agricultural interventions using the community capitals framework in rural Ethiopia shows that investing in social, human, financial, cultural, natural, physical, and political capitals resulted in increased assets within those capitals and others amongst the beneficiaries. The interaction between capitals builds “power with”, “power within”, “power to” and “power over” in an upward spiral. Strengthening social cohesion helped women to incrementally build trust, norms of reciprocity and diversify networks through which they accessed knowledge and

skills in various livelihood aspects important to their lives. Such social connections strengthened ties among group members and between group members and external service providers towards collective actions, shared sense of identity and innovativeness, eventually enabling women's "power with" and "power to" dimensions.

Collective action (e.g., borrowing and saving) has helped to build connections across different interests to reduce social conflict and promote equitable relations, which are critical for women to work together ("power with"), and develop confidence and self-esteem ("power within"). Transformation of power relations within beneficiary households also brought about harmony, and increased women's ability to negotiate and participate in decision making, which has enabled the beneficiaries to spiral up either as individuals, households, or collectives (Mulema et al., 2021).

The enhanced social capital has fostered women's access to and management of human, financial, physical, natural, and political capitals. This interaction between capitals has also helped beneficiaries to know themselves, their rights, the power dynamics within the community, acquire and apply agricultural information/knowledge, and financial/business management and leadership skills compared with women in the control sites. With the increased human capital, the beneficiaries contributed more to decisions on agriculture and participated in community leadership to voice their concerns ("power to" and "power within") and support fellow women.

An increase in human capital and financial capital in women's names increases women's ability to decide on investment options. Financial capital received in-cash and/or in-kind in the women's names or saving made in women's names or with a group connotation strengthens women's bargaining power and autonomy which opens more possibilities of collective action and reinvestment in other capitals that enhance their wellbeing ("power to" and "power over") (Mulema et al., 2021).

For instance, access to agricultural inputs in women's names enabled women to actively engage in agricultural activities creating a shift in culturally defined roles and power relations. The increased stock of financial capital was also strategically invested in natural assets such as oxen, chickens, small ruminants, donkey-cart and land rentals, and physical assets such as mobile phones and labor-saving technologies which they controlled. Diversification of income-generating activities creates a steady stream of financial capital which if well managed, increases the stock of assets in other capitals. As women acquire resources on their own and/or

collectively, they increasingly obtain decision-making positions in the household and the community, and power to act (Mulema et al., 2021).

Members of the women-only self-help groups were also registered as cooperative members and sold their honey through the cooperatives. These groups saved and loaned money to members and rotated the role of group leader among members. This resulted in a sense of shared leadership and mutual accountability, and the skills necessary to lead the groups developed among women who would not otherwise have this opportunity. Overall, groups are clearly helping to some degree to reduce some of the well-known disparities in access to inputs, training, that prevent women from engaging in market. But due to structural gender inequalities, women are also positioned differently in terms of the type, volume, and quality of the produce they market, the spaces they market in, and their motivations for sales. Participants of women-only self-help groups also explained that training in business skills and other forms of organizational support had improved their access to information, and enabled links to a wider network of partners. The lack of secure markets for their produce which women experience was overcome via collective action in some sectors, where groups are linked to specialized producer unions or have an established relationship with a particular buyer (Baden, 2013).

5.7 Women Economic Empowerment in Pastoral Community

A quasi-experimental study of a capacity building program of pastoralists with 76% of the founding members of collective-action groups were women, finds participants of the program perceived an increase in wealth and a reduction in hunger relative to that for controls and more income and assets for more food purchases. Project participants shifted their livelihood strategies to include more small-business activities and diversification. Capacity building package helped women become more resilient and better manage risks associated with drought. Having more income and saving allowed women to purchase health inputs for people and animals, procure supplemental animal feeds, and invest in commercial vegetable production and dairy processing schemes. The study concluded collective action has been shown to be an effective development vehicle, especially for poor women (Coppock et al., 2011).

Similarly, a study of women under PARIMA (Pastoral Risk Management) a capacity building program, finds women formed various development committees as well as savings and credit associations and women assumed group leadership roles in most of the cases. The groups saved and extended microloans for members. Most of the entrepreneurial activities involved livestock production and trade but also included construction of rental homes and establishment of butcheries, bakeries,

small retail shops, and commercial vegetable and forage production. Women also quickly supported their children-both girls and boys to enroll in local schools. The study observed illiterate women with no prior formal leadership experience are capable of organizing and helping sustain relatively complex initiatives. Compared to men, women have appeared more committed to improving the welfare of peers and their families, as well as more able to form bonds with other women that create trust and a sense of shared responsibility, both essential for the success of collective action. The study also noted that women often have high ambitions and the determination to achieve long-term goals (Coppock et al., 2013).

a) Resource access and decision-making power of women in pastoral community

A study conducted in Borana indicated joint ownership of cattle among most of the married male and female respondents (Galie et al., 2015). However, some men felt that women did not own resources such as oxen and land. Widowed women indicated that they mostly owned small ruminants and poultry. Farmland is mostly owned by elderly men and women, married men and women, and the wealthy. Moreover, in Borana, while boys can own resources before marriage, girls are not allowed to own resources (such as livestock) before marriage. The study noted that a person could be said to own livestock if they had purchased it, received it as gifts, and/or inherited it. However, more men than women purchased livestock before marriage; and while men and boys had inherited livestock and land, women had inherited none. Men were said to own more livestock than women because they were perceived to be more knowledgeable about the subject (Galie et al., 2015; Flintan, 2010). As a result, men had more decision-making power over livestock and land and the final say about their management. Women make decisions about how to use and when to sell milk, butter, chickens, and eggs without consulting male household members because these were resources that could be managed within the household compound which was “the appropriate place for women.” Men are responsible for selling and buying livestock while women gather grasses and residues to feed the livestock kept around the homestead (Galie et al., 2015). A study on pastoral livelihood diversification and gender in Borana, show that more men (35.8%) participate in animal trade compared with women (9.2%) with a significant variation (Abiyot & Kjosavik, 2021).

A study on gendered perspectives of climatic and non-climatic stressors in Borana, find that in traditional Borana culture there is no participation of women in

administrative issues which is considered as the domain of men. However, currently women are participating in formal pastoral administration and have a reserved seat. It appears that women are much more concerned about issues of climate, environment, and economic problems, while men give more attention to policy and governance problems affecting pastoral livelihood. The priority area of women and men are not homogeneous but are affected by the different roles and responsibilities they bear in their society. Women's traditional gender roles and responsibilities, and lack of external support significantly affect the suffering of women from droughts (Abiyot & Kjosavik, 2019).

A study on pastoral livelihood diversification and gender in Borana, show that traditional cattle-centered pastoralism has been transforming into more diversified livelihood activities such as crop production, animal trade, petty trade, poultry farming, and selling of firewood and charcoal. Although men dominate most of the pastoral livelihood diversification activities, women are also playing significant roles in petty trade, poultry farming, and selling of firewood, which increases women's workload and income and improves their decision-making power in the household. The study show that more men (35.8%) participate in animal trade compared with women (9.2%) with a significant variation. Women explained that only recently a few women had started to participate in this activity, using small credits they received from NGOs to purchase sheep and goats. The low participation of women in animal trading is traced back to the inequality between women's and men's access to live animals. The low participation of women in such remunerative activities has negative impacts on women's agency and economic empowerment. On the other hand, even the participation of the household in animal trade comes with added responsibility for women as it increases their workload in providing feed for these animals.

In contrast to animal trading, the study shows 42.5% of women were engaged in petty trade, whereas the figure was nearly half (22.5%) for men. Women have increasingly turned to this activity as more and more men lose their cattle to droughts. This has the effect of making women co-breadwinners, posing new activities and challenges. This has improved women's access to cash more than ever before. Although the participation of women in petty trade has obviously increased their workload, this is gradually challenging the existing gender roles and women are negotiating for change in gender relations (Abiyot & Kjosavik, 2021; Abiyot & Kjosavik, 2019).

b) Gender relations, division of labor and pastoral women

Within a Borana household, gender sensitization and division begin at birth and so become the norm: when a male child is born there is a large celebration and the first gift of a female calf known as the haandhura (meaning natal umbilical cord) is provided to him. Further gifts will be provided to him as he grows up. Girls do not receive any gifts of livestock until they are married. Socio-cultural ascribed roles determine women's and men's responsibilities within the society. Some responsibilities and labor divisions are quite clear and defined, while others tend to be more flexible and can depend upon labor shortages, the development phases of the family, the number and type of livestock, the nature of the task, and the intensity with which people adhere to role ideas (Flintan, 2010). Women's role in livestock management includes milking, milk processing, sewing, and smoking of milk containers, milk storage and sale. Women collect fodder and fetch water for young livestock, fetching water and collecting firewood for household, taking care of children, feed calves and kids and clean their enclosures. Men's tasks include fencing of livestock enclosures, work at the satellite camp, livestock sale and slaughter. Women and men carry out shared tasks comprising; for instance, cattle dung removal, livestock medication, releasing and retuning livestock in the morning and evening and watering livestock at the deep wells (Hertkorn et al., 2015; Abiyot & Kjosavik, 2019).

In Borana, as men are increasingly losing their traditional livelihoods (cattle herding) and resource entitlements, and are unable to provide food for the family, women are pushed out of homes in an effort to secure food for the household. Consequently, many women are currently engaged in activities such as petty trade and selling of charcoal and fuel wood to support their families thereby significantly increasing their daily workload. As women are frequently away from home, men have started taking care of children and helping women with other household tasks. The new responsibilities women and men are assuming are touching the core values of gender relations and are beginning to break down the traditional role boundaries in both productions systems (Abiyot & Kjosavik, 2019).

6 Gaps in the Literature

The systematic review of women economic empowerment in Ethiopia found that most of the studies used quantitative methods and data from labor survey and DHS (Demographic and Health Survey). More methodological work is needed to develop robust and standardized measures for the subjective dimensions of women economic empowerment measured based on a respondent's own beliefs, experiences, and perspectives. The subjective analysis of women economic empowerment also takes deeper analysis of the normative behaviors that constrain women, and it helps to look into the agency and power dimensions more with a different insight.

Much of the studies collected and reviewed tend to focus on gendered comparisons than purely focusing on women economic empowerment. This has necessitated for drawing implications of the studies and connecting them with women economic empowerment, sometimes, without the very intention of the purpose of the studies. Hence, this affirms the presence of fragmented and quite shallow literature on women economic empowerment in Ethiopia.

Women's involvement in owning and running MSE is believed to be a key enabler of women economic empowerment, studies conducted in Ethiopia identified barriers and enablers to women's entrepreneurship stemming from discriminatory social norms or women's additional responsibility for household activity/unpaid care. More research is needed to flesh out other aspects of the relationship between operation of MSE and women economic empowerment in specific contexts and determinants of sustainability of women owned MSEs. While some details and outcomes of women-owned and women-led businesses are documented by some studies, they do not explore the full range of issues and what specifically is needed to create an enabling environment for women-owned and women-led businesses.

Most of the studies conducted in Ethiopian on women economic empowerment focus on agriculture, MSEs and micro-finance institutions. There is a gap in evidence in the areas of gender wage differentials, gender gaps in labor market, the role of public investment in improving women's economic participation and determinants of sustainability of women owned MSEs. For the sake of indicating the gaps, despite the larger coverage of literature from the agricultural sector, the real situations of women in the sector demands huge investments and concerted efforts to transform them into genuine economic empowerments. The situation in the pastoral sectors was more miserable even as compared with the agricultural sector. Relatively, there were promising edges in the MSE sectors where there are lights of hope to empower the women financially and economically in Ethiopia.

7 Conclusion

The semi-systematic review has identified gender gaps in economic empowerment and the underlying determinants of these gaps in different areas. Women in Ethiopia are facing with various constraints such as limited-access, management and control over agricultural resources and technologies as well as limited access for agricultural extension services and financial services. Moreover, although women supply agricultural labor, in most cases they have limited decision making power on issues that affect their economic welfare. Women's limited access to productive assets and decision making also results in women's lowered market participation.

There is gendered division of labor in both rural and urban areas and women spend more time each day in unpaid care and housework than their male counterparts. The heavy burden of care and housework is largely due to culturally assigned roles that severely limit women's participation in economic and employment opportunities. Even though women-owned small and micro enterprises (SMEs) play a meaningful and significant role in contributing to economic development of the country, limited access to financial resources, human capital, institutional support, and access to market are the major constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia. On the other hand, women's involvement in running MSEs enabled women more involved in decision making, both at home and in the community.

It has also been noted that self-help groups (SHGs) and collective action have positive effects on three dimensions of women's empowerment. Women were more economically empowered, female SHG showed higher mobility, so were more socially empowered and able to participate in decision-making focused on access to resources, rights, and entitlements within communities, hence were more politically empowered.

In pastoral community, men were said to own more livestock than women because they were perceived to be more knowledgeable about the subject. As a result, men had more decision-making power over livestock and land and the final say about their management. Women make decisions about how to use and when to sell milk, butter, chickens, and eggs without consulting male household members. Remarkably the studies reviewed show that traditional cattle-centered pastoralism has been transforming into more diversified livelihood activities such as crop production, animal trade, petty trade, poultry farming, and selling of firewood and charcoal. Although men dominate most of the pastoral livelihood diversification activities, women are also playing significant roles in petty trade, poultry farming, and selling

of firewood, which increases women's workload and income and improves their decision-making power in the household. However, more men than women participate in animal trade which is traced back to the inequality between women's and men's access to live animals. The low participation of women in such remunerative activities has negative impacts on women's agency and economic empowerment.

8 Implications

8.1 Conceptual and Definitional Impasses

This review of the literature has found out that much of the definitions of women economic empowerment had emerged and predominantly circulates in the operational spheres of development agencies. This might create wider opportunities for easily testing the notions developed in the frameworks. On the contrary, definitions, conceptualizations, frameworks, and models propagating out of the academic circles and research institutions seems not well grounded and got the possibility to be pronounced. As the debates are still active and lack of comprehensive definitions result in more unresolved dilemma, the involvement of academic and research institutions would be praised in paving the way for providing a relatively acceptable and an oversimplified definition of what really comprises women economic empowerment. Hence, this calls for more systemic and analytical in-depth characterization of women economic empowerment, more specifically referring to and reflecting the Ethiopian realities.

8.2 Policy

From the semi-systematic review, it has been noted that gender gaps exist in economic empowerment. The situation is largely determined by: (i) the inequality between women and men to access to productive inputs and agricultural extension services, credit access and the differential treatment by markets and (ii) the different responsibilities for care and housework between women and men, which consequently lead to different time use, thus affecting choices of employment and economic activity. This call for revisiting and reform of the existing policies and legal frameworks related to women empowerment in Ethiopia. These includes proclamations related inheritance and customary laws and joint land certification, setting up of credit schemes that address the needs of women-owned small and

micro-enterprises and farmers, use of technology such as mobile phones to access markets, improve extension support and inputs for women farmers and organizing women in savings group to access credit and diversify their livelihoods. In alleviating women's time poverty, policy options and interventions may include strengthening and expansion of childcare program initiated by the government, improving infrastructure services such as water, electricity and road, provision of energy and labor-saving technologies to reduce women's time on domestic work.

8.3 Implications for Development and Practitioners

Based on this semi-systematic review, one can raise at least two critical and interrelated issues: one is about the advocacy towards valuing women's work in monetary terms. The reviewed literature has shown the fact that women have been unpaid on most accounts where they contributed their labor. On conditions where they are paid, lower rates of benefit as compared to men were also observed. This should call for interventions and mechanisms that consider at depth higher rates of payment for women and weighing the labor value of women wherever they engage, in formal or informal, settings and job opportunities.

The second one is the persisting economic marginalization women despite efforts by a number of actors in addition to the institutional and policy frameworks. The reviewed literature also accounted much on the perpetuating economic marginalization of women in the agricultural, pastoral and MSE sectors and economic systems. The review fully concludes that women are still suffering from both a range of factors to move out of their miserable lives and empower themselves. Despite the ongoing efforts by governments, non-state actors and other stakeholders, the economic empowerment of women need to be grounded and further supported institutionally beyond definitions and academic debates. Scaling up of the already existing good practices in the sectors might be one way to take it further while still new initiatives and innovations must evolve out.

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