

**THE COST OF GAPS IN EXISTING FOOD PRICE-STABILIZING MARKET  
POLICIES IN URBAN AREAS FOR POOR WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES: THE  
CASE OF ADDIS ABABA**

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(ISD), FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES,  
UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE (UWC)**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR JULIAN D. MAY**

**NOVEMBER 2022**

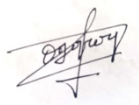
## DECLARATION

I declare that *The Cost of gaps in existing food price-stabilizing market policies in urban areas for poor women and their families: the case of Addis Ababa* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Tsega Girma Tefera

Date: November 11, 2022

Signed



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude to God and the Virgin Mary for all the blessings bestowed upon me, especially the courage that I have been endowed with to persevere through difficult times.

For his direction and dedication to my intellectual development and the successful completion of my thesis, my supervisor, Prof. Julian D. May of the Institute for Social Development (ISD), University of the Western Cape, has my sincere gratitude. The unwavering support of Prof. Mulugeta F. Dinbabo and the words of encouragement from my PhD colleagues at ISD, Irene Neyamu and Dr. Adeyami Saheed Badewa, are also greatly appreciated.

I owe all my success and everything I have accomplished thus far to my loving mother Yewbdar Tatek, my sisters Selam Girma, Rediet Girma and Meheret Girma, and friends such as Terefework Fekadu and Missale W/Giorgis who have been my backbones throughout. I am also grateful to my husband Prof. Benyam Dawit for all his support. My sincere appreciation also goes to Abinet G/Kristos, Dr. Celestine Nyamu-Musembi and Prof. Zemelak Ayele who were generous enough to lend a hand and provide advice when I needed it over the course of this project.

Finally, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the women who trusted me enough to disclose some of the most intimate details of their lives with me; without them, this research would not have been possible.

## DEDICATION

*To the courageous women of Addis Ababa who are compelled to shoulder a disproportionate burden of food inflation, I salute you.*

*To my beloved father Girma and uncle Aleme who always believed I could do this but are not here to see that it finally happened, this is for you.*



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## ABSTRACT

Food inflation has been a challenge in Ethiopia since prices of staple foods started rising in 2005, particularly threatening the food security of relatively poor and marginalized groups, such as women. However, there is limited research on the actual impact of food price surges and government-responsive programs on poor women. This study investigates the effect of food inflation and its coping mechanisms vis-à-vis government response programs from the perspective of poor women through consciously adopting feminist economics as a theoretical and interpretive framework. This was accomplished by taking into consideration women's gender-based privations and other facets of their identities and lived realities.

It employed a qualitative methodology that is guided by feminist epistemological principles in its design including data collection and analysis techniques. It investigated and drew lessons from how poor women are impacted by and cope with food inflation in relation to the Public Distribution System (PDS) of basic goods in Addis Ababa, a government intervention program, using the case study approach. In-depth interviews (IDIs) and two rounds of focus group discussions, (FGDs) utilizing Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools were carried out for women beneficiaries of the program, selected through the snowball sample technique, respectively. IDIs were also conducted for government and private implementing institutions of the intervention program.

The study assessed food provisioning strategies alongside an experience-based food insecurity measure to capture the many manifestations of women's vulnerability to increases in food prices. It also adopted a theory-based evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the intervention program's execution and achievement of its targeted goals, as well as a feminist analytic framework to analyse how well it catered for the gendered needs and constraints.

The findings revealed that time poverty, inadequate education, and lack of access to resources like income and assets constitute some of the main gendered and interrelated challenges poor women in the study area must overcome.

The impact of the time poverty brought on by poor women's numerous responsibilities and the absence of viable alternatives to their labour manifests in several ways. These include the strain on women's bodies and minds as well as the pressure to prioritize one role over another, which has long-term impacts on them, such as lowered competitiveness in the job market. This is primarily explained by gender ideals, which have obligated them to ensure the families' long-term survival regardless of their other duties and have denied them the negotiating leverage to access the family's assets and income including their earnings. Women are forced to bear disproportionately higher levels of emotional, monetary, and time costs of food inflation due to these gendered privations that significantly restrict their capacity to cope.

Although impoverished women buy less expensive food to cope, these cheaper foods typically take longer to buy, cook, or do both. In times of food inflation, poor women are faced with the hard decision of either suffering from food insecurity or committing more of their effort and time to food purchase and preparation. Despite being the only legal source of subsidised basic goods for the targeted beneficiaries, a theory-driven evaluation of the PDS of basic goods found that it had not succeeded in shielding its intended beneficiaries from rising food costs or ensuring that they consistently had access to basic goods at discounted rates. This is demonstrated in how the targeted beneficiaries continued to buy their food in the open or parallel market/illegal market where they have no protection from the PDS against exorbitant prices.

This was traced to implementation problems and faulty assumptions embedded in the program theory including the needs of its targeted beneficiaries and ways of addressing them, and the capacity of the implementing institutions to execute the program as adequately as planned. Despite facilitating access to basic goods to its poor women beneficiaries, the PDS has failed to meet their specific demands in terms of product characteristics such as quality scale/volume, and time. This was attributed to the intervention's androcentric orientation, evidenced by its disregard for women's gender-specific needs and challenges and its inability to address the issue through their experiences while taking into account their hidden/private transaction costs.

Despite the intervention's effort to maintain its gender neutrality, it relied on the extra time and effort provided by women in procuring and cooking food to compensate for its inefficiencies, worsening their existing reproductive burdens and widening gender disparities.



## KEYWORDS

Food security, Food inflation, Feminist economics, Gendered needs and gendered constraints, Gender-sensitivity/responsiveness, Time poverty, Basic goods, Bargaining power, Food provisioning strategies, Addis Ababa.





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## LIST OF ABBRIVATIONS

AAMP	African Agricultural Markets Project
AAU	Addis Ababa University
APRA	Agricultural Policy Research in Africa
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMC	Agricultural Marketing Corporation
ASRJETS	American Scientific Research Journal for Engineering, Technology, and Sciences
BMI	Body-Mass Index
BoP	Balance of Payment
BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
CARI	Consolidated Approach for Reporting on Food Security Indicators
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
JCEPS	Critical Education Policy Studies
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CPTU	Consumer Product Trade Unit
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
DDS	Dietary Diversity Score
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECX	Ethiopian Commodity Exchange
EEA	Ethiopian Economics Association
EEP	Extra-household Environmental Parameters
EEPRI	Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute
EFSRA	Emergency Food Security Reserve Administration
EGB	Ethiopian Grain Board
EGC	Ethiopian Grain Corporation
EGTE	Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox <i>Tewhado</i> Church
EPHI	Ethiopian Public Health Institute
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EMTRI	Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration
ESC	Ethiopian Sugar Corporation
ETB	Ethiopian Birr/Birr

ETBC	Ethiopian Trading Business Corporation
ETE	Ethiopian Trading Enterprise
FBS	Food Balance Sheets
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCND	The Food Consumption and Nutrition Division
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FEC	Food Energy Consumption
FeMSEDA	Federal Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency
FGD	Focus Groups Discussion
FIMI	Food Insecurity Multidimensional Index
FMCG	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods
FUJCFSA	Federal Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency of Ethiopia
FSP	Food Security Programme
FSS	Food Security Strategies
GAD	Gender and Development
GAIN	Global Agricultural Information Network
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GESEA	Gender Equality Strategy for Ethiopia's Agricultural Sector
GHI	Global Hunger Index
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
HABP	Household Asset Building Program
HCE	Household Consumption Expenditure
HDI	Human Development Index
HFIAS	Household Food Insecurity Access Scale
HICES	Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure Survey
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HLPE	High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition
HSSREC	Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee
IDI	In-Depth Interviews
IDS	Institute of Development Studies

IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IGC	International Growth Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMIS	Integrated Management Information System
JTTC	Jimma Teachers' Training College
LIC	Low-Income Countries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoANR	Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource
MoARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoCWA	Ministry of Children and Women's Affairs
MoFEC	Ministry of Finance and Economic Commission
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MoT	Ministry of Trade
MoTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MPO	Micro Poverty Outlook
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprises
MT	Metric Tonnes
MTRI	Ministry of Trade Regional Integration
MUAC	Mid-Upper Arm Circumference
NAP-GE	National Action Plan for Gender Equality
NBE	National Bank of Ethiopia
NEPS	National Employment Policy and Strategy
NGO	Non-Government-owned Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission
OAU	Organization for African Union
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
PADETES	Participatory Demonstration and Training Extension System
PAE	Per Adult Equivalent
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PDC	Planning and Development Commission
PDS	Public Distribution System



PoU	Prevalence of Undernourishment
PP	Prosperity Party
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
QoL	Quality of Life
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program
SKU	Store-Keeping Units
SNNPR	Southern Nations, and Nationalities and Peoples' Region
SPA	Social Provisioning Approach
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
ToA	Theory of Action
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Terms-of-Trade
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDESA	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPSNP	Urban Productive Safety Net Project
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WAD	Women and Development
WEF	World Economic Forum
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WID	Women in Development
WMS	Welfare Monitoring Survey

## LIST OF AMHARIC WORDS/TERMS

<b>Amharic terms</b>	<b>Meanings</b>
<i>Alle Bejimla/ Alle</i>	A trade name for the Consumer Product Trade Unit (CPTU)
<i>Amharic</i>	Amharic is the working language of the federal GoE and the Addis Ababa city Administration (EPRDF, 1995; Getachew and Derb, 2006)
<i>Bega</i>	Is the equivalent of Summer in Ethiopia, and occurs between October and January
<i>Belg</i>	Is an equivalent of Autumn in Ethiopia, and one of the three main rainy seasons occurs between February and May
<i>Berberere</i>	Spiced and grounded pepper which is commonly applied in popular Ethiopian dishes
<i>Beso</i>	Food that is made of barley and that can be consumed without having to cook it
<i>Chat/Khat</i>	Is a moderate stimulant made from the Catha edulis plant, which is produced and used in Ethiopia (Csete, 2014)
<i>Derg</i>	The socialist regime in Ethiopia between 1974-1991
<i>Ehel Berenda</i>	The biggest wholesale legume market in Addis Ababa
<i>Enkutatash</i>	Ethiopian new year celebration in September
<i>Fasika</i>	Ethiopian Easter which is celebrated in April
<i>Frank Addis</i>	A location further away from the residential area of the sampled beneficiaries
<i>Gulit</i>	An open marketplace, located relatively far from the other markets in the study area
<i>Hibret suks/ Shemachoch</i>	Common name for Consumers' Cooperative Societies' and outlet shops
<i>Iddir</i>	An indigenous, traditional, and voluntary association of people with the main objective of mobilizing finance and free labour to help members mainly, during bereavement, but also against other shocks such as illness, unemployment, fire, accidents and theft (Aredo, 1993; Mauri, 1987; Pankhurst and Haile Mariam, 2000)
<i>Injera</i>	A sour pancake-like staple food in Ethiopia
<i>Iqqub</i>	An indigenous, and voluntary saving mobilization association, is usually established by a group of people who have some kind of affinity with each other (Mauri, 1987; Pankhurst and Haile Mariam, 2000)

<i>Kebele</i>	The lowest administrative unit of the GoE
<i>Kirmet/Meher</i>	Is the equivalent of Winter in Ethiopia, and one of the three main rainy seasons that occurs between June- September
<i>Lekso</i>	It is the process of death and bereavement. According to the Ethiopian tradition, death and bereavement is an elaborate process that involves a religious burial ceremony attended by hundreds to thousands of people, several weeks of mourning, and feeding guests who come to console the family of the deceased for days (Seyoum, n.d.). The social norm of the country dictates that all people in the neighbourhood must visit and console the mourning family regardless of <i>Iddir</i> membership and closeness with the family of the deceased (ibid.)
<i>Meher/kirmet</i>	Is Winter in Ethiopia, and is one of the main rainy seasons that occurs between June and September
<i>Mercato</i>	The biggest open market in the country for both retail and wholesale trade.
<i>Merdo</i>	<i>Lekso</i> ceremony following the news of the passing of a close family member living in a far-away place
<i>Mitad</i>	A traditional pan used for making <i>injera</i> and bread
<i>Nifro</i>	a mix of boiled grains including wheat, beans, chickpea, etc
<i>Piassa</i>	A location further away from the study area, where one of the biggest markets for vegetables and fruits is located in Addis Ababa
<i>Qita</i>	An unleavened bread/pancake
<i>Shiro</i>	Stew made from spiced and powdered chickpeas. It is one of the most affordable and regularly consumed meals, especially by low-income households
<i>Shola</i>	An open marketplace, which is located relatively far from the other markets in the study area
<i>Teff</i>	A predominantly consumed and preferred grain especially in urban areas and among high-income group families in rural areas, and used to make <i>injera</i> (USAID, 2021)
<i>Tela</i>	Locally made alcohol made from barley, corn and/or other grains
<i>Woreda</i>	An administrative unit of the GoE above <i>kebeles</i>
<i>YeArkebe shop</i>	A small booth-like shop commonly named after a former Mayor of Addis Ababa, whose administration oversaw its provision for low-income groups running SMEs at affordable lease fees

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 Introduction

*“Food prices are increasing and increasing beyond our capacity to buy. We only buy food if we can afford it. We are only telling this to God, otherwise, I do not think this will be solved by human beings” (An excerpt from a story shared by a woman study participant in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)*

This frustration and hopelessness that is evident in the above quote is a feeling that might be shared by millions of poor people around the world whose food and economic security have been threatened by recent surges in food prices. Food prices have been on the rise globally owing to soaring oil prices, which have resulted in higher fertilizer and transportation costs, droughts and export restrictions. The COVID-19 pandemic and its containment measures have further disrupted production and trade (FAO et al., 2021; Mo Choi, 2021). Consumer food prices hit their highest level in six years in December 2020, following the outbreak of the pandemic, and have continued to rise through the first quarter of 2021 (FAO et al., 2021). The situation is exacerbated by the Russia -Ukraine war that triggered price increases in commodities such as grain, petroleum, and fertiliser with far-reaching impacts on net importers like Ethiopia, particularly hurting the service sector, the rural poor and the unskilled labourers (Tamru and Gebrewolde, 2022).

The headline inflation and food inflation in Ethiopia have climbed to new heights since 2011, registering an annual average of 33,7% and 40,2% respectively between July 21 and June 2022 (Central Statistics Agency (CSA), 2022). Rising food prices can cause and exacerbate the poverty<sup>1</sup>, and food insecurity of the affected population as they are forced to switch to lower-quality, less-balanced diets, limit their investment in education and health and sell productive assets to cope (Alam and Shahiduzzaman, 2008; International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2008; Meerman and Aphane, 2012; Ruel et al., 2010; von Braun, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup> Poverty is “a human condition characterised by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living, and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights” (UN Economic and Social and Council, 2001, p.2-3).

Increases in food prices are typically known to disproportionately affect poor urban inhabitants in low-income countries (LICs), who are net food buyers, allocating a significant portion of their income to food (Cohen and Garrett, 2010; Laborde et al., 2019). For example, during the year 2020, the food inflation in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is believed to have elevated the number of undernourished people in the region by 20% (to 264 million people) (Mo Choi, 2021). This is telling of the probable devastating consequences of the food price surge in Ethiopia for the 20,5 million of the country's population who are food insecure (CSA and World Food Programme (WFP), 2019). A study in three sub-cities of Addis Ababa found that among food-insecure households, 23% were found to be in a total state of hunger resulting from their dependence on markets for food supply combined with high food inflation (Birhane, et al, 2014).

Understandably, inflation like other shocks discriminates even among the poor; hitting socially and economically marginalized groups like women even worse (King and Sweetman, 2010; Kumar and Quisumbing, 2015; McBriarty, 2011; Meerman and Aphane, 2012; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2011). This is due to their relative lack of physical, human, and social capital, which limits their ability to respond appropriately (Kumar and Quisumbing, 2013; Quisumbing et al., 2008). Oftentimes, such pre-existing gender inequities are far greater than gender inequalities caused by economic crises (King and Sweetman, 2010). Globally, there exists a gender gap<sup>2</sup> of 32,3% on average, measured in terms of political empowerment, economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, and health and survival (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2021). With the current development trends, the overall global gender gap can only be closed in 135,6 years. Measured at the current rate of change, women are lagging 170 years behind men in the economic and health spheres (ibid.). This situation is much worse for women in poor economies.

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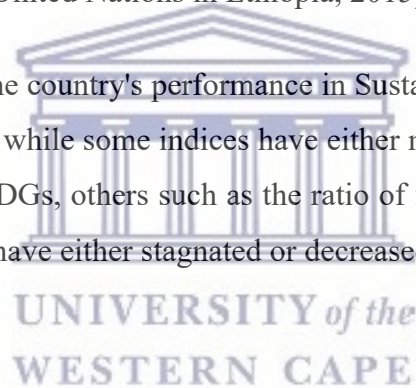
<sup>2</sup> Global Gender Gap Index utilizes a 0 to 100 scale to compute scores, which may be used to measure distances to parity (i.e., the percentage of the gender gap that has been closed) in terms of economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment (WEF, 2021).

According to ONE Campaign, (2016, p.1).

*“Being born in a poor country and being born female amount to a double whammy for girls and women: they are significantly worse off than their counterparts in richer countries, and in every sphere, they are hit harder by poverty than men “*

Despite making tremendous progress in bridging the gender gap in the health and survival index, women in SSA lag far behind males in other indices such as academic attainment when compared to women in other regions (WFP, 2021). In over half of the countries in the region, for example, there is a 20% literacy gap between males and females, which widens with higher educational levels, despite cross-country variability. This is also the case in Ethiopia, where despite great advances in decreasing the gender gap, the country has failed to reach Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 3 and MDG 5<sup>3</sup> by 2015 for several reasons, including socioeconomic and cultural barriers (Gebru and Demeke, 2014; National Planning Commission and The United Nations in Ethiopia, 2015).

The latest figures on the country's performance in Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5<sup>4</sup> indicate that while some indices have either moderately improved or are on track to meet the SDGs, others such as the ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received have either stagnated or decreased (Sachs et al., 2021).



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<sup>3</sup> The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a set of eight United Nations declarations made in 2000 to provide a comprehensive framework of basic values and principles in the areas of sustainable development, human rights, peace, and security, all of which must be realized by 2015 (National Planning Commission and The United Nations in Ethiopia, 2015). Among these declarations, MDG 3 aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, while MDG 5 aimed at improving maternal health respectively.

<sup>4</sup> SDGs are a set of 17 indivisible, global, aspirational goals and 169 corresponding targets that were adopted by Heads of State and Government and higher representatives in 2015 with the intention of serving as a framework for global development and coordinating action (United Nations, 2015). Among these, SDG 5 is aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

Ethiopia also performed poorly both in the Gender Development Index (GDI) and in the Gender Inequality Index (GII)<sup>5</sup> of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2020, due to its relatively low achievements in closing the gender gap in Human Development Index (HDI) in general<sup>6</sup>, and in reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market in particular. Ranking 97<sup>th</sup> out of 155 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index in 2020, Ethiopia still has a gender gap of 30, 9% (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2021). Therefore, it can be concluded that women trail far behind men in every meaningful aspect of life in Ethiopia, rendering them especially vulnerable to economic crises such as rising food prices.

## 1.2 Research problem

Inflation has been a serious challenge in Ethiopia since 2005 with the consistent recording of double-digit figures (Admassie, 2015, 2013; Birhane et al., 2014; Klugman, 2007). Between the years 2004 and 2019, the country's inflation rate averaged 15%, per annum while reaching a record high of 44% in 2008 (World Bank, 2021a). Food inflation has been the major contributor to the general inflation rate in the country since food and non-alcoholic expenditures makeup 54% of the Consumer Price Index (CPI)<sup>7</sup> (CSA, 2021). Food prices are also one of the determining factors of stability in the supply and access to food, thereby food security (CSA and WFP, 2019; FAO, 2003; Napoli, 2011). This is particularly true in urban centres including Addis Ababa, where unusually high prices of foods are among the top three most important driving factors for the incidence of shocks, thereby food shortages (WFP and CSA, 2019; Planning and Development Commission, 2018).

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<sup>5</sup> Ethiopia ranks 173<sup>rd</sup> and 125<sup>th</sup> in Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index respectively among 180 countries in 2019 (UNDP, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> With male to female HDI ratio of 0,837 in 2019, the country falls into the group 5 category, characterized by low performance in gender-equality (UNDP, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> CPI measures the average change in the cost of a fixed basket goods and services (CSA, 2021). The expenditure weights of the major household goods and services in the basket are derived from the Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure Survey (HICES) of 2015/2016, and December 2016 is used as base period (ibid.).

For example, in 2010/11, unusually high food prices contributed to 23,1% of incidences of food shock in Addis Ababa, making it the highest driving factor followed by illness at 5% (CSA and WFP, 2014). This has major ramifications for the nation's impoverished women, who are especially vulnerable to economic shocks like increases in food prices because of their multifaceted deprivations, including a lack of bargaining power and access to coping mechanisms like material and human capital (Dercon and Krishnan, 2000; Fafchamps et al., 2009; Fafchamps and Quisumbing, 2005, 2002; Gebre et al., 2021; Quisumbing and Maluccio, 2003; Tsige, 2019; Uraguchi, 2010).

Previous research has found that shocks make women in both male and female-led households more food insecure than their male counterparts (Belachew et al., 2012; Dercon and Krishnan, 2000; Uraguchi, 2009). For example, Women in both male- and female-headed households saw a substantially faster decline in consumption after the 2007–2008 food price crisis and a far slower recovery than men (Uraguchi, 2010). They are also more inclined to adopt consumption-based coping strategies, such as reducing the portion and, and the quality of food consumed by switching to coarse grains and oil, that are devoid of vegetables, dairy and meat (Uraguchi, 2010).

When compared to boys and men in the same household, consumption levels of women and girls in poor households tend to be more severely affected by shocks, exposing the underlying gender bias in access to food and coping mechanisms (Belachew et al., 2012; Dercon and Krishnan, 2000; Hadley et al., 2008). The workload of women in Ethiopia also tended to increase in response to shocks in income and food to purchase and prepare food more cheaply and boost family income (Uraguchi, 2010).



Ethiopia's National Food Security Strategies (FSS) and related policies and development initiatives such as the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP)<sup>8</sup> recognize women's contributions to the economy, their challenges, and the need to modify intervention programs accordingly to facilitate their participation and access to services (Ministry of agriculture and rural development, 2009; Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), 2002).

Similarly, many legislative measures were put in place in recognition of women's historical socioeconomic disadvantages in the country, beginning with Article 35 of the Constitution, which grants women affirmative and corrective measures (FDRE, 1995). However, gender equality has not been a priority in practice, as demonstrated by the lack of gender-disaggregated data, the omission of women's economic contributions from national statistics, the absence of gender and women-specific concerns in sectoral policies and plans, and evaluations (Druza et al., 2020; Gebru and Demeke, 2014; Tsige et al., 2020; WABEKBON Development Consultant PLC, 2006). For example, the most important form of social protection in Ethiopia, the PSNP, treats households as a single entity, disregarding gender and power dynamics within households (Tsige et al., 2020).

This suggests that Ethiopian government policies and programs are still influenced by androcentric economic theory, which ignores non-marketable aspects of the economy, and obscures the existence of varying needs, preferences, asymmetries in power, access to income and other resources, and household division of labour. Such government initiatives that fail to take into account the gendered nature of the crisis and the intervention pose the danger of escalating women's relative disadvantage by reinforcing discriminatory gender norms or by shifting the crisis' strain to them (Cagatay, 1998; Elson, 2010, 1998, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Jennings, 1994; Jones and Holmes, 2011).

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<sup>8</sup> The PSNP is a rural safety net program that aims to increase vulnerable households' resistance to food insecurity by providing cash and/or food transfers to help them become food sufficient and, eventually, food secure (Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), 2014). Since 2016, the safety net program was expanded to 11 urban areas (Federal urban job creation and food security agency of Ethiopia (FUJCFSA), 2018).

Hence, the research concern can be summarized in the following points:

- Food inflation is likely to have a greater impact on poor Ethiopian women, whose ability to cope is hampered by several gendered privations.
- However, the impact of rising food prices on poor Ethiopian women, as well as their relative difficulties to cope with it owing to their multiple gendered constraints, is poorly understood. This is due to the lack of enough attention given to the non-marketed aspects of the economy and how families operate, including how they make allocative and distribution decisions.
- Thus, the gendered impact of government policies and programs aimed at mitigating the impact of food inflation on women is not well-known.

This study attempts to address these concerns by analysing the impact of food inflation and coping mechanisms that women employ to adapt to rising food prices in Ethiopia. It also analyses the gender sensitivity of mitigation policies and programs of the government against food inflation and their impacts on poor women.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

The main objective of this research is to investigate the effect of food inflation and the coping mechanisms that women employ to adapt to rising food prices in the absence of an effective and gender-sensitive price-stabilizing intervention program in Ethiopia. It accomplishes this by examining the Public Distribution System (PDS) of basic products in Addis Ababa, a government intervention program designed to safeguard the food security of the nation's vulnerable population in particular by stabilizing the supply and prices of basic goods.

#### **Specific objectives of the research**

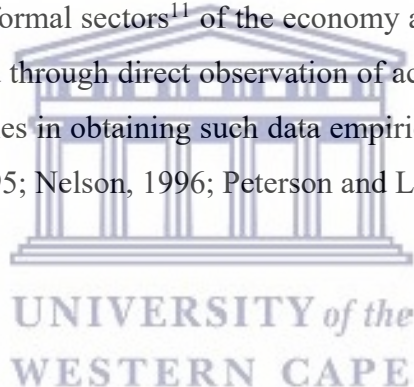
The specific objectives of this study are the following:

1. Exploring the gendered constraints of poor women residents of Addis Ababa concerning their multiple roles, their poor education and their lack of entitlement over income and assets;

2. Examining the effect of food inflation and its coping mechanisms from the perspective of women, given their gendered constraints;
3. Analysing the implementation of the PDS<sup>9</sup> of basic goods in Addis Ababa, its achievements and challenges in terms of ensuring a stable supply of basic goods at affordable prices for the poor; and
4. Analysing the impact of the PDS in terms of its responsiveness to the gendered needs of poor women beneficiaries in Addis Ababa.

#### 1.4 Significance of the study– The research gap

Despite the importance of gender in determining how households are affected by inflation and how they cope with it, a gendered analysis of economic crisis including food inflation is a very under-researched area (King and Sweetman, 2010; Quisumbing et al., 2008; Quisumbing, 2013). This could be explained by the underlying androcentrism in conventional economic methodology, which ignores the domestic<sup>10</sup>, and informal sectors<sup>11</sup> of the economy and places an inferior value on "soft" data obtained through direct observation of actual attitude and behaviour as well as the difficulties in obtaining such data empirically (King and Sweetman, 2010; MacDonald, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Peterson and Lewis, 1999).



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<sup>9</sup>This a program established by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) to improve the accessibility of basic goods, to stabilize prices and mitigate the harmful effects of food inflation on the poor (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018)

<sup>10</sup> This refers to a range of non-market traded activities performed in the home sphere, such as nurturing and caring to meet the concrete needs and wants of human beings (Elson, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Grapard, 2001; Hutchinson, 1995; Klamer, 1995; Kuiper et al., 1995; Mellor, 1997; Nelson, 1996; Woolley, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Informal employment refers to the type of employment or income generation activity without a formal contract, worker benefits or social, and legal protection, either at the household level or in the formal and informal sectors (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2002). It includes own-account workers in informal sectors, paid domestic workers, unpaid family workers, those in subsistence production, paid employees and employers in the informal sector and, members of informal producers' cooperatives (Ibid.).

The most recurring themes in empirical works in Ethiopia on the impact of food inflation in general, and those specifically looking at the gendered effects of inflation have been the use of secondary data, rigorous quantitative methods such as the application of simulation models and food insecurity measurement scales, and the focus on "hard" outcomes such as calorie intake (Alem and Söderbom, 2012; Belachew et al., 2012; Birhane et al., 2014; Hadley et al., 2011, 2008; Hill and Porter, 2017; Kumar and Quisumbing, 2013; Matz et al., 2015; Shimeles and Delelegn, 2013; Ticci, 2011; Ulimwengu et al., 2009).

Although these exercises and the methodology they used are useful, they lacked contextual information on the population being studied, the extent of the difficulties faced by individuals as a result of increased food costs, or how such changes occur (Hadley et al., 2012; Levay et al., 2013). The gender responsiveness of national strategies, development programs and policies has also been the subject of several insightful studies in Ethiopia such as, by Druza et al. (2020), Gebreselassie and Haile (2013), and Tsige et al. (2020). However, as of yet, no similar research has been done on government intervention programs aimed at stabilising the availability and price of food in urban markets.

This study aims to fill these research gaps by exploring the food inflation experience of poor women in Addis Ababa, its impact on their food security, as well as their coping strategies. Ethiopia's PDS for basic goods is also examined, along with its implementation process, challenges and achievements from the perspective of both implementing enterprises and targeted beneficiaries. It also investigates whether the intervention makes a deliberate effort to accommodate the gendered needs of women while addressing the food inflation problem. To my knowledge, this study is among the few that have consciously adopted a feminist economics framework to understand the impact of food inflation on poor women and the gender sensitiveness of government response programs. Motivation for this research, therefore, stems from the scantiness of research in Ethiopia that achieves the following:

1. Provides an in-depth, context-specific and “rich” analysis of the food inflation problem, its impact on physical and psychosocial well-being, and its coping techniques constituting emotions from the perspective of women;
2. Values women as a source of knowledge by allowing them to provide their interpretive accounts of the food inflation problem, how they are affected and cope with it based on their lived realities and experiences and given their gendered constraints;
3. Utilizes participatory research methods such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)<sup>12</sup> that empowers women participants in the study to be the main actors in mapping, diagramming, sorting, scoring, and analysing information;
4. Derives a program theory for the government intervention program, highlighting underlying causal relationships between stated outcomes, outputs, and activities as well as underlying assumptions, to assess the validity of the implementation process as well as the intervention program itself through its outcome; and
5. Utilizes a feminist policy analysis framework to analyse how women are affected by the government intervention program.

This study aims to contribute to improving policy planning and implementation by expanding and deepening existing understanding of the food inflation problem and government response through the realities and experiences of poor women, accounting for the social context in which they are embedded and the resulting structures of constraints.

## 1.5 Dissertation overview

This thesis is made up of ten chapters which can be categorized into the following three broad sections:

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<sup>12</sup> PRA methods refer to a set of participatory exercises that combine visuals, and tangibles, and are carried out in small groups to empower local and marginal people to express themselves, exchange ideas and information, and take centre stage in the knowledge creation process (Chambers, 2007; Uddin and Anjuman, 2013).

**Section 1** (Chapters 1-3) provides an introduction and context for the food inflation problem and its impact on women at global, regional and country levels. It also provides clarification on some of the major concepts in the study including how women are particularly vulnerable to food inflation, as well as a review of empirical studies on the topic in Ethiopia. In addition, it contextualizes the study by offering background information about the country, on issues relevant to the study.

**Section 2** (Chapters 4-5) comprises the theoretical framework, the analytical framework, the research philosophy, methodological principles, the design and methods of the study.

**Section 3** (Chapters 6-10) provide a synthesis of the study's results and serve as a conclusion. A summary of each of the constituted chapters in the study is provided below:

- **Chapter one** introduces the study by outlining the research problem that it aims to address, its objectives, and its significance. It also explicates the research problem, its objectives and the research gap that it aims to fill.
- **Chapter two** explicates the relevant concepts in the thesis starting with food inflation and its impact on poverty and food security; food security and its components, dimensions and issues of measurement and analysis. It explains the various ways in which women could become vulnerable to the effects of food inflation. It improves comprehension of established knowledge on the vulnerability of poor women in Ethiopia to food inflation and the gender sensitivity of the state legislations, policies, and programs, Through a critical analysis of earlier research on the subjects, their methodology, and findings,
- **Chapter three** provides relevant background information on Ethiopia's economy, food security, trends in food price movements and its driving forces, and the various responses of the government against food inflation.
- **Chapter four** presents the feminist economics theory, which is employed as the study's theoretical framework, guiding its research design including data collection and analysis procedures, as well as interpretations for its findings.

- It also attempts to expose the flaws of conventional economic theory and how its androcentric assumption of “economic man” and exclusive focus on marketed aspects of the economy neglects the role of gender norms and resulting constraints on women. The chapter also provides the analytical framework of the study specifying the dependent and independent variables and directions of assumed relationships.
- **Chapter five** details and justifies the study’s process/organicist worldview position, its feminist epistemological principles and methodological features, and how they inform the study’s research design and methods consisting of data collection, analysis, and presentation techniques. The chapter also provides an overview of the fieldwork and data analysis process, the researcher’s role and reflexivity, the study’s limitations and ethical considerations.
- **Chapter six** presents the study’s findings on the gender roles and multiple deprivations of poor women in the study area including their time poverty, and lack of bargaining power to address the first research objective.
- **Chapter seven** investigates how poor women in Addis Ababa are affected by food inflation and their coping strategies, thereby meeting research objective two.
- **Chapter eight** analyses the implementation process and outcomes of the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa, its achievements, and challenges using a theory-driven evaluation technique towards realizing research objective three.
- **Chapter nine** examines the responsiveness of the PDS to the needs and gender constraints of poor women beneficiaries through employing a feminist policy analysis framework, thereby meeting research objective four.
- **Chapter ten** summarizes the major findings and contributions of this study, followed by concluding remarks and policy recommendations. The thesis's schematic workflow, shown in Figure 1:1 below, illustrates how its various components are organised.

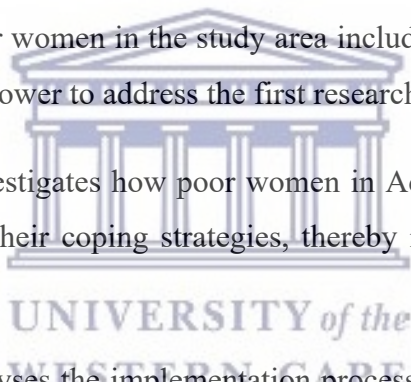
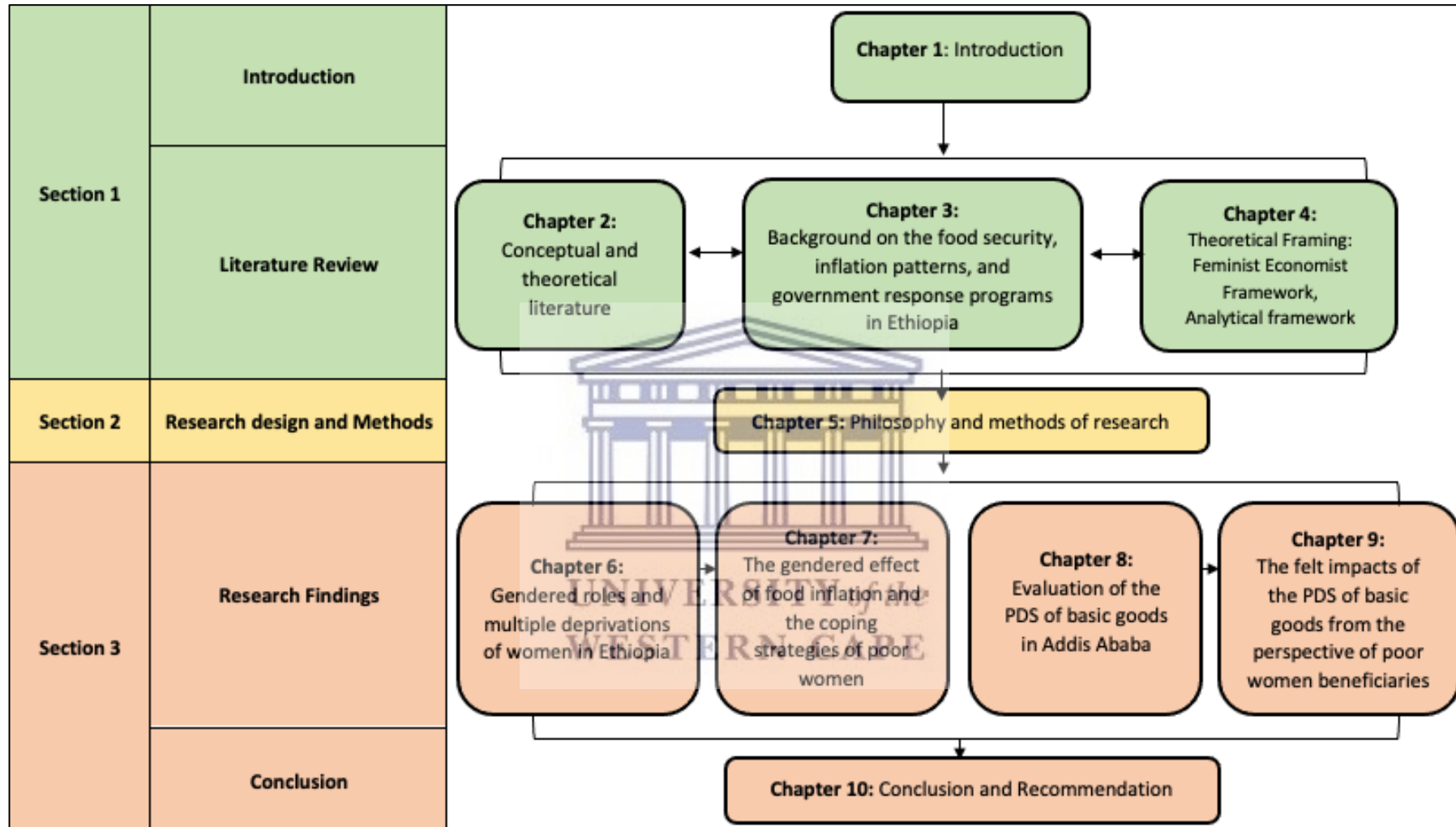


Figure:1:1 Schematic workflow of thesis





## CHAPTER 2 : Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter has incorporated conceptual and empirical literature that grounds this study in the pertinent knowledge bases that serve as its foundation. The chapter starts by presenting the food security framework, along with its various components and dimensions and their proxies. It also defines food inflation and discusses its social, economic and political impacts in terms of diminished income, rising poverty, inequality, food insecurity, and political instability. It then elaborates on how inflation-led food insecurity could be detrimental to the physical and psychosocial well-being of the affected population both in the short and long term (Coates et al., 2006; Dercon, 2008; Hadley et al., 2012; Hadley and Patil, 2008; Klotz et al., 2008; World Bank, 2011).

It also explores the role of coping strategies against current inflation-led food insecurity, and in determining future vulnerability. The various categories of coping strategies including food-related strategies and income-raising strategies are explained, along with their objectives and consequences. This is followed by elaborating on the logic behind the sequencing of coping strategies and how this process relates to the severity of the food security crisis.

The chapter also discusses the vulnerability of poor urban households to food inflation-led food insecurity. It then analyses the primary pathways via which women are prone to food insecurity by using social norms as explanatory variables. It outlines the existing gender gap in Ethiopia from various perspectives, as well as the list of legal and policy measures implemented by the GoE to address it. Finally, it presents a critical review of previous studies in the country on the gendered impact of food inflation and the gender sensitiveness of government programs/policies, including their methods and findings.

## 2.2 Rising food prices and their economic, social and political consequences

Price volatility refers to unanticipated price fluctuations in excess of the long-term economic business cycle trend, both in terms of frequency and magnitude, posing social, economic, and political crises (Díaz-Bonilla, 2016; Kalkuhl et al., 2016, 2013). High inflation<sup>13</sup>, is one of those unanticipated extreme price occurrences that disrupt economic development and jeopardize the food security and human development of especially the poor (Ha et al., 2019; Kalkuhl et al., 2016; World Bank, 2011). Hence, low and steady inflation<sup>14</sup> is desirable as it is associated with better economic and development outcomes such as poverty reduction (Ha et al., 2019).

Food price increases have important macroeconomic implications on aggregate/headline inflation, and a country's terms-of-trade (ToT), which could either be favourable or harmful depending on its net food import/export status (Laborde et al., 2019; World Bank, 2011). The effect of food price increases on headline/aggregate inflation could be "direct" or/and "indirect" through its "second round" effects on inflationary expectations, salaries, and the prices of other non-food components of the CPI<sup>15</sup> (Rangasamy, 2011, p. 185-186). The magnitude of the impact of food price increases on overall inflation is dependent on the share of food in the CPI (ibid.). Other long-term effects of rising food prices include decreased investment, employment, and economic growth as well as a rise in poverty and food insecurity (Díaz-Bonilla, 2016; Kalkuhl et al., 2016; Rangasamy, 2011).

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<sup>13</sup> Inflation refers to the rate with which prices rise over a given period of time, usually a year (Oner, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> However, extremely low inflation can also pose serious monetary and fiscal policy challenges as it can tip into deflation (negative inflation), which depresses economic activity and increases debt burdens (Ha et al., 2019).

<sup>15</sup> The CPI which is the most often used measure of inflation, refers to the cost of a fixed basket of commonly purchased goods and services by the typical consumer over a fixed period of time, usually a year (Oner, 2010).

Further, food price hikes could lead to social unrest and riots, and contestation of political power, especially with increasing urbanization and concentration of political power in metropolitan centres (Díaz-Bonilla, 2016; Kalkuhl et al., 2016). Hence, the absence of price stability is concerning for governments from social, economic, and political stability perspectives (Alam and Shahiduzzaman, 2008; IFPRI, 2008). The impact of food inflation on poverty, inequality, and food security is explicated in the proceeding sections.

### **2.3 Impact of inflation on income and poverty, and inequality**

There is no universal agreement on the direction and extent of the impact of inflation on income and poverty, as it depends on the production and consumption patterns of different groups (Laborde et al., 2019; World Bank, 2011). However, the literature on average suggests that when food prices rise sharply, the overall degree of poverty rises (Compton et al., 2010; Martin and Ivanic, 2016; Ticci, 2011; World Bank, 2011). This is mainly attributable to an increase in the depth of poverty among the already poor (i.e., poverty gap), as opposed to an increase in the number of people newly falling below the poverty line or an increase in the number of the ‘new poor’ (i.e., the poverty headcount) (Compton et al., 2010).

For poor net food buyers, in particular, a surge in food prices has an income effect of diminishing the purchasing power, thereby reducing their ability to spend on expenses like as heating, lighting, water, sanitation, education, and healthcare (Alam and Shahiduzzaman, 2008; D’Souza and Jolliffe, 2016; Headey et al., 2012; IFPRI, 2008; Klotz et al., 2008; Laborde et al., 2019, 2019; Meerman and Aphane, 2012; Ruel et al., 2010; World Bank, 2011). Another consequence of increasing food prices is the redistribution of income among various groups, aggravating existing inequalities, including intrahousehold inequality (Compton et al., 2010; Kalkuhl et al., 2016; Shimeles and Delelegn, 2013). This includes the income distribution from net buyers and wage labourers to wealthier landowners and net food sellers. In rural Ethiopia, for instance, those having access to land tended to benefit considerably from an increase in food prices, but those households without access to land tended to experience negative growth (Shimeles and Delelegn, 2013).

Households may also be obliged to sell their productive assets to cope with rising food prices which pose a threat to their livelihood in the future (IFPRI, 2008; von Braun, 2008). Such reactions to food inflation put households at risk of food insecurity, deteriorating health and living standards, and, in the long-term, trapping them in poverty (IFPRI, 2008; Kalkuhl et al., 2016; Meerman and Aphane, 2012; von Braun, 2008).

## **2.4 Impact of rising food prices on food security**

Sharp rises in food prices are likely to undermine the nutritional and food security of particularly the poor since they reduce both their calorie and micronutrient intake (Alam and Shahiduzzaman, 2008; Coates et al., 2006; Compton et al., 2010; IFPRI, 2008; Kalkuhl et al., 2016; Klotz et al., 2008; von Braun, 2008; World Bank, 2011). This section defines the concept of food security, its constituted components and dimensions/domains, how food inflation impacts them and how they are measured.

### **2.4.1 Food (in) security and its proxies**

The issue of food security has been at the top of the development agenda for a long time, dating back to the Hot Springs Conference of Food and Agriculture in 1943 (Napoli, 2010). Owing to its multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral nature, its definitions and operationalization of food security have been numerous and varied (FAO, 2003; Jones et al., 2013). Over time, the understanding of the issue has changed from being merely one of food supply, which is caused by a string of food crises, to one of effective demand, which is caused by a larger issue of poverty and the lack of development of vulnerable populations (Naopli, 2010; FAO, 2003).

Food insecurity is sometimes also used interchangeably with hunger and malnutrition (Jones et al., 2013; National Academies Press, 2006). The thesis, however, treats these terms as closely related but having differentiated meanings.

Hunger<sup>16</sup> is generally considered to refer to the unpleasant or painful bodily experience, including the feeling of weakness brought on by insufficient food energy consumption, and accompanying behavioural responses (FAO et al., 2021; Napoli, 2010; National Research Council, 2006; Webb et al., 2018). It is also a politically sensitive term that evokes pictures of extreme hardship and can motivate people to take action (Jones et al., 2013; National Research Council, 2006). It is proxied at the global and regional levels by the Prevalence of undernourishment (PoU)<sup>17</sup> (FAO et al., 2021, Jones et al., 2013; Webb et al., 2018). This study has adopted the official FAO definition of food security, which is said to be the most widely used and authoritative definition of food security since the term was first coined in 1974, this definition is said to be (High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE), 2020).

According to FAO (2021, p.190), food security exists when:

*“all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”*

This definition recognizes food security as the right of all people to food at all times as affirmed by the General Comment No. 12 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in 1999 (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): CESCR, 1999). It also shows that food insecurity is something that people see or experience, and is made up of essential elements and dimensions that have crucial effects on productivity and health (FAO et al., 2022; Leroy et al., 2015; National Academies Press, 2006). These key dimensions/domains include physical accessibility, social and economic access, utilization, stability, agency and sustainability; the components are quantity, quality, cultural acceptability, and preferences.

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<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that the concept of hunger is distinct from the use of the term in SDG 2 i.e., End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture), and in measures such as the Global Hunger Index (GHI) (GHI, 2021;Lowe, 2021; Sachs et al., 2021).

<sup>17</sup> PoU estimates the percentage of the population that consumes insufficient calories for an active, healthy lifestyle (., 2021).

While the quantity aspect of food security pertains to the need for enough energy to meet needs, the quality aspect of food security is a much broader concept that encompasses diversity/variety, adequacy, moderation, overall balance, and safety (FAO et al., 2021; Leroy et al., 2015; Ruel, 2003). Accordingly, diet diversity/variety refers to the number of different foods or food groups consumed over a given reference period, whereas adequacy refers to the sufficiency of nutrients or food groups in relation to requirements. Moderation refers to the need to limit the consumption of specific foods and nutrients associated with a higher risk of developing chronic illnesses, whereas overall balance and proportionality refer to the need to balance the composition of macronutrient intake, such as the amount of energy that comes from fat.

Safety, on the other hand, indicates the necessity of diet to be free from exposure to hazards and contamination that may cause health risks (FAO et al., 2021; Leroy et al., 2015; Ruel, 2003). Some of the common food security measures such as the Dietary Diversity Score (DDS)<sup>18</sup> and Food Consumption Score (FCS)<sup>19</sup> capture both the quantity and quality components of food security (Leroy et al., 2015). The last component in the aforementioned food security definition i.e., cultural acceptability and preferences indicates that food should be liked and preferred and acquired/produced and consumed in a way that is socially/culturally acceptable way (FAO et al., 2021; Leroy et al., 2015; National Research Council, 2006).

FAO's definition of food security, which was mentioned towards the beginning of this section also features, what is known as the four dimensions/domains of food security: availability, accessibility, utilization and stability (Jones et al., 2013; Leroy et al., 2015; Napoli, 2011).

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<sup>18</sup> DDS is a proxy indicator for measuring the economic ability of households to access adequate level of calories (quantity) and different food groups (quality) at a given period in time (WFP and CSA, 2019).

<sup>19</sup> FCS is a combined score incorporating indicators for dietary diversity, food frequency, and relative nutritional importance of the various food groups consumed (WFP and CSA, 2019). The FCS categorizes households into three food consumption groups based on standard thresholds i.e., poor food consumption, borderline food consumption and acceptable food consumption (ibid.)

It is common for proxies of food insecurity to combine one or more of these components and dimensions, as well as their outcomes, which are described in more detail in the next section. This is because the quantity, quality, cultural acceptability, and preferences components of food security are integrated with its various dimensions (Leroy et al., 2015).

#### 2.4.2 Dimensions/domains of food (in)security and their respective measures

In this section, each one of these dimensions is further discussed along with their common measures.

##### 1. Availability of food

Availability of food indicates having sufficient quantities of food to sustain a steady consumption, through production, collection from wildlife or market purchase, encompassing aspects of food reserves, markets and transportation, and recently, ecological related concerns such as “carrying capacity” and “ecological footprint” (Burchi and Muro, 2012; FAO et al., 2021; HLPE, 2020; Napoli, 2011). In the 1970s, the issue of food security was viewed as a supply-side issue brought on by a string of food crises and significant famine outbreaks that could be remedied by boosting food production and building up surpluses (Napoli, 2011).

Current-day food security indicators developed for use at the national level still typically prioritize food availability to estimate food shortages and surpluses, future food demand, and defining targets for agricultural production (Jones et al., 2013). These indicators are utilized to enhance regional and international food governance by allowing cross-national comparisons. They are also used to provide cross-national comparisons and facilitate regional and global food governance (ibid.).

Food security metrics such as the PoU, and the Relative dietary supply index<sup>20</sup> that rely on supply-side data from Food Balance Sheets (FBS)<sup>21</sup> are typically used for measuring food availability at national levels (FAO et al., 2021, Jones et al., 2013; Webb et al., 2018). However, after the realization that the Green Revolution did not automatically translate into reductions in malnutrition, and some people continued to starve for lack of entitlement to food, the importance of accessibility became apparent (FAO, 2003; Sen, 1981).

## 2. Accessibility of food

Accessibility denotes having sufficient physical and economic access to adequate quantities of food either through purchase or other means (FAO et al., 2021; HLPE, 2020; Jones et al., 2013; Napoli, 2011; The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 1986). The issue of entitlement to food adds an ethical and human rights aspect to the understanding of food security (FAO, 2003). Food accessibility can be measured using a variety of indicators, including the share of food expenditure and the domestic volatility of food prices (Jones et al., 2013). Whereas the former measures the average share of total expenditures on food by households in the lowest income quintile, the latter captures the observed fluctuation in the annual food price level.

The household consumption and expenditure surveys (HCESs) is another tool that incorporates proxies for poverty/income, consumer price indices, household socioeconomic status, and patterns of food and non-food consumption among families to assess food accessibility, quantity, and quality (Jones et al., 2013). Utilization was taken into consideration as a third element of food security once it was realized that physical and financial access to food as well as food acquisition are important, but not sufficient to provide the minimal nutritional requirements for a healthy and active life (FAO, 2003; Jones et al., 2013; Napoli, 2011).

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<sup>20</sup> The relative dietary supply index measures a nation's ratio of dietary energy supply per capita to its average dietary energy requirement (Jones et al., 2013).

<sup>21</sup> FBS determines the total number of calories available to a population, by accounting for the amount of food produced, imported, exported, and used for non-consumption purposes (Jones et al., 2013).

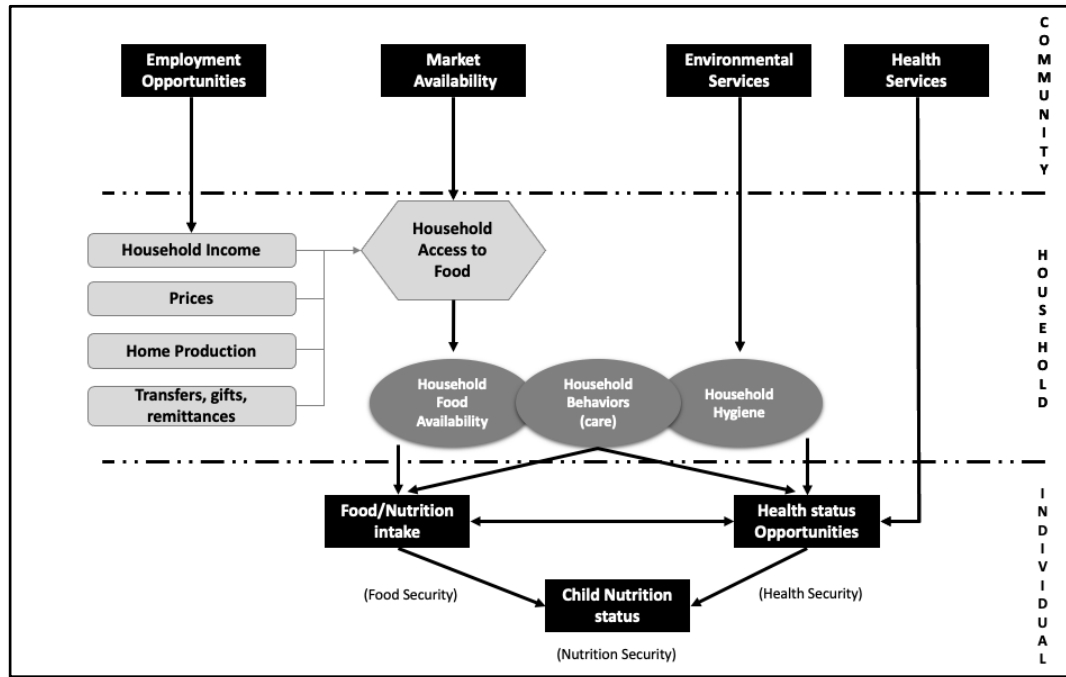


### 3. Utilization

Utilization assesses a person's capacity to make the most of the food that is available to them and that they can access to satisfy their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO et al., 2021). This domain reflects not just the food's nutritional value but also how it is distributed within households and how well the nutrients in food can be absorbed and metabolized by individuals (Jones et al., 2013; Leroy et al., 2015; Napoli, 2011). Hence, non-food inputs such as care and traditional/religious feeding and sharing practices, food preparation techniques, and health status are crucial for ensuring the food security of households.

This indicates how food security is a component of nutrition security which is a broader concept that requires having a hygienic environment, and adequate health and care services in addition to food security (Cohen and Garrett, 2010; FAO, et al., 2012; Klotz et al., 2008; Ruel et al., 2010). The relationship between food security and nutritional security is illustrated in Figure 2:1 below. It also demonstrates how food security is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition to attain nutritional security, as the latter is also determined by health security which in turn is a function of environmental and health services. The diagram also shows how food security is determined by food availability and access (which are determined by production, income, prices and transfers) at the community and household levels, and its utilisation (which is a function of care and health opportunities) at the individual level.

Figure 2:1 Food security framework



Source: Ruel et al. (2010)

Inadequate nutrient intake in terms of quantity and/or quality, as well as inadequate nutrient absorption and/or utilisation, is referred to as undernutrition and results in wasting, stunting<sup>22</sup>, and micronutrient deficiencies<sup>23</sup> (FAO et al., 2021). Whereas malnutrition is a larger concept that encompasses undernutrition as well as overweight and obesity resulting from inadequate, unbalanced or excessive intake of macronutrients and/or micronutrients (FAO et al., 2021).

<sup>22</sup> While wasting refers to low weight-for-height and signals acute undernutrition, stunting refers to low height-for-age suggesting chronic undernutrition (GHI, 2021; NPC -CSA of Ethiopia and UN Women, 2017).

<sup>23</sup> The term "hidden hunger" refers to the lack of several micronutrients, including iron, zinc, iodine, and vitamin A, caused by consuming an energy-dense but nutrient-poor diet, which is estimated to afflict over two billion people globally (Lowe, 2021).

The most popular method for measuring nutritional status is anthropometry<sup>24</sup>, which is a proxy measure of food utilization, involving simple body measurements of height, recumbent length (for very young children), weight, Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC), and skinfolds and making comparisons against a population reference or standard (Jones et al., 2013). This measure's results are closely related to mortality outcomes, including child mortality<sup>25</sup>, morbidity, cognitive development<sup>26</sup>, and chronic illness. As a result, it serves as a general indicator of health and socioeconomic well-being in addition to reflecting food intake (ibid.).

There are several multidimensional indices that measure one or more of the aforementioned dimensions and components of food security to determine a given population's food security status. Global Food Security Index (GFSI) is one such tool that measures the food availability and access dimensions, as well as quality and safety components (Jones et al., 2013). This index constitutes both the determinant and outcome of food insecurity and allows for drawing comparisons of food insecurity and hunger at a global level (ibid.). Similarly, the GHI, which measures availability, access, and use, uses three equally weighted indicators—undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality—to comprehensively assess and track hunger at the global, regional, and national levels. (Jones et al., 2013; Tacoli, 2011).

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<sup>24</sup>Anthropometric indicators and biomarkers include stunting, wasting, underweight, BMI, Vitamin A deficiency, Low haemoglobin (Anaemia), iodine deficiency, and child and infant mortality (Kalkuhl et al., 2013).

<sup>25</sup> Child mortality is the term used to describe the death rate of children under the age of five, which may be a result of a lethal combination of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments (GHI, 2021). Child malnutrition, which includes prenatal growth restriction and inadequate breastfeeding, is the leading cause of infant mortality, responsible for up to 45% of infant deaths in 2011 (Black et al., 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Maintaining a healthy diet/nutrition throughout a child's first 1000 days (including the pregnancy period) is especially critical if long-term irreparable physical and mental harm during adulthood is to be prevented (World Bank, 2011). On average, malnourishment in children is associated with a delay in school entry by 7 months, reduction in total years of schooling by 0,7 grade, a loss of lifetime earnings capacity by 10-17%, and an overall decline in GDP by 2-3% (World Bank, 2011, p. 10).

Once it was realized in the 1980s that shocks linked to food production, income, prices, and exchange rates were the main causes of temporary food insecurity with lasting effects, stability in the supply and access to food became crucial aspects of food security (FAO, 2003).

#### **4. Stability in the supply and access of food**

This component of the definition implies that food security is achieved when consistent supply and access to food that meets the utilization criterion can be guaranteed (FAO et al., 2021; HLPE, 2020; Napoli, 2011). Stability is a cross-cutting dimension that requires ensuring that the above three criteria of food security -availability, access and utilization are sufficiently addressed at all times so that people do not have to worry about the possibility of being food insecure (Leroy et al., 2015).

Households often employ strategies that involve trade-offs among their various needs to ensure their long-term viability as units either to prevent or in response to perceived and/or experienced shocks in food insecurity (National Research Council, 2006). Therefore, a thorough understanding of food insecurity necessitates the inclusion of the concept of time, both in the sense of the frequency and length of episodes as well as the frequency of the occurrence of distinct needs and events (ibid.).

This time element is used as the basis for further classification of the term food insecurity as transitory and chronic (Napoli, 2011). While transitory food security refers to a temporary decline in households' access to food due to shocks related to natural disasters, conflict, and economic collapse resulting in food price surges and unemployment, chronic food insecurity indicates an inability to meet food security needs either through own production or purchase for a prolonged period (Napoli, 2011; The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 1986).

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Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) is a measure of food security that captures not only economic access and quantities consumed, but also food preferences and anxiety related to food shortages (Jones et al. 2013). This scale can be used to assess the food security of households, identify and design context-specific interventions, and monitor and evaluate their impact (ibid.). There exist various versions of food security scales, adapted to the specific context of the region or country. For instance, the food security scale developed by Coates et al. (2006, pp.1442-1443) is composed of core household food insecurity experiential domains (uncertainty and worry, inadequate quality, insufficient quantity, socially unacceptability) and proximate consequences of household food insecurity domains of physical consequences of food insecurity and psychological consequences of food insecurity.

## **5. Agency and Stability**

The concept of agency and sustainability are the latest additions to the dimensions of food security (FAO et al., 2022; HLPE, 2020). Agency refers to the ability to take action and pursue values and goals, whether or not they are related to one's well-being (Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1992, 1987). Agency is a major engine of development both as a "constitutive" part of development, and as a means to achieving other development goals such as social power, political liberty, and economic freedom (Sen, 1999b). Development achievements in health, education, economics, politics, in societal relationships all prerequisite the exercise of people's freedoms through participation and decision-making (ibid.).

Agency as a dimension of food security here refers to one's capacity to make own decisions regarding what foods to eat, produce, and how it is produced, processed and distributed is an important dimension of food security (Burchi and De Muro, 2016). Engagement in the process that determines the policies and governance of the food system is one way to exercise agency (HLPE, 2020). Meanwhile, sustainability is the capacity of food systems to deliver food security and nutrition over an extended period without jeopardizing the economic, social, and environmental foundation for food security and nutrition of future generations (FAO et al., 2021; HLPE, 2020).

#### 2.4.3 Food security and poverty

Poverty can be deemed as absolute, relative or subjective depending on how it is defined and the type of benchmarks employed, who defines it, and how it is measured across time and space (May 2012). Absolute poverty is determined objectively through quantitative measures using a certain minimum standard of living as a benchmark, while relative poverty is measured against societal norms of an acceptable standard of living through a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures. The latter view of poverty adjusts for shifting needs, and preferences. A subjective assessment of poverty is based on how persons who perceive themselves to be poor rate their circumstances and is defined qualitatively.

In contemporary development discourse, poverty is understood to be socially constructed, to refer to the denial of fundamental abilities (beings and doings) in order to achieve a set of "functionings" like freedom from hunger, and as being multidimensional constituting physical, social, economic, political, and psychological/spiritual aspects (Chambers, 1995, 1989; Sen, 1999a, 1992a, 1987; Sen and Keych, 1983).

These views of poverty provide the basis of holistic and multidimensional measures commonly utilized at a global level such as HDI<sup>27</sup> and MPI<sup>28</sup>. The most widely used indicator of absolute poverty is financial or money-metric poverty, which assesses household income/expenditure against the amount needed to buy a hypothetical basket of food to meet the minimum calories for the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle in addition to some non-food items (May, 2012). Nevertheless, the per household, per capita, or per adult equivalent (PAE) interpretations of this metric, disregard the economies of scale attained by large-sized families and make the erroneous assumption that nutritional requirements are consistent across members of a household (ibid.).

The definitions and measurements of poverty mentioned here, which state ensuring food security either as one of the core components (as in the case of MPI) or as a proxy for measurement (as in the case of the poverty line), indicate the tight relationship between the concept of poverty and food security. On the one hand, the lack of income and poverty mostly result in the lack of access or entitlement to food, hence food insecurity. This is demonstrated by how disparities in food security across the globe mimic disparities in economic growth. 20,2% of Africans were food insecure in 2021, compared to 9.1% in Asia, 8.6% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 5.8% in Oceania, and less than 2.5 percent in Northern America and Europe (FAO et al., 2022) Hence, it is not uncommon for indices to use income/expenditure measures to gauge food security. The share of food expenditure by the poor is one indicator of the accessibility of food.

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<sup>27</sup> HDI is a composite index used for assessing the well-being of people at a global scale based on a minimal listing of capabilities focused on enjoying a basic quality of life i.e., having longevity, knowledge and a decent standard of living (UNDP, 2020). Standard of living, which is measured in Gross National Income (GNI) per capita Purchasing Power Parity (PPP \$) is used as a proxy for capabilities in addition to health and education measures (ibid.).

<sup>28</sup> Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of the UNDP provides a holistic measure of both the incidence and intensity of poverty by capturing the multiple deprivations of people in relation to their health, education and standard of living (UNDP, 2020). The later component of the index is measured in terms of access to cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, and housing assets (ibid.).

Similarly, the food poverty line is a proxy for the adequacy of food consumption by assessing the level of spending on food to meet the minimum level of calories for a healthy active life (WFP and CSA, 2019). Hence, people earning less than this amount are considered to be food poor.

On the other hand, food insecurity is a threat to livelihood security and perpetuates poverty in the long run (IFPRI, 2008; Kalkuhl et al., 2016; Meerman and Aphane, 2012; von Braun, 2008). This is because, the experience of food insecurity is felt along with some of its closely linked potential consequences and is related to the management/coping strategies employed by people to either respond or to prevent it (National Research Council, 2006). This is further discussed in the next section by exploring the effect of food inflation-led food insecurity. It also elaborates on how food inflation and its coping techniques affect the accessibility, utilisation, and stability dimensions of food security.

#### 2.4.4 Manifestations of household food inflation-led food insecurity and their consequences

Food insecurity is demonstrated not only by households' inability to consume adequate quality and volume of food but also by their lack of psychosocial well-being as discussed in this section. A surge in food prices triggers a substitution effect by which poor households are obliged to shift to cheaper, less healthy and less nutritious, unsafe and socially inferior sources of food that is devoid of meat, dairy products and fish (Coates et al., 2006; Compton et al., 2010; Kalkuhl et al., 2013; Klotz et al., 2008). They also divert funds away from healthcare, hygiene, and education to smoothen the consumption of staple food for a longer period, which has detrimental consequences on their nutritional status (Compton et al., 2010; Klotz et al., 2008).



This results in severe micronutrient deficiencies such as vitamin A and iron deficiencies with irreversible health consequences including increased susceptibility to infection and chronic diseases, wasting, stunting and weight loss, especially in women and children, and child mortality (Coates et al., 2006; Compton et al., 2010; de Pee et al., 2000; Dercon, 2008; Kalkuhl et al., 2016; Klotz et al., 2008; Martin-Prével et al., 2000; Meerman and Aphane, 2012; World Bank, 2011).

Further, child malnutrition has persistent long-term adverse effects on neuro-intellectual and physical development, undermining earning potential, and a country's overall human resource output, and perhaps prolonging poverty for future generations (Dercon, 2008; Klotz et al., 2008; World Bank, 2011). In addition, food insecurity also has a psychosocial impact that encompasses feelings of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, social exclusion, lack of agency, and loss of aspirations particularly in children (Coates et al., 2006; Dercon, 2008; Gebreyesus et al., 2017; Hadley et al., 2012; Hadley and Patil, 2008).

These psychosocial repercussions of food insecurity arise mainly due to the lack of assurance and control over the food situation including the difficulty in securing an adequate quantity of food in the near future (Coates et al., 2006). This unpredictability caused by perceived or real vulnerability to food insecurity might be enough to trigger a reaction such as reductions in food intake (ibid.). The psychosocial impact may also emanate from eating and acquiring food in a way that is not socially acceptable such as begging, waste picking and stealing resulting in shame and embarrassment (Coates et al., 2006). Food inflation-induced instability in access to food is one of the factors that create such mental distress in affected people (Dercon, 2008; Hadley et al., 2012).

Hence, food inflation and its associated coping/management strategies risk undermining most of the components of food security outlined in the previous section including quantity, quality (diversity/variety, adequacy), and cultural acceptability of the type of food consumed and the method it was acquired.

The magnitude and severity of the effect of food inflation are determined by the ability of households to cope, as well as the type and duration of coping strategies employed (Amare, 2010; Davies, 1996; Hadley et al., 2012; IFPRI, 2008; Ruel et al., 2010). This is discussed in further detail in section 2.5.

## 2.5 The role of coping strategies against food inflation

People are not “passive victims” of shocks in income and food; they actively use a variety of coping methods to mitigate their detrimental impact (Coates et al., 2006; Compton et al., 2010). Coping strategies constitute the bundle of available responses and entitlements that can be utilized to respond to “an immediate and in-habitual decline in access to food”<sup>29</sup> (Davies, 1996, p. 55). Hence, coping strategies not only signal the severity of the current food crisis but also forecast the likelihood of food stress in the future (Davies, 1996; IFPRI, 2008; Moser, 1998). Adopting coping techniques to ensure one’s or family’s food security requires having the agency/freedom to make decisions, for instance over family income and resources (Agarwal, 1997; Burchi and De Muro, 2016; Hopkins, 1995; Sen, 1999b).

Some of the most common coping strategies of poor households to food crisis are conscious shopping and seeking out bargains including subsidized food by the government, cutting out non-staple foods, reducing consumption, minimizing non-food expenses such as education, increasing the supply of labour to earn more income, migration, borrowing, begging (D’Souza and Jolliffe, 2016; Gazdar and Mallah, 2013; Ruel et al., 2010). Assets and entitlements that can be accessed and deployed to lessen the impact of the crisis are among these responses (Moser, 1998). The next section elaborates on the various categorization of coping strategies.

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<sup>29</sup> Coping differs from adopting in that it refers to a temporary solution to food access issues, as opposed to the latter, which refers to a permanent change in how food is obtained (Davies, 1996).

### 2.5.1 Types of coping strategies

Coping strategies can be classified in various ways depending on whether or not they directly alter previous consumption levels (both in quantity and quality), attempt to meet immediate consumption needs, protect long-term economic viabilities, and have an immediate and long-term impact on food security, livelihood, and economic status (Compton et al., 2010; Devereux, 1993; D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016). Commonly utilized categories of food crisis responses include food-related strategies versus non-food/livelihood-related strategies, income-raising strategies versus consumption-modifying strategies, and reversible strategies versus irreversible strategies.

All responses to the crisis that entail lowering the quantity, quality, and variety of the household diet, as well as which family members should change their diets and how, are referred to as food-based or consumption-modifying strategies (Compton, Wiggins and Keats, 2010; D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016). These strategies have the objective of conserving food and non-food resources such as income and assets to ensure economic sustainability in the long run (Devereux, 1993).

These reactions include, but are not limited to, reducing total calorie intake and moving to "poor people's food" by minimizing the consumption of relatively costly, nutritious, and socially favourable food between, and within food categories (Birhane et al., 2014; Compton et al., 2010; CSA and WFP, 2019; D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016; Hadley et al., 2012). In practice, this usually means limiting the consumption of animal sources of food, fruits and vegetables, and replacing pricey staples with cheaper ones. In addition, children would need to forgo their specialized complementary feeding to meet their physiological needs and join the family diet (Compton et al., 2010; Martin-Prével et al., 2000).

On the other hand, non-food/livelihood-related strategies aim to lessen the effect of reduced purchasing power by raising income or reducing expenditure (D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016). Income-raising strategies are employed to be able to buy more food to meet consumption needs (Devereux, 1993).

Cutting back on health, education, and other non-food expenditure, supplying more labour time in the market; selling productive and non-productive assets, borrowing, seeking help from formal and informal institutions, and migrating are some examples of these responses to rising food prices (Compton et al., 2010; D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016). Both groups of the aforementioned strategies could either have reversible or irreversible long-term impacts on the affected population. Consumption modifying measures could either be temporary and reversible, or could have lasting impacts on health, physical development, and cognitive development, perpetuating transmission of intergenerational poverty, as in the case of child malnutrition, as discussed in section 3.4.4 (Klotz et al., 2008; World Bank, 2011; D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016).

Similarly, income-raising measures could simply be 'consumption smoothing' that involves "tiding things over" by utilizing cash and in-kind savings and loans or could have a permanent impact if they involve disinvesting in the health and education of especially children and selling off productive assets (Compton et al., 2010; Hadley et al., 2011). Coping strategies that involve engaging in sex work, domestic labour and migration by women members of the family, may lead to loss of social support and protection, abuse and exploitation (Fernandez, 2010; King and Sweetman, 2010). Hence, it may not just be risky and dangerous for these women, but it also provides a weaker buffer against the economic shock caused by food inflation (Fernandez, 2010; King and Sweetman, 2010).

### 2.5.2 Sequencing of coping strategies

Coping with rising food prices follows a "managed process" that operates along the dimensions of reversibility and irreversibility, quality and quantity of food, and food-based and non-food-based responses (Hadley et al., 2012, p. 2418). Sequencing coping strategies in times of food shocks is "*a product of several complex (though largely intuitive) calculations concerning the feasibility, relative costs and expected return of each option, both immediately and for the future*" (Devereux, 1993, p. 58-59).

Food-insecure household households employ a range of coping techniques while trying to reconcile the two opposing objectives of meeting immediate consumption needs and maintaining their long-term economic viability (Devereux, 1993). The logic behind sequencing coping strategies through either conserving or consuming food and non-food resources is, therefore, the understanding that these resources might be much more needed in the future than meeting the current transitory food deficit. Hence, rationing of food, and the decision to sell off or hold on to assets longer in response to food deficits, is a way of managing the asset portfolio of households by taking into account its present and future entitlement value (Devereux, 1993). There is no standard and linear sequencing in the implementation of coping strategies in times of food crisis since priorities vary across households, and multiple strategies can be employed at the same time (Compton et al., 2010; Devereux, 1993).

However, households are believed to generally follow a certain sequential pattern of coping strategies as per the severity of the crisis (Coates et al., 2006; Frongillo et al., 2003). Generally, many studies have indicated that as the food insecurity status of households deteriorates, they move from reversible to irreversible strategies (D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016; Hadley et al., 2012). The Coping Strategy Index (CSI) by Klotz et al. (2008) in Table 2:1 below illustrates this, with coping methods on the left being more of a transient nature and those on the right having longer-lasting effects on the impacted as the food insecure scenario worsens.

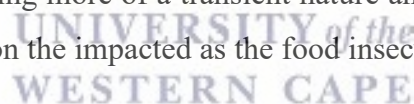


Table 2:1 Stages of household food insecurity based on coping strategies employed

Deterioration of household food security →								
Livelihood	Diversification /change in livelihood activities	Reduced expenditure on non-essential or luxury items and sale of non-productive or disposable assets	Children drop out of school and out-migration (rural to urban moves)	Increased use of child labour and borrowing and purchasing on credit, becoming indebted	Selling of productive assets	Selling of all assets	Reduced expenditures on essential items (food, water, etc)	Engaging in illegal hazardous activities as last resort for coping
Food-related	Change to cheaper, lower quality, and less preferred foods	Reduced diversity of food, poor nutrient intake and favouring certain household members over others for consumption	Reduced size and number of meals	Consuming wild foods, immature crops, and seed stocks, and sending household members elsewhere to eat ( <i>i.e.</i> neighbours)	Begging for food	Skipping entire days of eating	Eating items not done so in the past or not part of a normal diet ( <i>i.e.</i> plants and insects)	
Consequences for Health and Nutrition →								
Health Outcome	Depletion of micronutrients and lowered immunity		The appearance of clinical symptoms of micronutrient deficiencies such as night blindness, anaemia and increased morbidity		Underweight ↑ Maternal Weight ↓ Wasting ↑		Early childhood mortality	
<b>Increased Overall mortality</b>								

Source: Klotz et al. (2008)

This means that, strategies that lessen the risk of failure of primary production are implemented before those that call for selling off a household's productive assets and cutting back on investments in its human capital (Compton et al., 2010; D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016; Hadley et al., 2012). This is due to the irreversible effects of the latter category of strategies, which risk further declining food insecurity in the future (Hadley et al., 2011; Ruel et al., 2010).

Food insecure households will first lower the quality of their diet by cutting out relatively micronutrient-rich foods and shifting to cheaper sources of calories, then, as the situation gets worse, they reduce their intake (Coats et al, 2006; D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016; Hadley et al., 2012; Klotz et al., 2008). Thus, the set of coping strategies available to a given population and the coping strategies employed at a given moment can serve as indicators of the seriousness of the food insecurity experience and the populations' future vulnerabilities respectively (Compton et al., 2010; Frongillo et al., 2003; Hadley et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2013; Klotz et al., 2008). For instance, Uruguchi (2009) has utilized a coping strategy index combined with a household DDS to predict children's vulnerability to price-rise-induced food insecurity in Ethiopia and Bangladesh.

As per these food insecurity gradations of Frongillo et al. (2003) and the CSI of Klotz et al. (2008) illustrated in Table 2:1 above, borrowing food on daily basis and engaging in illegal and hazardous activities, respectively, signal extreme levels of food insecurity. The coping strategies chosen by individuals and families, as well as the sequence in which they apply them, are tightly related to the various dimensions of their vulnerability, which is a function of their shock sensitivity and responsiveness (Davies, 1996). This concept is further elaborated in the proceeding section.

## **2.6 Vulnerability to inflation-led food insecurity of poor urban households**

Vulnerability is a term that encompasses the level of “*defencelessness, insecurity, and exposure to risk in the face of shocks, and stress*” of a given population (Chambers, 2006, p. 33). The term captures both the exposure to contingencies i.e., sensitivity on one hand and lack of ability to resist and recover from shocks i.e., defencelessness on the other (Chambers, 2006; Moser, 1998). Davies (1996) differentiates between structural differential, structural livelihood system, and proximate vulnerabilities. The first captures vulnerability in terms of physical and other demographic characteristics like age, sex, and dependency ratio, while the second measures vulnerability in terms of productive capacity and derived entitlements from livelihood systems.

The last one denotes transient changes in population groups' structural vulnerability due to transitory shocks mainly related to their livelihood system. Food inflation is one such transitional shock that raises vulnerability to food insecurity, especially among low-income households. This group includes but is not limited to waged workers (both rural and urban), landless farmers, petty traders, and producers of goods whose terms of trade plummeted relative to the price of food grains, households with a large number of dependents, and female-headed households (Compton et al., 2010).

This is because, the poor are generally more sensitive to changes in food prices, as they devote a considerable percentage of their income (i.e., 50-70%) on food, and a change in food prices translates into a change in real income (Alam and Shahiduzzaman, 2008; Cohen and Garrett, 2010; Compton et al., 2010; Kalkuhl et al., 2016; Martin and Ivanic, 2016; World Bank, 2011). For instance, in Ethiopia, where 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the population spends more than half of their income on food, the slightest increase in food prices is likely to have devastating effects (CSA and WFP, 2019). They are also less resilient to increasing food prices as their ability to cope is undermined by their limited access to assets, credit and savings (Compton et al., 2010; Díaz-Bonilla, 2016; Ha et al., 2019).

Further, poor people, are mainly concentrated in casual, insecure, uncertain and low-paying jobs that do not adjust to price increases in the near term (Alem and Söderbom, 2012; Aynalem, 2021b; Cohen and Garrett, 2010; Compton et al., 2010; Díaz-Bonilla, 2016; Ha et al., 2019; Headey et al., 2012; Martin and Ivanic, 2016). A study by Headey et al. (2012) revealed that the food prices spike in Ethiopia from mid-2007 to mid-2008 and mid-2011 resulted in the decline of the purchasing power of urban wages by 20%. Urban wage rates, in particular, do not usually adjust to increases in food prices at least in the short run (Aynalem, 2021a). According to Tolossa (2010), it is difficult for poor urban residents of Addis Ababa to meet their subsistence demands since the money they earn from working in low-paying, low-skilled, and insecure jobs in both the formal and informal sectors cannot keep up with the growing cost of living.

The vulnerability of the urban poor to price fluctuations can also be explained by the "commoditized<sup>30</sup>" nature of urban life, their dietary pattern, lack of access to water and health facilities and related food safety concerns, and the social fragmentation/lack of community cohesion (Cohen and Garrett, 2010; Moser, 1998; Ruel et al, 2010).

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<sup>30</sup> This term indicates the reliance of urban livelihoods on cash to make money and acquire food and other services (Moser, 1998, p. 4).



A study in three sub-cities of Addis Ababa found that among food-insecure households, 23 percent were found to be in a total state of hunger resulting from their dependence on markets for food supply combined with high food inflation (Birhane, et al, 2014).

Poor urban households are also dependent on market purchases and lack land as well as other inputs to be able to produce their food and, therefore, buffer themselves against shocks such as rising food costs (Alam and Shahiduzzaman, 2008; Belachew et al., 2012; Birhane et al., 2014; Cohen and Garrett, 2010, 2010; IFPRI, 2008; Ruel et al., 2010; UNICEF and WFP, 2009; von Braun, 2008). For instance, in Addis Ababa, 38% of people spend 50% or more of their income on food, while 99% of people buy their food from the market (WFP and CSA, 2019). Food security in urban settings is thus determined by market accessibility and affordability (Alem and Söderbom, 2012; Amare, 2010; Belachew et al., 2012; Hill and Porter, 2017; Shimeles and Delelegn, 2013; Ticci, 2011; UNICEF and WFP, 2009).

Furthermore, staple foods such as rice, wheat, and maize commonly consumed by poor urban households are traded worldwide and are highly susceptible to global price fluctuations (Alem and Söderbom, 2012; Cohen and Garrett, 2010; Ruel et al., 2010). Despite fewer quantities consumed, food expenditures are also higher in metropolitan areas due to the comparatively higher cost of food (Minten et al., 2018; Tolossa, 2010). Meanwhile, urban wage rates do not usually adjust to increases in food prices, at least in the short run (Aynalem, 2021a).

The urban diet is characterised by increased consumption of street foods or processed, ready-to-eat meals, which are typically heavy in calories, saturated fats, salt, and refined sugars, paired with a sedentary lifestyle and poor basic hygiene put urban dwellers' health and nutritional security at risk (Cohen and Garrett, 2010; Ruel et al, 2010). This can be explained by women's difficulty to cook at home due to time limits imposed by their market work, as well as the lack of adequate access to public services such as health, water and sanitation by the urban poor (Cohen and Garrett, 2010; Meerman and Aphane, 2012; Moser, 1998; Ruel et al., 2010).

Children's well-being is also jeopardised by mothers' diminished provision of care<sup>31</sup> when they work outside the home in the absence of adequate childcare services (Cohen and Garrett, 2010; Ruel et al., 2010). This is because nutritional security is a function of not just food security, but also care and adequate access to health, and hygiene facilities as illustrated in Figure 2.1 above. Furthermore, despite fewer quantities consumed, food expenditures are higher in metropolitan areas due to the comparatively higher cost of food (Minten et al., 2018).

Further, the lack of adequate access to public services such as health, water and sanitation by the urban poor risks their food safety, thereby nutritional security (Cohen and Garrett, 2010; Meerman and Aphane, 2012; Moser, 1998; Ruel et al., 2010). This is understandable considering the fact that nutritional security is a function of not just food security, but also care and adequate access to health, and hygiene facilities as illustrated in Figure 2.1 above. Tolossa (2010) has shown how vulnerable the poor urban inhabitants of Addis Ababa are to numerous environmental and economic shocks as a result of their overcrowded, small homes and neighbourhoods that lack efficient drainage and sewerage systems, access to latrines, and reliable water supply.

The relatively weaker social cohesion among urban dwellers due to wider disparity in social and economic standing also undermines their ability to cope with economic shocks such as food price surges (Cohen and Garrett, 2010; Moser, 1998). Similarly, the severer impact of shocks in income and food on women and girls compared to men and boys has been widely acknowledged in past research works (Akresh et al., 2011; Cappellini et al., 2014; Coates et al., 2006; Compton et al., 2010; de Pee et al., 2000; D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016; Quisumbing et al., 2008; UNDP, 2020; Webb, 2002).

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<sup>31</sup> Deterioration in children's health can signal reduced provision of care from mothers, in the form of lower health seeking behaviour as their time is taken by income raising activities to respond to economic crisis (de Pee et al., 2000).

The issues discussed in this section point to the precarious position of Ethiopia's urban poor to food inflation. This includes the country's capital Addis Ababa, where the population growth has outpaced its socioeconomic development, giving rise to the incidence of urban poverty (United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), 2014). Official data indicate that Ethiopia also has over 2 million unemployed urban population, among which 398,346,00 are in Addis Ababa (CSA, 2020a). The problem has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 epidemic, which resulted in a 14,1% drop in real earnings for high-skilled employees and a 3,7% drop for low-skilled workers in Addis Ababa (World Bank, 2021c). The proceeding section elaborates on women's particular vulnerability to food inflation and its manifestations in terms of heavier mental, emotional, economic, and physical/time burdens and the reasons behind it.

## 2.7 Vulnerability of poor women to food inflation

In this section, women's vulnerability to food inflation is conceptualized from the perspective of existing gender ideologies/social norms and their influence on how women are affected and respond to the crisis, coupled with gender-blind government response programs.

### 2.7.1 The heavier physical and mental/emotional effect of food inflation on women

In times of food crisis, women (especially during their reproductive years) and girls in poor households suffer more from food insecurity compared to men and boys in similar circumstances as demonstrated by the higher incidence of thinness/lower Body-Mass Index (BMI), stunting and wasting and related health complications both in the short and long-term (Akresh et al., 2011; de Pee et al., 2000; UNDP, 2020; Webb, 2002). Adult members, especially women tend to sacrifice their portion of calorie intake and other non-food expenses to preserve their children's consumption habits and non-food investments such as schooling in response to increasing food prices (Agarwal, 1997; Coates et al., 2006; Compton et al., 2010; D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016; Haddad et al., 1997; Hadley et al., 2008; Kumar and Quisumbing, 2013; Quisumbing et al., 2008).

In doing so, they create artificial affluence for their children, displaying typical parental austerity at the cost of their own needs (Kochuyt, 2004). This practice through which mothers deliberately relinquish their consumption to ensure that their children have enough to eat is referred to as “maternal buffering” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 295). Thus, a decrease in maternal BMI can be used as an early signal for stress and the risk of malnutrition in households (de Pee et al., 2000). This may be explained by patriarchal social norms that may directly impede female household members' access to food, especially certain high-value food items, through the assignment of gendered roles<sup>32</sup>, instilling discriminatory perceptions about women's needs, interests, and contributions that are reflected in common proverbs and sayings (Agarwal, 2012; Delphey, 1979; Gebreselassie and Haile, 2013; UNDP, 2020).

Social norms refer to established, widely accepted, and self-sustaining customs (Agarwal, 1997; Elster, 1989). They influence the decisions and actions of individual members of a group such as a family or a community through the social/cultural construction of individual preferences, and the structures of constraint (Folbre, 1994; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1977). This is also in line with the theory of differential consumption, which views the family as a consumption distribution centre based on existing gender ideologies and related beliefs about individual members' status within the family, and nutritional and energy needs based on the nature of activities they engage in (Delphey, 1979).

In the face of crises, women tend to lose their jobs, and their assets such as jewellery or small livestock much faster than men, and girls may be pulled out of school earlier than boys to maintain household consumption (Compton et al., 2010; Quisumbing et al., 2008).

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<sup>32</sup> In traditional marriages, where husbands specialize in maintaining their families' living standards by earning income in the market, and agency, by acting as primary decision-makers at home, while wives specialize in affiliation by providing caring and nurturing activities (Agarwal, 1997; Chant, 1997; Nelson, 1996). Nelson (1996) defines affiliation as the need of human beings to express their love and commitment to one another through the act of care and nurture.

Women also tend to carry a much heavier mental, emotional, economic, and physical/time burden in coping with food inflation than other members of the household (Amare, 2010; Cappellini et al., 2014; Gebreselassie and Haile, 2013; Quisumbing et al., 2008). They also put more effort and labour time into buying and preparing cheaper food, which is usually time-intensive, and earning more money in the market to cope with an economic crisis such as food inflation, that threatens the food security of their families (Compton et al., 2010; Kumar and Quisumbing, 2011; Meerman and Aphane, 2012; Quisumbing et al., 2008; Uraguchi, 2010). This can also be explained by their critical and gendered role in food processing, storage and management at the household level to sustainably ensure the food security of all members of the family (Agarwal, 2012; Gebreselassie and Haile, 2013).

The gendered role of women in childbearing, caring, socialization, education and maintenance of the reproductive force, is referred to as reproductive work or “physical reproduction” or “human reproduction” (Edholm et al., 1978; Elson, 2010; Moser, 1993; Tacoli, 2012). The term reproductive work emphasizes both “care work” and domestic/” household work” which is also referred to as “indirect care” work, performed to meet the physical and emotional requirements of dependent adults and children (Benería et al., 2016, p.184). The burden of providing the ultimate safety net to ensure the survival of the household rests on women in times of crisis since they are disproportionately responsible for consumption and care, particularly for children (Elson, 2010).

### 2.7.2 Women’s diminished ability to cope with food inflation

Women are particularly vulnerable to inflation because of gender-based restrictions that prevent them from having the time, resources, and social capital to make the required changes without jeopardizing their access to food (Kumar and Quisumbing, 2013; Quisumbing et al., 2008).

ONE Campaign (2022), describes their privations as follows:

*“Poverty is sexist. There’s nowhere on earth where girls and women have the same opportunities as boys and men — but in the poorest countries, they face even more obstacles.”*

For instance, the material deprivation of women directly affects their food security both through its deteriorating effect on their endowments<sup>33</sup> and their exchange entitlement mapping<sup>34</sup> (Sen, 1981, 1987). This is also true for Ethiopian women who face pervasive gender inequality as demonstrated by their low achievement in economic opportunities and participation, educational attainment and political empowerment compared to men (NPC - CSA of Ethiopia and UN Women, 2017; WEF, 2021).

As depicted by Table 2:2 below, despite substantial achievements in the health sub-index, women in Ethiopia are still lagging behind men in terms of their achievement in economic opportunities and participation, educational attainment and political empowerment. For instance, women are underrepresented in technical and professional roles compared to men, and the wage and income gap remains at 51% and 42% respectively. The female unemployment rate in the country is 13,9 percentage points higher than the male unemployment rate (CSA, 2020a).



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<sup>33</sup> Endowments refers to what an individual has under her/his possession such as commodities (including food), assets, labour power, etc (Sen, 1981).

<sup>34</sup> Exchange entitlement mapping refers to the set of all alternative commodity bundles that the person can acquire in exchange for each of her/his endowment bundles (Sen, 1981).

Table 2:2 The gender gap in Ethiopia

Parameters	Female	Male	Gender gap
<b>Economic participation and opportunity</b>			0,44
Labour force participation (as a percentage of the total labour force)	76	86,7	0,12
Wage equality for similar work <sup>35</sup>	-	-	0,51
Estimated earned income, international \$ 1, 000 <sup>36</sup> (the ratio of the female to male wages)	1,3	2,2	0,42
Legislators, senior officials and managers (as a percentage of the other gender)	26,5	73,5	0,64
Professional and technical workers (as a percentage of the other gender)	29,9	70	0,58
<b>Education attainment</b>			0,15
Literacy rate (as a percentage of the total adult population ie.15 <)	44,4	59,2	0,25
Enrolment in primary education as a percentage of the total population in the official primary school age range)	81,5	87,7	0,07
Enrolment in secondary education (as a percentage of the total population in the official secondary school age range)	30,3	31,3	0,03
Enrolment in tertiary education (as a percentage of the most recent five-year age cohort that has left secondary school)	5,3	10,9	0,52
<b>Health and Survival</b>			0,03
Health and Life Expectancy, years	60,8	59	-0,03
<b>Political empowerment</b>			0,62
Percentage of women holding parliamentary seats as a share of total parliamentary seats	0,63	38,8	0,37
Percentage of women in ministerial positions as a share of total ministerial positions	0,67	40	0,33
The no. of years females and males held a post equivalent to an elected head of state or head of government in the country during the last 50 years	2,2	47,8	0,95

Source: (WEF, 2021, p. 187)

Following the election of women to important government positions such as president, Chief Justice, and members of the Prime Minister's cabinet in 2018, Ethiopia's standing on the WEF's political empowerment sub-index has greatly improved (Adebayo, 2018; Ahmed and Freytas-Tamura, 2018; Schemm, 2018).

<sup>35</sup> This is calculated on the basis of the perception of men and women regarding the parity of their respective wages (WEF, 20021, P. 76).

<sup>36</sup> This is a composite measure computed using female and male shares of the economically active population, the ratio of the female to male wages, GDP valued at constant 2017 international dollars (IMF), and female and male shares of population (ibid.).

However, women are underrepresented in technical and professional roles compared to men, and the wage and income gap remains at 51% and 42% respectively. The female unemployment rate in the country is 13,9 percentage points higher than the male unemployment rate (CSA, 2020a). In 2016, the proportion of female employment in the informal sector was 36% to males' 20% (NPC - CSA of Ethiopia and UN Women, 2017). The country has also not managed to bridge the gender gap at all levels of education, and hence ranks among the bottom 35 countries on gender equality in the educational attainment index (WEF, 2021).

Women also have a significantly lower rate of ownership of properties such as houses, agricultural land, and livestock (NPC - CSA of Ethiopia and UN Women, 2017). In 2015-2016, female-headed households own only 12% of land holdings and 18% of livestock, while the remaining is owned by male-headed households (ibid.). Ethiopian women also face several other compounding gendered barriers that undermine their autonomy including time poverty, lack of access to services that are vital to developing their capabilities including credit, extension and vocational training services, information networks, and Labour market constraints (Bekana, 2020; Drucza et al., 2020; National Planning Commission Central Statistics Agency (NPC-CSA) of Ethiopia and UN Women, 2017; Tsige, 2019).

Once more, the framework for intrahousehold bargaining over the division and allocation of income/wealth and labour is defined by societal norms and gender ideologies (Agarwal, 1997; Elster, 1989; Bourdieu, 1977; Sen, 1987). Hence, these gender-based restrictions are a result of patriarchal notions that support the social and institutional legitimacy of women's claims and access to property (Agarwal, 1995, 1997; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997; Oduro and Staveren, 2015).

Due to their multiple gendered responsibilities, women also have to endure time poverty signifying their lack of time to sleep, rest, and invest in their human capital and other capabilities (Chant, 2007; Gammage, 2010).



These gendered obstacles that women experience, not only undermine their human capital investment and labour supply but also foster a bad reputation as unreliable workers, which restricts their ability to compete in the job market, diminishing their prospective earnings (Borrowman and Klasen, 2020; Fairchild, 2003; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Hopkins, 1995; Levin et al., 1999; Mehra and Rojas, 2008; Moghadam, 2005; Pressman, 2003).

In times of economic crisis, these gendered beliefs that see women as “homemakers” and men as “breadwinners” may induce employers to lay off female employees faster than men during economic downturns, driving them into the informal sector (Elson, 2010). Women also may find it relatively more difficult to access loans in times of crisis owing it to the hardship of meeting the requirements in the form of collateral, business plan, and credit history in addition to the prejudicial perceptions of them as risky borrowers by financial institutions (Elson, 2010).

Similarly, women’s lack of agency diminishes their ability to make decisions regarding the use of pooled income for subsistence (Agarwal, 1997; Hopkins, 1995; Sen, 1999b). Their agency and capabilities to cope with economic and food crises are further undermined by threats and/or acts of violence coupled with limited legal benefits and protections (Quisumbing et al., 2008).

Ethiopian girls and women are known to face challenges emanating from discriminatory social norms such as underage marriage and gender-based violence (GBV) (NPC-CSA of Ethiopia and UN Women, 2017; Tsige, 2019; UN Women, 2020). Despite the legal and policy reforms implemented by the government to promote gender equality in the country, Ethiopian women are still bound by gender norms that favour males in terms of property ownership, inheritance, and asset division after divorce, giving them little to no negotiating leverage over how household assets are used and managed (Fafchamps and Quisumbing, 2005, 2002; Quisumbing and Maluccio, 2003; Tsige, 2019).

One of the explanations for this is that patriarchal social/cultural norms transcend the home and the community into formal legal and market institutions, influencing behaviour and choices and forming a common thread throughout the deprivations of women (Agarwal, 1997; Bakker, 1994; Deere and Doss, 2006; Elson, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Goetz, 2007; Nyamu-Musembi, 2007; Polachek, 1995). Data from several African countries demonstrates that one way this is primarily manifested is in the way patriarchal informal institutions restrict women from driving bargaining power from their legally held possessions (Aluko, 2015; Oduro and Staveren, 2015).

Therefore, social norms that are prejudiced against women have made women especially vulnerable to inflation led-food insecurity mainly through exclusively assigning them the responsibility of ensuring the family's survival while at the same time putting them at a disadvantage in terms of accessing food as well as the means of coping with such crisis. Hence, women's heightened vulnerability to inflation can be captured by the notion of "feminization of responsibility and obligation", referring to their relative lack of bargaining power/entitlement, rights, and rewards both at home, community, and institutional levels while having to assume the heavier burden of coping with the crisis due to their reproductive responsibility (Chant, 2007, p.206-208).

### 2.7.3 Gender-blind policies of government and impact on women

Government policies and programs have gendered effects, because men and women are systematically placed differently in the economy, confront different limitations, assume different socially defined responsibilities, and are consequently prone to behave differently in response to policy (Himmelweit, 2002; Seguno, 2020). These systematic differences between men and women include the occupation and industrial segregation of women due to economic and non-economic factors including gender ideologies that restrict their labour supply and human capital investment, employers' perceptions and labour market structure that discriminate against them (Borrowman and Klasen, 2020; Peterson and Lewis, 1999).

As a result, women are disproportionately concentrated in labour-intensive, low-paying, price-sensitive and non-core jobs and sectors, most prone to shocks such as economic downturns such as the export manufacturing sectors (Kabeer, 1997; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Ruiters, 2008; Tacoli, 2012). Hence, they have a substantially higher likelihood of losing their jobs during economic crises due to the precarious nature of the industries in which they work and the gendered ideology that regards their employment as disposable to safeguard the jobs for "breadwinners" (Elson, 2010, 2002).

In many Developing economies, the "feminization of the labour force" has occurred alongside the informalization of the labour force and changing market demands to a relatively flexible<sup>37</sup> cheaper labour (Elson and Pearson, 1989; Kabeer, 2007; Moser, 1993; Tacoli, 2012). In SSA for example, informal employment accounts for 74% of women's total non-agricultural employment, which is significantly larger than men's employment in the sector (61%) (Vanek *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, depending on the favoured or disfavoured sector, intervention programs and policies have distinct effects on men and women (Elson, 2010; Braunstein and Heintz, 2008). Physical stimulus and distribution of credit that divert government funds away from sectors and occupations, and financial institutions that are dominated and frequented by women such as micro-finance institutions, may not only fail to make the intended impacts but also result in women experiencing higher rates of unemployment and loss of income than men (Elson, 2010).

Secondly, as discussed in section 2.7.1, as part of their gendered reproductive roles women are made responsible for the family's care and survival making them especially susceptible to the effects of economic crisis. Even if a disproportionate number of men have lost their jobs, women may still shoulder a greater burden of the effort to build an ultimate social safety net by managing the family budget and providing for the family's physical and emotional wellness (Elson, 2010, 2002).

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<sup>37</sup> Flexible labour here refers to the type of labour that is in irregular/casual employment, to be hired and fired as necessary with minimal obligation and costs to the profit-driven employers in highly competitive sectors (Kabeer, 2007).

This was the case in Indonesia and the Philippines during the Asian financial crisis, where women increased their paid and unpaid labour in response to job losses by men (Elson, 2002). The inherent and interrelated biases in macroeconomic policies, namely deflationary, commodification, and male-breadwinner biases, might also explain their particularly detrimental impact on poor women (Elson, 2002; Elson and Cagatay, 2000). Accordingly, deflationary bias refers to the propensity to place greater emphasis on the attainment of low inflation through low public debt, low public expenditure, low taxes, and low budget deficits, while giving less weight to employment, public investment and the provision of goods in the economy. Commodification bias which is also known as market bias/privatization bias involves the replacement of state-based entitlements with market-based entitlements with the assumption that the private sector is inherently more efficient than the public sector.

Male-breadwinner bias exists when public sector funding for unpaid care labour performed by women is dependent on the wage paid to the male breadwinner in the market, restricting their entitlement to government-provided social services such as welfare benefits (Elson, 2002; Elson and Cagatay, 2000). In addition to denying them the same social benefits as men, these biases inherent in common macroeconomic policies make women lose their jobs at a rate significantly higher than men's, increase the amount of unpaid care they provide as "provisioners of last resort" in times of need, and confine them to low-wage, precarious paid work in prosperous economic times (Elson, 2002; Elson and Cagatay, 2000). For instance, the underlying deflationary and male breadwinner biases in contractionary inflation reduction macroeconomic policies resulted in women losing their jobs more quickly and in much higher proportions compared to men as witnessed in the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis (Braunstein and Heintz, 2008; Elson, 2002).

Nevertheless, women expanded their labour force participation in the informal market by working from home or on the streets to preserve household income (Braunstein and Heintz, 2008; Elson, 2010).

This was evident in South Africa where the implementation of such policies led to the casualization and feminization of labour as well as the expansion of the informal sector (Ruiters, 2008). This is a result of the gendered expectations placed on women to serve as the ultimate safety net for their families, as was previously stated.

Further, government response programs such as unemployment deflation that involves cutting back on social infrastructure, especially in the areas of health and education, run the risk of reinforcing gender stereotypes that place the burden of social provisioning on women, who are traditionally responsible for taking care of the family (Elson, 2002; Compton, Wiggins and Keats, 2010; Kumar and Quisumbing, 2013). Such policies tend to harm women more severely due to their lack of access to social assistance such as welfare benefits due to the male breadwinner bias and privatisation bias discussed above. For example, austerity measures implemented in developing countries between 2010 and 2012—which include wage reductions and subsidy reversals—disproportionately harmed women and children by jeopardizing the effectiveness of social protection systems and driving up the price of essentials like food (Ortiz and Cummins, 2013).

Meanwhile, conventional economic policies tend to downplay their effects on the domestic sector of the economy and the personal/social components of human existence, such as the development and preservation of human capabilities (Himmelweit, 2002; Ruiters, 2008). Such policies focus on what Elson (2002, p.6) referred to as “false economies” through reducing financial costs while disregarding nonmarket costs in terms of health, well-being, and social harmony. This places a sizable share of the responsibility for striking a healthy balance between quality of life and paid work on women (ibid.).

Government response programs/policies that are not considerate of how gendered norms influence economic behaviour, and the multiple deprivations of women in various spheres of the economy fail to appreciate how both the crisis, and the intervention are gendered (Bakker, 1994; Elson, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Himmelweit, 2002; Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997; Mellor, 1997; Williams, 1994).

Such gender-neutral or gender-blind policies risk perpetuating women's relative disadvantage by reinforcing existing gender norms that are biased against them or by shifting the burden of the crises to women (Elson, 1994, 1998, 2010a; Jennings, 1994; Cagatay, 1998; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Jones and Holmes, 2011). Even when policies are cognizant of the links between gender, economic growth, and sustainability of development, gender equity concerns have been incorporated into policy and practice in a limited and subservient manner (Jones and Holmes, 2011). This has undermined the potential for economic growth and progressive development by failing to adequately address unfair labour divisions and power imbalances along gender lines (ibid.).

The next section narrows the discussion to the impact of food price inflation in Ethiopia, and its gendered effects. It also outlines and critically reviews Ethiopia's effort towards addressing the prevailing gender gap in the country.

## **2.8 The effect of food price inflation on the urban poor and women in Ethiopia**

Studies on the impact of food price hikes in Ethiopia have commonly found that while the scale varied, there is undoubtedly a loss of welfare in terms of reduced income, increased poverty, and food insecurity among the urban poor as a result of sharp increases in food prices (Alem and Söderbom, 2012; Birhane et al., 2014; Hill and Porter, 2017; Matz et al., 2015; Shimeles and Delelegn, 2013; Ticci, 2011; Ulimwengu et al., 2009). However, Matz et al. (2015), despite finding some indication of a reduction in meal frequency and a switch to less favoured meals, did not establish a direct connection between increases in cereal prices and diet diversity and calorie intake of the affected population in both rural and urban areas.

However, the evidence on intrahousehold differences in the impacts of crisis resulting in food insecurity, particularly along gender lines, however, is sparse around the world, despite mounting evidence that gender is an important determinant (Compton et al., 2010; King and Sweetman, 2010; Kumar and Quisumbing, 2013; Quisumbing et al., 2008; Webb, 2002).

This has also been a prevalent trend in Ethiopia, where studies on the subject mainly focused on which population groups were most affected and how they dealt with it, without delving into intrahousehold disparities in impact, and much less the role of gender relations (King and Sweetman, 2010; Kumar and Quisumbing, 2011; Quisumbing et al., 2008; Quisumbing, 2013). The most adversely affected are households that are asset and income poor (, disabled, and headed by uneducated/unskilled, daily wagers, government employees and women (Alem and Söderbom, 2012; Birhane et al., 2014; CSA and WFP, 2019, 2014; UNICEF and WFP, 2009). For instance, according to research by Hill and Porter (2017), high inflation in metropolitan areas of the country results in a 14% decrease in consumption among households without formal education. Similarly, in 2015–16, it was discovered that female-headed families were 2,7% and 1% more likely than male-headed households to experience food shocks and shocks attributable to unusually high food prices, respectively (PDC, 2018).

Even though Amare (2010) attempted to analyse the food insecurity experiences of female-headed households separately from male-headed households in great detail, he fell short of examining the gendered vulnerabilities of women in general and those in male-headed households in particular. Others, such as Hadley et al. (2012, 2008), have recognized Ethiopian women's traditional role in feeding the household and making food-related decisions, and have actively involved them in data gathering. However, they refrained from further investigating the role of gender relations in the intrahousehold allocation of food and other resources and in coping with sharp rises in food prices.

This may have resulted from mainstream economic theory's practice of being indifferent to everything that is not quantifiable and not exchanged on the market, such as the domestic and informal sectors (McDonald, 1995; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). This is despite the fact that women are over-represented in these sectors devoting a significant portion of their time and labour (Chant, 2007; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Folbre, 1994; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Hopkins, 1995; Hutchinson, 1995; Mariarosa and James, 1972; Nelson, 1996; Tacoli, 2012).

For example, women are disproportionately overrepresented in domestic employment and unpaid family work, primarily performing secretarial and rudimentary types of tasks in Ethiopia (NPC - CSA of Ethiopia and UN Women, 2017). In 2016, women and girls aged 10+ spent almost three times more hours in unpaid care and domestic work as compared to men and boys in Ethiopia (UN Women, 2020).

This pattern also fits with the "black box" approach that research in economic practice usually takes to understanding how a family functions, which conceals disparities in the distribution of power, wealth, and labour among family members, especially along gender lines (Lundberg and Pollak, 1993; Woolley, 1993; Hopkins, 1995; Klamer, 1995; Ott, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Chiappori, 1997; Wolf, 2011). It can also be explained by the empirical challenges of tracing the impact of the economic crisis on the informal sector, which is not captured in official statistics, and the reproductive economy, where both the impact of the economic crisis and government response are usually delayed (King and Sweetman, 2010).

Finding evidence of the intrahousehold impact of the food price crisis is especially challenging in a country like Ethiopia where members of the family traditionally eat from the same pot, and/or dish (Amare, 2010; Hadley et al., 2008). Hence, some empirical works in Ethiopia studying the impact of economic shocks and food inflation, in particular, on food security and poverty had to rely on simulations based on pre-crisis data. For instance, Ulimwengu et al. (2009) and Ticci (2011) utilized data from the Ethiopia Household Income, Consumption, and Expenditure Survey (EHICES) and the Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS) survey from 1999-2000, to simulate the impact of increases in food prices on consumption/calorie, and on poverty respectively.

These and many other studies have commonly found that, while the scale varied, food price hikes in Ethiopia are undoubtedly followed by a loss of welfare in terms of reduced income, increased poverty, reduced consumption and food insecurity among the urban poor (Alem and Söderbom, 2012; Birhane et al., 2014; Hill and Porter, 2017; Matz et al., 2015; Shimeles and Delelegn, 2013; Ticci, 2011; Ulimwengu et al., 2009).



Despite the methodological importance of this technique, the validity of the underlying assumptions of simulations and their outcomes in these empirical works is questionable, since current circumstances may be different from the time of data collection, and gender relations are unique to the context under discussion (D'Souza and Jolliffe, 2016; Headey and Fan, 2008; Kumar and Quisumbing, 2011).

Another popular trend with studies on the impact of food insecurity in Ethiopia is the emphasis on quantitatively measured outcomes such as shifts in eating behaviours or anthropometric outcomes. This was apparent in the empirical works of Belachew et al. (2012), and Hadley et al (2011, 2008) who employed subjective self-reported scales, and Kumar and Quisumbing (2013, 2011) who utilized instrumental variables to quantitatively measure the experience of food insecurity or the impact of “food price shock”. Hill and Porter (2017), Ulimwengu et al. (2009), and Dercon and Krishnan (2000) have also utilized nationwide data that relies on anthropometric outcomes to measure calorie loss resulting from food price hikes. This is mainly because the collection of primary data through in-depth interviews and direct observation of actual attitude and behaviour is not part of the typical conventional economic practitioner's toolkit (McDonald, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Peterson and Lewis, 1999).

Several of these research works in Ethiopia have produced evidence that supports the claim that female family members experience shocks in household income and food more acutely than their male counterparts. This was evident in studies in Ethiopia, where adverse shocks in income and consumption were unevenly allocated among all members of the household, with women and girls bearing the brunt of the adjustment costs (Belachew et al., 2012; Dercon and Krishnan, 2000). Hadley et al. (2008) found that adolescent girls become more chronically food insecure than adolescent boys in the same household, revealing the underlying gender bias in food access or discriminatory buffering of food insecurity by adults.

The experiential measures of food insecurity such as those utilized by Hadley et al (2011, 2008) above are useful in presenting subjective cultural and personal values and expressions of deprivation that could be overlooked by other proxy indicators and objective measures (Webb et al., 2006).

Nonetheless, the full scale of the hardships endured by people as a result of rising food prices cannot be captured by either quantitative measures of food security or simulation studies alone (Hadley et al., 2012; Levay et al., 2013). Given the additional gender constraints that women endure, qualitative methodologies that allow for a more in-depth understanding of the food inflation problem in a way that is relevant to the "local" context and grounded in women's everyday lived realities are critical (McIntyre et al., 2011). Furthermore, due to its underlying premise that an average economic agent is a man, secondary data has limitations in accurately capturing the social context in which the study subjects are located as well as the reality of women (MacDonald, 1995; Peterson and Lewis, 1999).

Hadley et al. (2012) have utilized a qualitative method by relying on the subjective expressions of the urban poor to analyse how they experience food insecurity how it affects their health, and how they cope in the wake of the 2011 food price hikes in Ethiopia. This technique has made it possible to capture the diverse aspects of the lived experience of food insecurity by the poor, including its non-nutritional implications on their mental health and social life in times of food inflation, in addition to the nutritional impacts captured by the typical food insecurity measures/scales. Accordingly, the impacts of food price increases on Ethiopia's impoverished urban population are physical, mental and social which involve the erosion of community cohesion by reducing traditional practices that involve food such as coffee ceremonies.

The findings of studies by Hadley et al. (2012) and Birhane et al. (2014) confirm the hypothesis that coping with food inflation is a "managed process" that comprises a variety of responses including making dietary adjustments to reduce calorie consumption, switching to poorer quality (cheaper substitutes), and lower diversity. Most households also cope by raising their earnings, withdrawing their children from school, or selling off possessions to satisfy their needs (Hadley et al., 2011). However, it was noted that parents reduce their own consumption first in reaction to food inflation, and only when food insecurity was especially acute do they lower their children's intake (ibid.).

Uraguchi (2010) has combined the aforementioned qualities that are lacking in comparable studies by conducting a qualitative study on the vulnerability of women in both male-headed and female-headed households to food insecurity caused by increases in food prices, through examining their consumption patterns and coping mechanisms. Similar to Kumar and Quisumbing (2013), Uraguchi (2010) examined the effects of food price shocks on consumption patterns, perceptions of poverty, and the well-being of male and female heads of households in Ethiopia during the food price crisis of 2007–2008 and came to the conclusion that women suffered disproportionately. This was demonstrated in women’s relatively lower consumption and shift towards less preferred meals, loss of income and assets, increased workload, increased demand for participation in PSNP, and increased likelihood of adopting consumption-based strategies in the aftermath of such a crisis.

Uraguchi (2010) and Amare (2010) have also uncovered some evidence of the maternal buffering strategy in urban parts of Ethiopia, where women prioritized their children's consumption over their own in response to food shortages. In a similar vein, Fafchamps et al. (2009) found that women's bargaining power in rural Ethiopia is strongly and directly related to improved nutrition of their children, as a type of investment in their own old-age assistance. Women also reduce their food intake, both in terms of amount and quality, to be able to sustain their spouses' food consumption (Uraguchi, 2010).

Following sharp rises in food prices in 2007-08, the workload of women in Ethiopia has increased, as the result of their efforts to search for cheaper food from far-off places, prepare food differently, and engage in income-generating activities to earn more money (Uraguchi, 2010). The latter includes gathering and selling water and food, as well as handcrafted goods. Similarly, King and Sweetman (2010) found that poor women cope with an economic crisis by increasing their paid labour hours if they are already employed or by migrating to nearby cities or abroad, usually in the Middle East.

Studies in Ethiopia have also shown that women's relatively higher vulnerability to shocks is caused by the numerous obstacles they face, such as lack of intrahousehold bargaining power, which is determinantal to their nutritional allocation and access to the means of coping (Dercon and Krishnan, 2000; Fafchamps et al., 2009; Fafchamps and Quisumbing, 2005, 2002; Quisumbing and Maluccio, 2003; Tsige, 2019). Among the factors that determine the bargaining position of couples in marriage, is their respective divorce settlement, proxied by the relative wealth of the couples in the form of gifts from families upon marriage as governed by customary laws (Dercon and Krishnan, 2000; Fafchamps et al., 2009, Fafchamps and Quisumbing, 2005, 2002; Quisumbing and Maluccio, 2003; Tsige, 2019).

In addition, the relative cognitive abilities and independent income of couples in marriage are determining factors of their respective share of nutrition (Fafchamps et al., 2009). Gebre (2022) also found that women's decision-making power regarding the type of food crop produced in the household, and the amount of produced, and used for household consumption is positively related their dietary diversity in three *Woredas* in Oromia and South Nation Nationalities and People Region (SNNPR).

According to Dercon and Krishnan (2000), patriarchal gender norms and customary laws, for instance among Muslim Oromo and Southern<sup>38</sup> communities in Ethiopia are among the main detrimental factors to women's Pareto weights in allocation. Women's nutritional allocation in Southern communities, in particular, is also directly related to the size of the landholdings of the household as the demand for their labour in farm work arises (ibid.). This implies that gendered beliefs about the return to women's labour (productivity) and nutritional needs in relation to wealth and landholdings also determine their intrahousehold nutritional allocation.

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<sup>38</sup> The study has taken samples from the Kembata, the Gurage, the Wolayata, and the Gedeo communities in the Southern part of Ethiopia (Dercon and Krishnan, 2000).

Women decision-making farm households were found to typically have significantly lower access to resources like land and oxen, and lower returns on their resources, like education, which contributes to their relative food insecurity compared to their male counterparts (Gebre et al., 2021). Ethiopian women also have a harder time getting access to the means of coping with food price crisis, such as credit from financial institutions and opportunities to participate in Cash and food-for-work projects such as PSNP, obliging them to resort to adopting consumption-based strategies (Uraguchi, 2010).

## 2.9 The gender sensitiveness of policies/programs in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a party to some of the significant international and regional accords that advance gender equality (Drucza et al, 2020; Tsigie et al 2020). These include the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and the Banjul declaration. Despite the gaps in the adoption and implementation of these treaties in the country, they have guided subsequent national laws and policies with the objective of achieving gender equality (Drucza et al, 2020). The section outlines and discusses the major laws, policies and institutional mechanisms in place with the aim of accomplishing gender parity in the country.

### □ Legal measures

The current GoE, having recognized the historical socio-economic disadvantages of women in the country, has taken several legal and policy measures to bring about gender equity since coming to power in 1992. The first one of these legal measures is the inclusion of Article 35 in the Constitution granting women remedial and affirmative measures (FDRE, 1995). The measures included the provision of equal rights with men, protection against harmful laws/customs/practices, maternity rights, participation rights, ownership and inheritance rights, and equal opportunity in employment. Moreover, Articles 25, 34 and 40 of the Constitution confer women equal rights and protection as men in general; equal rights with men in marriage and divorce, and equal rights to ownership of property as men respectively (ibid.).

Since 1995, several other proclamations which are favourable to women were passed. The Revised Family Code No.213/2000 gives women equal rights to spouses during the duration, and dissolution of marriage (FDRE, 2000). The Civil Service Proclamations No.262/2002 (Art. 13) and No.515/2007, and the Labour Proclamation No.377/2003 (Art. 87) grant women protection against discrimination; and constitutional rights to affirmative action concerning recruitment, promotion, deployment and training (FDRE, 2007; 2003; 2002). These laws also protect pregnant women in particular against discrimination and harmful work and grant them the right to paid leave for examination purposes and upon the birth of the child.

Furthermore, the 2004 Criminal Code of the FDRE protects women against crimes on their bodies, health and lives resulting from traditional harmful practices, and crimes against their personal and sexual liberty (FDRE, 2004). Hence, among other things, women are legally protected from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other bodily injuries, violence in marriage, intimidation, coercion, deprivation of the power of decision, abduction, trafficking and rape (ibid.). According to the Rural Land Administration and Land Use Proclamation No 456/2005, women have the right to access rural lands and engage in farming activities (FDRE, 2005). The law also stipulates that the landholding certificates of a husband and wife should display both of their names (ibid.).

#### □ Policy measures

The National Policy on Ethiopian Women was formulated in 1993 to promote equality between men and women in participation and sharing of benefits in all aspects of social, political and economic life (The Transitional Government of Ethiopia: Office of the Prime Minister, 1993). This policy contains the need for legal protection of women's rights, facilitation of their access to basic social services and participation in the decision-making process, lessening their workload, and elimination of prejudices against them (ibid.).

Both the 1993-adopted National Population Policy and the 1996-adopted Development and Social Welfare Policy called for the repeal of practices and laws that denied women access to family planning services and health care, school enrolment, economic rights, including the full enjoyment of property rights, and gainful employment (FDRE, 1996; The Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1993). The Development and Social Welfare Policy also advocated for integrating gender issues into all appropriate initiatives, programs, and activities by incorporating women-specific components (FDRE, 1996).

This was followed by several policies which are beneficial to women such as the National Social Protection Policy, the Education and Training Policy, the National Health Policy, and the Employment Policy and Strategy (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA), 2014, 2009; (FDRE, 2019, 1994). Under the National Social Protection Policy, women, particularly vulnerable, pregnant and lactating women, are to receive special protection and support from abuse, violence and harmful traditional practices that undermine their legal rights (MOLSA, 2014; FDRE, 2012). Similarly, the Education and Training Policy gives special attention to women in the recruitment and assignment of teachers, in the organization, management and finance of the sector to encourage their participation (FDRE, 1994). One of the main objectives of this particular policy is to change society's attitude regarding women's role and contribution to development through education (ibid.).

The National Health Policy, which has the prevention of maternal mortality as one of its main objectives, works for the expansion of healthcare services in line with the principle of respecting reproductive health rights (FDRE, 2019). It also encourages women to take ownership of their health care or the health of their families and communities (ibid.). Furthermore, in developing the technical, managerial and administrative capacity of the sector women will be favoured through affirmative action. At the heart of the Employment Policy and Strategy in Ethiopia is the objective to support women running informal businesses to transform into formal ones and assist those in non-farm rural employment to increase their productivity (MOLSA, 2009).

The Policy also works to mainstream gender in employment generation through affirmative action, deliberately targeting women in skill and business development programs, promotion of women-friendly technologies, and child-care centres for working mothers (MOLSA, 2009). Similarly, since 2001/2, the GoE has formulated a series of 3-5 years economic programmes/ plans, which mainstreamed gender as a cross-cutting development issue, or/and as one of the major pillars of development to alleviate women's poverty and enhance their well-being efforts in the country (MOFED, 2010, 2006, 2002; National planning commission, 2016). These are the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP), and the GTP I and GTP II.

The PASDEP, in particular, had incorporated an action plan to serve as a framework for promoting its gender-equality agenda i.e., the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP- GE) (Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), 2006). This Action Plan was also meant to assist the GoE in implementing the National Policy on Ethiopian Women, and in meeting its other gender-related goals stated in the MDGs, and in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) (MoWA, 2010). The idea of ensuring that women receive equal advantages from development results in addition to their equal involvement was introduced with the launch of GTP I in 2010 (MOFED, 2010; National planning commission, 2016).

Both phases of the GTP indicated the GoE's desire to create a conducive environment for the promotion, strengthening and coordination of women's associations and organizations as a strategy to ensure the equal participation and benefit of women. By the year 2010, the National Gender Mainstreaming Guideline was formulated to serve as a frame of reference for policies, organizations, programs and projects to ensure effective mainstreaming of gender thereby equal participation and equal benefits across both sexes (MoWA), 2010). This was accompanied by the initiation of the GRB program in 2010 to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the planning process by allocating the necessary resources in advance as per the practical and strategic gendered needs of women and men (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED), 2012).



The guideline also requires all federal and regional level sectors to introduce GRB planning and reporting systems (ibid.). Following this, to assure that women farmers, pastoralists, and agro pastoralists equally benefit from agricultural development, improve their livelihoods, nutrition, and food security, and increase their resilience to climate change, the Gender Equality Strategy for Ethiopia's Agricultural Sector (GESEA) was also formulated in 2017 (Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource and (MoANR), 2017).

Issues pertaining to women's food security status have been garnering attention from policymakers in the country, as evidenced by the national FSS (2002) and the PSNP (2010-2014) (Ministry of agriculture and rural development, 2009; FDRE, 2002). The FSS emphasizes the need to prioritize providing agricultural inputs to low-income women and families led by women, as well as the necessity of enhancing the nutrition of pregnant and lactating mothers. Similarly, one of the guiding tenets of the PSNP is gender sensitivity, which translates into promoting and prioritizing women's engagement while being cognizant of and accommodating of their other household activities and time schedules. It has also mainstreamed gender into its human resource development and system functions as a necessary step in strengthening its institutional capacity to manage the program (Ministry of agriculture and rural development, 2009).

The GoE's commitment to ensure gender equity in access to resources and benefits of development, political representation, including leadership and decision-making, and protection of social welfare is also explicitly stated in the new 10-year development plan (2021-2031) (PDC, 2021). At the centre of these legal proclamations, policy documents and gender-equality objectives of these development plans are, the understanding that women's full potential to contribute to the economy is not realized due to their multiple deprivations in the form of lack of opportunity, capability, security and disempowerment. Hence, the main focus behind these measures seems to be increasing the participation of women in the economy through mainstreaming gender in the planning, and budgeting process across all sectors of the economy. Gender outcomes were also integrated into each of the sector strategies under the various economic programmes/plans.

Once again, empirical research on the felt impact of government intervention programs with the objective of addressing food insecurity through efforts aimed at stabilizing food supply and price in urban markets from the perspective of poor women, in particular, is virtually non-existent. However, several insightful studies have examined how well the FSS and its development initiatives and policies such as the PASDEP, and the Participatory Demonstration and Training Extension System (PADETES) have achieved their gender mainstreaming objectives (Drucza et al., 2020; Gebreselassie and Haile, 2013; Tsige et al., 2020).

In this regard, the critical feminist analysis of Ethiopian agricultural policies by Drucza et al. (2020) based on seven criteria—gendering of the policy, structural understanding of gender equality, intersectionality, women's empowerment, incremental transformation, gender-responsiveness, and regional and international contextualization—is particularly instructive. Gebreselassie and Haile (2013) also conducted a gender analysis of the national FSS to examine the issues and challenges in strategy and execution in the context of women's food insecurity through employing a policy analysis and simple regression techniques.

Tsige et al. (2020) also looked at how well gender equality in agricultural development has been promoted by the gender-mainstreaming narratives specified in national policies in general, the PADETES and the FSS in particular. A mixed method was used to examine contextual factors that limit the mainstreaming of gender and the level of gender disparity in access to and control over agricultural inputs and services from agricultural institutions.

Despite some encouraging steps toward women's participation, agricultural policies in Ethiopia have not managed to mainstream gender in their development programs (Drucza et al., 2020). The failure of these policies and programs to achieve the highly desired gender-transforming outcomes is demonstrated by the gender-based barriers women still face to access productive resources and services that are in line with their capabilities (Drucza et al., 2020; Gebreselassie and Haile, 2013; Tsige et al., 2020).

Additionally, efforts to utilize women's potential in agricultural production by granting them access to productive resources and services like assets proved inadequate to improve their food security levels (Gebreselassie and Haile, 2013). This is mainly because the implementation of these policies lacks recognition of women's life-cycle vulnerabilities and customary obligations that affect their task allocations, and access to intrahousehold food and property, limiting their capability to convert resources and opportunities available to them to improve their food security and well-being (Gebreselassie and Haile, 2013; Druza, et al., 2020; Tsige, 2019; Tsige et al., 2020).

There was also no gender mainstreaming strategy tailored to the local context, taking into consideration women's unique gendered needs and the problems that arise from their many identities and realities (Tsige et al., 2020). This was manifested for instance, in the extent to which rural PSNP programs are incompatible with women's other roles in the farm and household, and in the manner in which agricultural development programs disregard women smallholders' technological needs (Gebreselassie and Haile, 2013; Druza, et al., 2020).

In addition, these policies and programs have failed to set clear gender objectives (Druza et al., 2020). The initiatives are also poorly implemented for a lack of uniform understanding and effective integration both vertically across all administrative structures and horizontally across various agencies and sectors, as well as a lack of the necessary budget for execution at the lower levels of operation (Tsige et al., 2020). These implementing agencies include The Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MoANR), the Ministry of Finance and Economic Commission (MoFEC), and the Ministry of Children and Women's Affairs (MoCWA) at the federal–regional–zonal–*woreda* and *kebele* levels. Similarly, the institutional mechanisms that are required to properly designate accountable implementers, and necessary resources including funding across each administrative structure for gender mainstreaming are virtually non-existent (ibid.).

The GRB, for instance, have not been adequately, consistently and strictly implemented due to a lack of a uniform understanding, capacity and coordination among implementing institutions across sectors and administrative structures (Drucza et al., 2020; Gebru and Demeke, 2014; Tsige et al., 2020; United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), 2009). In summary, this implies that gender equality has not been a practical government priority in the implementation of sector-specific policies. It is this apparent inability to adequately institutionalize and implement the gender mainstreaming agenda that led Tsige et al. (2020) to believe that gender mainstreaming in Ethiopia is purely symbolic rather than practical; technocratic rather than giving women a voice to express their own needs.

## 2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter started with defining and explaining important conceptions relevant to the study including food inflation, and food security along with its various components, dimensions and proxies. This was followed by a discussion on coping strategies and their role in mitigating current food insecurity and its effect on future vulnerability. It also explored the various channels through which women become more vulnerable to the effects of food inflation-led food insecurity. To conceptualize women's unique vulnerabilities to food inflation, it examined gender ideologies/social norms, and their role in assigning roles, determining the bargaining power necessary to access food and other resources, and the gender-blind response programs of the government. It also provided a critical analysis of previous empirical work on the topic in Ethiopia, the methodologies utilized and their findings. The next chapter contextualizes the issue of food (in)security, food price volatility and inflation, and mitigation techniques of the government in Ethiopia.

## **CHAPTER 3 : Background on food security, food inflation, and government response programs in Ethiopia**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a context on the status of the Ethiopian economy, food security, food inflation and government response programs for a clearer understanding of the research problem. It begins by presenting the latest information on the state of the Ethiopian economy, followed by food insecurity as measured by several measures/indices, as well as the variations in food security based on geographic location, economic position, types of livelihoods, and dietary habits. The chapter then discusses the trajectory of food inflation in the country and the factors that have contributed to it, including the gap in the marketed supply of food, the government's expansionist monetary policies, and currency devaluations to control the country's trade deficit. It also summarizes the most common strategies implemented by successive Ethiopian governments towards mitigating the impact of rapid food inflation on its vulnerable population.

### **3.2 Background on the Ethiopian economy**

Ethiopia is a country with an estimated population of 121,3 million people in 2022, comprising more than 80 ethnolinguistic groups spread out over its vast territory covering 1,1 million km<sup>2</sup> (National Planning Commission and The United Nations in Ethiopia, 2015; PDC, 2021). Its location in the Horn of Africa, despite its risks in terms of political instability, has a strategic advantage due to its proximity to markets in the Middle East (World Bank, 2021b). Despite the gradual decline in the agriculture sector's contribution to the country's GDP from 45% in 2000 to 32,7% in 2020, Ethiopia's economy can still be considered agrarian with the agriculture sector contributing to 77,4% of exports and employing 72,7% of its labour force (PDC, 2021). Employment in the agricultural sector includes informal labour, including that of family and casual labour (Woolfrey et al., 2021).

Agricultural products such as coffee, oil seeds, grains and pulses, *chat*, flowers, and live cattle make up 75% of the country's exports (Minten et al., 2018; PDC, 2021; Woolfrey et al., 2021). The sector also remains vital in the country's economy by providing inputs for the manufacturing and service sectors (ibid.). The second most important sector in Ethiopia is the service sector contributing to 39,5% of the GDP and employing 19,8% of the labour force in 2020 (PDC, 2021). Despite the government's effort to transform the economy into an industrialized one as clearly indicated in the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) II, the industrial sector is lagging behind other sectors making up only 29,0% of the country's GDP and 7,5% of its annual exports in 2020. This is attributable to challenges related to shortages in foreign currency and agricultural inputs, low productivity of labour, limited capacity in terms of implementation and political instability (ibid.).

Ethiopia's economy has been on an upward trajectory, growing at an average of 9,2% annually from 2010/11 to 2-19/20 (PDC, 2021). During this period, the industrial sector (mainly construction) has shown the most progress growing at an average of 17, 2% per year, followed by the service sector which was growing at an average of 9,65% per year (ibid.). These achievements do paint a positive picture of the improved well-being in Ethiopia in general. Nonetheless, the country remains poor with a GDP per capita of \$ 852 in 2021, which is low compared to the SSA average of \$ 1,612 (in constant 2015 US\$) (World Bank, 2021a).

Further, the number of people living in multidimensional poverty and severe multidimensional poverty in 2019 was 69% and 42% respectively (UNDP and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), 2021). The country also ranks low in the HDI i.e., it stands at 173<sup>rd</sup> level out of 189 countries, which is an indication of the denial of "choices and opportunities most basic for human development" (UNDP, 2020, 1997, p. 5). Given that the proportion of the population living below both the national and international poverty lines was 23,5% and 30,8% respectively in 2019, a significant share of Ethiopia's population is still at risk of food insecurity (UNDP and OPHI, 2021).

Ethiopia has regularly been Africa's top beneficiary of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and official aid, receiving \$4,81 billion in 2019, with a large portion of this aid going to food security interventions (Woolfrey et al., 2021; World Bank, 2021a). In 2016, a total of 18 million people were dependent on food assistance from emergency food assistance programs and PSNP (WFP and CSA, 2019). Even though Ethiopia's population is mainly agrarian, the rate of urbanization has been gaining momentum, growing at a rate of 3,7% between 2011- and 2020, mainly driven by the rural-urban poverty gap along with land pressures in rural areas (PDC, 2021; Woolfrey et al., 2021; World Bank, 2021a, 2020).

According to the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) (2018), 25,590 million people are estimated to live in the urban centres of Ethiopia in 2021. This number is projected to reach 37, 496 million people by 2030 (ibid.). In 2015/6, 14,8% and 15,2% of the country's urban population were living below the absolute poverty and food poverty lines respectively (PDC, 2018). The GoE has attempted to address this by aggressively investing in housing, upgrading slums, providing infrastructure and promoting small urban enterprises since 2004/05 (African Development Bank (AfDB) et al., 2016).

However, the country is still challenged to provide formal employment, adequate infrastructure and services such as roads, water, electricity, sanitation, and housing for its urban population (World Bank Group, 2015). A study conducted by the CSA (2016) revealed that access to private sources of tap drinking water and electricity for lighting of Addis Ababa's population is limited to 40% and 50% respectively, while the remaining only have access to shared/ public sources. In addition, only 63% of the city's residents use electricity for cooking, and 28 % have access to flush toilets, while the remaining people use traditional alternatives such as charcoal as a source of cooking fuel and pit latrines as toilet facilities (ibid.).

Following the pandemic in 2019/20, the country's economic growth has slowed down to 6,1%, even though the agriculture sector was not affected as much as the other two sectors (PDC, 2021).

Further, exports, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and remittances declined by 4,1%, 20%, and 10 % respectively, diminishing the country's foreign currency reserve levels (World Bank, 2021c). Both income and employment have plummeted, particularly for the self-employed and casual labourers who account for 44% of urban families and are heavily dependent on self-employment (World Bank, 2021c). Construction saw the biggest jobs loss at 69%, followed by the hospitality and trade sub-sectors with 66% and 62% jobs losses respectively (Goshu et al., 2020). Consequently, 52,4 % of urban households faced an average of 8% loss/reduction in income following the outbreak (ibid.). Furthermore, recent internal conflicts have hampered agricultural production, exacerbated the trade imbalance, and halted imports, all of which have resulted in inflation reaching its highest level in a decade, among other things (Aynalem, 2021a; Endale, 2021a).

### 3.3 Food insecurity in Ethiopia

In the 2020 Global Hunger Index, (GHI) Ethiopia ranked 92<sup>nd</sup> out of 107 countries with a score of 26,2, which is an improvement from its previous score of 55,9 two decades ago, indicating a decline in the severity of hunger from extremely alarming to serious levels (GHI, 2021). The number of people experiencing food insecurity increased from 10.9 million in April 2021 to more than 18 million by the end of the year, however, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, climatic shocks including drought, floods, and desert locusts as well as socioeconomic challenges (WFP, 2021).

According to a survey conducted in 2016, the mean per person food energy consumption at the national level has increased by 67% since 1996, reaching 3,254 Kcal PAE per day (CSA and WFP, 2019; Minten et al., 2018; Woolfrey et al., 2021). The real PAE expenditure on food also showed an increase from \$241,25<sup>39</sup> in 1995/16 to \$311,35 in 2015/16, (both expressed in 2015/16 average national prices) (PDC, 2018).

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<sup>39</sup> This was calculated based on the annual average exchange rate of the Ethiopian Birr (ETB) against the US Dollar in 2015/16, which was 1Birr= \$ 0,049094 (CalcProfi.com, 2022).



Despite the increase in households' spending on food in Ethiopia, its proportion in the overall expenditure has been declining, denoting a decline in vulnerability to food insecurity<sup>40</sup> (CSA and WFP, 2019; Minten et al., 2018; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WFP, 2009). Between the years 1995/1996 and 2015/2016, the share of food expenditure as a share of total household expenditure decreased by 15 percentage points (from 60% to 55%) (PDC, 2018). Further, between 1995/96 and 2015/16, the proportion of food-poor<sup>41</sup> people have fallen in the country by 24,7 % (ibid.).

Nonetheless, the various food security measures for diet quantity, diet quality, diet adequacy, and food access indicate that a significant proportion of the country's population is still food insecure (CSA and WFP, 2019). For instance, the Consolidated Approach for Reporting on Food Security Indicators (CARI)<sup>42</sup> also found approximately 20,5 % of Ethiopia's population to be food insecure in 2016 (CSA and WFP, 2019). Among this group, 0,7% were found to be severely food insecure. Further, the country still has a significant proportion of its population i.e., 24,8% living under the food poverty line (CSA and WFP, 2019; PDC, 2018). Gauging by the share of spending on food from the total household expenditure, 29,2% of Ethiopian households are still vulnerable, among which 9,9 % are highly vulnerable (CSA and WFP, 2019). The proportion of households that have inadequate caloric consumption still stands at 31% of the total households in Ethiopia in 2016 (CSA and WFP, 2019). The Ethiopian diet is also highly unbalanced, with starchy staples contributing to 71,4 % of the total caloric consumption for the majority of the population (CSA and WFP, 2019).

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<sup>40</sup> Households are deemed vulnerable and highly vulnerable if they spend 65% - 74,9%, and 75% or more of their overall expenditure on food respectively, while those spending less than 50% of expenditure on food are considered less vulnerable (CSA and WFP, 2019).

<sup>41</sup> The food poverty line per adult per person per year in Ethiopia stands at \$185,62 in 2015/16 based on the daily minimum requirement of 2,200 Kcal PAE (PDC, 2018).

<sup>42</sup> CARI is a compound indicator of food security constituting measures for food energy deficiency, poverty status, and livelihood coping strategies. It determines the prevalence and extent of food insecurity by classifying households into groups of food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure (WFP and CSA, 2019). While the first two groups are considered food secure, the later groups are considered food insecure (ibid.).

The subsequent section goes into greater detail regarding the composition of the Ethiopian diet.

### 3.3.1 Diet composition in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian diet is mainly composed of cereals, followed by root crops, oils and fats, and pulses. As illustrated in Table 3:1 below, the combined proportion of meat, milk, vegetables and fruits in the total calorie consumption of the country is alarmingly low amounting to only 4,5%.

Table 3:1: Proportion of food items in Ethiopia's average annual food consumption

Food item/ category	Per capita quantity consumed (%)	Per capita calorie consumed (%)
Teff	8,2	12
Wheat	5,9	9,3
Barley	2,1	3,3
Maize	13,8	19,7
Sorghum	5,9	9,6
Other cereals	2,2	3,4
Processed cereals (pasta, wheat flour, etc.)	2,1	3
<b>Total Cereals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>60</b>
Pulses	4,2	6,1
Oilseeds	0,1	0,1
Meat	1,5	0,6
Milk/dairy products	4,2	1,8
Other animal products (egg, fish, etc.)	0,1	0,1
Root crops	18,7	10,9
Spices	1,1	1,6
Sugar/ Sweeteners	1,5	2
Oils and fats	1,8	7,1
Vegetables	12,6	1,9
Fruits	0,7	0,2
Soft drinks and packed juices	0,7	0,2
Alcoholic Beverages	6,2	4,6
Other foods	6,5	2,4
<b>Total non-cereals</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: computed from CFSVA 2019

Nonetheless, Ethiopian diets are diversifying over time, with the share of starchy staples slightly declining (even while the PAE quantity of consumption has increased), and the share of high-value products such as meat, fruits, and vegetables increasing in the total calories consumed (Minten et al., 2018; WFP and CSA, 2019; Woolfrey et al., 2021). Consumption of animal products and vegetables and fruits have increased by approximately 65% and 108% since 1996 respectively (WFP and CSA, 2019). This is due to a combination of factors such as economic growth, improved investment, surplus production, rapidly growing urbanization, improved standard of living, behavioural change in consumption, and the advent of processed and convenient foods (CSA and WFP, 2019; Minten et al., 2018; Woolfrey et al., 2021).

### 3.3.2 Variations in food security

Food security in Ethiopia varies along with the geographical location, economic status and livelihoods, and feeding practices of its population (CSA and WFP, 2019; Woolfrey et al., 2021).

#### □ **Regional variation**

The Amhara region is the most energy deficient and least capable to cope with food crisis followed by Afar and Tigray regions as revealed by the Food Energy Consumption (FEC) index and the CARI approach. Food poverty is the most prevalent in the Tigray region followed by Afar and Amhara regions, while the Southern Nations, and Nationalities and peoples' Region (SNNPR) is the most food inadequate region as measured by the FCS index (CSA and WFP, 2019; PDC, 2018).

Even though cereals make up the lion's share of total calories consumed at a national level, there are some variations across regions, and between rural and urban areas (CSA and WFP, 2019). For example, compared to the national average, the share of cereals in the total calorie intake is lower in Addis Ababa (i.e., 54%) and in SNNPR (i.e., 46%). While the main sources of calories in Addis Ababa are oils, fats, pulses and alcoholic beverages, it is root crops and tubers in SNNPR.

□ **Variation based on source of livelihood**

Similarly, the consumption of dairy products in pastoral and agro-pastoral regions such as Somali and Afar (i.e., 4-6%) is higher than the national average of (i.e., 1%), despite their income poverty (ibid.). According to a survey conducted in 2016, food insecurity was found to be the highest among those working in the informal sector, mixed agriculture, and casual labour (CSA and WFP, 2019).

□ **Variation based on economic status**

All food security measures and composite scores indicate that there is a strong correlation between food security and income status possession of wealth and assets. That is, as we move from the lowest to the richest groups in terms of consumption/expenditure<sup>43</sup> and wealth, the number of calories consumed, as well as the quality and adequacy of diet, improve (CSA and WFP, 2019). The poorest consumption/expenditure quintile in Ethiopia fails to meet the average minimum calorie requirement, unlike the top income quintiles. Using the CARI approach, the share of food-insecure people in the poorest wealth quintile i.e., 31,5% is considerably higher than the richest quintile i.e., 14,7% (ibid.).

□ **Variation between rural and urban areas**

The pace of economic growth and poverty reduction has not been even between rural and urban areas, with the former considerably lagging behind the latter (World Bank, 2020). Between the years 2011 and 2016, while poverty fell by 42% in urban areas, it only fell by 13% in rural areas (ibid.). Hence, about 13,9% of urban families and 22,7% of rural households experience food insecurity (CSA and WFP, 2019).

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<sup>43</sup> The expenditure quintiles are aggregates of income groups derived by first ordering of all households in ascending order of annual per capita expenditure and then dividing them into five equal parts, so that the 1<sup>st</sup> quintile represents households with the lowest annual per capita expenditure while the 5<sup>th</sup> quintile represents households with the highest annual per capita expenditure (CSA, 2018a).

The quantity, quality, and adequacy of diet (in terms of variety) in urban areas are better than in rural areas (CSA and WFP, 2019). That is, in urban areas FEC deficiency is 37,5% higher and diets are much more varied with higher proportions of meat, oil and fats, vegetables, fruits, and alcoholic beverages, compared to their rural counterparts. The most consumed cereal (in per capita consumption terms) among urban dwellers is *teff* in the form of *injera*, processed and semi-processed wheat such as pasta, while in rural areas it is maize and sorghum (ibid.).

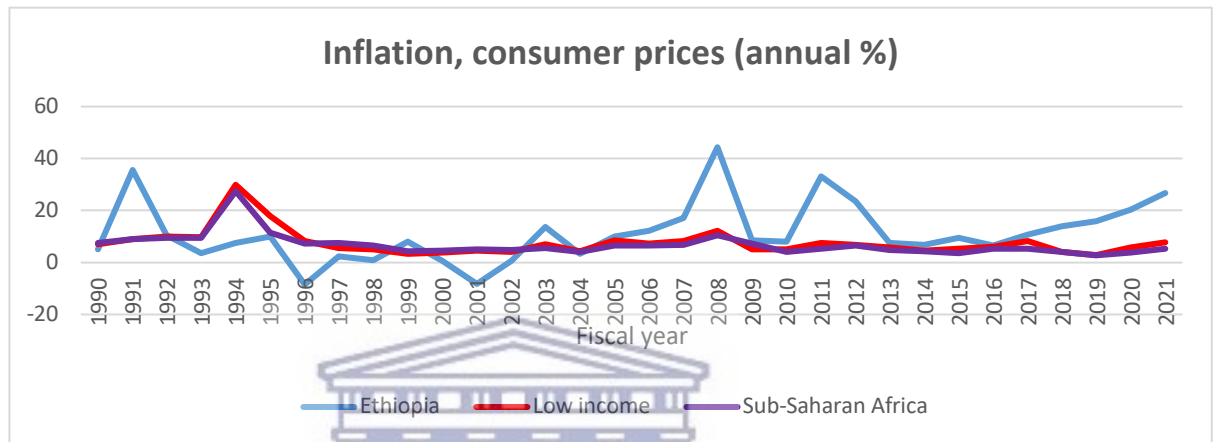
In urban areas, the DDS and the proportion of people in the acceptable food consumption category of the FCS were 14,7 and 11 percentage points higher than in rural areas, indicating a significantly better diet in terms of calorie adequacy and variety (CSA and WFP, 2019). The proportion of people who are vulnerable to food insecurity (measured by the share of spending on food from the total household expenditure) is also much larger in rural areas (32%) compared to urban areas (19,7%) (CSA and WFP, 2019). The level of exposure to shocks in food security in the former at 11,3 % is significantly higher than the latter which is 3,9%.

The most common shocks triggering food insecurity among Ethiopia's vulnerable population are crop failure, reduced income, the unusually high price of food, serious illness, death, and loss/reduced employment of household members (CSA and WFP, 2019; PDC, 2018). Inflation particularly is proving to be an invisible hammer on the urban poor, who are now slipping further into poverty due to its resulting reduction in their real wages and thus purchasing power (Endale, 2021b). As a result, previously middle-class people are now compelled to queue up early in the morning at bakeries and shops run by consumer associations since they can no longer afford to purchase things from private stores due to the rise in the cost of food (ibid.). Similarly, to this, those who were previously in the low-income income group are sliding further into the "poorest of the poor" category, who depend on the government for direct assistance through the SafetyNet program (Endale, 2021b). The next section elaborates on past and present trends in food prices and their components in Ethiopia.

### 3.4 Food price volatility and inflation in Ethiopia

For most of the period before 2002, Ethiopia recorded a moderate inflation rate except for the recurrent droughts every few years (Admassie, 2015). As illustrated in Figure 3:1 below, the annual percentage change in the inflation rate of the country was below the SSA and LICs averages for the greater part of the period preceding 2002 (World Bank, 2021a).

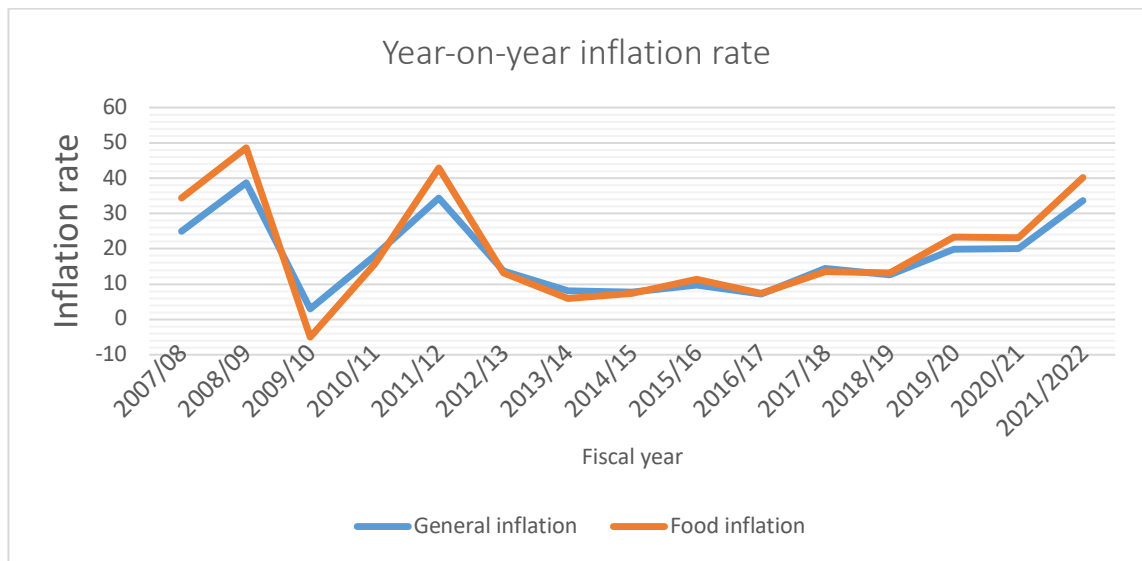
Figure 3:1 Annual inflation rate in Ethiopia



Source: (World Bank, 2021a)

However, since 2005, when double-digit inflation rates began to be consistently recorded, the issue of inflation has become quite problematic in Ethiopia (Admassie, 2015, 2013; Birhane et al., 2014; Klugman, 2007). As illustrated by Figure 3:2, food inflation in Ethiopia moves in the same fashion as the general inflation, but at a slightly higher rate i.e., between the period 2007/08 and 2022/22, the average food Inflation rate in Ethiopia stood at 19,66%, which is slightly above the average general inflation rate of 17,74% (CSA, 2022).

Figure 3:2: Comparison of the general inflation rate with the food inflation rate



Source: Compiled from CSA country and regional level consumer price indices data (2007/08-2020/21).

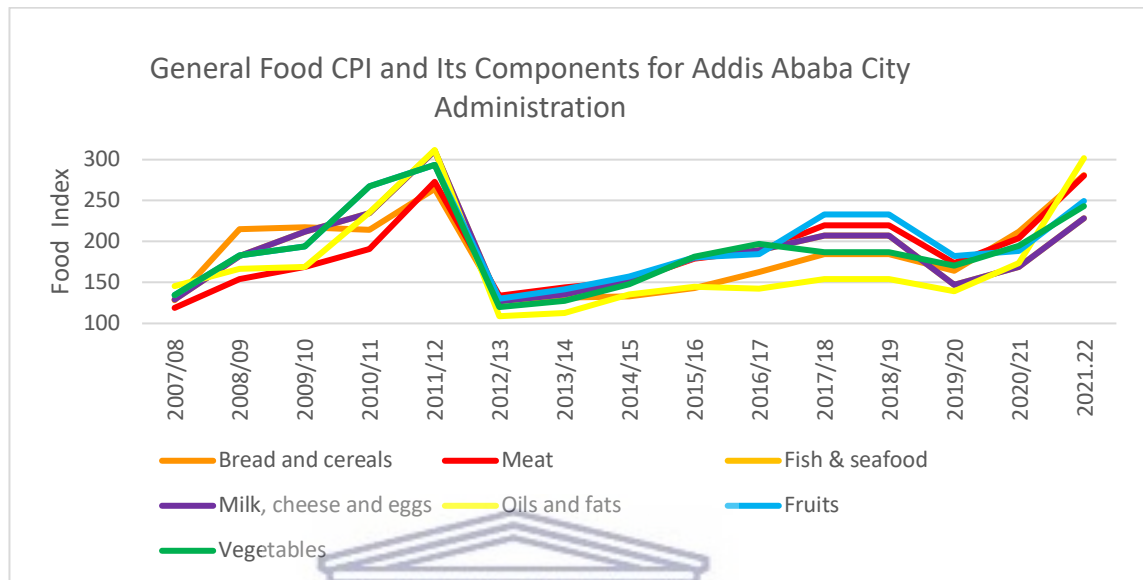
The spike in the general inflation both in 2008 and 2011 is mainly attributed to the significant increase in food prices compared to all other prices constituted in the general consumer index (Admassie, 2013; CSA, 2011, 2009). The increment in food indices by 48,6% and by 42,9% in 2008/09 and 2011/12 respectively is significantly higher than the increment rates of all other non-food components of the CPI. The high rate of increase in the food index can be traced back to an increase in the prices of cereals, pulses, bread, meat, milk and egg, oil and fat, vegetable and fruits, other tubers and stems, and coffee and tea Leaves (CSA, 2011, 2009).

For example, the price index for cereals increased by 78,8 % in 2008 and by 60,2% in 2011. Similarly, the price index for bread increased by 78,1% in 2008 and 35,9% in 2011. Food price increases have continued to drive the general inflation rate upward in recent times, as seen in Figure 3:2. In July 2022, year-on-year the food inflation and general inflation rates stood at 35,5 and 33,5 respectively (CSA, 2022). Among food groups, the highest inflation rate was recorded for oils and fats (102,1%) followed by bread and cereals (48,6%) (CSA, 2022).

As shown in Figure 3:3 below, food prices in Addis Ababa follow a similar pattern to the rest of the country.

They began to rise in 2008/09 and peaked in 2011/12, following the national trend of rising food costs. Since 2013, food prices in Addis Ababa started to gradually rise once again.

Figure 3:3 Components of the Food CPI for Addis Ababa



Compiled from CSA country and regional level consumer price indices data (2007/08-2021/22).

Unlike the price of staple foods, the real price of nutritionally rich food groups such as meat and fruits in urban areas has increased by 19-62% between 2007 and 2016 (Bachewe et al., 2017; Bachewe and Minten, 2019). This is a reflection of the supply gap, following the diet transformations in Ethiopia, particularly in urban areas from starchy staples to animal sources of food over time (Minten et al., 2018; WFP and CSA, 2019; Woolfrey et al., 2021).

### 3.5 Drivers of food inflation in Ethiopia

There are many factors behind food inflation in the country including the disproportionate growth in aggregate demand compared to marketed supply, the absence of well-functioning markets, the expansionary monetary policy, the Balance of Payment (BoP) crisis and resulting shortages in foreign currency, political instability (Admassie, 2015; Gebremeskel, 2020; PDC, 2021).



In the following sections, each of the driving forces behind food inflation is elaborated further.

### 3.5.1 Shortage of marketed agricultural supply compared to demand

Aggregate demand for agricultural outputs has been on an upward trajectory due to population growth and increases in per capita income, thereby purchasing power and consumption (Klugman, 2007). Increased government investment in pro-poor sectors and cash injections in the economy from microcredit services and the PSNP played key roles in the rise in aggregate demand (Admassie, 2015). Meanwhile, the marketed supply has lagged behind demand resulting in food inflation (Admassie, 2015; Geda and Tafere, 2020; Klugman, 2007).

This can be explained by the dominance of subsistence agriculture and supply shocks related to the seasonality<sup>44</sup> of agriculture and cyclical droughts. Small-holder farming, with an average landholding size of 0,95 hectares makes up more than 90% of crop production in Ethiopia (Ayele et al., 2019; WFP and CSA, 2019). With only 5% of farmland currently being irrigated, agriculture in Ethiopia is predominantly rain-fed, hence is subjected to supply shocks related to seasonality and droughts (Ayele et al., 2019; Durevall et al., 2013; WFP and CSA, 2019).

The volume of marketed supply and prices vary with the production season which is unique to the type of livelihood and the specific geographical zone in the country (Admassie, 2015; Bachewe et al., 2017; WFP and CSA, 2019; Minten et al., 2018; Minten and Dorosh, 2019). For example, maize, sorghum, and teff prices are usually highest in August and September, whereas wheat prices are normally highest in June (Minten and Dorosh, 2019).

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<sup>44</sup> The Ethiopian calendar has three main rainy seasons namely *Kiremt/Meher* (Winter), *Belg* (Autumn), and *Bega* (Summer) (CSA and WFP, 2019). While 50-80% of the country's total annual production occurs during the *Kiremt* season, the remaining production occurs during the smaller rainy season of *Belg* and *Bega*. The *Belg* rains are especially important for pastoral areas and long cycle crops such as maize and sorghum, which make up 70% of total cereal production in the country (ibid.).

The seasonality of agricultural production is also one of the main drivers of the seasonality of prices in livestock (Bachewe et al., 2017). Prices of livestock are lower during the *Meher/kirmet* season of July- August and the post-harvest season of December – November when animal feed is relatively easily accessible (ibid.). In addition, crop failures induced by cyclical droughts such as El Niño trigger food inflation (Admassie, 2015; Dorosh et al., 2020). For example, the 1972–1974 and 1984–1985 famines in Ethiopia were caused by weather shocks that resulted in droughts (Dorosh et al., 2020; WFP and CSA, 2019).

Despite significant increases in recent years, only 30% of agricultural produce is marketed, since agriculture in Ethiopia is still primarily subsistence-based except for oilseeds (Ayele et al., 2019; CSA and WFP, 2019; Minten et al., 2018). Nonetheless, with the growth of agricultural surplus, there is a gradual shift in the food system from subsistence farming to a ‘transitional system’ characterised by longer value chains which deepened the importance of markets for both suppliers and consumers (Minten et al., 2018). The average rural households, for instance, are dependent on the market to access the seven most essential commodities in Ethiopia (coffee, maize, beans, barley, wheat, teff, and sorghum), hence are not immune to price surges (Dorosh et al., 2020). This is complemented by recent development in modern food marketing techniques and technology such as storage facilities, mobile phones, a commodity exchange system, access to credit, and modern retail and foodservice outlets (Admassie, 2015; Durevall et al., 2013; Minten et al., 2018).

Nonetheless, agricultural markets remain poorly integrated, with limited efficiency and competition among traders (Admassie, 2015; Klugman, 2007; Rashid and Negassa, 2013). This has slowed the growth in marketed supply and led to a rise in food prices (Admassie, 2015; Klugman, 2007). Further, the development of agricultural marketing techniques has improved farmers' bargaining position, allowing them to charge higher prices and store their produce in anticipation of greater prices in the future (Admassie, 2015; Durevall et al., 2013; Geda and Tafere, 2020). The nearly 100% increase in grain prices between February and September 2008 is attributable to such speculative behaviour of farmers (Durevall et al., 2013).

### 3.5.2 Expansionist monetary policy

The funding of government expenses from the central treasury, which increases the money supply, is another important factor contributing to Ethiopia's inflation (Admassie, 2013, 2015; Geda and Tafere, 2020; PDC, 2021). Between 2010/11 - 2019/20, the Broad money supply (M2) grew by an average of 24,5% annually and the amount of money circulating outside banks reached approximately \$26 Billion from \$12 Billion<sup>45</sup> (PDC, 2021). Further, the nearly constant velocity of the money supply, combined with the growing money multiplier (Broad money to reserve money), which reached 4,4% per year in 2018/19, prompted rapid inflation in the country (Geda and Terefe, 2020). This growth in money supply outpaced the country's general economic development resulting in a rise in the cost of living including food (Admassie, 2013, 2015; Durevall et al., 2013; Rashid, 2010).

### 3.5.3 Balance of Payment (BoP) crisis and Devaluation

Another factor fueling inflation in Ethiopia is the devaluation of the local currency by the GoE's to alleviate foreign currency shortages caused by the country's persistent BoP problems (Admassie, 2015; Geda and Tafere, 2020). Between 2012-2021, the trade deficit increased from \$5,5 billion to \$10,9 billion, even though its share in the GDP has decreased from 16,8% to 10,1% (PDC, 2021). To lessen the country's trade deficit and resulting currency shortages, the GoE has been depreciating the Ethiopian Birr (ETB) against the major currencies, particularly since 2020 (World Bank, 2021d). Between 2019-2022, the ETB lost 2,426 percent % of its value, falling from 2,07 to 52 against the dollar (Endale, 2022). This move by the government aggravates the inflation crisis within the country by making imports expensive in local currency<sup>46</sup> and exposing the country to inflation in the World market (Aynalem, 2021a; Endale, 2021a; Geda and Tafere, 2020).

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<sup>45</sup> This was calculated based on the annual average exchange rate of the ETB against the US Dollar in 2009/10 which was 1Birr= \$ 0,08567, and 2019/20 which was 0,332435 (CalcProfi.com, 2022).

<sup>46</sup> The continuous loop through which inflation and devaluation trigger each other is referred to as "inflation devaluation spiral" (Aynalem, 2021a).

This presents serious challenges in terms of food inflation for a net cereal-importer country like Ethiopia. Despite making huge leaps towards food self-sufficiency, the country still imports some of its major cereals such as maize and wheat (CSA and WFP, 2019; Minten et al., 2018; United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN), 2020; Woolfrey et al., 2021). For instance, between the years 2016/17-2019/20, the country on average, formally<sup>47</sup> imported 1,2 MT tons of wheat per year, which amounts to 30% of the domestic consumption (USDA and GAIN, 2020). Another monetary policy misalignment of the GoE that is contributing to inflation in the country is the rationing of foreign currency in times of shortages. For example, during the 2007/08 world price crisis, the GoE responded by rationing foreign currency, which served as a restriction on food imports by the private sector, exacerbating the domestic food inflation problem to the point that it surpassed inflation rates in the world market (Minot, 2010; Rashid, 2010).

### 3.6 Mitigation techniques of government against inflation

Recognizing the detrimental ramifications of inflation on economic growth and the living conditions of the country's most vulnerable citizens, notably the urban poor, as well as the need to avoid social unrest, the GoE has long sought to preserve price stability by containing inflation within a single digit (Admassie, 2015; Gebremeskel, 2020; PDC, 2021; Worako, 2012). Successive regimes in Ethiopia have placed a strong emphasis on maintaining the stability of prices, particularly of cereals in formulating food policies due to the sub-sector's importance for rural livelihood, food security, as well as national income (Rashid, 2010; Rashid and Negassa, 2011). Towards that end, there have been several attempts to regulate commodity markets to varying degrees to stabilize prices and ensure stable supply since the 1950s (Teshome, 2009).

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<sup>47</sup> This is without accounting for the amount imported informally through the cross-border trade, which accounted for almost 30% of the domestic consumption (USDA and GAIN, 2020).

The scope of governmental intervention in the market varied in accordance with the prevailing political philosophy ranging from its limited role during the feudal period, to its extensive, and discretionary<sup>48</sup> interference during the socialist, and contemporary regimes respectively (Rashid, 2010). Hence, a range of strategies has been employed to regulate the commodity market and protect consumers varying from extreme measures such as executing merchants who were convicted of hoarding grain to other market and non-market instruments (Teshome, 2009). For this purpose, the GoE has established state-run marketing enterprises, and formulated necessary reforms/proclamations to regulate the quantity, quality and price of critical commodities and provide market intelligence for producers and exporters (Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise (EGTE), 2018; Holmberg, 1977; Teshome, 2009; Woldehanna and Tafere, 2015).

These enterprises include the Ethiopian Grain Board (EGB) and the Ethiopian Grain Corporation (EGC) during the Monarchy period, the Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) during the socialist *Derg* period, and the Ethiopian Trading Business Corporation (ETBC) and the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) during the current period (ETBC, 2021; Rashid and Negassa, 2011; Teshome, 2009). The Ethiopian Trading Business Corporation (ETBC) has incorporated the EGTE, the Ethiopian Fruits and Vegetable Marketing S.C (Et-fruit), the Consumer Product Trade Unit (CPTU)<sup>49</sup>, and the Procurement Services Enterprise (ETBC, 2021).

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<sup>48</sup> This refers to the government's unrestricted participation in markets to remedy for market failures whenever the private sector is unable to do so (Dorosh et al., 2020).

<sup>49</sup> The CPTU, which is mostly known by its trade name *Alle Bejimla* was referred to as the Ethiopian Trading Enterprise (ETE) prior to 2015, and its incorporation under the ETBC (ETBC, 2021; FDRE, 2015, 2013). In the remainder of this study, the enterprise is referred as *Alle* in short.

The GoE has also promoted the Consumers' Cooperative Societies<sup>50</sup> and outlet shops, commonly known as *hibret suks/Shemachoch* in urban settings, reviving a practice that was popular during the socialist *Derg* regime (1974–1991) (Woldehanna and Tafere, 2015; Woldu et al., 2013). For a comprehensive list of these parastatals and proclamations that have been put in place to regulate commodity markets and stabilize market prices, Appendix I can be referred to. This section outlines some of the most common strategies employed by successive Ethiopian governments including tightening monetary policy, tax elimination and subsidizing essential commodities, maintaining strategic national reserves, export bans, suspension of local purchase of grains by international humanitarian organizations, controlling distribution quantity through rationing and price-setting, establishing commodity exchange, and safety net programs.

### 3.6.1 Monetary and fiscal policy

Ethiopia has been following a tight monetary policy that is oriented towards stabilizing and containing its inflation rate within single digits by ensuring that the growth in the money supply is proportional to the growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (PDC, 2021). The policy measures taken by the GoE towards this objective include raising the minimum reserve requirement on net deposits, liquidity requirement on liabilities, interest rates on deposits and setting a cap on the amount of money that private banks can lend (Admassie, 2015, 2013). Further, the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) has also stopped disbursing loans to finance public sector borrowings since 2011/12 (FAO and WFP, 2012). The GoE has also been subsidizing basic goods<sup>51</sup> i.e., wheat flour, sugar and palm oil that are rationed for urban residents since 2011 (Tegegne et al., 2018).

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<sup>50</sup>Cooperative societies are defined as “*autonomous associations having legal personal and democratically controlled by persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs ad their aspirations*” (FDRE), 2016a, p.2437). Consumers' cooperative societies in particular are those cooperative societies that are involved in the distribution of basic goods through their retail shops known as *Consumers' cooperative shops* (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). In the remainder of this study consumers' Cooperative Societies are referred to as Consumers' Cooperatives in short.

<sup>51</sup>Basic goods or services are defined as those goods or services that are necessary in the daily lives of consumers, whose shortage in the market may lead to unfair trade practices (FDRE, 2014)

For instance, the government is currently paying a subsidy of \$9,3 per quintal of wheat<sup>52</sup> (ibid.). On specific food items, the GoE has either eliminated or lowered import duties, turnover taxes, and value-added taxes (Admassie, 2015; Worako, 2012). By September 2021, the GoE has eliminated taxes on wheat, rice, edible oil and sugar, removed the value-added tax levied on eggs and pasta, and cut import duties on edible oil, sugar, and baby formula to 5%, while designating wheat and rice as duty-free imports (Addis Fortune, 2021).

### 3.6.2 Maintaining a strategic national reserve/buffer stock

State-run market enterprises such as EGTE and the Ethiopian Emergency Food Security Reserve Administration (EFSRA) maintain strategic reserves of cereals such as wheat and maize to ensure the food security of vulnerable citizens in times of disaster and emergency (CSA and WFP, 2019). FSRA, in particular, is the government agency in charge of managing the strategic food reserve, which is procured from both domestic and foreign sources and made accessible to government relief and non-profit humanitarian organizations in times of crisis (Admassie, 2015; CSA and WFP, 2019). Ethiopia's emergency food reserve stocks have been generally too small in size in comparison with domestic production and consumption to meet the intervention's price-stabilization objectives (Dorosh et al., 2020). That is, between 2009 and 2015, the country's average public cereal stock (145 thousand MT) on average was less than 1% of the annual domestic cereal production.

### 3.6.3 Establishing commodity exchange

The ECX was founded in 2008 to improve the functioning of the commodity market by facilitating a smooth flow of market information and minimising risks against variations in price and quantity through promoting the development of binding contracts between traders (Admassie, 2015; CSA and WFP, 2019; Dorosh et al., 2020).

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<sup>52</sup> This was calculated at the annual average exchange rate of the data collection (2018), which was i.e., 1Birr= \$ 0,037 (CalcProfi.com, 2022). This rate is used in this thesis to convert all sums indicated in ETB during time of data collection (i.e., 2018) into USD.

Nonetheless, since the commodities that are currently being traded through ECX are limited to coffee, sesame and pulses, the organization's role in stabilizing the prices of staples in the country is negligible (Admassie, 2015; CSA and WFP, 2019).

#### 3.6.4 Establishing social safety net programs

The PSNP is a core component of Ethiopia's Food Security Programme (FSP) which came into existence in 2005, to serve as a stable and predictable safety net for chronically food-insecure rural households (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD), 2009; MoA, 2014; World Bank, 2016). Together with the other components of the FSP such as the Household Asset Building Program (HABP), the program is mainly aimed at smoothening consumption, avoiding asset depletion, and strengthening household and community resilience to shocks. This is done through the timely provision of adequate food and/or cash transfers, and credit and extension services, among others.

Since 2016, the GoE, with financial assistance from a consortium of international organizations and development partners, has been implementing the Urban Productive Safety Net project (UPSNP), a comprehensive social protection program designed to enhance inclusive growth and development in 11 selected cities, particularly of households living below the poverty line (FUJCFSA, 2020, 2018; World Bank, 2019, 2017a). In its current phase (4<sup>th</sup>), the PSNP has targeted 10 million people, consisting of 8.3 million chronic food insecure clients in all regions of the country save for Gambella and Benishangul Gumuz (MoA, 2014). The UPSNP has also thus far benefited over 604, 000 people who are vulnerable<sup>53</sup> to food insecurity through directly supporting them or/and facilitating their engagement in community and other development works (FUJCFSA, 2020).

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<sup>53</sup> According to the targeting guideline for UPSNJP (2020), vulnerable groups include low-income groups, street dwellers, beggars, prostitutes, unemployed, people with disabilities, people suffering from mental illness, drug addicted, elderly and children are the main targets.



The PSNP improved beneficiaries' food security by enhancing consumption expenditure and daily calorie intake, and reduced poverty by increasing and diversifying the income and assets of its beneficiaries, thereby building their resilience to shocks (Berhane et al., 2011; Tadesse and Zeleke, 2022; World Bank, 2016). However, the program solely targeted the urban poor and primarily addressed food insecurity brought on by natural disasters like drought rather than fluctuations in food prices (Woldehanna and Tafere, 2015).

It was also pursued by issues with beneficiary targeting in the design and administration of the programs, as better-off households were included while the neediest ones were excluded (Uraguchi, 2010). Similarly, the UPSNP has improved both the average annual consumption expenditure and the average annual income of programme beneficiaries, improving their resilience to shocks (Gebresilassie, 2020; Mengie, 2021). Nonetheless, the program may have led its direct beneficiaries to develop dependency syndrome, as illustrated by their complete reliance on cash transfers from the program (Mengie, 2021).

### 3.6.5 Controlling marketed supply, distribution channels, quantities, and price

The administrative measures taken by the GoE to stabilize prices and supply in the market include export bans, suspension of local procurement by WFP and others, direct control of imports, distribution channels, prices and quantities through rationing (Admassie, 2015; Dorosh et al., 2020; Rashid, 2010; Worako, 2012). Since 2008, the GoE has prohibited cereal exports, except for a small fraction of grain exported during good production years and the amount exported through informal channels for lack of enforcement (Rashid, 2010; USDA and GAIN, 2020; WFP and CSA, 2019). For example, in 2020/2021, 1 million MT of Sorghum was exported formally from Ethiopia (USDA and GAIN, 2020).

Further, following the 2007/08 food price crisis, the GoE prohibited humanitarian organizations such as the WFP from locally sourcing cereals to ensure that there is adequate supply for the country's demands (Admassie, 2015; Rashid, 2010; Worako, 2012).

The GoE also sought to control the distribution channels of essential goods including imports, impose price ceilings/profit margins and set quantities through quota allocation (Admassie, 2015; Dorosh et al., 2020; Rashid, 2010; Woldehanna and Tafere, 2015; Worako, 2012). Hence, since 2013, the GoE has been implementing yet a new PDS of goods to improve the accessibility of basic goods such as sugar, palm oil, wheat grain and flour, to stabilize prices and mitigate the harmful effects of food inflation on the poor (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018; Woldehanna and Tafere, 2015; Woldu et al., 2013).

This involves buying these goods both from local and international sources through EGTE, *Alle Bejmla*, and authorized private companies such as *Alsam*, *Ahfa*, *Belayneh Kinde*, *Guna* to distribute it to the public through the Consumers' Cooperative associations, ET-fruit, and selected mill factories in urban areas (Tegegne et al., 2018). For example, the GoE directly imported 1,02 million MT of wheat through the EGTE in 2015/16 (40% of total wheat imports), of which 55% was rationed through the distribution system (Dorosh et al., 2020).

The EGTE allocates the subsidized wheat to mill factories to be distributed further down the supply channel to selected bakeries that sell bread to end consumers at fixed prices (Tegegne et al., 2018). Up to May 2018, 40 mill factories and 1,464 bakeries, and 557 *hibret suks* in urban areas have been involved in the distribution system of wheat flour, sugar and palm oil (ibid.). The government also made a direct attempt to control prices of 17 commodities including bread rice meat, cooking oil and sugar that is deemed essential in 2011, even though it lasted only for a few months (FAO and WFP, 2012; Worako, 2012). Nonetheless, the profit margins and prices of the basic goods distributed through the urban rationing system remain fixed (Admassie, 2015; Woldehanna and Tafere, 2015). This is further deliberated on in Chapter 8 under the title “Evaluation of the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa”.

In summary, these state interventions outlined in section 3.6 have been useful in easing the impact of rapid inflation on the food security of the country's vulnerable population, albeit for short while (Admassie, 2015; Rashid, 2010; Woldehanna and Tafere, 2015; Worako, 2012). They do, however, have limitations, such as failing to meet market demand as demonstrated by seasonal shortages, and the prevalence of parallel markets, further aggravating inflation (Admassie, 2015; Rashid, 2010; Woldehanna and Tafere, 2015). Further, the GoE has also long acknowledged the lower social status of women, their vulnerability to poverty, harmful traditional practices, gender-based violence, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, their restricted access to education, their lack of control over essential resources, and their excessive workload (MOWA, 2006).

### 3.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter provides background information on the state of food insecurity and economical vulnerability to food insecurity in Ethiopia, past and current trends in food inflation and the driving forces behind it. It also discusses the government's efforts to mitigate the negative effects of food inflation on its vulnerable population. The next chapter explicates and justifies the use of the feminist economics framework, which is the theoretical and interpretive framework that is used in this study to explain its empirical findings. By highlighting the role of social norms in constraining economic behaviour and action, which results in gender asymmetries in bargaining power and capabilities in addition to the efficiency considerations common in mainstream economic theory, this framework helps understand the gendered nature of economic behaviour and economic crisis.

## CHAPTER 4 : Theoretical Framing: Feminist Economist

### 4.1 An introduction to feminist engagement in development policies

There is neither a single concept nor a single agenda at the crux of feminist economics (Kuiper et al., 1995; Woolley, 1993). However, Bacchio (2020, p. 149) has summarized the wide array of topics that the discipline touches upon as follows:

*“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 labour, wage, access to finance, and so forth. “*

Feminist economics, informed by feminist perspectives, sheds light on the androcentric biases of economics starting from its definition and abstractions to the subject matter defining the topics under study, the language and rhetoric used, and the methodology utilized (Benería et al., 2016; Folbre, 1994; Kuiper et al., 1995; Nelson, 1996; Polachek, 1995; Sen, 1995; Woolley, 1993). It does so to reconstruct economics in such a way that it considers the perspectives and realities of both women and men, documents the difference between their well-being, and advocates for policies that advance their equity (Woolley, 1993).

Feminist and Feminist Economic discourse have influenced development thinking since the 1970s as demonstrated by the development strategies of Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD) (Benería et al., 2016; Cornwall et al., 2007; Miller and Razavi, 1995). These strategies are categorical names for “institutionalized sets of practices and discourses within development institutions” to rectify the subordination of women (Cornwall et al., 2007, p. 2). WID which was inspired by liberal feminism has dominated the Neoclassical economic growth theory and policy agenda, while WAD and GAD have constituted several of the critiques which are constituted in the arguments of postmodernist, postcolonial and feminist economics discourses (Benería et al., 2016; Miller and Razavi, 1995).

The WID strategy has challenged the “welfare approach”<sup>54</sup> of development policies towards women for overlooking their potential as productive members of society (Miller and Razavi, 1995). It gave recognition for the productive role of women, particularly in the non-marketed production of households in rural economies of Developing Nations. Hence, it advocated for women’s integration into the economy through the provision of necessary development inputs for women-focused projects (Benería et al., 2016; Miller and Razavi, 1995).

Hence, the “efficiency approach” of WID justified investing in women not only to better their economic standing but also to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall economic development through their contributions (Miller and Razavi, 1995). However, this instrumentalization of the gender equality agenda in development programs as means to achieve other unrelated or conflicting objectives has hindered the advancement of women’s capabilities and well-being as ends in themselves (Benería et al., 2016). The GAD argument, which incorporated both the WID and WAD perspectives expands the efficiency motive of economic development policies to include human and sustainable development motives (Benería et al., 2016; Miller and Razavi, 1995). This represents a shift from the efficiency approach to development to the capabilities approach and the human rights approach to development.

The WID strategy also treated women as a distinct and identical category of people, disregarding the impact of other social relations and differentiations such as class and caste on women’s economic choices and opportunities (Miller and Razavi, 1995). Policies having such a narrow focus on development that perused gender equality as a standalone agenda have not only failed to capture the full extent of women’s subordination but also to challenge them (Benería et al., 2016; Miller and Razavi, 1995).

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<sup>54</sup> The refers to the portrayal of women as "needy" beneficiaries in development projects without any consideration for their potential contributions in its success (Miller and Razavi, 1995, p. 4)

Inspired by postmodern and postcolonial feminist thinking, WAD and GAD theorists were critical of WID's Western conceptualizations of gender and gender equality that assumed the modernist organization of society to be the norm (Benería et al., 2016). This practice of WID portrayed the women in Developed Nations as role models for development while distorting the experiences of those women in Developing Nations and characterizing them as lacking knowledge and agency. This has led to the formulation of development policies based on universalized Western development models that failed to capture the complexities of women in Developing Nations (Benería et al., 2016).

Proponents of the WAD and GAD perspective argued that even though perusing gender equality as the only objective in development may seem less threatening to the existing system, it is impossible to address gender inequality separately from other inequalities it intersects with (Benería et al., 2016). Hence, they advocated for a context-specific, intersectional analysis (constituting gender and other features of identity) of the development process to capture its impact on women. This would require taking into account the concrete realities, experiences and knowledge of women, and being considerate of differences in meanings and distribution of power (ibid.).

The GAD approach provided the “gender roles” and “social relations analysis” frameworks for operationalizing gender in development study and practice (Miller and Razavi, 1995). While the former once again advocate for the “efficiency approach” to development through directing resources to women, the latter argues for affecting social relations/structures and redistributing power. The gender roles analysis is in support of tailored development interventions to address identified needs and constraints of men and women in relation to their assigned roles and access to resources within the household (ibid.). However, this analytical strategy has wrongly assumed the full autonomy of people in a conjugal relationship and neglected the relational aspect of families which constitutes a mix of selfishness and altruism, conflict and cooperation (Miller and Razavi, 1995). As a result, it has failed to capture how change can be brought forth through development policies and programmes.

On the contrary, the social relations framework is cognizant of the wide range of social relations embedded in household, community and market institutions that shape the organization of production, consumption, distribution, and the means through which needs are met (Miller and Razavi, 1995). Hence, proponents of this framework insist that the development process should start with a clear understanding of the terms of cooperation, exchange and the underlying institutions through which such relations are structured.

This requires giving due attention to “fluid social or relational resources such as rights, obligations and claims” in addition to the obvious material resources dominant in neo-classical development policies (ibid., p. 30). Accordingly, development interventions targeting women should recognize the way women perceive their economic interests and give priority to improving their relational resources and bargaining power. For improving the bargaining power of women, the framework suggested politicization of the women empowerment agenda in development policies through promoting participatory development strategies (Miller and Razavi, 1995).

Despite the substantial progress made by development institutions in terms of incorporating the gender inclusion agenda, development has not always been able to improve women’s capabilities and quality of life and achieve equitable development for all (Benería et al., 2016; Cornwall et al., 2007). One of the main challenges of integrating gender in development policies and bringing about social transformation is the depoliticization and sloganization of the gender equality agenda to a simple technical process administered by bureaucrats (ibid.). This has become prevalent with the widespread application of gender mainstreaming strategies by development institutions to systematically integrate the gender inclusion agenda at all relevant levels of policy and practice (Cornwall et al., 2007).

Through gender mainstreaming the gender equality and empowerment objectives which should in principle incorporate “self-realization, self-actualization and mobilization” for change were reduced into a simple process of responding to the perceived resources gaps of women (Cornwall et al., 2007, p. 7).

Feminist economics, with its bases in the GAD perspective, offers a key conceptual framework for development policies aiming to promote sustainable human development.

This chapter utilizes feminist economics theory to illustrate the underlying prejudiced assumptions of mainstream economic theory against women in its description of economic behaviour, overlooking the role of social and cultural norms and the non-marketed domestic economy along with the gender power relations and varying tests and preferences within it. It also expands on the multiple and gendered deprivations of women such as their lack of bargaining power, material deprivation and time poverty, which are often disregarded by programs and policies inspired by mainstream economic theory assumptions. The chapter also presents the study's analytical framework that looks at women's unique vulnerability to food inflation, and how they are affected by government response programs, given their gendered needs and constraints through a feminist economics lens.

## 4.2 Androcentrism in mainstream economics

Feminist economics is critical of mainstream economic theory due to its androcentric<sup>55</sup> biases in its assumption of the behaviour of “economic agents”, and its limited focus on the marketed aspects of the economy which prohibits it from painting a full and accurate picture of the economy (Benería et al., 2016; Jennings, 1994; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). It also disapproves of the way mainstream economic theory discounts the role of social and cultural norms in constructing gender roles, shaping behaviour and preferences, and constraining the decisions and actions of “economic agents” (England, 1989; Folbre, 1994; Harding, 1982; Nelson, 2021; Sen, 1987b).

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<sup>55</sup> According to feminist researchers, androcentrism is the underlying masculine bias in social inquiry that has consistently made women's lives and experiences invisible and has distorted our understanding of social interactions and beliefs (Harding, 1986).



As shown in more detail in the next section, these biases can be attributed to the hierarchal dualisms present in mainstream economic theory and practice, which devalue behavioural traits and sectors associated with femininity while elevating those associated with masculinity.

#### 4.2.1 The hierarchal dualisms in mainstream economics

Among the hierarchal dualisms common in the modern world is the conception of femininity and masculinity along with their perceived features mentioned (Nelson, 2021, 1996). Mainstream economics also characterizes the world as composed of a male-dominated public world of the independent citizen on one side, and a private world of the domestic, dependent, female non-citizen on the opposite side (Grapard, 2001; Nelson, 2021, 1996). While women and all the attributes<sup>56</sup> and values culturally associated with them make up the subordinated half in the domestic sphere, the superordinate half is dominated by the so-called “economic man”, “rational man” and “scientific man” (Mellor, 1997). It is focused on choices made by autonomous, self-interested, rational agents while discounting actions driven by social and emotional subjects who care for, are interested in, and are dependent on others (Folbre, 1994; Kuiper et al., 1995; Levin, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1995).

Rationality is presented as being complete, invulnerable, and self-sufficient while expressing emotions is associated with lacking control over oneself and a weakness (Nelson, 2021). It assumes rationality and emotion to be in two radically separated spheres: emotions, preferences, desires, and values on one side as determinants of one’s ends; rationality, cognitions, and calculations on the other, as instruments of achieving these ends. That way, even though rationality serves the interest of tastes, it is immune to their effects (England, 1989; Grapard, 2001). Further, it denotes reason as synonymous with logic, which is a superior form of exposition, and one of the main traits of masculinity (Nelson, 1996).

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<sup>56</sup> In the context of modern Western and English-speaking cultures, masculinity is metaphorically associated with traits such as individuality, being autonomous, self-interested, rational public, and active, while femininity is associated with being social, other-interested, dependent, emotional, private, and passive (Nelson, 1996). This culture also dictates masculinity, along with its associated attributes, behaviours, values, and activities it to be the superior gender (ibid.).

Mainstream economic theory also values selfishness as more rational than altruism while considering love, care and nurture which are considered to be attributes of women as merely “natural”<sup>57</sup> or “moral responsibilities”, hence intellectually uninteresting (Folbre, 1994; Woolley, 1993).

All the while, a feminist analysis holds that the attribution of gender to biological sex differences, common in the modern world conception of femininity and masculinity, is mainly achieved through cognitive/metaphorical categorizations of traits as opposed to differences in intrinsic characteristics within specific cultures (Nelson, 2021, 1996)<sup>58</sup>. Feminist economists also accuse the subject of depicting women as being less capable of rational and objective thinking since they are seen as mainly being ruled by their emotions and subjective thinking as compared to men (Harding, 1982; Nelson, 1996; Pujol, 1995). They reject this dichotomy because of their view that perception, understanding, and rational judgment of economic agents are intimately linked with their values, wants, and emotions (Levin, 1995; Nelson, 1996).

Hence, feminist economics charge the *homo economicus* conception of mainstream economic theory of implicitly basing its assumption on a socially constructed masculine role, and associated preferences and values, interacting in an impersonal environment, while systematically ignoring or distorting feminine ones (England, 1989; Folbre, 1994; Harding, 1982; Hopkins, 1995; Kuiper et al., 1995; Levin, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987). As per the “separative-soluble” human behaviour dichotomy of mainstream economics, the economic agent is depicted as masculine and “separative” (from body and nature), while women are depicted as “soluble” (closer to bodies and nature) and merely existing to serve others (Nelson, 2021, p.108-109).

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<sup>57</sup> This view has emanated from the assumption of “biological determinism” where, women's provision of care in the household is justified by their physiology and seen as unconsciously executed “act of nature” which deserves no economic value (Waring, 1999, p. 23-24).

<sup>58</sup> This view may have its roots in Nancy Chodrow’s “reproduction of mothering” which explains how the provision of primary care by mothers leads to behavioural differences between girls and boys through the use of psychoanalytic theory (Bueskens, 2021). Through this process, women are socialized to develop an interdependent, connected and embedded identity with others i.e., “selves-in-relation”, while men develop an individualized, separated and detached identity (ibid., p. 5).

This act of systematically asserting a hierarchy among values by putting those associated with masculinity on top and those associated with femininity at the bottom is referred to by Nelson (1996, p. 19) as “conceptual sexism”. In the following consecutive sections, these prejudiced stances of the discipline against women are elaborated in further detail from a feminist economics perspective.

#### 4.2.2 Neglecting the role of social norms on economic behaviour

Mainstream economic theory bases its assumption of economic behaviour and action of agents on the ideals of separation and emotional detachment from their social context (England, 1989). One of its main underlying assumptions is the existence of self-interest-maximizing agents that are capable of making rational choices (England, 1989; Folbre, 1994; Nelson, 2021; Sen, 1977, 1973). These assumptions of conventional economic theory, in the eyes of feminist economists, ignore the social construction of economic behaviour, interdependent utilities and other motives for individual action and decisions (England, 1989; Folbre, 1994; Mellor, 1997; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1973, 1977). As elaborated in this section, social norms can influence economic behaviour through the assignment of gender roles to biological sex differences, and the social construction of behaviour/preferences, choices and actions (Atkinson, 1987; Coltrane, 1996; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Folbre, 1997).

##### 4.2.2.1 *The sexual division of labour*

As indicated in section 2.7.1, the prevailing gender ideologies of society impose gendered roles for “husband” and “wife”<sup>59</sup> per their assumed comparative advantages (Agarwal, 1997; Atkinson, 1987; Chant, 1997; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Ferree, 2014; Folbre, 1997; Pleck, 1997; Tichenor, 1999; West and Zimmerman, 1987; Woolley, 1993). Women living in Developing Nations typically have reproductive roles and productive roles as well as societal commitments (Edholm et al., 1978; Moser, 1993; Tacoli, 2012).

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<sup>59</sup> Or women and men in committed/permanent and semi-permanent relationships

Even though there is no single definition of societal commitments/voluntary community work, it generally refers to the context-specific free provision and maintenance of scarce resources for collective consumption (Benería et al., 2016; Elson, 2002; Moser, 1993). Per the aforementioned social ordering, the reproductive role of women is the most important role that defines their identity as “good wives” and “dutiful daughters” (Chant, 2007; Hochschild and Machung, 2003). Hence, women are expected to be almost exclusively responsible and to devote a significant portion of their time to reproductive labour regardless of their involvement in productive labour (Chant, 2007; Dalla Costa and James, 1972; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Folbre, 1994; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Hopkins, 1995; Hutchinson, 1995; Nelson, 1996). On the other hand, it is socially constituted to be “unfeminine” and “egoistic” for a woman to participate in the “male terrain” of paid work outside the home (Chant, 2007; Grapard, 2001).

#### *4.2.2.2 The social construction of behaviour/preferences and constrained choices/actions*

Feminist economists contend that the mainstream economic theory's depiction of “economic man” as emotionally detached, independent, and self-interest-maximizing, is dismissive of interdependent utilities, including the need for care, affection, and sympathy, as well as other motivations of behaviour, such as commitment and obligation (England, 1989; Folbre, 1994; Mellor, 1997; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1973, 1977). This is because, humans are social beings, who acquire sentiment and a sense of group solidarity for those around them, and their behaviours/preferences are socially constructed and their decisions and actions are constrained by the prevailing social context and norms (England, 1989; Folbre, 1994; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1973, 1977). Because of these emotional connections between economic agents, they are not capable of imagining each other's feelings, but also their well-being is dependent on each other's welfare (England, 1989; Sen, 1977).

In this case, of particular importance to feminists is the concept of sympathy which denotes how the concern for others' well-being is related to one's well-being (Folbre, 1994; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1977). In the eloquent words of Sen (1973, p. 253) "man is a social animal and his choices, in a fundamental sense, always a social act". A person may choose one alternative over the other, even though that choice will yield a relatively lower personal welfare due to her/his commitment or responsibility (Folbre, 1994; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1977).

Commitment and a sense of obligation may arise out of a sense of duty or one's morals/ethical values, which in itself is dependent on the specific social, political, and religious context (Sen, 1977). Moreover, alongside responsibility, people also are dependent on each other financially, physically, and emotionally for issues such as childcare, spousal support, household tasks, maintaining inter-family connections, and decision-making (Nelson, 1996).

As per the principles of social structures of constraint<sup>60</sup>, one's choice is limited by the choices of others with whom she or he belongs, based on commonalities such as nationality, race, gender, age, economic status, and other allegiances (Folbre, 1994; Sen, 1987). These constraints constitute the influences of all these, sometimes conflicting identities on one's interest, well-being, and obligations. These social structures or arrangements are not necessarily of economic agents' making, but they reflect the purposeful choices and structure of the particularly powerful and dominant groups of previous generations (Folbre, 1994).

Therefore, the expression of personal identity or "individuation" is comprised of demonstrating a commitment to others through collective action (Folbre, 1994, p. 28). Hence, the identities of economic agents should be understood as "persons-in-relation", and choice as a compromise between individual self-interest and her/his environment constituting hers/his physical/social relationships (Folbre, 1994, Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1977).

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<sup>60</sup> Alternatively, Sen (1987) refers to the social arrangements that determine the division of labour, share of food and other resources, and decision-making powers as the "Social technology".

Individuals are also seen as purposeful agents, whose self-interest-motivated objectives are constrained by both efficiency considerations and the social construction of individual preferences and cultural norms (Folbre, 1994). The behaviour and actions of economic agents could constitute a mix of both altruism and self-interest in the face of social and structural constraints and are not specific to any gender (Agarwal, 1997; Folbre, 1994; Kabeer, 1997).

Therefore, objective economic calculations are not the only determinants of peoples' decisions and actions. The social context and the role of social norms in circumscribing the decision-making space and in lending meaning to the decisions deserve due consideration. Further, mainstream economic theory also describes the behaviour of "economic man"/ "*homo economicus*" purely in terms of his revealed preferences, which indicates the amount of utility earned from different sets of choices (Sen, 1977). Rational behaviour is expressed in terms of consistent ranking of choices in terms of one's preference and tests, assigning a higher utility to a "preferred" alternative and vice versa (Becchio, 2020; England, 1989; Folbre, 1994; Sen, 1977, 1973; Woolley, 1993). "The maximiser individual" is assumed to possess complete information and knowledge and make choices in the context of scarcity (Becchio, 2020, p. 143).

Feminist economists criticize this notion of mainstream economics models for overlooking that individuals' commitment varies with each specific context, and hence a single, separate, autonomous preference ranking cannot sufficiently capture their interests, welfare, actual choices, and behaviour (Folbre, 1994; Sen, 1977). This is particularly true for members of a family where a choice constitutes both cooperation and conflict; selfishness and altruism, and hence is fluctuating and inconsistent (Agarwal, 1997; Folbre, 1994; Sen, 1987). Sen (1977, p. 336) referred to such "rationality" in preference-ordering, which makes no distinctions for differences in various contexts as "foolishness, and mainstream economic theory's assumption of an agent with "one all-purpose preference ordering" as a "rational fool".

In addition, as per the cognitive/metaphorical assignment of traits to sex groups disused in section 4.2.1, women are socialized and perceived to be altruistic i.e., to put others' interests, especially that of their children before themselves, to have less "bounded" concept of themselves, and to place a higher value on interdependent utilities outside themselves (Bueskens, 2021; Folbre, 1994; Harding, 1982; Hutchinson, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Mellor, 1997; Sen, 1987; Woolley, 1993). On the contrary, from the perspective of this social ordering, the needs of men are recognized and endorsed separately from their families' (Agarwal, 1997; Bueskens, 2021).

However, feminists hold that the assignment of behavioural patterns such as altruism and self-interest between men and women is not generalizable across the board (Agarwal, 1997). For example, women may subscribe to the traditional gender ideologies of "maternal altruism" that are biased against them, and hence be reluctant to exercise their bargaining power in intrahousehold distributive and allocative decisions to fulfil their interests (Coltrane, 1996). For these women, doing housework could mean "doing gender" which refers to the act of reaffirming their sense of identity as per the social construction of their gender (Coltrane, 1996, p. 50).

However, the seemingly altruistic behaviour of economic agents could also reflect an act of self-interest to secure their own well-being in the future (Agarwal, 1997; Folbre, 1994; Kabeer, 1997, 2007). For example, in cultures where women face patriarchally gendered constraints such as the lack of social and economic freedom, their altruistic investments towards their sons and other male relatives could be a way of securing their social standing and livelihood in the long run (Kabeer, 1997, p. 266). In this case, their action reflects a "patriarchal bargain" against the risks imposed by their gendered constraints such as lack of autonomy instead of reflecting their choice (ibid.). For example, mothers in rural Ethiopia who bring more assets to the marriage than the fathers invest more in the welfare of their children, particularly sons, in terms of nutrition and education than themselves as they are believed to be important sources of old age security (Fafchamps et al., 2009; Quisumbing and Maluccio, 2003).

#### 4.2.3 Discounting the reproductive sector and the role of women in the economy

Economic inquiry is mainly concerned with the interactions that occur in the market and subjects such as choice, scarcity, and competition; but not the gender relations, the concrete needs and wants of human beings, and their interaction with the environment in the domestic sphere (Elson, 1995; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Hutchinson, 1995; Klamer, 1995; Kuiper et al., 1995; Mellor, 1997; Nelson, 1996; Grapard, 2001; Woolley, 1993). Other activities that have spiritual, psychological, social or political value such as care and nurture but are not exchanged in the market are of little importance (Grapard, 2001; Nelson, 1996; Waring, 1999; Woolley, 1993). This is demonstrated by its failure to account for household production including subsistence production<sup>61</sup> and unpaid domestic labour in the national accounts (Floro, 2021; Grapard, 2001; Moss, 2021; Nelson, 1996; Waring, 1999; Woolley, 1993).

Even if it was acknowledged in labour force statistics and national accounts since the 1990s, it remains to be under-recorded due to the difficulty of distinguishing it from reproductive domestic work and differentiating between remunerated and non-remunerated work (Benería et al., 2016; Moss, 2021; Moser, 1993; Waring, 1999). Consequently, unpaid work executed by women is considered as non-work and often classified as “unproductive work”, “not-real-work” and “women’s work”, and time spent in reproductive work is classified as “leisure” (Folbre 1994; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987). The housewife is referred to as “just a housewife,” and her work is referred to as “just housework” (Hochschild and Machung, 2003; MacDonald, 1995).

Nonetheless, since the late 1920s, this tendency of mainstream economics started to change with the emergence of home economics, household economics, and the new household economics within the discipline (Becchio, 2020).

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<sup>61</sup> Substance production entails production of goods such as food and clothing for one’s own consumption, which is usually a women’s domain in poor households of agricultural economies in Developing Nations (Benería, 2011; Elson, 2002; Moser, 1993; Moss, 2021).



These schools of economics asserted the importance of household production and domestic labour for social well-being. Among Household economists, Margaret Ried has attempted to calculate the economic value of the unpaid domestic labour of women and concluded that it is undervalued in household production compared to the opportunity cost to women (Becchio, 2020; Moss, 2021). Home Economists and Household Economists during the 1920s-1930s emphasized the centrality of motherhood and the need for women to specialize in a specific set of skills in the domestic economy for the well-being of the family and society as a whole (Becchio, 2020).

This pattern in the economics discipline is informed by the belief in biological determinism, where a women's work in housework and childcare is justified by her physiology (Becker 1985, 1981a; Waring, 1999). Similarly, the altruistic assumption of women by these schools of economics has contributed to the lack of recognition and value for their work in the economy (Kabbeer, 2007; Mellor, 1997). They have also mainly applied rational microeconomic calculations and econometric tools to explain household behaviour and decisions regarding marriage, fertility, divorce, consumption, and labour allocation without making due considerations for the role of social/gender norms (Becchio, 2020).

Feminist economics, on the other hand, focuses on the production that occurs at the household and community levels i.e., the care, nurturance, and emotional work that the so-called “productive” activities are dependent on (Feiner, 1995; Sen, 1987). This is because, human beings are not always independent; their lives begin as infants and end with old age, both requiring care and nurturance, and they may also experience disability or illness during their life course (Hutchinson, 1995; Nelson, 1996). Hence, due considerations are given to the interdependence between the productive/market and reproductive/non-market sectors of the economy and the importance of social provisioning for human life, and women’s role as a bridge in between (Benería et al., 2016; Elson, 1996, 1994; Jennings, 1994; Sen, 1995).

Care work, in particular, is recognized as an indispensable part of sustaining social relations and economic processes, and an essential capability by itself (Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Folbre, 1994, 2011; Hutchinson, 1995; Moss, 2021). According to the UNDP (1999), the provision of care or social reproduction is a fundamental element of human development which is both an input and also an essential capability by itself. Thus, a deficit in the care economy can be determinantal to economic growth, and as harmful to human development as any other fiscal deficit (Elson, 1996; UNDP, 1999).

Even though it is either unaccounted or under-recorded, women play a vital role in the economy in terms of replenishing the workforce, maintaining the social framework, and ensuring the continuation of society (Folbre, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Hutchinson, 1995). And housewives are not simply “dependents” on their working husbands as presented in economic theories, but their husbands and children are also dependent on them for care and nurturance. Feminist economists also argue that the gender division of work that assigns reproductive work exclusively to women is the foundation of their discrimination that paved the way for their marginalization both at home and in the market (Agarwal, 1997; Borrowman and Klasen, 2020; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Moss, 2021).

Despite the reluctance of economics to see it as an economic activity, social reproduction is costly to women, both in terms of expenditures and time devoted to the daily maintenance and care work (Folbre 1994; UNDP, 1999). Women’s burden of unpaid domestic work is exacerbated by income poverty, the absence of care policy and the lack of basic infrastructures such as tap water and electricity as in the case of low-income countries in Africa (Floro, 2021; Oduro and Staveren, 2015). This is further elaborated in section 4.3.3. The level of unpaid work women has to attend to in the domestic sphere is substantially affected by the demographic structure and composition of the family (Floro, 2021). The presence of younger children, older family members, and those needing care due to ill health can significantly increase the amount of unpaid work women have to carry out, while the presence of older daughters and grandparents has the reverse effect (ibid.).

Feminist economics prescribes development policies/programmes to centre their analysis on how the wide range of marketed and non-marketed activities can be geared towards provisioning the basic necessities of life (Benería et al., 2016). It also recommends development policies to work towards the promotion of gender-equitable livelihoods and well-being (ibid.). This would require treating households not just as mere consumers, but also as producers by accounting for unpaid labour and its gendered distribution in the domestic economy (Benería et al., 2016; Elson, 1996, 1995; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Floro, 2021; Himmelweit, 2002; Moss, 2021). This would necessitate development policies and programmes to set human development targets as well as monetary targets (Benería et al., 2016; Miller and Razavi, 1995).

The discipline propagates for the adoption of either the capabilities or human rights frameworks, or a combination of the two to ensure that human well-being is used as a yardstick against which the success of development policies are measured (Benería et al., 2016; Berik and Kongar, 2021). The former approach measures well-being in terms of individuals ability (in terms of beings and doings) to achieve a set of “functionings” such as freedom from hunger, illiteracy, or morbidity (Sen, 1999a, 1992a, 1987; Sen and Keych, 1983).

This is also in line with the social provisioning approach (SPA) which requires analysts and policymakers to explicitly take an ethical stance in recognizing the gendered nature of economic processes and outcomes, and their intersections with other social identities, and account for differences in power and agency, and the vitality of the processes that generate economic outcomes (Berik and Kongar, 2021). On the other hand, the human rights approach makes it obligatory for governments to adhere to essential minimum levels of economic and social rights in formulating development policies (Benería et al., 2016). The main objective in both frameworks is ensuring the provisioning of human needs as opposed to the maximization of utility, income, or output as in the case of policymaking in mainstream economics (ibid.).

#### 4.2.4 Application of a unitary approach to the family

The unitary view of the family, which is prevalent in mainstream economics, is accused by feminist economists of hiding the existence of autonomous members with different tastes, preferences, asymmetries in power, income, and division of labour, and the potential for conflicts and negotiations among them (Grapard, 2001; Hopkins, 1995; Klamer, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Ott, 1995; Sen, 1995; Wolf, 2011; Woolley, 1993). This is because, in the unitary/ "common preferences"/ "altruism" model, families are simply treated as if they are single individuals maximizing a single-family utility function/"group preference function" against a common budget constraint, and with "harmonious optimal divisions" taking place among them (Becker, 1981a; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Haddad et al., 1997; Lundberg and Pollak, 1993; Nelson, 1996; Ott, 1995; Sen, 1987). Adequate attention was not provided to the workings of families, including how allocative and distribution decisions are made (Chiappori, 1997; Klamer, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Lundberg and Pollak, 1993; Woolley, 1993).

In the unitary approach to the intrahousehold allocation of the family, a common household welfare function is aggregated from the individual preferences of members in several ways. Building consensus among members, taking the weighted sum of the net preference of all members, and maximizing members' efficiency in market-like transactions that take place in the private sphere are some of these methods (Becker, 1976; Haddad et al., 1997; Sen, 1987). In this model of the household, the preferences of all members are assumed to be incorporated altruistically into the utility function of the head of the household (Agarwal, 1997; Becker, 1981a, 1981b; Folbre, 1994; Klamer, 1995; Sen, 1987; Woolley, 1993).

And since the utility function of the head of the household also represents the family utility function, all beneficiary members are assumed to willingly pool their resources towards the income and utility function of the altruistic head (Agarwal, 1997; Becker, 1981a, 1981b; Haddad et al., 1997). Hence, optimal allocation among members is ensured through the altruism of the head of the household and the voluntary contributions of all beneficiaries (Becker, 1981a, 1981b; Haddad et al., 1997).

Feminists and feminist economists, however, are opposed to this abstraction of the family, for treating families as individuals, with tastes and preferences typical of the ‘head’ of the household, which is often male, conceals the existence of women and children that have tastes and preferences that could be different from the “head” (Hopkins, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Ott, 1995; Sen, 1995; Woolley, 1993). The manner in which the tastes and preferences of other members of the household including the wife are absorbed into a single household utility function which is not necessarily representative of their utilities is referred to as “engulfment”/ “coverture”/ “subsuming”/ “dissolving” process (Nelson, 1996, p. 98). Therefore, wives become investment goods, and children are treated as consumption goods for the altruistic head as demonstrated in theories that have adopted the mainstream neoclassical model of the household such as consumer theory (Hopkins, 1995).

This model’s treatment of the household as a single unit and rendering women and children invisible and without autonomy goes against the discipline’s basic assumption of agents as autonomous individuals (Nelson, 1996; Woolley, 1993). Furthermore, the way families are portrayed in these models ignores the unequal power, income, and labour distribution among family members as well as any potential disputes and negotiations (Klamer, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Ott, 1995; Grapard, 2001; Wolf, 2011; Woolley, 1993). This includes the exceptional power bestowed upon the “altruistic head” of the household which allows him to transfer his purchasing power to others, a privilege which is not extended to the other members of the family (Nelson, 1996).

This makes the altruistic behaviour of other members of the family irrelevant as they do not have similar power. In doing so, these models may have contributed to the legitimization and perpetuation of these inequalities (Benería, 2009). Further, these models also treat the initial distribution of skills, resources, prevailing social arrangements, and preferences as exogenous, thereby failing to explain gender relations that are biased against women (ibid.).

In contrast, feminist economists are of the view that the relationship between family members can be characterized as a continuum of separation and connection due to their commitment/responsibility and dependence on each other (Folbre, 1994; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1977). There is an underlying power relation among family members along with their responsibility and/or dependence on each other i.e., responsibility gives one power over decisions, and those who are dependent on others have to succumb to that power (Nelson, 1996). Hence, their views are more aligned with the bargaining models among the collective models of intrahousehold allocation of the family because they convey the identity of each member of a household as “persons-in-relation”, and family behaviour as a process (Folbre, 1994; Nelson, 1996).

Collective models of the family allow for modelling intrahousehold allocation of the family, as they acknowledge the coexistence of multiple decisions making units, and preference functions within a household (Agarwal, 1997; Chiappori, 1997; Haddad et al., 1997; Lundberg and Pollak, 1993; McElroy, 1990). They appreciate differences in access and control over resources and constraints among family members (Agarwal, 1997; Lundberg and Pollak, 1993; McElroy, 1990). They also acknowledge the coexistence of both autonomy and interdependence, conflicts, and cooperation in household decision-making (Carter and Katz, 1997; Chiappori, 1997; Haddad et al., 1997; Sen, 1987).

These models of the family are composed of both cooperative solution and non-cooperative (separate sphere) models (Haddad et al., 1997). The former group is composed of models relying on the Pareto efficiency of household decisions, and models relying on the bargaining process of members (Chiappori, 1997; Haddad et al., 1997; Manser and Brown, 1980; McElroy, 1990; McElroy and Horney, 1981). On the other hand, the latter group is composed of models relying on voluntary contributions equilibrium, and a "conjugal contract" that dictates the terms of exchange for goods and services between couples (Carter and Katz, 1997; Haddad et al., 1997; Lundberg and Pollak, 1993).

#### □ **The bargaining models' intrahousehold allocation**

The bargaining models in particular, among the collective models of the family, provide an analytical framework for examining how the different utility functions of individuals are reconciled to solve allocative and distributional problems within the household (Manser and Brown, 1980; McElroy and Horney, 1981). Bargaining models of the family brought to the forefront “the status quo position”/ “the breakdown position”/ “treat point, which refers to a guaranteed fallback position (in terms of utility) for the negotiating parties if no agreement is reached between them (Agarwal, 1997; Manser and Brown, 1980; McElroy, 1990; McElroy and Horney, 1981; Nelson, 1996; Ott, 1995; Sen, 1987).

A cooperative solution is negotiated between the involved parties by considering their respective gains or losses from cooperation compared to the breakdown position (Agarwal, 1997). This means that those who are more likely to be relatively better off in case of a failure to secure an agreement have a relatively higher bargaining power to secure a favourable outcome, and vice versa (Agarwal, 1997; Manser and Brown, 1980; McElroy, 1990; McElroy and Horney, 1981; Nelson, 1996; Ott, 1995; Sen, 1987). The threat point of individual negotiators determines their entitlement over the share of the benefits from the cooperative outcome through their respective bargaining powers (Sen, 1987).

However, bargaining models of the family rarely specify factors other than income as determinants of the breakdown position thereby, the bargaining power of individual members (Agarwal, 1997). Feminist economists, on the other hand, have identified several non-quantifiable factors that determine the bargaining power of individual members of a family both within and outside the household as discussed further in the proceeding section. This includes social norms, perceptions about contributions and needs, institutions, and communal/external support systems/ Extra-household Environmental Parameters (EEPs) (Agarwal, 1997; Gupta and Stratton, 2008; McElroy, 1990; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987).

The following section further elaborates on how decisions are made at the household level, by investigating these determinants of bargaining power among members of the family.

#### *4.2.4.1 The role of social/cultural norms*

As briefly mentioned in section 2.7.1, social norms establish the foundation for intrahousehold negotiations about the division and allocation of resources, such as money and labour, including who is permitted to negotiate on what topics and the manner with which bargaining is conducted (Agarwal, 1997; Elster, 1989; Bourdieu, 1977; Sen, 1987). They define what is “natural” or “Doxa<sup>62</sup>”, hence incontestable, and what can be negotiated, and the extent/limit of that negotiation (Agarwal, 1997; Bourdieu, 1977; Sen, 1987). For example, social norms may dictate the sexual division of labour within the home as “natural”, hence not open for discussion and bargaining. Social norms also set the criteria and justifications for bargaining including what is considered to be “fair” (Agarwal, 1997; Elster, 1989). For instance, they set the principles upon which food and other resources may be shared among family members, such as members’ needs and interests, and contribution to the family income (Agarwal, 1997).

Similarly, as discussed in section 4.2.2.1, the division of labour between couples is done based on the principles of comparative advantage as per the prevailing social norms and gender ideologies. In doing so, they may favour some groups over others and sustain inequalities such as those existing between men and women. Bargaining outcomes in marriage could simply result from a couple’s internalized understanding of differences in their bargaining power, without explicitly doing so (Agarwal, 1997; Folbre, 1997). Further, social/cultural norms and gender ideologies spanning across the home and the community into formal legal and market institutions becoming a common theme across all the privations of women

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<sup>62</sup> This refers to part of social order/tradition that reflects the dominant perceptions of a particular community, and hence accepted as natural and self-evident (Bourdieu, 1977; Agarwal, 1997).



(Agarwal, 1997; Bakker, 1994; Deere and Doss, 2006; Elson, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Goetz, 2007; Nyamu-Musembi, 2007; Polachek, 1995).

Hence, feminist economists view economic agents as “gendered” beings, and market and legal institutions, as bearers, transmitters, and reinforcers of gender biases against women even though they may not be intrinsically gendered themselves<sup>63</sup> (Benería et al., 2016, p. 73). Therefore, they suggest that policymakers give due consideration to the ways through which gender is embedded in institutions and structures as a “hierarchical value system”<sup>64</sup>, and assess how proposed policies affect existing power relations in both paid and unpaid economies (Benería et al., 2016; Himmelweit, 2002).

#### *4.2.4.2 Perceived interests/needs*

The information base of the earlier version of bargaining models was exclusively focused on individual interests which are taken to be cardinally representable and clearly stated (Sen, 1987). According to the “perceived interest response” concept of Sen (1987, p. 24), members of households who are perceived to put a relatively lower interest in their well-being compared to the well-being of other members are more likely to get an unfavourable deal in the collusive solution of the family. In so doing, these models failed to account for differences in the perception of relative needs or the perception of reality by individual members of the family due to influences from other coexisting identities based on age, sex, economic class, and marital status, and so on (Sen, 1999a; Sen and Keynch, 1983).

Moreover, these models have also overlooked the social construction of gender roles, and perceptions of “naturalness”, which is a significant factor in determining perceptions of interest and legitimacy as discussed in sections 4.3.1 and 4.2.4.1. As indicated in section 4.2.2.2, the needs and interests of individual members of a

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<sup>63</sup> Feminists and feminist economists view money in all its forms to be a “bearer of gender”, reflecting gender biases against women in the market (Kabeer, 2016; Elson, 1993; Nelson, 1996; Jennings, 1994; Reskin and Roos 1990).

<sup>64</sup> In line with its SPA, the discipline also recommends to be mindful of other forms of social differentiation such as class, race, and ethnicity (Benería et al., 2016).

household are further complicated by their love, dependence, and responsibility/commitment towards each other.

Further, the perception of needs and reality is not always what it seems to be, and hence is an unreliable indicator of bargaining power needs. For example, as discussed in section 4.2.2.2 the behaviour of women with weak resources and limited opportunities outside of the household towards their family, and male family members, in particular, could be motivated by their long-term self-interest, and not necessarily altruism (Fafchamps et al., 2009; Kabeer, 1997; Quisumbing and Maluccio, 2003). In addition, since, bargaining models have not provided any means by which the well-being of the respective negotiators can be objectively<sup>65</sup> measured, they are not effective in measuring well-being (Sen, 1987; Sen and Kynch, 1983). This approach has helped to sustain traditional inequalities such as those that exist across gender lines by taking advantage of the fact that deprived groups are unable to articulate their interests or dispossessions (Sen and Kynch, 1983).

#### *4.2.4.3 Perceived contributions and legitimacy*

Bargaining models of the family do not leave any room for ambiguity in the perception of the legitimacy of the negotiators, concerning whether or not they are deserving of the cooperative outcomes (Sen, 1987). However, feminist economists have found that bargaining outcomes are tilted in favour of those members who are perceived to have a “greater” contribution to the family (Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987). Hence, a higher “contribution” in the eyes of other family members is translated to a higher “legitimacy” to get a better deal out of family negotiations. This idea is also related to the concept of “economies of gratitude”, which refers to the level of obligation individuals feel towards their family members, and the level of appreciation and entitlement they receive for their contributions (Hochschild and Machung, 2003, p. 19).

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<sup>65</sup> Well-being can be objectively measured in terms of a person's “functionings” (vectors of beings and doings) such as nutritional, educational and health achievements; and the “capability” to achieve them (Sen, 1999a, 1992; Sen and Kynch, 1983).

The “economies of gratitude”, informed by the prevailing ideologies of the time, is one of the factors that determine the bargaining power of individual members in the family (Coltrane, 1996; Hochschild and Machung, 2003).

It is important to note that the determinants of bargaining power complement and substitute one another, sustaining existing deprivations (Agarwal, 1997). The factors that lower the breakdown position of individuals such as loss of job or assets can at the same time lower their perceived contribution to the family, and thereby their legitimacy to be entitled to the cooperative outcomes. In addition to its immediate consequences, cooperative outcomes of one period will influence bargaining positions and cooperative outcomes of future periods/generations (Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987).

For instance, favourable cooperative outcomes in one period in terms of accumulated wealth will put the negotiating party in a relatively better bargaining position in the next period by improving both her/his fall-back position and perceived legitimacy. Sen (1987, p. 27) refers to this process through which asymmetries in relative bargaining advantage/disadvantage are sustained across various bargaining rounds/generations as “feedback transmission”. This explains how asymmetries in ownership of property, income, and education between men and women are reproduced in the next generation through cooperative conflict outcomes (Agarwal, 1997; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987). Further, those who have access to and control of resources have the bargaining power to shape gender ideologies in their favour through various channels such as media and religious establishments (Agarwal, 1995). Hence, women who are in historically disadvantaged positions are trapped in a cycle of no or limited bargaining power and material deprivation as discussed in the following sections.

These patriarchal social norms and informal institutions that deprive women of family property and assets at the household level are further reinforced by the extra-household bargaining power such as the state and the market (Bakker, 1994; Deere and Doss, 2006; Elson, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Folbre, 1997, 1994; Lindsey, 2016; Oduro and Staveren, 2015; Polachek, 1995).

Lack of equitable service provision by extra-household institutions can exacerbate unequal gendered relations at the household level since access to extra-household social and institutional support is one of the determinants for intrahousehold bargaining between spouses (Agarwal, 1997).

For instance, women's intrahousehold bargaining for certain properties such as land is preconditioned by the limits of their legal claims which is the result of their extra-household bargaining with the state (ibid.). The gendered extra-household factors that undermine women's intrahousehold bargaining power are referred to as "gender-specific environmental parameters" (GEPs) (Folbre, 1997, p. 265). The link between intrahousehold bargaining and the bargaining that happens in the outside world is discussed in further detail in section 4.3.2 by illustrating the role of the market and legal institutions over women's access and entitlement to family income and wealth.

### 4.3 The multiple deprivations of women

At first glance, mainstream economics, with its utter silence on gender relations, might appear gender neutral. However, feminist economists view the discipline's "conceptual silence" towards women's history and contribution to the economy, and the gender asymmetric power relations, as gender-blindness (Bakker, 1994; Elson, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Mellor, 1997; Williams, 1994). Among the main manifestations of gender inequality is the lack of bargaining power, access and command over family income and assets by women compared to men (Agarwal, 1997; Bradshaw, 2002; Chant, 2007; Deere and Doss, 2006; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2011; Sen, 1999a, 1987).

Women also have to endure time poverty signifying their lack of time to sleep, rest, and invest in their human capital and other capabilities (Chant, 2007; Gammage, 2010). Hence, feminist economics recommends that development programs have a holistic conceptualization of women's privations including their lack of access and control of income and property at the household level (Bradshaw, 2002; Chant, 2007; Deere and Doss, 2006; Hopkins, 1995; May 2017). Each of the aforementioned privations of women is discussed further in the following section.

### 4.3.1 Lack of bargaining power

Women's bargaining ability is constrained by society's expectations of appropriate female behaviour that treat their needs and interests as less important than men's, and systematically understate their contributions and legitimacy (Agarwal, 1997; Sen, 1999a, 1987). In many traditional families, "economies of gratitude" is skewed against women, which is detrimental to the bargaining power they require to influence the division of labour in the family in their favour (Coltrane, 1996; Hochschild and Machung, 2003).

This is because, the prevailing gender ideologies only value the financial contributions of members to the economic fortunes of the family while disregarding the total volume of work done or the amount of time spent to indirectly support such earnings (Sen, 1987). This has emanated from the social arrangements that regard time spent in activities that support sustenance, survival, or reproduction as "unproductive" labour (Hochschild and Machung, 2003; MacDonald, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987). This under-valuation of women's labour is also rooted in the assumption that women have a "natural" interest and a "moral responsibility" to voluntarily provide these services for their families, out of their love and care (Folbre, 1994; Mellor, 1997; Woolley, 1993).

All the while, as discussed in section 4.2.2.1, the division of labour, resulting from the same social arrangements has confined women to the so-called "unreproductive" roles. Hence, women's contributions to the family are systematically undervalued, and their perceived legitimacy in the distributional and allocative decisions of the family is downplayed. Evidence on the ground also indicates that women's ownership of property and income earned in the market by itself does not necessarily improve their bargaining power (Aluko, 2015; Kabeer, 1997, 2007; Oduro and Staveren, 2015; Vyas et al., 2015; Zelizer, 1989). Women may not have management rights over not only family income but also their own wages in households where adult males or senior and non-earning women are present (Kabeer, 1997; Zelizer, 1989).

Further, having management rights of family income or own earnings does not necessarily give women control over its disposal (Kabeer, 1997; Pahl, 1983; Zelizer, 1989). In many cultures, social/cultural norms differentiate the earnings of women as a collective resource of the household, while that of men as an individualized resource (Zelizer, 1989). Therefore, women do not necessarily have control over the priorities that guide the spending patterns of family income. This can be understood as a “patriarchal bargain”, by which women surrender their autonomy over their wages and property to be able to maintain protection provided by their family and wider society in coping with gendered risks and constraints (Kabeer, 1997, p. 266). In such a way, the traditional role of men as breadwinners in the family is maintained even if women are also earning income in the market (ibid.).

Furthermore, there is a normative meaning attached to the income earned by women, that makes it inferior to the income earned by men i.e., “not all dollars are equal” (Modell, 1987 cited in Zelizer, 1989, p. 343). The income earned by women is sometimes referred to as “pin money” to set it apart from “real money” or wage/salary that is earned by men (Zelizer, 1989, p. 344). Therefore, a financial contribution is not the only determinant of gratitude and legitimacy of members of a household, but also the underlying gender ideologies that are biased against women. Hence, improvement in the breakdown position and perceived contributions of women alone does not guarantee better bargaining power and better entitlement rights over family income and property.

#### 4.3.2 Material deprivations of women

Income, assets, wealth, and productive assets determine people’s livelihood choices, provide security in times of emergency and opportunities in times of growth; and most importantly, they define economic and political power (Agarwal, 1995; Bebbington, 1999; Deere and Doss, 2006). Hence, gender inequalities in the distribution of and access to resources and wealth among family members can be indicative of the existing inequalities in economic and political power (Deere and Doss, 2006).

Mainstream economic theories operating under the assumption of family members as being altruistic towards each other, suppose the existence of “harmonious optimal divisions” or equitable distributions of income and other resources in the family (Becker, 1981b; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Haddad et al., 1997; Lundberg and Pollak, 1993; Nelson, 1996; Ott, 1995; Sen, 1987; Woolley 1993). Thus, policies that are founded on mainstream economic theory principles tend to equate the well-being of individuals with the average (adult-equivalent) well-being of the household to which they belong (Haddad et al., 1997; Haddad and Kanbur, 1990). Hence, intrahousehold inequalities including those between the two sexes are neglected.

However, feminist economists argue that the welfare level of the household is not always a good predictor of the welfare level of individual members (Bradshaw, 2002; Chant, 2007; Deere and Doss, 2006; Lindsey, 2016). There exist power asymmetries among household members that affect their access to family income: while some can withhold part of their income for personal expenditure, others cannot (Bradshaw, 2002; Chant, 1997; Hopkins, 1995). Male members of the family, having superior bargaining power, typically belong to the former group, while female members belong to the latter (Chant, 1997).

Therefore, women may not be able to access family income even when it is available at a household level (Bradshaw, 2002; Chant, 2007). The situation where women and children remain poor in not-so-poor households due to their limited or lack of access to household income is referred to as “secondary poverty” (Bradshaw, 2002, p. 7). This is mainly because gender ideologies that inform the social and institutional legitimacy of women’s claims and access to property are typically biased against them (Agarwal, 1995, 1997; Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Oduro and Staveren, 2015; Sen, 1995; 1987). For example, in many cultures, women are not considered to be legitimate heirs of ancestral land and hence their only access to such property is conditional on their relationship with male members of the family as wives or kin (Agarwal, 1997; Gray and Kevane, 1999; Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997; Nyamu-Musembi, 2007).

Customary practices that perceive daughters as transient 'passers-by' and wives as 'comers-in', and not belonging to the patrilineal lineage of the family resources have led to their dispossession (Nyamu-Musembi, 2007). Further, as mentioned in section 4.2.4.1, discriminatory social/cultural norms and gender ideologies against women not only constrain their bargaining power in the private sphere but also in the legal and market spheres, contributing to their material deprivation as discussed in the following sections.

#### *4.3.2.1 The role of legal institutions and instruments*

Established social norms are known to profoundly penetrate state institutions and actors in the form of informal norms and prejudices against women (Goetz, 2007; Nyamu-Musembi, 2007). This implies that even though the liberal notion of citizenship<sup>66</sup> promises equal individual rights for everyone, in reality, women are less likely to claim those rights compared to men due to the underlying patriarchal normative structures within formal laws (Goetz, 2007). As a result, women are better positioned to access their rights and entitlements to resources through their personal relationships and connections as opposed to the use of formal legal means (Goetz, 2007).

This is why feminists insist that women's citizenship should be understood as situated in the social (racial, religious), economic and political context as formal legal citizenship alone does not ensure gender justice (Nyamu-Musembi, 2007). Legal and policy instruments through which women can accumulate wealth are shaped by the prevailing social norms and gender ideologies that are biased against women (Agarwal, 1997, 1995; Bakker, 1994; Cagatay, 1998; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Kabeer, 2016; Oduro and Staveren, 2015; Polachek, 1995).

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<sup>66</sup> Citizenship is a term that describes being a member of a community (formal and informal) through adherence to its terms and conditions to be eligible for certain rights and entitlements (Goetz, 2007)



These instruments include the institutions that pass and implement laws and policies related to labour market operations, accumulation of property, access to credit facilities, input and market facilities (Agarwal, 1997, 1995; Folbre, 1994; Deere and Doss, 2006; Moghadam, 2005; Nyamu-Musembi, 2007; Oduro and Staveren, 2015).

Furthermore, as data from various African nations show, gendered-informal institutions and social norms can tend to supersede formal property rights (Aluko, 2015; Oduro and Staveren, 2015). For instance, Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2002) discovered that location-specific norms are the strongest single predictors of the distribution of assets between spouses upon divorce in rural Ethiopia.

As a result, women are prohibited from deriving bargaining power from their legally owned properties by patriarchal informal institutions. Hence women's perceived ownership of property is not automatically translated to an actual decision-making power over their property. This is especially true if ownership of property is acquired through the market and is financed by the women themselves for lack of approval of women's agency by the prevailing social norms (Aluko, 2015; Oduro and Staveren, 2015). Even in the existence of gender-equal laws such as those prohibiting under-legal age marriage, female genital mutilation, and domestic violence, women's agency and bargaining power are still constrained by a failure of enforcement as in the case of many African countries including Ethiopia (NPC-CSA of Ethiopia and UN Women, 2017; Oduro and Staveren, 2015; Tsige, 2019; UN Women, 2020).

Also, having adequate information regarding property laws and procedures including registries, dispute resolution tribunals, and key personnel, and physical and economic access to legal machinery is vital in determining ownership and control of property (Agarwal, 1997; Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997). While this is the case, women are confined to the private domain by the traditional sex-role assignment, where their access to relevant knowledge/information and networks, physical mobility, and financial capability is limited (Nyamu-Musembi, 2007; Grapard, 2001).

#### *4.3.2.2 The role of market forces: Occupational and industrial segregation of women*

The contemporary human capital theory of the New Home Economists regards the time and effort allocation decisions of individual members of a family, as being conducted with the objective of maximizing returns, based on the principle of specialization (Becchio, 2020; Becker, 1985, 1981a). However, feminist economics is cognizant of the societal discrimination against women that restricts their human capital investment and labour supply undermining their competitiveness and earning capacity in the labour market (Borrowman and Klasen, 2020; Dalla Costa and James, 1972; Grapard, 2001; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Polachek, 1995; Pujol, 1995). Labour power, being one of the most important assets a person has, the failure to get employed or earn a living wage by women workers risks their well-being (Chambers, 1995; Sen, 1987).

Mainstream economics mirrors the social construction of gender roles by implicitly assuming full-time domesticity of women, as married and with children, or to be married and to have children, and economically dependent on either their spouses or male relatives (Pujol, 1995). Per this assumption, women in the job market were portrayed as “unfeminine” and to be acting “unnaturally” (Pujol, 1995). Thus, women’s presence and contribution to the productive labour force were not only invisible and unappreciated but were also problematized as distracting from reproductive work (Folbre, 1994; Pujol, 1995). Accordingly, the only acceptable motive for women to get employment outside the home was exceptional financial circumstances (Becchio, 2020; Kabeer, 1997).

Moreover, because mainstream economics saw women as unproductive in market work, their participation in the labour market was considered inefficient (Becker, 1985, 1981a; Pujol, 1995). This view is rooted in the contemporary human capital theory of the New Home Economists which asserts that wages in a perfectly competitive labour market reflect one’s level of productivity resulting from her/his investment in human capital and selection of occupations accordingly (Becker, 1985, 1981a; Hutchinson, 1995; Polachek, 1995).

The school maintained that it is efficient for women to specialize in housework and provision of care, as they have a comparative advantage because of their biological commitments<sup>67</sup> and long-time human capital investment in the field (Becchio, 2020; Becker, 1985, 1981a). The New Home Economists consider the labour supply of women to be determined by their marital status, duration of the marriage, the number of children, and the spacing between children, the lowest one being those of married women with young children (Polachek, 1995).

This is because they believed that the responsibility that comes with reproductive labour such as caring for children and the sick consumes a substantial share of women's time and energy, diminishing their competitiveness in the labour market (Becker, 1985, 1981a, 1976; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Hopkins, 1995; Levin et al., 1999; Moghadam, 2005; Pressman, 2003). Women who are too burdened with their reproductive responsibilities deliberately choose timesaving/flexible and energy-saving jobs at the expense of other opportunities that provide higher wages and job security (Becker, 1985, 1981a; Hopkins, 1995; Pressman, 2003; Mitra and Pool, 2000). This relative income loss of mothers compared to those without children is referred to as the "motherhood pay penalty" (Samman et al., 2016: 25).

As discussed in Chapter 3 of 3.8.2, feminists and feminist economists believe that there are also non-economic factors behind the occupational and industrial segregation of jobs across gender lines. As elucidated by the social structure theory, the assignment of housework and childcare-related tasks between men and women is dependent not only on economic factors, but also on institutional, structural, and ideological factors both at home and in the market (Coltrane, 1996). These include the unequal institution of marriage and gender ideologies that assign reproductive work exclusively to women. According to this theory, men and women only falter from their traditionally assigned roles when the situation demands it, for example in the case of an economic crisis (Coltrane, 1996).

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<sup>67</sup> According to this view, women have an intrinsic advantage, and a relatively heavier investment on their children compared to men, since they carry them as foetuses, deliver and breastfeed them (Becker, 1981a). As a result, they are more willing to invest their time and energy in their care.

Palmer (1991 cited in Peterson and Lewis, 1999, p. 87) referred to the exclusive assignment of replenishing the workforce to women, as a “reproductive labour tax” that diminishes their ability to participate in income generation activities in the market. This indicates how the existing gender division of labour in the household reinforces women’s subordinate position in productive work (Borrowman and Klasen, 2020). It does so by depriving women of the time, energy and human capital needed to be competitive in productive work in the market, as elaborated further in section 4.3.3 below.

This led to the segregation of women in particular industries and vocations that are known for their tedious labour, poor pay, exploitative nature, and casual/flexible employment, as detailed in section 2.7.3 (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Kabeer, 2007; Moser, 1993; Tacoli, 2012). According to Elson and Pearson (1989), this represents a typical case of employers in these sectors and occupations taking advantage of the lack of bargaining power by women employees as manifested in their docility and willingness to execute monotonous tasks and supply casual/flexible labour at a cheaper price.

As mentioned in section 4.2.3, women’s contribution to subsistence production may not even be visible because it is perceived as an extension of reproductive domestic work. Therefore, it may not be perceived as “real work” which deserves an exchange value, hence does not get a wage. In addition, as discussed in section 4.3.1, earning wages in the market does not always grant women control over their income and real independence due to the underlying oppressive patriarchal authority. Hence, gender equality in paid labour cannot be achieved through market forces alone without redressing the gender segregation in unpaid domestic labour.

#### 4.3.3 Time poverty of women

The lives of women who are employed in the market are stretched between two competing urgency systems in the workplace and at home, resulting in their fatigue, sickness, and emotional exhaustion (Hochschild and Machung, 2003).

This is because, despite the escalation in the intensity and diversity of women's participation in the workforce, they are not exempted from domestic and caring work, while men's involvement in reproductive labour is missing/lagging (Chant, 2007; Humphries and Sarasúa, 2021). Hence, women's employment in productive labour to earn an income does not necessarily translate into an increased bargaining power for them in the labour allocation decisions of the household (Fukuda-Parr, 1999; Shaffer, 1998). The term "feminization of responsibility and obligations" refers to the disproportionately high amount of duty and accountability that women have to shoulder to cope with poverty without a corresponding improvement in their bargaining power/entitlement, rights, and rewards compared to men (Chant, 2007).

Thus, the feminization of responsibilities and obligations both at home and in the workplace while instigating the time poverty and exploitation of women, it has not improved their choices. Unlike men workers, women who are employed in the marketplace, do not receive backstage support from their husbands at home and may not afford to hire someone to assist with reproductive work (Mitra and Pool, 2000; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Tacoli, 2012). Hence, even though it is hidden from view, women's lack of backstage support from their male partners contributes to their lower earnings in the marketplace.

The reproductive work women have to attend to at home after a long workday in the market is sometimes referred to as a "second shift" (Coltrane, 1996; Hochschild and Machung, 2003). Mellor (1997) illustrates the dualistic nature of time in mainstream economics as social time (clock time) and task-oriented-biological time. Unlike the "economic man" who lives in social time/clock time, women live in a biological time that can never be reduced even when they are involved in productive work outside their home due to its vitality for human survival. Thus, women are not in control of their own time but are mere "strangers" or "refugees" in the world of male-defined time (Forman and Sowton, 1989).

Further, as discussed in previous sections, women's role in reproductive labour is considered a "natural" or a "moral responsibility" as opposed to 'real work'. The absence of a clear demarcation between work and leisure in domestic labour conceals women's needs for rest except at night, unlike men who are considered to require resting once they return home from work (Moser, 1993). Owing to time poverty, women suffer from role strain resulting from role overload, role conflict, and role contagion (Home, 1998, 1993). While role overload implies having too much work and so little time, role conflict is said to emerge out of the need to simultaneously fulfil multiple roles. The former is indicative of the underlying time poverty problem, while the latter is indicative of the incompatibility between various roles (Coverman, 1989). Role contagion, on the other hand, refers to the challenge of performing one role while worrying about other responsibilities (Home, 1998).

Time poverty and the sexual division of labour that confines women in the private sphere also discourage their investment in human capital that is essential for employment in the market (Agarwal, 1997; Fairchild, 2003; Home, 1993; Mehra and Rojas, 2008; Meinen-Dick et al., 1997; Grapard, 2001). Lack of human capital is one of the major factors behind human poverty<sup>68</sup> that robs people of the opportunities vital for their well-being (UNDP, 1997). Hence, women's lack of human capital has lasting consequences in their lives through shaping their livelihood strategies and material well-being (Becker, 1985; Fairchild, 2003; Grapard, 2001; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Mehra and Rojas, 2008; Polachek, 1995; UNDP, 1997). Thus, being time-poor can be detrimental to women's well-being as it affects their functioning both in the present and in the future.

Hence, women are forced to make trade-offs between their multiple responsibilities, lowering both the quality and volume of output (productivity) of their work, at home and in the workplace (Gammage, 2010; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Pleck, 1997).

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<sup>68</sup> The UNDP (1997, p. 5) defines human poverty as "the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development- to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others".

To cope with time poverty women, implement various strategies such as cutting time from housework and childcare, or “supermoming”<sup>69</sup> to be able to manage their “double day” both at the workplace and home (Hochschild and Machung, 2003). Mothers working in full-time jobs may take more frequent leaves from work to manage their reproductive responsibilities compared to fathers reinforcing the stereotype that they are “unreliable” employees, which is used as a justification for their relatively lower wages (Levin et al., 1999; Pressman, 2003; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Hopkins, 1995).

There are a number of theories that have attempted to explicate the factors behind the sexual division of labour amongst family members. These include the human capital theory, the social structure theory (which was discussed in section 4.3.2), and the middle-range predictor theories of relative resource/exchange<sup>70</sup>, time availability<sup>71</sup>, and gender ideology (Coltrane, 1996). However, the empirical evidence on the ground indicates that most of these theories are lacking in terms of fully predicting the labour allocation decisions of family members on their own (Coltrane, 1996; Bahçe and Memis, 2013; Kabeer, 2007; Oduro and Staveren, 2015). This is because, family decisions regarding the division of labour are outcomes of the interaction between various factors that influence the economies of gratitude between members, and it is too complicated to be accurately captured by any single abstract theory (Coltrane, 1996).

However, among the many predictor theories of household labour allocation between men and women, gender ideology receives the most support from empirical evidence on the ground (Coltrane, 1996; Kabeer, 2007).

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<sup>69</sup> “Supermoming” refers to the way mothers emotionally prepare and absorb the conflicting demands of their multiple roles at home and at work by being organized, competent, selfless and tireless (Hochschild and Machung, 2003).

<sup>70</sup> Relative resource/ exchange theory presents the amount of domestic work family members has to execute as being inversely related to their earned income or hypothetical “market worth”, and bargaining power, which is measured by of the level of education and job experience (Coltrane, 1996, p. 155).

<sup>71</sup> The time availability theory views assignment of tasks related to domestic work as dependent on the availability of “free” time, which refers to all labour hours not spent in paid market work (Coltrane, 1996, p. 159).

Especially in Developing economies where the male breadwinner ideology provides the main safety net against the risks posed by their informal employment, women may continue to bear the domestic work burden as a bargain to keep both their jobs and marriages (Kabeer, 2007, p. 25). Women who hold informal and risky jobs, in particular, may be reluctant to demand an equal share of the domestic burden from their husbands in compliance with the prevailing gender ideologies and hierarchies (Kabeer, 2007). This is because, in the absence of public safety net measures against the risks associated with such employment, their main source of social protection is family and the wider society. This also signifies how the occupational segregation and lower pay of women help in sustaining the existing privileges of men such as exemption from housework, reinforcing the stereotypical sexual division of labour in the family (Berik and Kongar, 2021; Kabeer, 2007).

As indicated in the discussion thus far, poor women, especially those living in Developing Nations suffer from several interlinked disadvantages including lack of bargaining power, time poverty, material, and non-material deprivations. These privations reinforce each other to produce several challenges to keep women in what Chambers, (1995, 1989) referred to as a “deprivation trap”. This term is used to indicate the multi-dimensionality of women’s deprivation problems having physical, social, economic, political, and psychological/spiritual aspects, and their interaction to entrap them into a vicious cycle of interrelated deprivations. Income and ownership of assets are some of the major determinants of bargaining power through their effect on the breakdown position and perceived legitimacy of individual members of a family. Hence, women’s decision-making power and well-being are undermined by their material deprivation. At the same time, their lack of bargaining power to influence decisions in their favour both in the household and in the marketplace reinforces their material deprivation.

Chambers (2006, 1989) describes women’s lack of bargaining power to have access to income and wealth and equitable wages as men workers in the market as “powerlessness”. Furthermore, women’s investment in the family in terms of time, effort, and money is not automatically awarded with higher bargaining power.



All the while, as this chapter has described, the androcentric presumptions ingrained in mainstream economic theory prohibit them from taking for accounting for these relative privations of women, which undermines their potential in making the intended impact. The inherent biases of conventional economic policies are demonstrated by their disregard for or underestimation of the importance of gender relations in the economy, the social and human aspect of existence and the crucial role played by women in it, and the numerous restrictions placed on women in both the private and public spheres (Braunstein and Heintz, 2008; Compton et al., 2010; Elson, 2010, 2002; Himmelweit, 2002; Jones and Holmes, 2011; Kumar and Quisumbing, 2013; Ruiters, 2008). This is covered in section 3.8.2 of Chapter 3.

#### **4.4 The analytical framework of the study**

As per the theory of feminist economics, the study explores how the behaviour, preferences, choices and actions of poor women living in Addis Ababa are shaped and constrained by the prevailing social/cultural norms. It particularly investigates the type and extent of roles assumed, and labour time provided freely by these women in their homes, and communities and the motivations behind it. It also looks into the type of income-generating activities they are involved in, the amount of market labour they supply, and the reasons behind it. In relation to this, the study also investigates the extent of women's role strain including how it influences economic behaviour and actions, in terms of their human capital investment, labour supply in the market and livelihood strategies, and ability to cope with an economic crisis such as food inflation.

This study seeks to determine how these women perceive and articulate their needs/interests, priorities and contributions. It also looks at where these perceptions emanate from, and how they influence women's bargaining positions. It also inquires to know what other factors determine the bargaining positions of women with regard to the distributive and allocative decisions of the family in relation to income/wealth, labour time and food. In addition, it examines the extent of women's access and control over family income and wealth, including property that legally belongs to them and the income they have earned in the market, and the factors that determine such entitlement.

It also scrutinizes how women's ownership and entitlement of income and assets (lack thereof) and time poverty affect their bargaining power, as well as how they are affected by food inflation and their choice of coping techniques.

It analyses the design and implementation of the intervention program to determine whether it has taken into account the aforementioned gendered roles, needs, and constraints of women as well as whether it harbours any implicit biases against them. For instance, it enquires if adequate attention has been paid to the role of women in the domestic economy, particularly in buying and preparing food and how they might be affected differently (from men and other household members) by both food inflation and the government response program.

It also asks whether unpaid labour in the non-marketed domestic economy is considered a valued contribution or taken for granted in the intervention program. It probes if it made considerations for social norms which may have constrained the individual agency of women at home, in the community or in the market, and how they might have been affected by it, especially with respect to the food inflation problem, and their choice of coping strategies. It assesses how doing so (lack thereof) affected the intervention outcomes. Based on the study's findings, the thesis attempts to make recommendations for improving the effectiveness of intervention programs in mitigating the harmful impacts of food inflation on food security and in bringing about gender equality. As per the discussion thus far, the core dependent and independent variables in the study are listed and explained as follows:

***Core dependent variables***

- The impact of food inflation on poor women's food security, and related economic, physical and psycho-social consequences; and
- Poor women's coping techniques/abilities to mitigate the harmful consequences of food inflation.

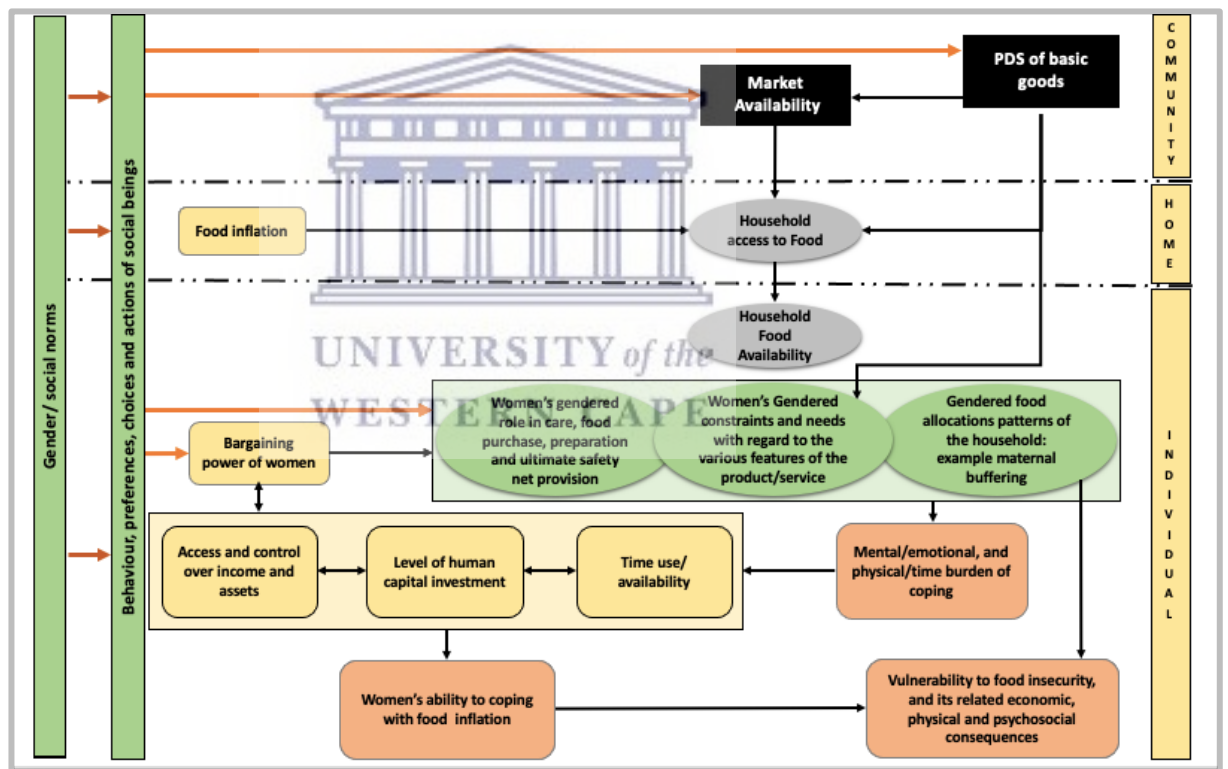
***Core independent variables***

- Gender roles/time use
- Level of human capital investment
- Entitlement and control over family income and assets

- ❑ Women's share of the burden of coping with food inflation
- ❑ Coping techniques of women
- ❑ Effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the PDS
- ❑ Effectiveness of the PDS in achieving targeted outcomes
- ❑ Responsiveness of PDS to the gendered needs of poor women

The analytical framework of the study is presented in Diagram 4.1 below, which is an adaptation from Ruel et al. (2010) and is based on conceptual and theoretical literature. It shows hierarchies and the directions of relationships between the variables stated above. As depicted, the role of social/gender norms and their influence on social beings' behaviour, preference, choice and actions transcends the individual, the home and community levels.

Figure 4:1: Analytical framework for the gendered vulnerability of women to food inflation



More detailed information concerning how the study accomplished these objectives can be found in the proceeding methodological and empirical chapters 5- 9.

## 4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the biases against women embedded in mainstream economic theory as displayed in its conceptual sexism against the values and subject matters that are considered to be feminine. This includes the lack of attention it pays to the role of social/gender norms in constraining choice and action and the provision of essential services in the domestic sector and its erroneous treatment of households as unitary where harmonious optimal allocation decisions are made. In doing so, it obscures and downplays the crucial role that women play in economic life through meeting basic human needs and the gendered restrictions that prevent them from having the same bargaining power, access to resources, and free time as men to enjoy the benefits of economic life or deal with an economic crisis on an equal footing. Therefore, mainstream economic theory and the policies that stem from it, not only fail to capture all aspects of the economy but also fail to see the gendered nature of economic behaviour and economic crises.

Hence, feminist economics is presented in the thesis as a better alternative for this study because it views economic agents as “individuals in relation”, who are constrained by both efficiency considerations and the social construction of individual preferences. It also treats economic agents as “gendered beings”, and household, market and legal institutions as bearers, transmitters and reinforces of gender, illuminating the relative gendered deprivations of women that span across the private and public spheres. It sheds light on the domestic sector in particular and the centrality of the unpaid labour that women provide in the provision of necessary services, such as care, to support the marketed component of economic life.

In line with the objectives of this research, the framework lends a critical lens to analyse the effect of food inflation on poor women in the study area, and the coping techniques they employ, in light of their gendered constraints. It also assesses how well the existing government intervention program against food inflation, is responsive to the gendered needs and constraints of its women beneficiaries.

Chapter 5 elaborates on how this framework is employed as a theoretical and interpretive framework to guide each stage of the research process, starting from its methodological philosophy, to formulating its research design, data collection techniques, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of findings.



## CHAPTER 5 : Philosophy and methods of research

### 5.1 Introduction

In a qualitative study, the research process begins with the following questions: what is the nature of reality? How do we know about this reality as researchers? What is the best method to investigate this reality? What is our moral/ethical standing concerning this reality? (Aliyu et al., 2014; Creswell, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The answers to these questions make up the philosophical assumptions of the study that informed the thesis with regard to ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology (Creswell, 2007). The worldview or a set of beliefs of a researcher serves as an “interpretative bricoleur” guiding her/his stance on each of these philosophical assumptions and, therefore, her/his action and claims to knowledge (Creswell, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

In line with the feminist economics theoretical framework of discussed in Chapter 4, the research paradigm and philosophical assumptions of the study are guided by feminist principles that illuminate the role of gender norms that are prejudiced against women in constraining economic behaviour and action across all spheres of the economy, including the institutions that design government intervention programs. This is the aspect of the economy that is overlooked by conventional approaches in economic practice that assume autonomous, self-interested, rational agents, and exclusively focus on marketed aspects of the economy, resulting in the misstatement of how women are affected by an economic crisis and government response programs (Folbre, 1994; Kuiper et al., 1995; Levin, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1995). This chapter describes and justifies, the guiding feminist principles that guided the study’s philosophical assumptions including methodology, and the research design consisting of data collection, analysis, and presentation techniques.

## 5.2 Research paradigm: process/organicist worldview

A paradigm is nothing but a set of socially constructed fundamental beliefs and principles that behave as an overarching framework guiding one's understanding of the natural world of realism and how it might be identified (Aliyu et al., 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). According to the positivists' worldview, science is considered to be an objective “arbiter of truth, rational belief and, hence, rational action” which is also referred to as “modernism” (Peterson and Lewis, 1999). This privileged position of science is justified by its unique methodological rules that serve as a benchmark for “legitimate scientific” practices (Barker and Kuiper, 2003; Caldwell, 1994; Barker, 2004; Peterson and Lewis, 1999).

Similar to other sciences, economic thought, driven by its ‘positivist’ worldview, sees a scientific practice as an impersonal and objective process, and the production and evaluation of knowledge as resulting from “mirroring nature” (Bergeron, 2001; Klamer, 2001; Levin, 1995; Peter, 2003; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). On the contrary, feminist economics strives to find a balance between the notion of science as a socially constructed activity (relativism) and science as a rational enterprise (objectivism) (Barker and Kuiper, 2003; Harding, 2003; Peter, 2003).

This study followed a process/organicist worldview position Nelson (2003a, 2003b, 2003c) where science is seen as a methodological inquiry which involves extending perception and reflection both through experience and purposefully seeking a better understanding. Hence, knowledge is not simply about studying reality through scientific thoughts, but also about being a part of that reality and contributing to it (ibid.). Therefore, according to this worldview, an economic practice needs to be grounded in the theory of reality (ontology) to be able to reflect our lived experiences (Nelson, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c).

## 5.3 Ontological assumptions of the study: Provisional realism

Ontology in qualitative research is a philosophical assumption about the nature of reality which is subjective and hence multiple (Creswell, 2007). Its inquiries into the “structure and type of truth” and “what can be recognized and known about it” (Aliyu et al., 2014).

The positivist ontology of standard neoclassical economics views reality as a closed system of laws and mechanisms while feminists view the world as open, interrelated, and flexible (Nelson, 2003c). Neoclassical economics, like most scientific theories, favours the accounts of economic agents as rational, self-interested individuals even though this description applies to only a specific category of the general population i.e., adult males (Barker and Kuiper, 2003; Harding, 2003; Peter, 2003).

However, feminist economics is known for its ontological heterogeneity and for incorporating various visions of agency, and motivations for the choices and actions of agents including self-interest, altruism, responsibility, dependency or affection (Agarwal, 1997; Barker, 2004; England, 1989; Folbre, 1994; Mellor, 1997; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1973, 1987, 1977). Further, research in feminist economics seeks to uncover the interactions between various entities/accounts and processes such as those between economic and social factors (Barker, 2004). For example, in explaining the wage gap, this approach considers institutional, structural, and ideological factors, as opposed to the conventional economics approach which only considers differences in labour productivity resulting from investment in human capital as an explanatory variable (Borrowman and Klasen, 2020; Coltrane, 1996; Elson and Pearson, 1981; Grapard, 2001; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Kabeer, 2007; Pujol, 1995).

Hence, the research has found the process ontology of Nelson (2003b), which was pioneered by mathematical physicist Alfred North Whitehead, and elaborated by pragmatist philosophers William James and John Dewey, to be most compelling. This ontology regards reality as a “throb of experience” which is complex and interdependent. Under this assumption, the reality is composed of events and experiences in an organically interconnected whole (Nelson, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c). Hence, both time and relationships between entities, connected through shared experiences, are of vital importance (ibid.).



In the process/organicist worldview, perception of reality occurs in two modes: presentational immediacy and “causal efficacy” (Nelson, 2003a, 2003c). While the former refers to distinct, and controllable percepta with minimum connections to past and future events, the latter refers to vague, emotional, and uncontrollable percepta involving past and future events. Thus, this philosophy of ontology acknowledges the existence of non-cognitive and non-sensory perceptions. This view of reality is referred to as provisional realism to indicate that reality is much more complicated and our influence on it is much broader than what is consciously known to us through our experiences (Nelson, 2003a, 2003c). This view of the world and reality as unfinished and evolving leaves room for spontaneity and for the scientist to be part of that reality through experience and relations with other entities both in the past and in the future (Nelson, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c).

In this evolving world, the reality that is realized in one moment through one’s subjective understanding of pre-existing entities<sup>72</sup> is synthesized as objective data for the next moment (Nelson, 2003a, 2003b). Therefore, in a process ontology, there is no neutral “spectator” position; scientific practice is intrinsically value-laden (Nelson, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c). The knower, who is located within the observed reality, as part of the creation, and has a broader and deeper understanding of that experience is assumed to have a sense of the self, the whole, and the many (Nelson, 2003c). In the feminist-process worldview, this intimacy and interconnectedness of the knower with other entities in the whole has the advantage of grounding emancipatory and caring projects (ibid.). Process ontology is also concerned with the consequence of knowledge and maintains that the improvement of the human condition is the only justification for scientific practices (Nelson, 2003a, 2003c). This makes it ideal for conducting feminist research which also considers solving real-life problems of women as a virtue (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1987a).

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<sup>72</sup> The process through which one is connected to pre-existing entities is referred to as “prehension” by Whitehead (1966, cited in Nelson, 2003c, p.113)

#### 5.4 Epistemological assumptions of the study

Epistemology is a term that describes who can be a “knower”, what can be known or accepted as relevant data, and what qualifies data as knowledge (Aliyu et al., 2014; Harding, 1987a, 1986; MacDonald, 1995; Stanley and Wise, 1990). It also defines how the researcher should be related to the research being conducted, and how knowing (epistemology) differs from being (ontology) (Creswell, 2007; Harding, 1987a; Stanley and Wise, 1990). Epistemology provides clarifications on whether or not subjective truth amounts to knowledge, if the point of view of the researcher matter, and what the objective of perusing knowledge should be (ibid.). In short, it is a way of justifying how we know what we know or what warrants our “knowledge claims” as researchers (Creswell, 2007; Harding, 1986). Creswell (2007) sees epistemology as a way of closing the gap between the researcher and what is being studied i.e., participants of the study.

As indicated in the preceding chapter, traditional and contemporary/Cartesian theories of knowledge/epistemologies propagated the sanctity of science beyond the realm of social interactions i.e., the scientist as autonomous, unified, authoritative, and dispassionate beings; and scientific methods as value-free (Kuiper et al., 1995; Levin, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Strassmann and Polanyi, 1995). These epistemologies have exclusively endorsed the masculine voice to be the voice of science, from whose perspective problems were defined and meanings were created, while systematically excluding women as “knowers” (Harding, 1986; 1987a; Peterson and Lewis, 1999).

The androcentric biases of economic practice are reflected in its deeply ingrained Western, affluent, male ideologies, resulting in the portrayal of the male experience as representative while depicting that of women as deviant from the norm (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1986; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Tuana, 1992). For this reason, feminists consider traditional epistemologies to be sexist against women and inapplicable in real-life scenarios (Harding, 1986, 1987a, 1987b).

As illustrated in the following section, this has led to the emergence of feminist epistemologies which seek to unmask these deep-rooted androcentric tendencies of knowledge-seeking in traditional and contemporary sciences while claiming value-neutrality.

#### 5.4.1 Feminist epistemology

Feminist epistemology is a theory of knowledge that presents women as legitimate knowers, and their activities, and social relations with men as important explanatory variables of human behaviour (Harding, 1986, 1987a). To overcome the androcentric biases of traditional epistemologies, feminists have come up with the following alternative methods of knowledge-seeking (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1986, 1987b; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Stanley and wise, 1990; Tuana, 1992)

##### □ **Feminist empiricism**

Feminist empiricists are of the view that the androcentric biases of traditional empiricisms emerge mainly during the process of selecting and defining problems for scientific inquiry (Harding, 1986, 1987a, 1987b; Stanley and wise, 1990). Thus, not only the “context of justification”, but also the “context of discovery” should be examined to make the research more objective, since this process cannot be free of the social values of the researcher (ibid.). They advocate for diversifying the research community by allowing more women and feminist (men and women) researchers into the field so that varying views can be entertained and hidden assumptions and values can be unveiled and questioned (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1986, 1987a, 1987b; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Tuana, 1992). In this regard, social liberation movements play a vital role in feminist empiricism in bettering “bad science” and increasing its objectivity by questioning existing shared assumptions and values in scientific communities (ibid.).

##### □ **Feminist standpoint theory**

According to feminist standpoint theorists, in a society with a social hierarchy, knowledge is skewed against women and in favour of the "ruling gender," which is male (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1986, 1987b; Tuana, 1992).

Even though this approach has derived certain lessons from the Marxist viewpoint, the basis of this domination is not only conditioned by economic class as propagated by Marxists but also by race and culture (Harding, 1987b). Hence, they advocate for women to be included as a necessary and valid category in a scientific inquiry so that knowledge can be grounded in women's social experiences (Harding, 1986; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Stanley and Wise, 1990; Tuana, 1992).

A feminist standpoint, by borrowing theories and motivations from feminism and the women's movements, provides a scientific interpretation and explanation of women's social experiences (Harding, 1986, 1987b; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Tuana, 1992). This is because of the belief that knowledge is generated through the intellectual and political struggles waged by women against their oppressors (Harding, 1987b). Feminist empiricism and feminist standpoint epistemologies are considered "successor sciences" since they believe in enlightenment ideals of rationality, universality, and singular conceptions of truth i.e., "true reality" (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1986; Stanley and Wise, 1990; Tuana, 1992). Both epistemologies are aimed at making modern science more objective through "anti-authoritarian, anti-elitist, participatory, and emancipatory values and projects" (Harding, 1986, p.161).

#### □ **Feminist postmodernism**

Feminist postmodernism, in contrast to the preceding two epistemological orientations, stands strongly opposed to modernist science and epistemology along with the enlightenment notions of a disembodied, objective, neutral science/ "universal" knowledge (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1986, 1987b; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Tuana, 1992). Hence, it rejects any endeavour to find an absolute and fixed basis for grounding knowledge and the proposition of any one method as a way of achieving it.

Postmodernists saw the dualisms inherent in contemporary science's enlightenment worldview<sup>73</sup> and science's assumed role, as a bridge in-between as androcentric (Grapard, 2001; Harding, 1986; Kuiper et al., 1995; Levin, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Strassmann and Polanyi, 1995; Tuana, 1992). For this reason, feminists are focused on deconstructing the dichotomous structures of discourse where women are constructed as the "Other" or a "Non-man" (Harding, 1986; Grapard, 2001). Instead, they maintain that knowledge is multiple and varies amongst people with opposing views and political ideologies (Harding, 1986; Tuana, 1992). As opposed to one "one true story", there are numerous, smoothly connected realities (Barker, 2004; Levin, 1995; Harding, 1986, 1987b; Nelson, 1996; Tuana, 1992). Hence, women's multiple experiences yield fractured and complex ontologies, rendering feminist inquiries to be permanently partial (Harding, 1987b; Tuana, 1992).

#### 5.4.2 Distinguishing features of feminist epistemology

There are some apparent similarities and contradictions among the feminist epistemologies discussed in the preceding section (Harding, 1986; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). The study that informed this thesis has adopted some of the most salient features of these epistemologies that are further discussed below.

##### 5.4.2.1 *Consideration of the social and political nature of scientific knowledge production*

Standard economists claim that there exists a "free market of ideas", independent of social structure, where ideas/arguments take precedence over each other simply based on merit (Strassmann and Polyani, 1995). However, feminists and feminist economists believe that both knowledge creators and knowledge itself are socially constituted and not value-neutral (Barker, 2004; Butler, 1990; Gergen, 1985; Harding, 2003, 1991, 1987a, 1987b, 1986; Peter, 2003; Levin, 1995; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Sen, 1973, 1977; Tuana, 1992).

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<sup>73</sup> The dualisms which are common in contemporary science's enlightenment worldview are those between culture and nature, mind and body, emotions and values, objectivity and subjectivity, abstract and concrete, permanence and change (Grapard, 2001; Harding, 1986; Kuiper et al., 1995; Levin, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Strassmann and Polanyi, 1995; Tuana, 1992).

Hence, there is no autonomous pre-social interior essence; individuals' identities, perspectives meanings, tests, and values are shaped by the social web that they are part and parcel of (Butler, 1990; Gergen, 1985; Harding, 1991; Levin, 1995). Because agents are socially situated within a specific cultural, religious, and economic context, the process of understanding itself is not up to an independent observer, but a result of active discussion and negotiation among people in a relationship (ibid.). Gergen (1985) refers to this rationality that lies within the collective understanding of a society as "negotiated intelligibility". Hence, it is the normative rules of communities that govern scientific activity. Therefore, the subject/agent of knowledge is multiple, fragmented, contradictory, changing, and hence unstable as opposed to autonomous, unified, and stable (Harding, 1991; Levin, 1995).

As a result, there is no perfectly reliable mechanism for ranking various accounts and arguments (McCloskey, 1983; Strassmann and Polyani, 1995). There is only the voice of those dominant and exclusive groups of "knowledge makers" in the discipline who legitimize what counts as "true" knowledge, and who should be let inside this circle by acting as gatekeepers (Barker, 2004; Bergeron, 2001; Grapard, 2001; Peter, 2003; Strassmann and Polyani, 1995). Thus, those in a position of power within a community of knowledge creators in economics can sustain the prevailing standards that resonate with their values using disciplinary techniques. This indicates that there exists an underlying system of power in the production of knowledge through which personal, social, and political values, and unequal power leads to an unequal ability to influence the creation of knowledge.

This restricts the free flow of economic discourse, and participation in the process, including those who are directly affected by the research outputs and heterodox critiques such as feminist economists (Barker, 2004; Bergeron, 2001; Peter, 2003). Hence, the choice of epistemology and methodology in scientific inquiry is also political and ethical (Harding, 2003; Peter, 2003).

Alternatively, feminists propagate “positional objectivity”/ “dynamic objectivity”/ “strong objectivity”, that acknowledges, makes use of, and critically examines the societal and cultural values that determine the assumptions, beliefs, and desires of the observer/researcher (Harding, 1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1991; Keller, 1995; Stanley and Wise, 1990; Sen, 1992). Hence, to increase the objectivity of the scientific inquiry, the researcher’s assumptions, beliefs, and desires should be critically investigated and acknowledged (Harding, 1986, 1987a, 1987b; Stanley and Wise, 1990). In light of this, this study incorporated some of the key components of feminist epistemology, such as focusing on women's experiences and empowering them to be knowledge-makers, as seen in section 5.4.2.2 below. It has also taken into account the researcher’s values and possible role in knowledge creation as elaborated in section 5.6.4.

#### *5.4.2.2 Centred on women’s experiences*

As discussed in the preceding section, the conventional economic practice has failed to incorporate the experiences of women and the issues important to their lives in its domain of study and scientific practice (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1986; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Tuana, 1992). Hence, issues related to the gender division of labour and non-marketed reproductive labour either fall outside of the subject’s jurisdictions or are explained as a consequence of rational choices of self-interest maximizing rational agents (Barker, 2004). Feminist epistemologies, on the other hand, are of the view that a knowledge-seeking tradition that overlooks or silences the voice and perspectives of women is socially unjust and can only produce distorted knowledge (Barker, 2004; Grapard, 2001; Harding, 1986, 1987a, 1987b; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Tuana, 1992). Hence, women's experiences should be considered as a valid resource of knowledge in both theoretical and empirical scientific inquiry.

Women should be allowed to reveal their own experiences and take an equal part in the production and distribution of knowledge (Harding, 1987a).

Feminist economics advocates for the construction of knowledge from the perspective of women in consideration of their traditional roles and responsibilities, in addition to the perspective of the “rational economic agent” (Elson, 1995b, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Feiner, 1995; Folbre, 1994; Hutchinson, 1995; Jennings, 1993; Nelson, 1996; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Sen, 1987, 1995). This can be achieved through the inclusion of women in the profession and gender as a legitimate category of analysis (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1986; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Stanely and wise, 1990; Tuana, 1992). This is accomplished in the study by treating and valuing women as the main knowers by allowing them to provide their personal and subjective experiences of the food inflation problem, how it impacts them, and the challenges they face in coping based on their actual experiences. The responsiveness of the government intervention program is also evaluated from the perspective of poor women beneficiaries.

#### *5.4.2.3 The social, cultural, and political values of science for women*

Research in conventional economics is mainly focused on the rational choices of agents in the market, based on their abstract preferences, without much consideration for their actual needs and wants, and their interactions with the environment (Elson, 1995; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Hutchinson, 1995; Klammer, 1995; Kuiper et al., 1995; Mellor, 1997; Nelson, 1996; Grapard, 2001; Woolley, 1993). Feminists consider the origin of research problems, and the purpose of research and knowledge production as inseparable (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1987a). In line with the process ontology discussed in section 5.3, feminists deem that the goal of a research inquiry should be meeting or improving the basic human needs of the targeted population and protecting the environment as opposed to mere knowledge production or political domination (Barker, 2004; Harding, 1987a; Nelson, 2003a, 2003c).

A scientific inquiry in feminist economics is evaluated based on its social, cultural, and political values and goals; particularly concerning the well-being of women, children, and marginalized groups (Barker, 2004; Harding, 2003, 1987a; Peter, 2003; Peterson and Lewis, 1999).



This is demonstrated in the discipline's concern for ensuring the provision of the basic needs and wants of human beings (Elson, 1995, 1996; Nelson, 1996). It does so by accounting for subsistence production including informal, domestic, and volunteer work and recognizing women's vital roles in replenishing the workforce and maintaining the social framework (Elson, 1994, 1995, 1996; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Feiner, 1995; Folbre, 1994; Hutchinson, 1995; Jennings, 1993; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987, 1995). The study's embrace of these epistemological assumptions is shown by its concern for how rising food prices influence the provision of essential services, including food security and care, and the crucial role played by women in the process.

## 5.5 Methodology of the study

Methodology is a study framework that is informed by the research paradigm, encompassing the whole research process from design up to analysis and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2007; Harding, 1987; McDonald, 1995; Stanley and Wise, 1990). It is a way of translating questions of theoretical interest into a plan of action (McDonald, 1995). Whereas a research method refers to specific techniques used for gathering and analysing evidence such as surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and ethnography which are informed by the research epistemology (Harding, 1987, Stanley and Wise, 1990).

Under the positivist view of standard economic practice, the quality or value of any scientific work is dependent upon the methodology utilized to attain it, which is mainly characterized by abstraction, formalization, detachment, and precision (McCloskey, 1983; Nelson, 1996; Strassmann and Polyani, 1995). The application of any other method such as metaphors, historical narrations, persuasive reflections, and moral claims is considered to be straying from the "scientific method" (McCloskey, 1983).

Feminist economists, on the other hand, regard this practice in positivist economic methodology as demonstrating the discipline's androcentric nature (Cullenberg et al., 2001; McDonald, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Peterson and Lewi, 1999).

This is apparent in the discipline's treatment of rigorous and precise mathematical methods associated with masculinity as valid while treating intuitive and verbal models of social structure associated with femininity as soft, imprecise, and "unscientific" (Nelson, 1996). The masculine biases inherent in standard economic methodology are reflected in its detachment from everything that is not traded in the market and not quantified, including the gendered aspect of the economy (McDonald, 1995; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). This includes unpaid labour in the private sphere and intrahousehold distribution of labour, income, and resources.

Further, economic practice generally gives little attention to empirical work and qualitative data obtained through direct observation of actual attitudes and behaviour, due to the inferior value attached to it (McDonald, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). It is focused on the manipulation of available data, finding proxies for missing variables, and refining statistical specifications (McDonald, 1995; Nelson, 1996). As a result of its over-emphasis on theory-driven abstraction and formal econometric testing, while staying detached from the concrete world, the discipline lacks a "feel" for real-world issues (McDonald, 1995; Nelson, 1996).

It is also mostly reliant on secondary data collected by statistical agencies focusing on Gross National Product (GNP) accounts that best reflect the reality of the typical male worker as gender biases against women are also reflected in data collection (McDonald, 1995; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). Due to the limitations associated with secondary data, the unit of analysis in neoclassical economics is either the individual or the household without further information regarding the social context they are embedded within (McDonald, 1995). However, feminist economists believe that rigorous analysis and emotions, institutions, rich metaphorical analysis, and tangible observations are just as valuable in defining quality in research practice as "precision" (Baker, 2004; Cullenberg et al., 2001; Levin, 1995; McCloskey, 1983; Nelson, 1996).

Conducting research in feminist economics involves generating primary data<sup>74</sup> to have access to more distinct, interpretive accounts (Klamer, 1995; McDonald, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). Feminist economics demonstrates its novelty by bringing to the fore issues that have been previously ignored, and by adopting different theories and principles of explanation to reach conclusions that may be different from those in conventional economic practice (Barker, 2004). Instead of the usual constrained optimisation and formal mathematical modelling, it offers a variety of other explanations to describe the behaviour of economic agents (Baker, 2004; Cullenberg et al., 2001; Levin, 1995; Nelson, 1996).

For instance, feminist economists have identified non-quantifiable factors, such as social norms and their resulting structures of constraints to explain how intrahousehold labour and resource distribution decisions are socially and emotionally constituted (Agarwal, 1997; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987). The valuation of women's unpaid work, intrahousehold inequalities in decision-making power, access to income and resources, labour allocation, and gendered processes in the paid labour market have been three of the main theoretical and empirical concerns of feminist economics (MacDonald, 1995). Hence, it also transcends the typical divisions of conventional economic practice between formal and informal economies, paid and unpaid labour, market and non-market activities, and labour engaged in both production and reproduction.

In the words of MacDonald (1995, p. 136), feminist economics is focused on the “personal, gendered, non-market relations” aspect of the economy. Feminist economics also exhibits a preference for theories that assume mutual interactions among various components and processes rather than the one-way relationship that is typical in conventional economic practice (Barker, 2004).

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<sup>74</sup> Primary data is collected to meet the specific objectives of a research project through methods such as participant observations, interviews, FGDs, photograph, and videos records (Hox and Boeije, 2005).

Despite the lack of a fully developed methodological alternative, feminist economics has incorporated some of the important feminist theoretical virtues that have been discussed so far in this chapter to address existing biases prevalent in conventional economic practice (Barker, 2004; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). Similarly, feminist economists do not have an agreement on a unique set of research methods but have adopted existing methods to fit their interests (McDonald, 1995).

As briefly discussed in the preceding section, feminist economists define quality in empirical work as constituting a broader view of knowledge formation, a combination of both “masculine” and “feminine” methods<sup>75</sup> and a wide range of evidence (Barker, 2004; Cullenberg et al., 2001; Levin, 1995; McCloskey, 1983; Nelson, 1996). In the proceeding section, the thesis elucidates how the research design and methods of this study incorporated these methodological qualities namely empirical adequacy, novelty, ontological heterogeneity, mutuality of interaction, applicability to human needs, and diffusion of power.

## 5.6 Research design

Research designs are simply maps that help the researcher navigate from assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis by outlining the necessary procedures that should be followed (Creswell, 2009). In line with the feminist philosophical assumptions and feminist economics methodology of the study, the qualitative research design approach proved most appropriate. This is because the qualitative research design method allows for a comprehensive analysis of the issue being investigated, as well as an interpretation of the meanings provided by subjects within the social context in which they are embedded through their direct engagement/ encounter with the study (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Creswell, 2007).

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<sup>75</sup> While mathematical models of proof are traditionally considered to be ‘masculine’ methods, connected forms of research involving surveys, case studies, and ethnography are considered to be “feminine” methods (Cullenberg et al., 2001).

Further, some of the salient features of a qualitative research design such as the direct role played by the researcher in data collection, its reliance on multiple sources of data, its inductive approach to analysing data, and its flexibility makes it suitable for the study (Creswell, 2007). In consideration of the objectives of the research, the case study approach is used as a strategy of inquiry/framework to shape the design of this study. The case study approach is a type of qualitative inquiry that permits the exploration of an issue of interest through an in-depth investigation of a particular case (s), drawing lessons from that experience (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2005). This approach involves setting the social, political, economic, and other contexts of the selected case (s), and identifying its peculiarity, activity, its function, and interactivities allowing for an extension of experience (Stake, 2005).

This study has investigated how food inflation and its coping mechanisms affect poor women and their families living in urban areas of Ethiopia, especially in the absence of gendered price-stabilizing policies. This was accomplished by studying the particular case of the PDS of basic goods and ensuring a stable supply of basic goods at affordable prices for poor women in Addis Ababa. Per Stake's (2005) categorization of criteria, the approach of inquiry followed here can be considered both an intrinsic and instrumental case study.

The study sought to have a better understanding of the particular context concerning the gender-specific constraints faced by poor women living in Addis Ababa. With this context, it moves on to examine how women are impacted and respond to food inflation. It narrows its attention to the operation and execution of the PDS of basic products in Addis Ababa to investigate its effectiveness in ensuring stability in supply and access for the targeted population. This is followed by examining the gender sensitivity of this particular intervention program. The PDS was selected as a case because it offers a unique opportunity to learn about the issues which are of interest to this research considering that it has been in implementation since 2007, with more than 400,000 registered beneficiaries in Addis Ababa alone, and its involvement of several stakeholders (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018; Woldehanna and Tafere, 2015).

Addis Ababa is an interesting area for this research since it is a population of 4,8 million<sup>76</sup>, among which 74,9% are food insecure (Birhane et al., 2014). It is also a 100% urban population that is reliant on the market to access food, hence vulnerable to the effects of food inflation (Central Statistical Agency (CSA), 2018a). Furthermore, Addis Ababa, being the capital city of the country, is relatively more accessible and hence offers a better prospect for a thorough investigation of the case.

Towards meeting research objective 2, the study examines the impact of food inflation on poor women and their families, by exploring their food provisioning strategies, as well as experiences with food insecurity, and coping mechanisms related to the food inflation crisis. The former technique elucidates how food is purchased, prepared, distributed, consumed, and disposed of by households (McIntyre et al, 2011). Hence, it allows for a “local” understanding of the vital role poor women play in food provisioning for their families and the multiple related challenges they encounter to meet their needs (Levay et al., 2013; McIntyre et al., 2011).

An experience-based measure of food insecurity is employed to capture food intake, as well as other manifestations of food insecurity including concern over the quantity and quality of the food supply, and the consequences of food insecurity, such as alterations in eating habits in response to food inflation-led food insecurity. The aforementioned techniques also help illuminate how households’ function, including the existence of numerous, sometimes conflicting priorities, variations in access to family resources among members, and food insecurity coping techniques, as well as the role of social, political, and cultural factors on these decisions (Hadley et al., 2008; McIntyre et al., 2011).

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<sup>76</sup> This is according to the projection of the United Nations, Department Economic and Social Affairs, Population division (2018) in 2020.

The study conceptualizes women's vulnerability to food inflation from the perspective of how social/gender norms shape their bargaining power in intrahousehold distributive and allocative decisions of labour and income, as shown in the analytical framework in Figure 4.1. The method used in the study departs from the conventional economic practice in its attempt to understand how food price increases and response programs in the market sector alter patterns of work and individual workload, distribution of income and resources, and well-being in the domestic sector, demonstrating its novelty.

To capture different concepts of agency as well as motivations for the decisions and behaviours of poor women in response to rises in food costs, several data sources are referred and multiple questions are asked on the same issue. This is done to assure the ontological heterogeneity of the study as discussed in section 5.3 above (Creswell, 2007). For example, the study investigates what motivates women to provide unpaid work for their families and communities and give up their control over family income and resources.

Further, by providing a thorough assessment of how social and economic elements interact to determine the impact and responses of women to food inflation, the study also demonstrates its evident mutuality of interaction in approach. For instance, the study looks at how gender norms impact women's social standing, which in turn affects their economic status, as well as how economic status impacts social status and how these two factors interact to influence women's bargaining power in family decisions and their access to resources to cope with rising food prices.

As discussed in section 5.4.2.3, the study is concerned with how rising food costs affect women, who play a vital role in the process of provisioning for basic human needs. It also investigated how responsive the intervention program is to the gendered needs and constants of poor women to ensure their food security. This demonstrates its concern for the consequences of knowledge. To investigate the effectiveness of the PDS in ensuring a stable supply of basic goods at affordable prices for the poor (study objective 3), the study employed a theory-driven evaluation approach, which is described in more detail in the next section.

### 5.6.1 Theory-driven program evaluation

Program theory is neither a program nor a theory; rather, it gives the justification for the programs, together with its implicit presumptions on why and how the program would deliver the intended results (Funnell and Rogers, 2011; Rossi et al., 2019). The program theory is composed of process theory/Theory of Action (ToA) and impact theory/Theory of Change (ToC). While the former component explicates the blueprint for what the program is supposed to do and how, the latter elucidates how specific activities are linked to specific outcomes, bringing about the desired change in a program or intervention (Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Rogers, 2014; Rossi et al., 2019; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2017).

The ToA details the presumptions and expectations regarding the programs' capacity to bring about the anticipated changes necessary to achieve the program goals and objectives outlined in the ToC (Rossi et al., 2019). The organization plan, which includes both the functions and activities that the program is expected to perform as well as the necessary resources and the service utilization plan, which includes the program's assumptions and expectations about how to reach the target population, are subcomponents of the ToA. On the other hand, the ToC is the essence of the program theory elucidating the assumptions about how desired changes/outcomes are brought about by the program's action/s (ibid.).

The theory-driven approach for evaluating programs and interventions involves a systematic and cumulative study of the implementation process including underlying causal links between stated outcomes, outputs and activities, and the overall context (Chen, 2015; Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Patton, 1997). It is this ability of theory-based evaluation to illuminate the process in between the various steps in the implementation process that gives it an advantage over the atheoretical or “black box” evaluation approach that relies on a simple input-output formulation, producing at best rudimentary results (Funnell and Rogers, 2011; Lipsey and Pollard, 1989; Rossi et al., 2019).



Theory-based program evaluation also provides a conceptual framework that allows for highlighting issues to be investigated, testing underlying assumptions, and interpreting results (distinguishing between the validity of the program implementation and the validity of the program theory) in a way that ensures internal validity<sup>77</sup> (Funnel and Rogers, 2011; Chen, 2015; Lipsey and Pollard, 1989).

This study conducted both a program process evaluation and an impact evaluation of the intervention program. Process evaluation entails assessing whether the program is reaching the targeted audience and whether its service delivery and support functions are consistent with set criteria (Funnel and Rogers, 2011; Rossi et al, 2019). Impact evaluation, on the other hand, looks at whether the desired outcomes were achieved and whether they had any unforeseen consequences (Rossi et al, 2019).

The study evaluated the success of the PDS of basic goods in two steps. First, it ‘reverse-engineered’ a program theory and a corresponding logical model for the intervention program to analyse its objectives, activities/strategies, outputs, outcomes, and implementation process including the horizontal and vertical linkages between relevant actors in the chain. This can be referred to from Figure 8:1. Next, this program theory was used as a frame of reference for analysing to what extent the planned procedures were followed in the implementation process, and the envisioned outputs/outcomes were achieved by the intervention program from both the perspective of implementing enterprises/bureaus and targeted beneficiaries. In addition to the program theory, the list of legal reforms and guides listed in section 5.6.1.3 are used as benchmarks for evaluating the success of the intervention.

The study made value judgements regarding the implementation process of the intervention’s program on the basis of its appropriateness/ relevance and fidelity.

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<sup>77</sup> Internal validity in the context of evaluation refers to the degree to which a study can accurately convey whether an intervention has created observed impacts on outcomes (Chen, 2015).

While appropriateness and relevance examine whether the intervention program's design (ToA) is appropriate for the issue it seeks to solve, fidelity examines how closely the program is being carried out as per its program theory, as well as whether any deviations have taken place and how they have affected the underlying assumptions of the ToA (Funnel and Rogers, 2011; Rossi et al, 2019).

To evaluate the impact of the intervention, the study assessed its effectiveness in meeting its intended objectives i.e., its contribution towards resolving the problem that gave rise to the intervention (Funnel and Rogers, 2011). Since the PDS lacks clear success criteria to judge its performance, the study employs few of the comparative tools outlined by Funnel and Rogers (2011). These include a comparison between program outcomes and objectives, actual program implementation and planned implementation, and program activities with standard codes of conduct. For triangulation reasons and to provide alternative viewpoints on outcomes, more than one comparative tool was utilized concurrently (Funnel and Rogers, 2011). To analyse the gender sensitivity of the PDS of basic goods (study objective 4), the study utilized a feminist policy analysis framework as discussed in the proceeding section.

#### 5.6.2 Feminist policy analysis framework

This is a systematic model or a set of questions that can be used to evaluate the compatibility of specific social welfare policies with the missions and goals of the welfare state as social justice, redistribution, or equity (Karger and Stoesz, 2018). Given the study's objective of investigating the gender sensitiveness of the PDS of basic goods, a feminist policy analysis framework is the most appealing method of analysis, because it provides a gender lens for the inquiry and helps to determine explicitly how women, in particular, are affected by policies (Kanenberg, 2013; Marshall, 1997, 1998; Mcphail, 2003).

A better understanding of social justice and current inequalities, such as how these policies govern and restrict the lives and societal roles of women, is prompted by exposing the underlying assumptions ingrained in regulations, including hidden biases in favour of the culturally and economically powerful groups (Kanenberg, 2013; Marshall, 1997, 1998; Mcphail, 2003). In so doing, it provides the evidence needed to prevent policymakers from making similar biased assumptions in the future (Mcphail, 2003).

In this study, a feminist policy analysis framework adopted from Mcphail (2003) was utilized as it makes a thorough attempt to develop a structured set of questions based on feminist values from various schools of thought to understand policies. The questions constituted in this framework are categorized under the following major themes of feminist analysis: language; context of policy; the myth of gender neutrality; equality; access to and assignment of power; and rights and responsibilities (Mcphail, 2003). The questions listed in Table 5.1 below, which were adopted from Mcphail's (2003) original list, were used to analyse the gender-responsiveness of PDS of basic goods.

Table 5:1: Feminist policy analysis framework: through a gender lens

SN.	Theme	Questions to raise
1	<b>Power analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are women involved in making, shaping, and implementing policy? In what ways were they involved? How were they included or excluded? Were the representatives of women selected by women?</li> </ul>
2	<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are women clearly visible in the policy?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does the policy take into account the social/cultural and economic realities of women's lives and lived experiences both now and in the past?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How is a policy that is not traditionally defined as a "women's issue" still a "women's issue?"</li> </ul>
3	<b>Gender neutrality &amp; Equality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the presumed gender neutrality hide the reality of the gendered nature of the problem or solution?</li> <li>• Does the policy achieve gender equality? Does the policy treat people differently to treat them equally well?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does the policy consider gender differences to create more equality?</li> </ul>

4	<b>Language</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does the language infer male dominance or female invisibility? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Are gendered expectations and language encoded in the policy?
5	<b>State-market control</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Are women's unpaid labour and work of caring considered a valued contribution or taken for granted? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the policy replace the patriarchal male with the patriarchal state?
6	<b>Rights and care/responsibility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Are women penalized for either their roles as wives, mothers or caregivers?
7	<b>Values</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Do any of the feminist values make the basis for the policy?

Source: adapted from Mcphail (2003)

### 5.6.3 Data collection process

The data collection process in qualitative research constitutes locating the research site, establishing rapport with participants, formulating appropriate sampling and data collection techniques, recording information, and storing data (Creswell, 2007). In the proceeding sections, a detailed description of the main activities that were involved in the data collection of the study is provided.

#### 5.6.3.1 *Locating the research site and identifying the target population*

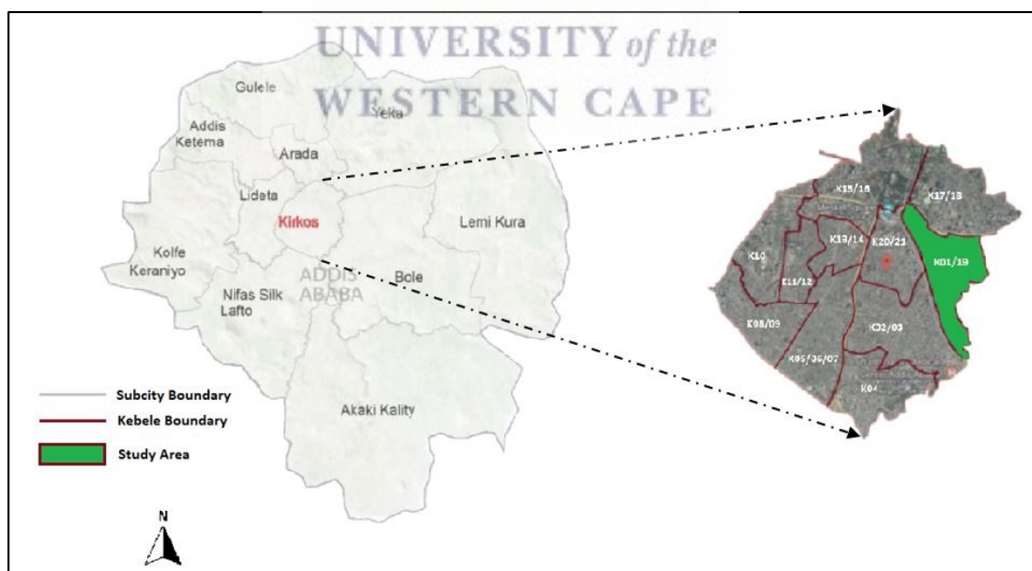
The research site of this case study is *Kirkos* sub-city in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. The sub-city was chosen on purpose because it is typical of Addis Ababa's underdeveloped metropolitan areas. According to the 2015/16 Ethiopian household consumption expenditure (HCE) survey, 14,3% of the residents of the sub-city belong to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and lower expenditure per capital quantiles<sup>78</sup> (CSA, 2018a). This means that their annual per capita expenditure is equal to or less than \$ 467,62 in the 2015/2016 average prices in Ethiopia (ibid.). With a daily expenditure per capita of 1,28, these segments of the population in the sub-city would be categorised under extremely poor as per the World Bank's international poverty threshold (Cruz et al., 2015).

<sup>78</sup> Household Expenditure Per Capita is useful for assessing the extent and distribution of the income dimension of poverty in developing economies like Ethiopia, where income data fails to capture economic well-being due to the exclusion of subsistence agriculture and the informal sector, and under-reporting of respondents (CSA, 2018a).

Previous studies have also shown that 80,9% of the inhabitants of the sub-city were food insecure, with 14, 6% of them experiencing severe food insecurity (Chanie, 2021). Despite significant variations at the *kebele* level, 74% of the residents of the sub-city expressed dissatisfaction with their quality of life (QoL), as determined by the crowdedness of their living conditions, their socioeconomic status, their proximity to various facilities, the safety of their neighbourhood, their housing, and other factors (Tesfazghi et al., 2010).

This is also true of *Keble* 01/19 residents in the sub-city, where the survey respondents were chosen. Of these, 55–66% reported dissatisfaction with their housing, sanitary conditions, and economic status (as determined by education, employment, and income status) (Tesfazghi et al., 2010). As indicated in Figure 5:1 below, this sub-city is located in the centre bordering *Arada*, *Yeka*, *Bole*, *Nifas Silk-Lafto*, and *Lideta* sub-cities. The data collection is conducted in Woreda 01, which is one of 10 woredas in the sub-city. The sub-city covers 14.62 square meters of land and is home to 235, 441 thousand residents, 53% of whom are women (Addis Ababa City Government, 2017).

Figure 5:1: Map of Kirkos sub-city



Source: Addis Ababa City Government (2022)

Popular landmarks in Kirkos sub-city include Addis Ababa stadium, *Meskel* square, and the National Palace (Addis Ababa City Government, 2017; Tesfazghi et al., 2010). It also hosts several federal government and Oromia regional government offices and agencies, and international organizations such as the office of the Organization for African Union (OAU) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (ibid.). The aforementioned survey also reveals that 55% of the sub-city's residents are engaged in economic activities<sup>79</sup>, with the bulk of those jobs being in the informal sector<sup>80</sup> (Cruz et al., 2015). About 30% are self-employed and 21% are employed by others (informal private enterprises) (CSA, 2018a). In terms of the type of activity, those engaged in wholesale and retail trades, and motor vehicle repairs make up the largest group i.e., 17,4%, followed by employment in private households at 12,6%, and construction at 11% (ibid.).

#### 5.6.3.2 *Sampling techniques*

As per the case study approach of the study, the sample selection process focused on cases that offer an opportunity to learn as opposed to being representative starting from the most accessible and convenient ones (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2005). Using Spradley's (1979) criteria, the study identified those informants and respondents who are thoroughly enculturated and are currently involved in and affected by the issues the study is trying to investigate and those who have adequate time to provide sufficient information. For this purpose, the study employed the snowball sampling technique, which involves identifying key informants who can purposefully inform the study before gradually expanding the sample to include more respondents through referral tactics. Accordingly, it identified key informants by posing questions such as 'Who knows a lot about \_\_\_\_?' or 'Who should I talk to?' as suggested by (Patton, 1990).

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<sup>79</sup> This refers to all members of the Households Ages 10 years and above who were engaged in Economic Activity during the last 12 months (CSA, 2018a).

<sup>80</sup> For the purposes of the survey, the informal sector comprises of unregistered, informal household enterprises employing less than 10 persons, that are engaged in marketed production (CSA, 2018a).

In line with its feminist epistemological principles, the study consciously recruited women beneficiaries of the PDS in the sample to be able to seek out their narrative of how rising food prices and government response initiatives affected them. In the selection of study participants, a deliberate effort was made to ensure balance and diversity of perspectives by incorporating multiple "cases within a case" (Stake, 2005). This was achieved by including women of varying ages, marital status, involvement in economic activity, and assignment in either public or private retail shops in the study sample. Even though the snowball sampling technique was utilised for recruiting women beneficiaries of the PDS and private retailers into the study sample, only specific personnel from government Agencies, and Bureaus were authorised to provide the information required by this study, hence, were approached directly.

The study participants were approached by an individual who resides in the same location and understands the specific socio-economic context. This individual served as what Creswell (2007) refers to, as a 'gatekeeper' in granting access for the researcher to the participants and building trust between them. In this case, the gatekeeper was a 38-year-old male, who was born and raised in the study area and is a respectable member of the community. He was somewhat familiar with several of the women study participants who were beneficiaries of the PDS, and hence was in a position to establish rapport and gain their confidence, which was vital to produce good-quality data. This person served as the study's initial point of contact in the study area, facilitating access to study participants by confirming their availability and scheduling interviews.

I have met the gatekeeper through my social network, who had previously participated in fieldwork and had a similar experience. He was recruited after an agreement regarding the financial reward was reached. Prior to the start of the data collection, the gatekeeper was informed about the purpose of the study, rationale behind choosing the study site, and specifics regarding the data collecting process such as where and how long it would take.

The target populations of this study were those women residents of *Keble* 01/19 in Kirkos sub-city who are potential beneficiaries<sup>81</sup> of the PSD of basic goods, and informants from implementing associations, enterprises, agencies, and bureaus both at *woreda* and the city level. The total number of study participants in the sample size was 25, of which only 3 were male as shown in Table 5.2 below. The small sample size of the study can be explained by its primary focus on closely examining how changes in food prices and government response initiatives affect poor women in particular. This is done by looking at the "process" or the "meanings" these women attribute to these issues given their current social situation as opposed to making blanket generalizations about the issue.

Table:5:2: Summary of study participants

Sn.	Participant groups/ Represented institutions	Sex	No. of participants	
			IDI	FGD
1	Women beneficiaries*	F	15	18
2	Registered retailers	M	2	-
3	Consumers' Cooperative societies/ Unions	F: 1 and M: 1	2	-
4	Addis Ababa Cooperative Agency	M	1	-
5	<i>Alle Bejimla</i>	F	1	-
6	Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau	M	1	-
	<b>Total</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>

Note: \* Some women beneficiaries took part in both IDIs and FGDs.

In-Depth-Interviews (IDIs) were conducted for 22 participants of which, 15 are women beneficiaries of the PDS, and 7 are representatives from the implementing institutions. Two rounds of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also held for 18 women, including 3 who did not take part in the IDIs. While the first group was composed of 10 relatively older (age 55 and above) retired women beneficiaries of the PDS, the second group was composed of 8 relatively younger women beneficiaries (below the age of 55), most of whom are engaged in economic activities<sup>82</sup>.

<sup>81</sup> This is in relation to the main objective of the PDS of basic goods which is to minimize the aftershocks of inflation, to stabilize the market and ensure accessibility of basic goods by those consumers in the low-, and middle-income quantile (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018a).

<sup>82</sup> They will be referred to as FGD1 and FGD2 hereafter.



### *5.6.3.3 Data collection techniques*

The use of multiple sources of data in qualitative research is justified by the need for replication and convergence to ensure the reliability of the research findings (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Accordingly, the former concept refers to the frequency of occurrences of a phenomenon across a place, time, context, and person while the latter refers to the convergence of a phenomenon across data gathered using multiple methods. This process of clarifying meaning or interpretation through multiple sources of evidence/perception of a phenomenon is referred to as triangulation (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2002). In the case study approach, triangulation is used to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings (Stake, 2005).

Towards ensuring its empirical adequacy as discussed in section 5.5 above, the study attempted to gather diverse narratives from a variety of participants, including poor women beneficiaries and implementers of the government response program including private retailers, government enterprises and officials at various levels. Primary data was gathered from the women participants on a wide range of issues, including their education, income, and employment status, various roles they play, intrahousehold decision-making power, how they are impacted and cope with food price increases, how they select food retail outlets, and how they evaluate the PDS's services. The study also collected primary data regarding the government intervention program against food inflation from implementing actors at various levels including private retailers, distributors, importers and officials at government Bureaus.

Similarly, its determination towards solving the power discrepancy in the creation of knowledge is also apparent in its choice of data collection techniques. That is, it employed IDIs and FGDs constituting semi-structured, open-ended questions to create an atmosphere, where respondents freely express their opinions and ask for explanations when needed (Babbie and Mouton, 2012; Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Yin, 2002). The use of PRA tools in FGDs was particularly advantageous in capacitating disadvantaged groups to express themselves more effectively (Chambers, 2007).

Through the use of these tools, poor women beneficiaries were allowed to be the knowers in the process of mapping, diagramming, sorting, scoring, and analysing information in the study. These tools are also ideal in reversing power relations<sup>83</sup> between interviewers and interviewees by empowering the latter who could be poor, weak, and marginalized to express themselves better (Chambers, 2007).

The researcher who speaks *Amharic*<sup>84</sup> translated the IDI and FGD instructions into it, and the interviews were also conducted in that language. The IDIs and FGDs took 45 minutes to an hour to complete. The study has also utilized secondary data sources i.e., a review of existing documents for corroborating findings from primary data sources. These three data collection techniques that were utilized in the study are elaborated further below.

#### □ In-Depth Interviews (IDI)

IDI allows well-informed respondents to directly provide their insights about an issue as they perceive and interpret it (Babbie and Mouton, 2012; Yin, 2002). The process involves a friendly, guided, and extensive conversation between the researcher and the respondent through which the institutional constraints and the complex processes behind certain outcome variables are revealed (Peterson and Lewis, 1999; Yin, 2002). Beyond answering the 'What' question of research, IDI allows for further probing through the 'Why' and 'How' questions i.e., the actual process of constructing opinions and standpoints in the minds of the respondents (Babbie and Mouton, 2012).

The study's interview guides were informed by the theoretical proposition of this study i.e., feminist economics, and constituted semi-structured, open-ended questions that were flexible enough to allow for modifications by the researcher during the data collection process. It granted the researcher some level of control over the direction and content of the discussion without limiting respondents from elaborating on the subject.

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<sup>83</sup> Chambers (2007) refers to the interviewers as the 'uppers and the interviewees as the 'lowers' to indicate the power difference between the two in terms of both and relationship context.

<sup>84</sup> *Amharic* is as a language serves as a lingua-franca in Ethiopia (Meyer 2006).

Besides, this data collection technique has allowed the researcher to provide more information and explanation for respondents about the questions during the interview process. Given the paucity of previous research work on the non-marketed and gendered aspect of economic crisis, open-ended questions proved ideal for exploring basic and in-depth information on the subject of inquiry. Most of the IDIs with the women respondents took place at their homes to make them feel comfortable enough to talk freely. On the other hand, other informants from the government offices and retail shops were interviewed either at their place of work or any other convenient location. Three different interview guides were used for the three different groups of respondents i.e., women beneficiaries of the intervention program, registered retailers, and informants from implementing enterprises and government Bureaus. The interview guides for the various groups can be referred to from Appendices II and IV.

The interview guides for women beneficiaries of the intervention program in particular covered issues related to demography, employment, household income and wealth, migration history, consumption goods, and their outlets, evaluation of the services of the PDS and its implementing enterprises, the effect of food price increments, and coping mechanisms. The first few questions in the interview guideline regarding their marital status and migration history helped collect the life histories of women participants providing vital context for the study.

As illustrated in Table 5.3 below, the ages of the study participants ranged between 33 and 65, with the average age being 51 years. In terms of marital status, 8 of the women who were interviewed are widowed, 6 are still married, and one has never been married. Among the 15 women participants who were interviewed, 13 migrated to Addis from rural areas mainly from *Wollo* and *Gondar*. Nonetheless, all participants on average have been residents in Addis for close to 3/4<sup>th</sup> of their lives. Reasons for migrating to Addis varied from the curiosity of modern life and better living standard to searching for better education and work opportunities to be able to support oneself and family members back home.

Despite the fact that the participants' educational backgrounds range from none at all to tertiary-level degrees, 11 and 13 of them, respectively, have not finished their primary and secondary education.

Table 5:3 Background information on the IDI participants

Code name	Age	Marriage status	Education * Level	Employment status	Migration history	Years of residence in A.A.
P1	64	Married	14	Retired/ Pensioner	<i>Tigray</i>	52
P2	58	Widowed	4	Safety Net	<i>Wollo - Amhara</i>	40
P3	50	Widowed	4	IGA** + Safety Net	<i>Gondar - Amhara</i>	30
P4	35	Widowed	2	employed + Safety Net	<i>Gondar - Amhara</i>	24
P5	55	Married	6	Safety Net	<i>Wollo - Amhara</i>	42
P6	45	Single	0	Domestic work + Safety Net	<i>Wollo - Amhara</i>	27
P7	50	Married	3	Safety Net	<i>Gondar - Amhara</i>	40
P8	62	Married	3	Safety Net	<i>Wollo - Amhara</i>	45
P9	53	Widowed	4	Employed (Government job)	<i>Wollo - Amhara</i>	46
P10	49	Widowed	10	Safety Net	<i>Addis Ababa</i>	
P11	65	Widowed	1	Safety Net	<i>Gelan - Oromia</i>	45
P12	61	Widowed	12	Retired/Pensioner	<i>Addis Ababa</i>	
P13	50	Widowed	1	IGA + Safety Net	<i>Gurage - SNNPR</i>	47
P14	36	Married	10	IGA + Safety Net	<i>Addis Ababa</i>	
P15	33	Married	3	Domestic work	<i>Wollo - Amhara</i>	20
<b>Average</b>	<b>51,07</b>		<b>5,13</b>			

\*Educational status was measured by the number of years spent in school starting from primary school/ the 1<sup>st</sup> grade

\*\* Income Generating Activities (IGAs)

During the IDIs, the women were allowed to do most of the talking while the researcher nods to show that she is “listening carefully, discerningly, and intently”, probing for further clarifications, when necessary, as advised in feminist research methods (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 134).

#### □ Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD is another essential primary data source that involves an interview and a discussion with 12 or fewer respondents on specific topics under investigation in the presence of a researcher (Peterson and Lewis, 1999). This technique has the advantage of encouraging more interactions and discussions among participants through which relevant issues are identified and formalized in a collective forum (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Creswell, 2007; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). This method allows for observing how participants communicate, how ideas are shaped and reshaped, and the divergence or convergence between their opinions, and experiences (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

The purpose of FGDs, as per feminist economics research methods, is to foster the flow of diverse ideas from all members rather than to reach a consensus (Staveren, 1997). Instead of maintaining a detached and objective stance, the researcher is required to acknowledge the diversity, complexity, and unpredictability of interpretations of social life, as well as recognize the (gendered) interests and values inherent in study concepts, including hers/his own (ibid.).

FGDs are also a way of embedding the research into the social and historical context by incorporating the agents' experiences and their interpretations from the start, thereby defying the distinction between theorization and empirical work. The study employed PRA tools in the FGDS, that are championed for simplifying realities that are cumbersome and difficult to express verbally through the use of visual and tangible aids (Chambers, 2007). Among existing PRA tools, Venn diagrams, resource cards, daily activity (routine) clocks, timelines, and pair-wise rankings were used to illuminate relevant information with regard to the research questions and the case under investigation. Table 5.4 below illustrates how these tools were used in the study.

In line with the ideological and epistemological principles of the PRA, the researcher has only taken a facilitator role during these exercises, with the goal of learning from the perceptual experience.

Once again, great care was taken to not influence outcomes by keeping the questions open-ended, steering clear of loaded, ambiguous and questions and suggestive questions, and allowing participants to narrate their stories however they saw fit. For the FGD guides and a pictorial illustration of women respondents utilizing PRA tools during FGDs, Appendix V and VI can be referred to respectively.

#### □ Literature Review/Documentation

The study reviewed existing documents such as government reforms, proclamations, periodical reports, and other relevant studies from different government institutions such as the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI), the ETE, and the Central Statistical Agency (CSA). These secondary sources of data include “Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform No. 2/2013”, “Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform No. 2/2016”, “Subsidized Basic Goods Business Linkage, Allotment and Distribution Reform No. 01/2018”<sup>85</sup>, “Trade Competition and Consumers’ Protection Proclamation No. 813/2013”, the “Trade System Reform Program of 2011”, and the “Cooperative Societies Proclamation No. 985/2016” (Addis Ababa City Administration, 2011; Addis Ababa City Administration Trade Bureau, 2018, 2016, 2013; FDRE, 2016a, 2014). Academic literature, other studies and news articles on the subject were also utilized to corroborate the study findings.

This was done to gain an overall understanding of the case under investigation i.e., the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa including its targeted beneficiaries, objectives, strategies, and implementing Agencies and Bureaus. The information gathered from these sources was used to compile a Program Theory for the intervention program, which then was used to conduct a theory-driven evaluation of the as discussed 5.6.1. In line with the case study approach, the data gathered from the existing literature is used for supporting the evidence that is collected using IDI and FGDs, and for identifying issues for further investigation (Yin, 2002).

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<sup>85</sup> This is referred as the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018 in short from this point forward.

Further, it has the advantage of stability even if it is reviewed multiple times, unobtrusiveness, providing all the necessary details, and having broad coverage (ibid.). Table 5.4 below illustrates the independent variable/s, collected data, method of data collection and analysis techniques utilised for each of the four objectives of this study.



Table 5:4 Matrix linking independent variables, required data, and data collection tools and analysis techniques

Research Objectives	Independent variables	Acquired data	Data collection methods	Data Analysis techniques
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of human capital investment and perceived</li> <li>• Bargaining power</li> </ul>	<p>Women participants'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Years of schooling,</li> <li>• Reasons for not continuing with education (if that is the case),</li> <li>• Perceived impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDI</li> </ul>	<p>Analyzing women's perception and articulation of their needs/interests, priorities and contributions based on their lived realities</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender roles/ time-use</li> <li>• Bargaining power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The type, and extent (volume) of (paid and unpaid) labour hours provided by poor women on average in the household, community and the market,</li> <li>• Factors behind women's labour time allocation decisions and the reasons behind,</li> <li>• Perceived impacts on women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDI</li> <li>• FGD (PRA tool utilized)</li> </ul> <p>Through the use of the Daily activity clocks, where women recollect how they typically spend their time on average within 24 hours with the help of pictures, symbols and cards.</p> <p>The use of Venn Diagrams to identify and measure the extent of factors that influence women's time allocation decisions</p>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entitlement and control over family income and assets</li> <li>• Bargaining power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's perceived level of decision-making power over family income and assets compared to their spouses, and the reasons behind it,</li> <li>• Differences in income spending priorities between women and their spouses,</li> <li>• Perceived impacts on women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDI</li> <li>• FGD (PRA tool utilized)</li> </ul> <p>Resource Cards were utilized to analyse which resources of the household belong to women and which ones do not and why it is so.</p>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's share of the burden of coping with food inflation</li> <li>• Bargaining power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effect of inflation on households</li> <li>• Whether women are affected differently than the other members of the household,</li> <li>• The reasons and motivation for such behaviours and actions of women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDI</li> <li>• FGD (PRA tool utilized)</li> </ul> <p><u>The use of timelines:</u> Participants were presented with an illustration of four food groups (animal-sources of food, legumes, vegetables and fruits), and they were asked to indicate the variety of their diet and how it changes within the course of the year (across the four seasons) by putting bids in cups placed in each box. Participants put one, two and three bids to indicate that they have consumed specific food components "occasionally", "sometimes", and "regularly" respectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysing food provisioning strategies,</li> <li>• Experience-based measures of inflation led-food insecurity, its consequences and adaptation techniques women employ</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coping techniques of women</li> <li>• Bargaining power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's range of responses to food inflation and their consequences</li> <li>• What factors influence women's choice of coping techniques</li> </ul>		

3	Effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the PDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The level of adherence of the program implementation in the execution of program functions,</li> <li>• The extent of success in reaching targeted customers, and delivery of services to affect the anticipated changes with the program design and appropriate standards of procedure.</li> </ul>		Theory-Based Evaluation
	Effectiveness of the PDS in achieving targeted outcomes	<p>Assessing whether the program achieves the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability: stability in supply,</li> <li>• Accessibility (price) of the basic goods to cushion the targeted beneficiaries (including women) from the harmful consequences of rising food prices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDI</li> <li>• FGD (PRA tool utilized)</li> <li>• Review of literature</li> </ul>	
4	Responsiveness of PDS to the gendered needs of poor women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's motivations behind their choice of market outlets for food,</li> <li>• whether the service of the PDS meets women's requirements</li> <li>• Degree of women's involvement in the intervention program, whether their contributions,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDI</li> <li>• FGD</li> </ul> <p>The use of Pair-wish ranking tool to analyse how much women value the various features of food retail shops - quality, price, volume,</p>	Feminist policy analysis framework

		<p>needs, and limitations resulting from their economic and sociocultural realities were recognized and taken into account when defining the food inflation problem, formulating its mitigation strategies, and putting those strategies into practice, and how that affected the program's outcomes.</p>	<p>availability/supply time, customer service, location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of literature</li> </ul>	
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#### 5.6.3.4 Recording procedure

The recording procedure in qualitative research design includes observational field notes, journals, interview write-ups, mapping, photographing, sound recording, and collecting hard and soft copies of documents (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2007). The researcher recorded all the IDI and FGD conducted in the study by audiotapes, took handwritten notes and photos of results of PRA-related exercises. Once again, these data were later translated to English and transcribed by the researcher. The computer software program ATALS.ti 8.4.3 was used as a database to save, organize, and retrieve audio files and transcripts of interviews and FGDS, memos and photographs during the field study. Hard-copy notes from each IDI were also kept in a box file. This ensures the reliability of the study since there exists a formal, presentable, and verifiable database that can be easily retrieved, and by maintaining a chain of evidence (Yin, 2002).

#### 5.6.4 Data analysis and presentation procedure

The mass of words and signals from participants generated through the data collection process needs to be described, summarised and interpreted to bring order and understanding (Creswell, 2007; Klamer, 1995; Taylor-Powell and Renner, 2003). The data analysis procedure in the study involved a circle/spiral process through which data is closely scrutinized, mapped, annotated, coded<sup>86</sup>, classified and relationships visualized, interpreted and presented. There were no clear-cut lines between these various steps as commonly happens in a qualitative study, as they can be interrelated and conducted simultaneously (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2005). The coding process of the data analysis, in particular, required a lot of reading and rereading, becoming an “adventures experience” as described by Staveren (1997, p.132).

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<sup>86</sup> Coding is the process of organizing and labelling data into categories based on a certain classification criterion for the purpose of describing, classifying, interpreting, and presenting in figures, tables, or a discussion (Creswell, 2009, 2007)

The use of the analytical software ATLAS.ti 8.4.3 made the data analysis process much more efficient by making it easier to go back and forth in the analytical circle between documents, codes, notes, and memos allowing for creating, deleting, merging, and splitting of codes and code groups. Further, the use of this application software facilitated generation and export of reports into word documents for analysis and interpretation. As can be referred from Appendix VI, a total of 67 codes were created in the aforementioned computer program, which were then grouped into 13 code groups. This was done to allow the raw data to pass through multiple levels of abstraction to acquire experiential knowledge and make assertions about the case as commended by the case study approach (Stake, 2005). Among the common techniques of the case study analysis, establishing patterns, looking for correspondence between two or more categories, explanation building, and the use of logic models were utilized in the study (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2002).

For interpreting study findings, strategies used in deconstruction analysis were also used to illuminate multiple perspectives, including the voices of disempowered groups (Martin, 1990). Rejecting the false dichotomy between the private world of women and the public world of men, deconstruction strategies permit examining and analysing what was also left unsaid, implicit meanings, metaphors, and sources of bias (ibid.). The study employed text and figurative descriptive methods and narration to present its findings. This was done with the view that the only way to understand anything human, including feminist concerns in economic practice, is through storytelling (Klamer, 1995; Strassmann and Polyani, 1995).

The rhetorical assumption of qualitative study dictates for the language of the research be literal, and informal, and include the personal voice of the participants through the use of first-person pronouns, and engaging narratives (Creswell, 2007). With this in mind, direct quotations from the study participants are presented in the finding of the study. Enclosed in the presentation of the study's findings are all the evidence represented by multiple quotations from respondents, and possible interpretations that may be made by drawing on existing knowledge and subject-matter expertise of contemporary thinking and discourse, as is typical in high-quality qualitative data analysis (Yin, 2002).

Presenting all available evidence through multiple quotations allows the presentation of multiple narratives and motivations, thereby demonstrating the study's ontological heterogeneity as discussed in section 5.3 above (Creswell, 2007).

#### 5.6.5 The Researcher's Role and Reflexivity

As discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, knowledge creators are not value-neutral, but "positioned" by their cultural, social, gender, class, and political standing. Researchers are embodied within the research they conduct through their instrumental and co-constructive role in the design, data collection, interpretation, and presentation of findings, or through their subjective construction of "truth" (Creswell, 2007; Cullenberg et al., 2001; Pezalla et al., 2012).

Hence, researchers should critically investigate and acknowledge their assumptions, beliefs, and how they are implicated in the studies they conduct (Cullenberg et al., 2001; Harding, 1986, 1987a, 1987b; Stanley and wise, 1990). This is also per the axiological assumptions of a qualitative study that prescribes for the researcher's values that shape the study to be recognized and openly discussed (Creswell, 2007). With this in mind, I would like to clarify my values and position as a researcher that may have influenced my perception and interpretations in this study. My mother, who played a vital role in shaping my values, made me aware of the unique challenges of Ethiopian women at an early age. My work experience in development, and gender-sensitive projects, in particular, have provided me with an opportunity to see intervention programs critically from the perspective of poor women.

In keeping with the process/organicist worldview of this study, I am conscious that, as a consumer and a woman living in the same city most of her life, I do share some of the experiences of the women participants of the study, hence, I am an intrinsic part of the reality that I am investigating. Furthermore, an acknowledgement of my role as an instrument of research means understanding that the conversational spaces during qualitative interviews are impacted by factors more than words spoken (Pezalla et al., 2012).

I may have impacted the research outcome in the following ways, according to a self-reflexology of my interview style, role in the study, and gender. Disclosing my position as a PhD researcher to study participants, in the beginning, may have created a safe conversational space to be able to speak freely about government policies without fear of a repercussion. Similarly, my identity as a woman and the associated perception of me as an empathetic listener may have helped to foster an implicit understanding between myself and the women participants of the study, particularly in discussions related to gender power dynamics.

I imagine that some of the participants might have been discouraged or humiliated to be forthright about the magnitude of their hardships assuming that I would not comprehend given my middle-income economic class position. But despite being an "outsider," my years of professional experience with people in comparable economic situations have trained me to assure the research participants that I am a sensitive and sympathetic listener. Also, the presence of the gatekeeper in all IDIs and FGDS, who is perceived as "one of them" in terms of both geography and economic status, has served to ease any potential tensions between the research participants and myself.

The audio recordings of the interviews and FGDS revealed that as a researcher, my tone as an interviewer was mostly neutral, and my reactions to respondents' answers were limited to "aha" and "okay", except for the occasional words of empathy and encouragement. This may have made it easier to get more specific information from the study participants. At times, when short answers are given by respondents for lack of vocabulary to create a private account because the idea seems novel or different from what they know in the public account as indicated by Wilson (1991), I have taken an interpretive role to facilitate a more elaborated conversation. For example, women who were not employed in the market to earn income found it difficult to describe their contribution to the family since the dominant ideology refers to such women as unproductive. Hence, I have assisted them in developing a language to communicate their unique experiences and roles within the family through the use of interpretive questions in the IDIs and Daily activity (routine) clocks from PRA tools in the FGDS.

Nevertheless, while I acknowledge the subjectivity of my lens in perception and interpretation of reality, I have made a conscious effort to be as self-reflective as possible by presenting all evidence collected in the study from multiple sources.

### **5.7 Study limitations**

In line with the provisional realism ontological assumption of the study, the reality and the researcher's influence on it is much more complicated and broader than it can consciously be seen, heard and understood (Nelson, 2003a, 2003c). Hence, the study should be understood as only presenting a “throb of experience” on how poor women living in A.A are affected by high food prices and government response programs. The qualitative case study approach adopted in the study is focused on gaining an optimum understanding of the particular case of the PDS of basic goods and its women beneficiaries in Addis Ababa through an extension of experience and drawing lessons from it without making generalizations beyond that (Stake, 2005).

In addition, since the study is exclusively focused on how poor women in Addis Ababa are impacted by food inflation and government response programs, it is unknown how wealthier households and men are also impacted. Further, the study presents a snapshot of the case under investigation, hence interpreting all observed behaviours of women as reactions to the food prices crisis and government intervention programs might be challenging for lack of a similar study that can be used as a reference point.

### **5.8 Ethics Considerations**

Ethical considerations in qualitative research include recognizing and being sensitive to one's subjectivity as a researcher, the power balance between the researcher and the research participants, and respecting research participants and their opinions (Creswell, 2007). Respecting research participants entails valuing their opinions and the time and effort they spend in the research, and the risks they are taking by revealing information (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2005). Thus, issues of consent, reciprocity, and confidentiality must be duly considered.



Following the university's rules, this study was first approved by the Higher Degrees Committee of the Faculty of Economics and then by the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) of UWC, to ensure that it conforms to the ethical standards of social science research. The ethics approval letter is attached in Appendix VII. Once on the ground, before embarking on the data collection process, potential respondents were briefed about the objectives of the research and the data collection process.

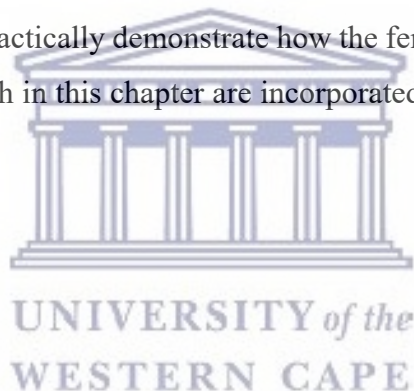
A letter of support/an information sheet from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) explaining the objectives of the research, the researcher's academic affiliation with the institution, and the benefits, and risks posed by the study to the participants was presented to each interviewee. This was done to obtain the participants' informed consent, align everyone's expectations, and narrow the power gap between the respondents and the researcher. This information sheet also provided assurances that the rights of participants and the confidentiality of the information they provide during the study would be respected. For more information Appendices VIII- XI can be referred to. This was followed by seeking and gaining the participants' written consent to take part in the research and allowing data to be recorded through audio and photographs. Respondents were given the assurance that their anonymity would be protected, and that any information provided would be kept private, particularly during IDIs to reduce the danger of exposure. Participants in the FGDs also signed an agreement to keep confidential all information divulged during the group discussions.

The letter of consent for the various group of participants can be referred to in appendices XII-XV. As a token of appreciation for the time and effort participants spent in the research, they were provided with a compensation in the form of food vouchers worth \$7,31. In consideration of the culture of the research site, bottled water, and some refreshments were provided during interviews. Moreover, during the entire course of the data collection process, every effort was made to ensure that participants do not feel pressured or violated and that the social norms are respected.

To maintain academic honesty, all consulted literature during the course of this study was cited using the Harvard reference method, thereafter, properly accredited in the reference list by utilizing the referencing computer program Zotero 6.0.9.

## 5.9 Chapter Summary

The guiding feminist concepts in the study's philosophical premises, methodology, and research design including data collection, analysis, and presentation procedures, are described and justified in this chapter. The feminist features of the research methodology are shown in its "situational" understanding of scientific endeavour, which takes into account the power dynamics at play in the creation of knowledge, its emphasis on the experiences of women, and its concern for the implications of science for women, including how it affects their provisioning of essential services. It also demonstrated its reflexivity by duly acknowledging the values of the researcher and how they may have affected the research. The proceeding chapters practically demonstrate how the feminist ideals that have been discussed in great depth in this chapter are incorporated into the research and their findings.



## CHAPTER 6 : Gendered roles and multiple deprivations of women in Addis Ababa

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings with regards to the gendered constraints faced by women in *Kirkos* sub-city of Addis Ababa concerning their multiple and conflicting gendered roles and lack of bargaining power in household decisions, and the resulting time poverty, and material and non-material deprivation of wealth. It also explores how these disadvantages interact with one another to entrap them into a vicious cycle of interrelated deprivations. It starts by providing background information on the study participants. Following this, the gender-specific challenges of these women relating to their multiple roles, their poor education and their lack of entitlement over income and assets are outlined.

### 6.2 Background information on the participants in the study

As mentioned in Chapter 5, 13/15 women who were interviewed indicated that they migrated from other regions to the capital city A.A at some point their lives. Reasons for migrating to Addis varied from the curiosity of modern life and better living standard to searching for better education and work opportunities to be able to support oneself and family members back home.

This is exemplified by the following quotes:

*"I came here to study and to help a relative with the housework as a maid". (P7: 11.07.18)*

*"I came from a rural area because a family member sent a message to my family promising to allow me to go to school". (P6: 10.07.18)*

*"I came here to work and help my mother". (P15: 27.07.18)*

*"I came to my aunt in Addis Ababa when I was 14/15 to study" (P5:10.07.18)*

The one significantly visible pattern among many participants is that most of them came after or followed a family member to Addis Ababa, who initially hosted them and assisted in their settlement.

### 6.2.1 Migration history and educational attainment

As mentioned in section 5.6.3.3, 13/15 women who were interviewed indicated that they migrated from other regions to the capital city, A.A at some point their lives. Reasons for migrating to Addis varied from the curiosity of modern life and better living standard to searching for better education and work opportunities to be able to support oneself and family members back home. This is exemplified by the following quotes:

*“I came here to study and to help a relative with the housework as a maid”. (P7: 11.07.18)*

*“I came from a rural area because a family member sent a message to my family promising to allow me to go to school”. (P6: 10.07.18)*

*“I came here to work and help my mother”. (P15: 27.07.18)*

*“I came to my aunt in Addis Ababa when I was 14/15 to study” (P5:10.07.18)*

The one significantly visible pattern among many of the study participants is that most of them came after or followed a family member to Addis Ababa, who initially hosted them and assisted in their settlement. There is a considerable difference in educational attainment between those women born in rural areas and those born in Addis Ababa. Table 5.3 shows that, on average, the educational attainment of women born in rural areas is grade 2,8, while it is grade 11,5 (which is the final year of high school) for those born in Addis Ababa. Hence, the educational attainment of women born in Addis Ababa on average is higher by 8,7 years than those of women born in rural areas. This finding is in line with the official educational statistics of the country which also indicates that there are considerable gaps between rural and urban areas (PDC, 2018). That is, in 2016, the net primary school enrolment and the net secondary school enrolment in urban areas were 15% and 65% higher than in rural areas respectively (PDC, 2018).

The finding of this study seems to suggest that the main reasons behind the low-level education enrolment rate of the study participants who are born and raised in rural parts of the country can be summarized as the unavailability of educational facilities, the lack of time and energy due to the double/triple demands of their multiple roles, lack of parental awareness, and for economic reasons.

The problems relating to access to education facilities are reflected in the following testimonies of study participants:

*“Back then in rural areas, there was no education. There were not many teachers... at the time rural parts of the country there was no education. To reach the nearest schools, you would have to walk for 3-4 hours”. (P3: 09.07.18)*

*“I did not go to school. There was no education in rural areas”. (P7:11.07.18)*

Access to formal education was very low in Ethiopia prior to the Socialist revolution with only 18% of the total population having been enrolled in primary education by 1974 (The World Bank Group, 2019). As a result, most Ethiopians who were born in the 1950s missed out on education during their early childhood years. Women had even lesser access to education compared to men i.e., in 1974, the gross enrolment ratio in primary education for females stood at 11% to males 24% (The World Bank Group, 2019). Most people of that generation only accessed primary education for the first time during the National Primary Literacy Campaign (1979 – 91) of the *Derg* regime (Kenea, 2014). The gender gap in educational attainment is still prevalent in the country (World Bank, 2021a).

The study also found that 6 out of 15 of the study participants had the opportunity to be enrolled in primary education only after getting married and forming a family during the aforementioned National literacy campaign. This hints at the underlying time, energy and financial pressure that married women and mothers have to face when investing in their human capital. The following excerpts from interview transcripts clearly illustrate this issue:

*“I have learnt until grade 3 after getting married. Then when I gave birth, the education and the degree were stopped...the children won't be raised properly. They will suffer. I will suffer”. (P4: 09.07.18)*

*“I was raising children. When I started studying, I gave birth. So, I stopped to give my time to my children”. (P8: 11.07.18)*

*“I was very eager for education. But giving birth put an end to that”. (P8: 11.07.18)*

This is consistent with previous findings that indicated that the multiple roles of women and the resulting time pressure deprive women of the opportunity to peruse their education (Agarwal, 1997; Fairchild, 2003; Home, 1993; Mehra and Rojas, 2008; Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997; Grapard, 2001).

The time pressure seems to get particularly worse for poor and widowed women who face relatively stronger pressure from the demands of their multiple and more inflexible roles, hence more difficulty in perusing their education. One woman explains why she was not able to progress with her education as follows:

*“Because I am raising my children on my own, I was unable to further my education. My husband has passed away”. (P12: 24.07.18)*

This seems to insinuate that for married women to stay in school they needed the support of their husbands or other family members, which had not always materialized. The following quote from an interviewee in the study attests to this view:

*As you know men are not willing to support their wives' education. My late husband did not want me to continue with my studies...I attempted to withstand this influence and continue my education for 3 months, but he was still not willing. So, I had to stop. (P10: 19.07.18)*

Husbands can discourage their wives' investment in human capital directly by forbidding them or indirectly by being unwilling to share some of the work burdens related to housework, childcare and community management. This is elaborated in further detail in section 6.4.1.1 under the discussion regarding the time poverty of poor women. In line with findings by Home (1993), the study indicated that the lack of cooperation from other family members could be one of the main challenges of adult women learners. The chances for poor women with families who are involved in IGAs to invest in their education seems even slimmer as their time and energy are already constrained by the double demands of their childcare and housework, and market work. The following quotes from the interview transcripts of the study confirm this finding:

*“...with children and sitting and working at the shop until the evening collecting 0,05 and 0, 25 cent coins, how can I study?” (P13: 27.07.18)*

*I was raising children; I have cooperative work and I do whatever work that I get. Also in the afternoon, I work whenever I am called. Therefore, I could not manage all this work while studying. I studied for a year and I dropped out...I had restarted studying here on the night shift, but when things didn't work out with my work, I had to quit it. (P15: 27.07.18)*

These challenges of adult women learners persist even though, evening classes are conducted in public schools in many urban parts of the country to accommodate less privileged citizens, who are unable to join the regular daytime education system (Worku, 2014). This finding is in line with Mehra and Rojas (2008) argument that women who are facing time pressures due to their multiple roles are forced to sacrifice their long-term human capital investments. Further, the type of labour-intensive jobs poor women in Addis Ababa tend to occupy such as domestic labour gives the impression that it is incompatible with their self-development efforts. Women participants in the study explained the reason why they could not continue their education as follows:

*“I used to be a domestic worker and my employers were not willing to let me study. I was hired as a babysitter”. (P7: 11.07.18)*

*“I could not (study further). I used to be a cook for soldiers in the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade of a military camp i.e., at Tatek in Addis Ababa I was 16....it is the nature of the job that could not allow me (to study). We worked all day”. (P9: 12.07.18)*

This is an indication of study participants believe that parental awareness about the benefits of educating children is much lower in rural areas than in urban areas. This is evident in the statements below:

*“Education was not popular then...If I was born in Addis, I would have been educated and led a better life. Where I came from the awareness about education is very low”. (P7: 11.07.18)*

*“Parents in Addis send their children to school no matter how poor they are. But that was not the situation in rural areas... If she (my mother) was a woman from the city she would have known the value of education”. (P3: 11.07.18)*

The study has found that the other important determinant of school enrolment for girls and women is the cost related to it. Even though primary and secondary education is provided free of charge in all government-owned schools in Ethiopia, classes conducted in the evening attract some fees (World Bank, 2005). Moreover, there are also expenses related to stationery, books and transportation.

For poor women, these expenses might be unaffordable as can be understood from the following response of the study participant:

*I also couldn't ...to be able to care for the children... I got married at the military camp in 1975. I gave birth to one child while I was still at the military camp and I gave birth to two more once I was out of the camp...The money was not enough...My salary was only 43 Birr. He (my husband) was also earning only Birr 80<sup>87</sup>. He was a soldier. (P9: 12.07.18)*

*"Because of my income status. I was married and with children". (P2:5.07.18)*

This finding confirms previous studies conducted by Home (1993) and Fairchild (2003) that have identified access to finance as playing a big role in the educational attainment of women learners. Further, there are opportunity costs related to education in the form of forgone income that could have been earned if time was spent in IGAs instead. The following responses from study participants to the question of why they have not gone further in their studies attest to this statement:

*"It is for economic reasons; otherwise, education was available. I used to collect wood and sell it". (P15: 27.07.18)*

This is particularly true for poor households who depend on their children's income to ensure their food security. One woman said:

*"My father died when I was still young...I am the older one (of two children) ...he (my brother) was just a child. I was the one who was expected) to (can help. She (her mother) was not in good health. I was the one helping her". (P15: 27.07.18)*

Regarding this, the study found that child labour in household work and childcare is usually reserved for girls, sometimes at the cost of their education. The following response of the study participant can be referred to as an example:

*"Even though my father wanted to send me to school, my mother refused because she needed my help with the chores around the house". (P4: 09.07.18)*

This finding is consistent with Anker's (2000) concern that child labour can be incompatible with the schooling of children, especially if it involves excessive and full-time work. The work burden of mothers is so profound that, they are forced to rely on their daughters' labour time even at the cost of their education.

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<sup>87</sup> The USD equivalent of ETB 80,00 ETB 40,00 were \$9,6 and \$ 5,16 respectively, during the time the study participant was referring to (which is estimated to be 1998), calculated at the annual average exchange rate of the time which was 1ETB= \$ 0,12.



Alternatively, this finding can be explained by the mother-daughter sex-typing<sup>88</sup> gender reproduction of roles and responsibilities in the family (Goodnow, 1988; Hochschild and Machung, 2003).

### 6.2.2 Income and employment status

The participants found it difficult to state the exact amount of their monthly income, mainly due to the informal nature of their jobs and the irregularity in income that follows. The following quote exemplifies this situation:

*I swear to God, I do not make much money. I do not have a lot of business. Sometimes, I sell charcoal and then I stop. Some commodities are not easily sellable, like kitchen utensils. In a week, I may only sell one or two utensils. So, I cannot say I make this much money. I just eat whatever I make with the children. (P13: 27.07.18)*

As evident in the quote below, the fact that money may be coming from a source other than them and spent directly on whatever is needed could be another explanation for why the participants in the study were unable to confidently state their monthly income.

*“It is my child who covers my expenses. I do not know my monthly expense”. (P11: 24.07.18)*

This hints at the existing social support system in the family and community that is serving as social protection for low-income families. Poor women mainly rely on their adult children, siblings and neighbours to cope with food insecurity and shocks in income. Here are examples demonstrating this observation:

*“He (the first child) is the one who gives me money. I am here because of him”. (P11: 24.07.18)*

*“During the holidays, my brothers give me money for butter and chicken. Since my husband passed away, one (brother) gives me money for chicken and the other one for vegetables during the holidays”. (P10: 19.07.18)*

*“It is my sisters (neighbours) who are assisting me. Especially for the sick child, my neighbours have not abandoned me since he got sick. They know the depth of my problem”. (P11: 24.07.18)*

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<sup>88</sup> Sex typing or gender reproduction denotes a situation where children perform chores typically performed by the parent who is the same sex as them i.e., daughters executing tasks usually performed by their mothers, which results in the gender segregation of labour in children in the same way to that of their parents (Blair, 1992; Goodnow, 1988; Hochschild and Machung, 2003).

The study also found that, despite being poor, women still provide support to their extended families. To the question of how they ended up raising their sibling's children, women participants in the study have the following to say:

*“That is because they (my siblings) are even poorer than me. Their mother is sick and they have other problems too. I brought them (my brother's children) because I believe I was in a better position”. (P13: 27.07.18)*

*“My sister is deceased...I care for her child more than I care for mine”. (P14: 27.07.18)*

This shows how human relations based on kinship, intracommunity or a shared sense of identity, which is also referred to as bonding social capital is vital in improving the resilience of poor urban dwellers to food insecurity, and thereby individual and social well-being (Mpanje et al., 2018; Woolcock, 2005). The study has identified some of the main expenses of the study participants as house rent, utilities, food and *iddir* as indicated in the quotations below:

*“I pay rent on a government-owned house but for a private owner. With a lot of stress, we spend up to 4,000 Birr per month. I pay 1000 Birr for rent. My children go to a public school. Somehow, we manage to pay for the 4,000 Birr”. (P15: 27.07.18)*

*“I pay 800,00 Birr just for rent. The remaining is spent on food”. (P6: 10.07.18)*

*“I spend all the money that I make during the month. I cannot afford to buy everything I need every month but one at a time (Some expenses will be postponed)” (P4: 09.07.18)*

*Then that money goes to iddir, electricity, and water payments...I buy beso, soap. If he said he ran out of clothing, it will be purchased. I leave out what I need and cover expenses like electricity and water and iddir. Because they are the priority. Once I have managed to cover these expenses, I will buy food for myself and allocate the remaining money for the child. This is how I live my life. (P11: 24.07.18)*

The most striking theme in most of the quotes in this sub-section is how most women participants perceive themselves to be poor due to their inability to run lucrative businesses/IGAs and earn good money, the difficulty of covering their own expenses, inability to support themselves or having to rely on others. Hence, some expenses such as food, children's health and *iddir* take precedence over others such as women's needs. This confirms previous studies by Cappellini et al. (2014), who established that women sacrifice their own needs and desires to cope with poverty.

In terms of employment status, 13 out of the 15 women who participated in the IDI are involved with some kind of IGA including petty trading and domestic work, 2 have formal employment, and 2 are retired pensioners. Whereas 11 are involved in the Urban Productive Food Safety Net Project (UPSNP) implemented by the government targeting the “poorest of the poor” households who are considered to be the most vulnerable to food insecurity. The following excerpts from the interview transcripts describe the participants' involvement and benefits from the program:

*“Because my income level (standard of living) is low, I decided to help myself by participating in the Safety Net program”. (P2: 5.07.18)*

*“There is something called a safety net that the government has brought. The salary is 900,00 Birr, for a family of four. It is with this money that I live. I am a coordinator...I have become a beneficiary of a Safety Net program, which is cleaning in the morning. I am one of the coordinators”. (P14:27.07.18)*

*“I have an illness and they understood my situation. I now have a card .... they made me under direct support. So, I get supported just like a pensioner”. (P11: 24.07.18).*

This shows that most of the study participants are among the vulnerable urban poor that the UPSNP is trying to help become food secure through direct cash transfers either as compensation for labour-intensive work or unconditionally for those who are unable to do so for reasons related to old age or illness (FUJCFSA, 2020; 2018). In section 6.5.2, the chapter elaborates further on how the educational attainment, income and employment status of women impact their decision-making power.

### **6.3 The multiple roles of women in Ethiopia**

The study has found that the labour time of women is spread out between family, market work and community obligations. This section describes the various activities and roles of women.

### 6.3.1 Reproductive role of women

The household chores identified by the respondents constitute everything from cooking, to cleaning and washing. This is illustrated by the following quotes from the interview transcripts:

*I wake up at 6:00 in the morning and I pack food for those children who are working (employed outside the home). Then I do other household chores. If injera has to be baked, I do that. I make a sauce, I clean the house, I washcloths. I do all household chores myself. (P12:24.07.18)*

*During the day, we brush the dirt from the floors, make the beds, if cloth needs to be washed, we washcloth, if we need to bake injera, we do that, we make a sauce, we make coffee. The task is many more than I have mentioned here. Can all the tasks be completely listed? No, they cannot (P11: 24.07.18)*

Some of the activities like hand-washing clothes are arduous and time-consuming activities that need to be planned ahead of time as shown in the following testimonial from the FGDs:

*We wash once a week. We wash on a day when we do not have to bake injera and we already have food prepared on the previous day. If I have planned to wash clothes tomorrow, I will finish all other work today. We wash the whole day. We take a lunch and coffee break and continue washing in the afternoon. It takes the whole day because we wash both children's and adults' clothes. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

Further, the study revealed that the lack of a consistent supply of water and electricity affects women's time much more than the other members of the household. If the water supply to the household is interrupted, it is expected of the women to make it available even if it means travelling long distances, carrying heavy water containers or staying up late at night waiting for the water to come. In the FGD1 the women responded to the question "when do you fill up your water containers<sup>89</sup>?" as follows:

*We do that very early. When we have to do that, we wake up at 3:00/4:00 AM. If she (the water) comes early, we wait up until 2:00 in the evening. There was a time I waited until 2:00 AM and collected water. She (the water) does not come early. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

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<sup>89</sup> To be able to manage interruptions in water supply, it is common practice to fill-up and store water in containers whenever it is available.

Such erratic behaviour in the supply of utility services on top of the already limited access to a private source of drinking water and electricity in the city (which stood at 40% and 50% respectively in 2016) exacerbates women's household work burdens (CSA, 2016). Similar to previous studies by Tacoli (2012), this demonstrates how women are directly affected by the non-income dimensions of poverty like access to water, electricity and housing conditions because of their reproductive role. It also confirms Ilahi and Grimard's (2000) finding that poor infrastructure adds to the work burden of women while decreasing whatever time they have left for market-oriented work and leisure.

### 6.3.2 Productive role of women

The women participants in the study also play productive roles in their families through employment in low-ranking jobs both in the formal sector and informal sector. The quotations from the IDI transcripts below specify the type of work that the women participants in the study are engaged in to earn income.

*"I (hand) wash other peoples' clothes for a living". (P6: 10.07.18)*

*"I work for furniture producing private company from 8:30AM to 5:00PM as a cleaner and messenger". (P4: 09.07.18)*

*Cleaning job at the Office of the Prime Minister. (P9: 12.07.18)*

*"I sell in gutit that the government has provided me with i.e., YeArkebe shop when times were good. I do odd jobs in that space... I sell charcoal, and commodities from Mercato, I sell and do everything that I can". (P13: 27.07.18)*

This confirms previous theory and findings by Vanek et al. (2014), Kabeer (2007) and Tacoli, 2012), that women are concentrated in low-paying, labour-demanding and precarious jobs in the market. Moreover, respondents reported that poor women in Addis Ababa are involved in cooperatively<sup>90</sup> owned/managed micro and small-sized businesses as one study participant describes below.

*"I am now in a cooperative which is in the business of producing food. Producing injera and food". (P14: 27.07.18)*

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<sup>90</sup> Cooperative societies are self-governing and legally registered associations, established by a number of people who come together voluntarily to meet a common economic, social and cultural needs which would not have been addressed if they were acting on their own (FDRE), 2016a).

Such types of businesses are established with the active support of the Federal Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) Development Agency (FeMSEDA) and other regional government institutions with the main aim of job creation in urban areas (FDRE, 2016b). Further, as mentioned in section 6.2.2 above, many poor women in Addis are involved in UPSNP which involves cleaning the neighbourhood early in the morning from 5:30/6:00 – 9:00 AM.

### **Factors determining women’s participation in productive labour**

There are several factors behind women’s decision to engage in productive labour, the type of jobs and IGA to be involved in, and how much time to allocate for this role, thereby explaining the occupational segregation of women. As illustrated in Table 6:1 below, the main factors identified by the study participants are poverty or the need for additional income, health and education status, and time availability of women considering their reproductive work and societal commitments.

Table 6:1: Factors determining participants' engagement in productive labour

Factors determining participants' engagement in productive labour in FGD1		Factors determining participants' engagement in productive labour in FGD2	
1	The health situation of the women	1	Poverty /necessity of additional income
2	Poverty /necessity of additional income	2	Reproductive role
3	Education status	3	The health situation of the women
		4	Societal commitment

Source: Group exercise during the FGDs

#### **□ Poverty /necessity of additional income**

Poverty/ the need for additional income were ranked high as one of the main reasons behind getting involved in IGAs by both the older and retired women group of women, and the young women group who are employed in the market. It should be noted that almost all of the women who are engaged in productive labour are widowed or without a partner, making them the only breadwinners in their families.

Therefore, work is most likely the only means of survival as evident in the following testimony of a woman in the second FGD:

*The biggest factor that forces us to work is poverty. When you are poor, you get out of your home (to work and) to get money. What forces us to go out of our house is the need to improve our living standards, to be able to do (afford) the things that we want, to raise our children and to survive even if we do not have any children. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*“I started the Safety net job because my income is not enough and I raise fatherless children on my own”. (P4: 09.07.18)*

*“Because my income level (standard of living) is low, I decided to help myself by participating in the Safety net program”. (P2: 5.07.18)*

*“I started working to help my living situation. For example, with the money I get paid from that work, I go to Piasa and buy things and this is a big thing. I cover expenses for vegetables”. (P7: 11.07.18)*

This is similar to previous empirical findings that found economic needs to be the main reason behind poor women’s decision to engage in productive labour (Kazi et al., 1986). Moreover, the study revealed that access to adequate capital may also dictate the type of IGAs women are involved in. This is evident in the following testimony:

*“I wanted to get into trading, but I do not have the capital”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

□ **The health situation of the women**

As evident from Table 6:1 above, the health status of women is one of the main factors that determine women’s involvement in productive work, thereby their ability to be food secure. This is evident in the following excerpts from the interview transcripts:

*“For health reasons, I can’t do labour-intensive work. I have a headache”. (P8: 11.07.18)*

*“I used to bake injera and sell it. But now, since I got sick, I buy from others and resell”. (P3: 09.07.18)*

*Yes, if you miss work because of your health, they will say “she missed work again, this is what she does”. It is considered laziness. No one will understand that you are sick. You are working while sick. And you are moving around, because, even if sick, you cannot let your family go to bed hungry. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

This factor was found to be particularly important, for the older and retired group of women as opposed to the younger and employed group, as demonstrated by their ranking in Table 6:1 above. Considering the type of labour-intensive work poorly educated women engage in, their health status can significantly affect their livelihood and food security.

#### □ Education status

Possession of the necessary education/skill set was also identified by the study participants as one of the main factors determining the extent and the type of labour force participation. Poorly educated women are not oblivious to their missed opportunities: they regret not securing well-paying and stable jobs and the better living standard that education would have brought, and they regret not being able to perform well at their current jobs.

The following responses from women participants demonstrate these findings:

*“If I have studied, I would have had a job, I would have lived a better life, and I would have spent my day outside of home working”. (P8: 11.07.18)*

*“Yes, if I was educated, I would have reached a good level. I would have raised my children in a good way and I would have led a good life. It is my lack of education that forced me to sit down and do nothing”. (P4: 09.07.18)*

*“I could have benefited from more education. I could have worked at a level higher level than cleaning. I could have earned more salary”. (P9: 12.07.18)*

*It (lack of education) has affected me very much. I find it hard to read and understand when I am required to at my current job. I am sometimes expected to deliver documents to individuals after reading to whom it is being addressed. I find it hard to do my job. (P4: 09.07.18)*

This finding demonstrates how far-reaching the adverse effects of low investment in education could be in the lives of women. Moreover, it explains why poor women are concentrated in low-paying jobs, with little or no prospects for promotion. Since women’s unemployment or their employment in the least-paying jobs are factors that contribute to the incidence of poverty, the argument that less-educated women are more likely to be poor can be made (Gimenez, 1990). Further, it can be understood from the quotations above that the lack of education and the inability to earn income in the market has negatively affected women’s sense of pride and self-confidence.



#### □ Time availability

Lastly, poor women need to have some spare time to get involved in income-generating work considering they also have other competing roles. This will be further elaborated in section 6.4.

#### 6.3.3 Community management role of women

The study also revealed that all women who participated in the study had some level of involvement in social life-related activities in their communities. Most of them are also members of at least one informal community association. The most common of all these associations was found to be *Iddir*. The women participants in the study describe their social life-related activities as follows:

*“I participate in iddir, and visit sick people, and the families of deceased people”.* (P4: 09.07.18)

*“If someone is sick, I go to visit them, if someone had died, I go to console the family of the deceased. I also have both men and women iddirs”.* (P12: 24.07.18)

*“There is iddir, men's and women's I also help out people who are preparing for a feast in the neighbourhood”.* (P8: 11.07.18)

*“I participate in many ways, iddir: women's' and men's'. I also go and visit if anyone is sick or gave birth, and to comfort the family of the deceased if any”.* (P7: 11.07.18)

Hence, the social life of women involves assisting their community members with the preparation of feasts and celebration of events such as births and weddings, visiting the ill and consoling those in bereavement. Women participate in these activities regardless of their *Iddir* membership as long as they are happening in their neighbourhood as indicated by the quotation below:

*“I go to lekso. But I do not have iddir”.* (P6: 10.07.18)

As per the rules and procedures<sup>91</sup> of *iddirs*, in addition to the financial contributions, members are required to participate in cooking and serving food to guests during funerals, weddings, graduations and other ceremonies.

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<sup>91</sup> *Iddirs* have written by-laws dictating the rules and procedures of operation including the roles and responsibilities of members, the amount of contribution, and fines (Mauri, 1987; Pankhurst and Haile Mariam, 2000)

Participants in the study describe their involvement in *iddirs* as follows:

*“There is a monthly iddir meeting. We also go to make payments. If someone dies, we go for the burial ceremony and also assist in serving dinner, and lunch according to our shift schedule... if it is our turn, we also serve food (for the guests)”*. (P13: 27.07.18)

*“Men's iddir erects tents and is responsible for other labour-intensive tasks. While women's iddir serves your guests (consolers) with food for 3 days...I accompany family members during the time of the burial of the deceased”*. (P9: 12.07.18)

Hence, membership in *iddir* has both its financial and non-financial obligations. The non-financial obligations include the time members are expected to spend consoling the grieving family in time of death. The amount of time women spend executing social life-related activities in their community varies with the task assignment schedule of the *iddir*, the type of activity, individual interest, and the level of closeness with the particular family that is bereaved. For instance, one respondent said that if the task scheduled is filtering *tela*<sup>92</sup>, assigned members will have to stay the course of the activity which takes up to two hours. On the other hand, another woman describes the time spent executing *iddir* obligations as merely a matter of interest as follows:

*“It depends on your interest. You can say I will assist with this task and go home or you can go there repeatedly to assist until the task is completed”*. (P11: 24.07.18)

Similarly, the finding of the study has revealed that tasks involving men's *iddir* also vary depending on the frequency of death in the particular *iddirs* as described by study participants below.

*“The payment for the men's iddir is every month. The iddir-related task does not come every month, but every 15 days. It might also happen 2-3 times a month”*. (P13: 27.07.18)

*“Even men's iddir take a long time. For example, yesterday we left at 8:00 am in the morning to fold up a pop-up tent, we only came back around 11:00 am”*. (P11: 24.07.18)

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<sup>92</sup> Such tasks are executed by *Yesetoch* (women's) *iddir*, which are typically known to have smaller membership size and financial contributions compared to *Yewendoch* (men's) *iddir* /community *iddirs* which mainly serve as funeral associations (Pankhurst, 2008).

Evidently, men's *iddirs* may take up to three hours at a time and may be necessary multiple times a month. Further, some of these activities also require waking up and going to other people's houses in the early hours of the morning. One women participant said:

*"If somebody dies in our iddir, I go there at 6:00 in the morning and return at 7:00 am". (P8: 11.07.18)*

In addition, some of these activities are physically demanding as conveyed by the following examples:

*"You carry the tent, you collect the tent... Together with the men, we collapse it. You carry it (to the place where it is stored) and when it is your turn, you return it". (P11: 24.07.18)*

*"I take out tenets when requested. I return other equipment when requested. We work turn by turn". (P9: 12.07.18)*

It was understood from the discussion with the women respondents in the study that, they do not view their social/community commitments just as an obligation, but also as a source of financial and social capital. The following quotations from transcriptions of interviews with women respondents attest to this claim:

*"We are many and we go together. I don't go alone...If we wait until Sunday, all of us will go; if not some of us will go. We do this not to go alone. We also contribute money to buy what we want as a group". (P7: 11.07.18)*

*We, women, are the first ones who gather around and who would try to solve it whenever there is a problem like the death of a member (a close relative of a member) of the community, when a member of the community gives birth, during times of happiness. (P1: 05.07.18)*

*"I do the Safety Net job from 5:30 AM -8:00 AM. The law requires that I work for 4 hours, but I work for about 2 hours because others cover for me". (P7: 11.07.18)*

This confirms the argument that community associations such as *iddir* serve as forums for fostering group interactions, and support, and asserting community solidarity (Mauri, 1987). Hence, attendance at these meetings is enforced not just by *iddir* by-laws but also through social norms (ibid.). Such social interactions and networks also foster and maintain women's identities, and sense of self-worth (Woolcock, 2005). This seems to support Di Leonardo's (1987) contention that, like housekeeping and childcare, women play a special role in preserving the kin and social networks of their family.

The study also revealed that some of the women are members of the ruling party<sup>93</sup>, who are involved in the identification of beneficiaries, coordination and monitoring of government-led projects and programs such as the UPSNP, fundraising to finance school expenses for kids in low-income families, and arranging government housing for people living in dire poverty. One participant describes her involvement in government-led projects as follows:

*“I coordinate the Safety net program...I also work in the Women's League<sup>94</sup>”.*  
(P10:19.07.18)

The services provided by some of the women for various government projects may even take days or weeks at times. The following testimonies from women participant in the study elucidate how demanding these tasks can be:

*“Because I am serving the people. I leave early in the morning and come late in the evening. Then I get tired and I just sleep. So, there are times that I do not eat...you might find this surprising, but I never sit at home”.* (P10:19.07.18)

*I do these tasks on different days. We might do the CC work for a week or 15 consecutive days. The fund raising happens once a year. Once a year for their uniforms and exercise books, we organize (do) what needs to be done. The activity starts six months earlier with the coordination of the committee (members). We will set objectives. Then we get the list indicating 'who is eligible for support'. After that, there is also the task of checking and confirming that going door-to-door.*  
(P14:27.07.18)

However, it is apparent in the personal accounts of some of these women that, they do not feel the compensation for the services they provide is satisfactory. Here are some examples

*Sometimes, they give us money for transportation for the coordination work...Currently, I am working for free. We are repeatedly asking for compensation for our services...But they are saying, serving the community is big deal (it should be enough).* (P10:19.07.18)

*There is nothing for me (given to me). They (people in government) only help themselves...They do not pay us anything. If they were fearful of God, just only one of the committees paid us 100 Birr for training once. Since then, we have been working for six months but they did not pay us anything.* (P14: 27.07.18).

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<sup>93</sup> The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) which has been reformed and renamed to Prosperity Party (PP) since 2019.

<sup>94</sup> Both the Women's Forum/League and the 1-5 cluster are part of the ruling party's monitoring and surveillance structures.

The study also found that the women which are providing their labour hours in government programs are beneficiaries of the Safety Net program or/and have received support from the MSE development office of the government either in the form of finance or provision of production/marketing shades. The fact that these women are already beneficiaries of these programs, could explain the government's reluctance to pay monetary compensation for all of the work they put into the implementation of its programs. The women beneficiaries of the program may also be allowing this to continue regardless of their dissatisfaction for fear of the possible repercussions on their livelihoods if they were to ask for more financial payment or refuse to obey the instructions of the government authorities.

Another possible reason for the government's disinclination to pay higher financial compensation for women's labour time could be the perception that their labour is inferior to that of men's that can be mobilized with minimal payment, coupled with their perceived docility and willingness to execute monotonous tasks at cheaper prices (Elson and Pearson, 1981). It can be surmised from the discussion here that women in the working-age<sup>95</sup> group, especially in low-income countries play the triple roles of reproductive, productive, and community management, in confirmation of previous findings by Edholm et al. (1978), Moser (1993), and Tacoli (2012). As indicated in the study, the government also adds to the triple burdens of women without paying adequate compensation.

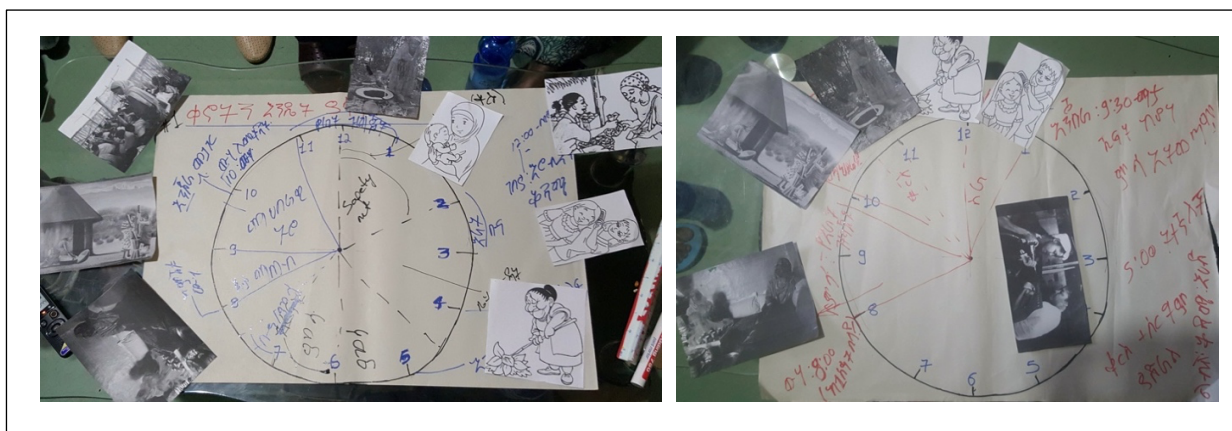
#### **6.4 Time poverty of women**

As discussed in Section 6.3, women's labour time is spread out between family, market work and community obligations, sometimes with no or very little time to spare for themselves. This is illustrated by the activity clocks in Figure 6:1 below which are constructed by participants during the FGDs.

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<sup>95</sup> Working age population refers to all persons who are between the ages of 15 and 64 (World Bank, 2017b).

Figure 6:1 Daily activity clocks depicting how women spend their day



Source: Activity clocks constructed by research participants during the FGDs (Left: FGD1 & Right: FGD2)

The finding revealed that, on average, poor women wake up at 4:30 AM – 6:00 AM and work until 9:00 PM/11:00 PM, only breaking for an hour or two for lunch and coffee daily. Women in the FGD described the typical daily routine of women as follows:

*she wakes up at 10:30 AM... Then she makes breakfast and sees her children off, then she cleans her house, makes her bed, etc. and she completes these tasks until 6:00 or 7:00. Then she leaves for work. She might make breakfast the previous night. She may only need to warm it up in the morning. It depends on the time she has to leave for work in the morning...she might work the whole day. If it is part-time work, she might leave work at 2:00 PM. she does not take a lunch break. But if she works for the whole day, she takes a lunch break. When she comes home at 2:00 PM, she eats whatever she made in the morning whether her children are home from school or not, and if she has a husband (or not) then she will have coffee. Then she organizes (prepares) whatever is required for dinner. Then it would get late (dark). ...she participates in her community and social life-related activities either in between the other activities or after she is done with her coffee around 3:00 PM/4:00 PM she will go (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

In summary, on productive work alone, women in the working-age group spend 7 hours/day, while older and retired women spend 5 hours/day. Both groups of women spend, on average, about 4 hours on reproductive work daily. On the other hand, women’s roles related to the management of their social lives in the community could take from a few hours up to three days depending on the occasion or incident. This is illustrated by the quotation from a study participant below.

*“If a family member dies, it is a must that I go early in the morning, I spend three days there”. (P13: 27.07.18)*

This hints that women suffer from role overload, implying that they have too many responsibilities, but not enough time (Coverman, 1989; Home, 1998, 1993). To the question of whether a woman is allowed to sleep a little late in the morning if she feels tired, the participants in the FGD2 responded as follows:

*“No, it is not. How can you do that, especially if you have children? He (her husband) will get up and ask for breakfast. Even if he does not, you will not have peaceful sleep (restful sleep)”.* (FGD2: 09.09.18)

*“When it comes to household chores, we do not even have time to sit”.* (P12: 24.07.18)

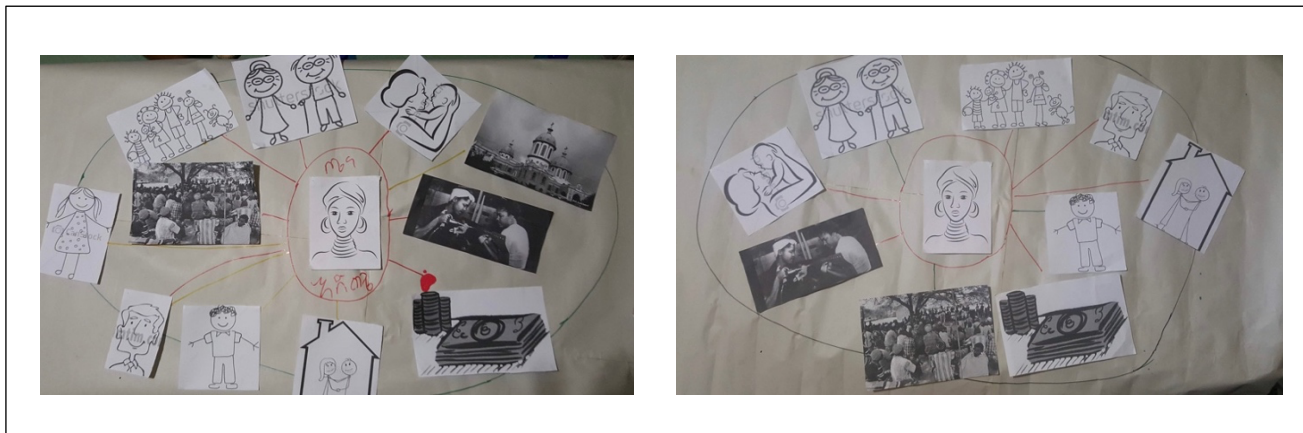
Hence, time poverty signifies women’s lack of time to sleep and rest resulting in their fatigue, sickness, and emotional exhaustion, and their lack of time to invest in their human capital and other capabilities (Chant, 2007; Gammage, 2010; Hochschild and Machung). The section below elaborates on the main factors behind the time poverty of women, their labour time allocation between their various roles and the extent of their influence.

#### 6.4.1 Factors determining labour time allocation of women and their consequences

Figure 6:2 below represents the Venn Diagrams drawn by participants during the two FGDs, illustrating the factors that influence the number of hours spent on household care and community management by women participants. Accordingly, in both FGDs, marital status/husbands, size of the family, presence of infants and young children requiring care, economic status, and possession of a job or IGA were categorized as high-level determinants of women’s labour time both in and outside of the household. For the older group of participants, additional factors such as the presence of older family members who require care, the age and health status of the women, and societal commitments were also characterized as high-level determinants of women’s labour hours.

On the contrary, for both groups of women, religious institutions and grown-up children (daughters more than sons) have no or only moderate effects on their time. In addition, community/social life and the presence of older family members in the household have a relatively minor effect on the time of the younger group of women.

Figure 6:2 Venn Diagrams depicting determinants of women's labour time allocation by FGD participants



Note: The red line depicts a high-level determinant, the yellow depicts a medium-level determinant and the green depicts a low-level determinant. Further, to understand what each picture constituted in these Venn diagrams represents Appendix XVI can be referred to.

Source: Venn diagrams constructed by research participants during the FGDs (Left: FGD1 & Right: FGD2)

In the following section, the study's finding regarding each of these factors is further discussed.

#### 6.4.1.1 The role of marriage and husbands

Despite differences of opinion regarding the degree, all women who participated in the study have indicated that their husbands influence their time allocation decisions between different activities including rest momentarily. The following excerpts from the FGDs can illustrate this situation further:

*Husbands, no matter how kind they are require everything to be organized and be served to them...He thinks his obligations are her obligations...He thinks everything is her responsibility...There are so many who do not even pick up the plates after eating. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*Let us say I was working on something and my husband comes home. Then If I drop whatever I was doing to serve him, he is creating an influence on my work burden. Because it means I have twice the burden now. For one thing, I am working there, the second thing, I am serving him while he can serve himself. So, that means, the thing I was working on becomes a burden for tomorrow because I gave my time to my husband instead. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

It is apparent that women are frustrated because their husbands not only fail to take on a fair share of the household responsibility or obligation but adds to their work burdens.



However, there are few exceptional husbands and sons that are involved in some reproductive work such as the purchase of groceries with the instruction and guidance of women. One woman shared her experience as follows:

*“My husband while he was alive, he used to buy a lot of things and wait for me before I come home from work. And I was very happy with the things he used to buy. We used to discuss and I used to tell him and he used to buy accordingly”. FGD2*

Furthermore, the study found that men get involved in men’s *iddir* to some extent, at times as a favour to their wives or if they have spare time as exemplified by these quotations.

*“My husband goes to idder for me if he is not at work”. (P8:11.07.18)*

*“Lately, he (my husband) is unemployed, he stays home all day. So, he is the one who goes to iddir these days”. (P7:11.07.18)*

The study also indicated that some of the women feel that time is one of the tools used by their husbands to assert control and power over them. If a woman decides how to spend her time without the knowledge and blessing of her husband, she may face both verbal and physical violence. Here are some examples to demonstrate this argument.

*Husbands have an extremely high level of influence on our lives. By any chance if you come home late just one time, the door will be closed in your face; by mistake, if you stay out late, even if you were at work all day and you had to go to lekso and visit a sick person somewhere and you had to stay late, the door will be closed on your face; or you will be insulted out in the open... You should let us go soon, or we will face this issue pretty soon. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

Men have so much control over women’s time that some of them feel that being widowed might be better off. This is clearly expressed in the following quotes from the study. This sentiment of the study participants is captured in the following quotes:

*“If my husband was alive, I would not have been able to come and chat with you today”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*“Unmarried women have better control over their time than married women. She is less stressed in terms of time and work”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

The above testimonials of the study participants assert the argument that women are mere “strangers” or “refugees” in the world of male-defined time due to their lack of control (Forman and Sowton, 1989). However, this is not an outlook shared by all women as clearly indicated in the following quotes from the participants of the first FGD:

*“Being unmarried by itself has its burden on a woman's time. A married woman gets assistance in both household chores and social commitments from her spouse. But an unmarried woman is all alone”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*“It depends on the type of marriage. If he is a cooperative husband, not having him will add to the work burden of the women”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

The other issue that has become evident in the study is the verbal and physical abuse poor women are enduring from their husbands for reasons related to control over their time. This can be grasped from the first quote in this sub-section. One woman also shared her story about the physical harassment she endured from her late husband as follows:

*Ayi, my child..., the fact that I am alive is a miracle. The man (my husband) was a drunkard. He used to be prone to fights. Because of that, my mind is still not functioning right. I am a woman who survived an attempted murder (by my late husband) at night... I even raised the children through a lot of suffering. I was 15 when I was put in the palm of his hands (married/left at his mercy). I will not be finished with that story (if I start it now). I stand here with you because of God (by his mercy) my child. (P11: 24.07.18)*

This might be best explained by the feminist argument that views domestic violence against women as a means of maintaining the systematic and structural control of men over women in a patriarchal society Copelon (1994).

#### *6.4.1.2 Presence of infants, children and older family members*

The participants in the study identified the presence of infants and small children as one of the major determinants of the amount of time women spend in the provision of care as follows:

*“If a mother has an infant, she never has free time. It adds to her exhaustion”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*“For a working mother, a child has a lot of influence on their time and work”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

Participants in both FGDs distinguished the presence of grown-up children in the household as having a medium to low level of influence on their labour hours. When it comes to the question of whether it is boys or girls who create more pressure on a women's time, there seems to be no consensus among women participants in the study. While some are of the view that boys create more strain on mothers' time, while girls have the opposite effect, others believe there is no actual difference between the two. This is evident in the following excerpts from the FGDs:

*"If there is a daughter, she assists her mother at least a little bit. But boys just eat whatever you give them and they go". (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*We are not the same here. I have boys. And a girl. But in my case, the one adding pressure to my work is my daughter not my boys. But for other families, daughters assist with work while boys add to the burden of work. Some girls do not assist their families with work. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*"I do not pressure my children to assist me with community work because they are students. Besides boys are not like girls. Boys are troublesome (challenging). They do not go". (P13:27.07.18)*

*"Yes, I get assistance from my niece. The daughter of my brother whom I have been raising". (P7:11.07.18)*

*"They are both the same". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

Thus, this study does not fully conform to the previous findings by Goodnow (1988) and Blair (1992) that assert that female children are more likely to perform greater total amounts of labour than male children. Nonetheless, what has boldly come out in the study is that most of the support women receive in reproductive and societal commitment-related work comes from other female family members of the household including their daughters. The presence of older family members who require care was also identified as one of the determinants of women's reproductive labour hours. Study participants described how elderly members add to their workloads as follows:

*"I had an elderly mom that I was taking care of. She used to live in a rented house that I was paying for.... She was over 90 years old. I used to take care of everything including food". (P8: 11.07.18)*

*"You will have to care for the food, hygiene and health of older family members". (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

This factor was found to be more of a concern for the older groups of women (FGD1) than the younger groups (FGD2) as illustrated by the Venn Diagrams in Figure 6:2 above. Further, women in both FGDs agreed that the volume of activities related to both housework and provision of care is proportional to the size of the family.

#### 6.4.1.3 *The role of a job/ IGA and the economic status of women*

Women participants in the study describe how their involvement in productive work affected their household work, care work and community involvement as follows:

*“It has created time pressure on me and it has reduced the time I spend with my children. I would have preferred to make breakfast for my children before they go to work, but because of my Safety Net job, I can't do that”. (P7: 11.07.18)*

*“I do not participate in anything...I spend the whole day at work. Because I leave in the morning and only come back at 12:00 PM, but then after a little, while I will go back to work, I do not ...(interact/socialize) with anyone”. (P15: 27.07.18)*

Evidently, there exists a trade-off between women's commitment to housework and childcare and their commitment to productive work and social life due to their underlying time poverty. Rost et al. (2015) from data computed in five countries including Ethiopia, where women also found that women spend between 10 and 44 minutes less on exclusive care activities for each extra hour of paid work they undertook.

Hence, as women continue to enter the labour market and in the absence of other childcare options, an evident 'childcare<sup>96</sup> - gap' is created (Samman et al., 2016). The childcare gap is said to be the worst for poorer households owing to poor working conditions, limited support networks, unaffordability of childcare, and lack of neighbourhood safety (ibid.). This might have dire consequences for the children both in the short and long run unless male members of the household are sharing this responsibility or other childcare services are being utilized.

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<sup>96</sup> Care refers to the face-to-face service that allows children to develop the 'human capabilities' of having physical and mental health; physical, cognitive and emotional skills which are crucial for their development and well-being, affecting their cognitive development, schooling and labour market outcomes in the long run (England et al., 2002; Tanner et al., 2015).

Thus, both the output and quality of women's work at home, in the community and the market are negatively affected (Gammage, 2010; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Pleck, 1997). However, participation in productive labour does not exonerate women from all their other responsibilities in the household and community. The quotation below captures the frustration of a poor woman who is enduring extra work burdens and time pressures due to her multiple roles.

*“It is very hard. You will have to do both works within the household and outside. You will spend the whole day at work, and when you come back, you still have to do your chores at home. You will have to clean the house and bake injera”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

Clearly, an employed woman's life is stretched between two competing shifts of work, at home, and in the workplace. This can be taken as additional evidence of the role overload problem poor women are facing. This is why Hochschild and Machung (2003) refer to the tasks employed women have to attend to at home after spending a long day at the workplace as a “second shift”. Moreover, considering the labour-intensive work poorly educated women are engaged in (as discussed in section 6.3.2) their responsibility in household and care work can further strain their energy. Further, women who are too burdened by activities related to their reproductive role have little or no time left to get involved in productive work, earn income and thereby secure their food security. The following quote from a woman participant in the study who used to be a cross-regional trader in the country attests to this:

*I used to work hard (had a lot of business). When my mom was there, leaving these children alone (with her), there was no problem. These days, you cannot trust anyone. What if they do something (bad) to these children? ... So, to care for and protect them, I have stopped those things and I stayed here. (P14: 27.07.18)*

Another woman participant in the study said

*“When I do not have anyone to take care of my baby, I stay home”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

It can be deduced from the above testimony that, women's role strain in household work and provision of care indirectly constrains not only their available time for productive work but also their geographic and occupational mobility.

Hence, in addition to role overload, poor women suffer from role conflict due to the incompatibility of their roles, and role contagion due to the challenge of performing one role while worrying about other responsibilities (Coverman, 1989; Home, 1993; Home, 1998). Further, the competing demands of women's reproductive and community management roles undermine their efficiency and effectiveness in productive work, which also adversely affects the perception of their employers. This can be gathered from the following quotation from a woman participant:

*“They (my employers) say ‘her lekso is never-ending; her problems are never ending’...”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

Hence, the underlying conflict between the multiple roles of women could potentially undermine their competitiveness in the productive labour market, thereby income by reinforcing the stereotype that they are “unreliable” employees, who deserve lower pay (Levin et al., 1999; Pressman, 2003; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Hopkins, 1995). There is indeed an economic cost to being a mother, in terms of a forgone opportunity to earn higher income in the market as postulated by the concept of “the-motherhood-pay-penalty” (Overseas Development Institute, 2016). This can also serve as a testament to how the lack of backstage support from their husbands and other family members at home is costly to women's productive work (Mitra and Pool, 2000; Hochschild and Machung, 2003; Tacoli, 2012).

The time poverty problem of women may also explain why a significant proportion of the participants 11 out of the 15 are in informal employment as mentioned in section 6.2.2 since it allows for time flexibility as argued by Mitra and Pool (2000). Understandably, the time poverty problem is much worse for widowed women who are the sole-bread winners of their families; those in formal employment with minimal time flexibility, and those with children and family members suffering from chronic illnesses. According to the study's findings, women's time poverty can be traced back to their income poverty, which deprives them of alternatives to substitute their labour and lessen their burden.

This feeling is distinctly reflected by participants in the following excerpts from the FGDs:

*“If a woman has money, she can hire someone to do some of the tasks for her”.*  
(FGD2: 09.09.18)

*“A woman with money will have a maid to assist her, so will have some rest”.*  
(FGD1: 08.09.18)

This vital role of women’s economic status in their labour time allocation decision is also indicated in Figure 6:2 above. It can be deduced from the discussion in this section that, women are trapped in a vicious cycle of interrelated deprivations of income and time. That is, time poverty undermines women’s chances of earning a higher income in the market, and being income poor implies that they cannot afford the means to lessen the strain of their various roles and time poverty.

#### *6.4.1.4 The role of the community*

The obligations imposed by social commitments such as *iddirs* worsen the time poverty problem of women who are employed or involved in productive labour as they often do not make exceptions to accommodate them. Women who are involved in productive labour have mentioned some of the allegations made about them by community members upon failure to allocate the expected amount of time in community work as follows:

*“They say ‘she does not participate; she does not work this and that’ ...”* (FGD2: 09.09.18)

*“They say ‘she does not care about others’ ...”* (FGD2: 09.09.18)

This suggests that women who are too busy to participate in community work and social life may lose favours and face ostracization from their fellow *iddir* and community members. Furthermore, women who fail to allocate adequate time and execute their communal responsibilities are also subjected to financial penalties per the by-laws of their *iddirs* as explained by a study participant here.

*“If I fail to go, I get fined. And the punitive measure is very severe”.* (P9: 12.07.18)

King and Sweetman (2010) also discovered that during economic downturns, women’s social capital is degraded because they lack the time to cultivate their relationships unless there is an immediate, survival-related need to do so.

That is why women who are involved in productive labour try to avoid this conflict with their fellow *Iddir* and community members by accommodating their communal obligations on top of all their other responsibilities. One participant shared her experience as follows:

*“If it is a merdo, I request to be assigned on the weekends. Then, I may get assigned to work on Sundays and I may work on Sundays”. (P9: 12.07.18)*

At times when leniency from other members and negotiation for a more convenient time is not possible, women are forced to make a hard choice between their productive work and societal commitments. The study found that some are willing to sustain the latter at the cost of the former as is demonstrated here.

*“If I am assigned to a shift (if it is my turn), I do not go to work. I ask for permission or take a leave of absence from work”. (P9: 12.07.18)*

*“I leave it (my shop) for the children (when I leave to attend to my social commitments). Otherwise, I will just close it for 3 days”. (P13: 27.07.18)*

Evidently, poor women, with limited labour-substitution possibilities seem to risk their income and food security in the short run to preserve their long-term social capital investments. One only needs to refer to the following responses of women participants in the study to the question “whether *Iddir* comes before food or not” to confirm the above statement:

*Yes (Iddir comes before food). It is life. It is Iddir that buries me when am dead. It cannot be stopped...this is normal. If I do not do this, I cannot live. (P11: 24.07.18)*

*“It is a must. I do not have a choice. It is life How else would you be able to live with others? There is nothing you can do on your own. You do everything with people, there is nothing you can do without people”. (P13: 27.07.18)*

*“Comfortable or not, it (Iddir) is a must. It is our social life. What can we do?” (P9: 12.07.18)*

This finding confirms previous literature and empirical findings by researchers such as Mauri, (1987) and Pankhurst and Haile Mariam (2000), that even though *Iddirs* are established and run by people voluntarily, failure to participate by community members is consequential. That is, people who do not participate in *Iddir* might be considered outcasts and disgraceful to their families.



Hence, members' commitment to their *Iddirs* is preserved mainly by the underlying social ties that impose sanctions for non-compliance more than the written rules of procedure (Mauri, 1987). The study has also found that another factor imposing further pressure on the already scarce time of women juggling multiple roles is problems related to the existing transportation facility of the city. For example, one participant responded to the question how much time do you spend on social life-related activities as follows:

*It depends on how far the place is from where I live. These days, everyone including children and other relatives is living far away. Sometimes, we spend the whole day just travelling. We go out at 9:00/10:00 am and might stay out until 5:00 PM (P7: 11.07.18)*

Similarly, those women who are involved in productive labour outside of their house are affected by shortages and inconsistency in transportation services which are quite common in Addis Ababa. One participant describes the plight of a typical working woman as follows:

*“She spends some time travelling home from work. It is not like she chose this. She faces time scarcity. And she is also tired when she gets home”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

This finding supports previous studies which emphasised the importance of access to reliable transportation services for the livelihoods of the urban poor (Booth et al., 2000; Wegelin and Borgman, 1995). As can be surmised from the discussion in this section, poor women face time poverty and role strains resulting from their multiple and conflicting roles. Hence, they are forced to make difficult choices between allocating the necessary time and effort to take care of their family at home, earn income in the market, invest in their human capital, and their social lives. And their choices have consequences on their energy, health, productivity and efficiency, income, and general well-being. At this juncture, it is important to pose the question “how did this arrangement come about”? This is the main topic of discussion in the proceeding section

#### 6.4.2 The role of gender ideology in the division of labour

The women respondents in this study think of themselves as homemakers first, who are responsible for the daily consumption and wellness of their families whether or not they have jobs outside of the home. They consider all tasks related to this role such as buying food as ‘women’s work’. This is illustrated in the following responses of women participants in the study to the question of why purchasing consumable commodities is assigned to them:

*“It is because a woman is the manager of the household, particularly the purchase of food, and the kitchen”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*“The family is her (the mother’s) responsibility. When the house suffers, when the family suffers, when children are sick, when children are hungry, when children are bare ... the responsibility is hers” (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*he (my husband) does not assist with the household chores because it is a woman’s work. (P7: 11.07.18)*

*“Well, I am a woman; he (my husband) brings in money and gives it to me and I spend it in such a way that it covers as many expenses as possible”. (P8: 11.07.18)*

It is evident here that women feel that reproductive tasks including buying food are natural to them. One does not need to look any further than some widely known *Amharic* proverbs to see how boldly and bluntly society has assigned labour roles between males and females (Assefa, 2002; Bililigne, 2012). Here are a few examples to that effect:

*“A woman’s death is in her kitchen” (Yeset lej motua bemajetua)*

*“A woman is to the kitchen as a man is to a court” (set bemajetuwa wend bechelotu)*

Hence, the social order sees women as destined to play the reproductive role and execute the household tasks, while men are seen as destined to occupy positions where important decisions are made such as the court. This finding confirms that gender roles are linked to the way society is ordered, which constitutes the cultural prescriptions and expectations of females and males (Agarwal, 1997; Atkinson, 1987; Chant, 1997; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Ferree, 2014; Folbre, 1997; Lindsey, 2016; Pleck, 1997; Tichenor, 1999; West and Zimmerman, 1987; Woolley, 1993). Accordingly, these expectations affect the behaviours of females and males by influencing the way they think, feel and act.

Thus, when women care for their families and execute the housework, they are reaffirming their sense of identity as per the social construction of their gender which is also referred to as “Doing gender” (Coltrane, 1996, p. 50). Further, similar to previous findings by Tacoli (2012) and Mellor (1997), this study maintains that the time poverty of women is caused by the feminization of various responsibilities/obligations in the household and the community. It also showed that women take pleasure in their ability in managing their limited resources economically and in knowing exactly what is needed by the family. This is evident in the following quotes from the transcription of the FGDs:

*It is because a woman can economize resources. That is the amount of money given to her and the number of goods she buys. He (the husband) does not know the amount needed.... they (men) might not buy the required quality.... Besides, they may not buy it at the same price that we would have bought it. Men do not bargain... for lack of experience (men) do not bargain and buy by economizing their resources (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*“Husbands also do not buy good things (things that are needed by the family). Because he does not know. He does not have the experience. For example, if you ask him to buy onions, he will get you spoiled ones”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

Hence, failure to assume this role and execute household work-related activities as described above by the wife/mother in the family is considered shameful. In the second FGDs the women expressed their opinion of such women as follows:

*Let alone men, some women do not know anything. There are women who live it to their husbands to economize, buy and bring everything, and organize even better than them. He might not give her money, but he may buy everything himself. He does that because he thinks she is wasteful. It could also be because she does not know how to buy. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

This clearly reveals society’s belief that the existing gender role assignment between men and women is grounded on their innate abilities, hence is an effective and efficient division of labour. To the question of who among male and female children assists them with the task of buying food, women responded as follows:

*“You normally take the girls along during shopping. Because you say (believe that) ‘she will assist me’, you take her with you”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*“Daughters...go with their mother and learn how much she buys and how she economizes her resources”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*“Some daughters if you take them along with you while you shop, will follow in your footsteps”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

This insinuates that daughters are actively mentored to take on this role by their mothers starting from a young age. This shows how women prescribe to the deep-seated sex-role assignment of the prevailing gender ideologies, and that girls are more suited to tasks related to reproductive labour than boys. It also demonstrates women's key role in reinforcing and maintaining the social order directly through gendering tasks they assign to their children. This confirms previous studies that maintained that parents influence the gendered division of labour in their children through the direct assignment of tasks and role modelling of their performance, thereby resulting in the sex-typing of children (Blair, 1992). This influence of parents is particularly stronger with children who are of the same sex as them (ibid.).

Spittler and Bourdillon (2012) referred to this informal process through which children learn to master certain tasks under the supervision and guidance of older siblings and parents thereby emulating the division of labour within the family as the "chore-curriculum". Through the "chore-curriculum", by the time a young woman becomes an adult, she has logged in many hours of tasks related to household work following in her mother's footsteps. This also goes to show how families are among the informal institutions through which gender ideologies are transmitted, and the gendered division of labour is reproduced across generations. However, the contribution of women in the family through housework and provision of care is overlooked and under-valued by themselves, their life partners and the community at large despite the strain on their time and energy.

The following quotes from a study participant encapsulate this argument:

*"There is nothing I do really. When it comes to household chores, we do not even have time to sit". (P12:24.07.18)*

*"You might spend the day working and stressing out. But some husbands might not understand you and say 'What have you been doing the whole day? It is not like you do something important". (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

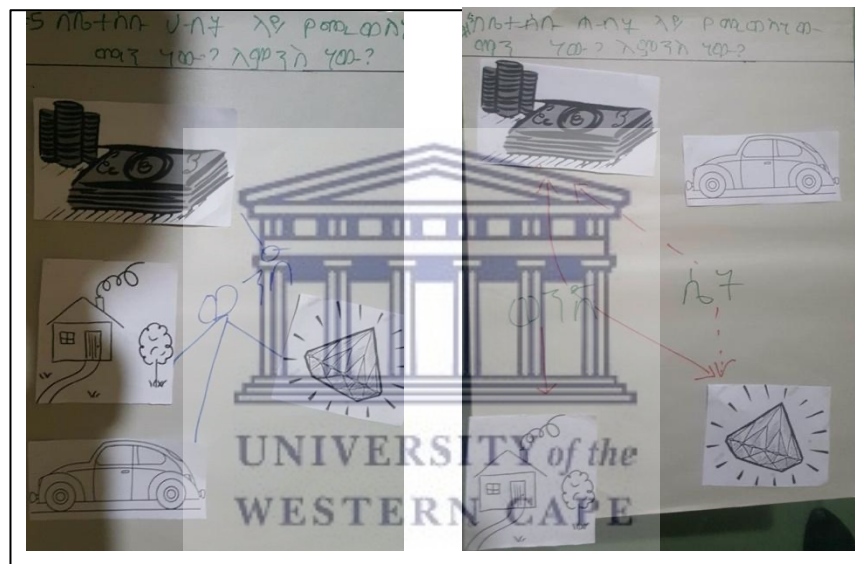
This finding confirms the society's deep-rooted inferior status for labour time that does not earn a salary in the market, even if it supports sustenance, survival, or reproduction (Hochschild and Machung, 2003; MacDonald, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987).

The lack of acknowledgement and appreciation for reproductive labour could also be explained by the assumption that women are “naturally” interested and have the “moral responsibility” to provide such labour (Folbre, 1994; Mellor, 1997; Woolley, 1993).

### 6.5 Women’s lack of entitlement and decision-making power over income and assets

Figure 6:3 below displays the outcome of the resource analysis exercise completed by participants during the two FGDs to indicate who uses and controls resources in the household between women and men.

Figure 6:3: Entitlement over income and assets between men and women



Note: solid lines represent full use and control rights, and broken lines represent partial entitlement rights. Also, “ሰ” means male and “ሴ” means female

Source: Resource analysis constructed by research participants during the FGDs (Left: FGD1 & Right: FGD2)

As shown by Figure 6:3 above, while participants in FGD1 left out women entirely out of the picture because she has no control over any of the family assets (i.e., houses, vehicles and jewellery), those in FGD2 have shown that women have some partial entitlement and control over their jewellery and earned income.

### 6.5.1 The gender gap in access and control of income and property

The study found that women are not only kept in the dark about their husbands' earnings, but their opinions are disregarded in decisions regarding income allocation and distribution. The following quotes from the FGDs clearly demonstrate this issue:

*“To begin with, you don't even know how much money he is making. What are you going to do if he says 'this is my salary'. Most men hide their salary amount; it is only a few men that are honest about it”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*For one thing 'he is the only one who is knowledgeable'<sup>97</sup>, head of the household and breadwinner. So, when I ask 'what did you do about this issue?', the answer is 'none of your business' ...”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*“If he is kind, he can consult his wife and make a decision together, but if he says 'I am superior, he will make all the decisions' ...”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

This also hints at the type of arrogant and condescending tone they are met with when they do ask their husbands to be part of the income-allocative and distributive decision. This finding corroborates the widely known Amharic saying that “you do not ask women their ages, and men their salaries”. This goes to show how society has normalized it for men to keep information related to their incomes a private and a personal matter, the same way age is to a woman. Hence, women's access to family income is entirely up to their husband's discretion, since they are side-lined from participating in the family's budget-allocative decisions for lack of bargaining power. The quotes below validate this argument.

*Even if he honestly admits the amount of his salary, he is not obliged to give it to you. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*Thus far, what is customary is that the husband's money will be given for managing household expenses after some begging. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

Similarly, the finding of the study revealed that men/husbands hold unparalleled bargaining over family property and assets, regardless of who within the family advanced the money to finance these assets in the first place.

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<sup>97</sup> The sentence is quotation mark to indicate the speaker's ironic tone.

This is shown in the following quote.

*A husband's equipment is his, to do as he pleases, even if it was bought with money contributed by both the husband and wife. You cannot loan equipment that belongs to your husband to anyone. You will be questioned, "why do you even touch equipment that belongs to a man?" (FGD2: 09.09.18).*

*"He is the decision-maker of both mine and his properties". (FGD2: 09.09.18).*

In contrast, wives need to consult and get permission from their husbands before modifying and altering existing property in any form, even if it is for the benefit of the whole family. This may include painting rooms or building partitions to sublet part of a house to other tenants. The following quote from the second FGD can be taken as an example:

*"If we need money and I needed to sell something, we can only do it if he is convinced. But he can (sell property) even if I am not convinced". (FGD2: 09.09.18).*

*"She might come up with the idea, but he is the one who decides. If he does not like your idea, he might reject it". (FGD2: 09.09.18).*

Women participants in the study have agreed that the only reason some men consult or seek consent from their wives in decisions regarding family assets is because the law demands it. The following story shared by a women participant in the second FGD asserts this argument:

*I used to have land that I bought myself. He (my husband) finished everything (the procedure needed for selling), but in the end, it (the title of the deed) was in my name. So, he said, "Participant women 4<sup>98</sup>, let's go to Tafo" and I was like "why?" and he was like "this and that" and "let us sell it before the government takes it away". And when I asked "why do you want to sell it?" He was like "we will use the remaining half. I will sell 100 (square meters) and 100 (square meters) will remain". Then I kept quiet because I did not find it convincing. I could not decide on anything (could not do anything). Then he left (without me). But, in the end, they (the authorities) insisted that I go there. So, I went by taxi and signed (the documents). So, he sold it. He tried to do the same thing with the remaining 100 (square meters) too... He only told me because he needed my signature. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

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<sup>98</sup> The name of the participant is anonymised.

To the question of whether a husband can decide to sell family property like jewellery on his own, participants said the following:

*No, he cannot. If she knows about it (the jewellery) and they have not agreed (to sell it), he cannot sell it. It is the law that prohibits him from doing so, otherwise, he will try to. I have that experience. The law requires that both partners be present (during such transactions). (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

This is in line with previous findings in Ethiopia by Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2002), who suggested that women's ownership rights do not necessarily translate into control rights. It is consistent with the argument that social norms overrule formal property rights, restricting women from maximizing their bargaining power (Oduro and Staveren, 2015). Hence, in line with Chant (2007), the study found that women's entitlement over family resources and bargaining power are more important determinants of their well-being than their income or the actual resource base of the household. However, the young and employed group of women have some level of freedom in making decisions regarding the income that they have earned themselves and the jewellery that belongs to them as shown on the resource analysis diagram in Figure 6.3. This is clearly expressed in the following quotes from the study:

*"He cannot decide on my money. If I want, I will buy clothes and buy the things that are missing. My money is my money. I buy clothes, I buy jewellery. His money is his money". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*"I use my pension money as I see fit". (P1: 05.07.18)*

#### 6.5.2 Factors behind women's lack of bargaining power

There could be many explanations for women's reluctance to assert their rights over family income and property. The one possible explanation for the inferior bargaining position of women compared to men is the existing social and cultural norms governing gender roles. Women participants in the study characterized their husband's position in the household as follows:

*"He is the pillar of the household". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

It is apparent in the above quote that men/husbands occupy a central and indispensable position in the family.



This also implies that they take the leadership position to make decisions on behalf of other members including on financial matters, and movable and immovable property, sometimes without having to inform, discuss and negotiate with their wives about it as indicated in section 6.5.1. To the question of why men have such unfettered access to all property belonging not only to them but to their wives as well when women have so little, one participant in the study has the following to say:

*“It is something that has come from our parents ...It is not us; it was always there from the old times”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

This indicates that there is a social and cultural order that makes this decision-making arrangement between husbands and wives the norm. Another participant explained the decision-making process in her household as follows:

*“I am the one who rented out the house. He does not get involved in this. I am the husband and he is the wife”. (P4: 27.07.18)*

This reveals the underlying understanding of a “husband” by the women participants, as someone who makes financial decisions on behalf of the family as per the prevailing gender ideology. Hence, if a woman seems to be making important decisions on behalf of the household, she is considered to act as a “husband” and her husband to act as a “wife”. Thus, the women participants in the study who take the back seat to let their husbands make important family decisions could be asserting their socially and culturally prescribed and acceptable position as wives (Ferree, 2014; Tichenor, 1999; West and Zimmerman, 1987). They might also be trying to avoid being seen as more powerful than their husbands in the marriage and its undesirable consequences<sup>99</sup> in society (Tichenor, 1999).

Therefore, the balance of marital power in a marriage is more closely related to gender than income status (Tichenor, 1999; West and Zimmerman, 1987). Women’s lack of bargaining power over family income and assets are mainly explained by the gender norms that assign the decision-making power to their “husbands”.

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<sup>99</sup> In threatening the male bread-winner identity, women may jeopardize their protection from family and wider society against gendered risks and constraints such as unemployment (Kabeer, 1997).

The study found that another reason for women's weak bargaining positions in the family is a lack of education and failure to earn income in the market. To the question "Who decides on the family income?" during the first FGD, one woman responded as follows:

*"Men of course, where would an uneducated woman get money?" (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

It can be surmised from this response alone, that there are at least two explanations as to why women do not get involved in the decision-making process regarding family income. One is the obvious self-doubt that less-educated women feel towards making meaningful contributions towards important decisions in the family. The other is the fact that women do not feel like they are entitled to make decisions on income that they have not earned themselves. The husband's money is his own money, as opposed to theirs'. These findings indicate that the devaluation of women's contribution to reproductive labour coupled with their failure to earn income in the market has undermined their bargaining power over allocative and distributive decisions in the family.

This demonstrates that the most important determining factor of perceived contributions of family members, and thereby perceived legitimacy in bargaining outcomes are their contributions in financial terms as opposed to the volume of work done or total labour hours spent (Nelson, 1996; Sen, 1987). Therefore, the bargaining power of poorly educated and unskilled women, with minimal opportunities for productive employment in the market is very slim. This is an indication of how the various gendered constraints of women interact and reinforce each other to entrap them into a vicious cycle of interrelated deprivations.

### 6.5.3 The gender gap in income spending rights

The study found that women view the money they earned as belonging to the family in general and to be spent on the needs of the family. This is expressed in the following excerpts from the FGD transcripts:

*"The money is meant to be used by the family". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*"Because she and her husband agree to spend their respective money on various expenses, she does not have the freedom to spend it (her money) on tea with her friends". (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

Further, while the income earned by women is readily available to be spent for the good of the family, the money earned by men can only be accessed at best through negotiation and goodwill. The stark difference between men and women about income spending patterns is depicted in the following quotes:

*“Yes, we do consult him and we also save if there is enough to save. But if there is a shortage you will have to spend it. We have to have his willingness to spend it”.* (FGD1: 08.09.18)

*“He gives you the amount that he is convinced of, and then he might even use the rest (of his money) for entertainment. It is his right”.* (FGD2: 09.09.18)

This can be explained by the way the prevailing social/cultural norms that guide the flow of funds within the household, dictate the money earned by women as a collective resource of the household, while the money earned by husbands is a differentiated and individualized resource (Zelizer, 1989). Hence, men are justified in keeping some “spending money” for their personal pleasure; and not making it accessible to the family (Chant, 2003; Hoodfar, 1998; Pahl, 1983; Zelizer, 1989). However, the study revealed that it is not only the social and cultural prescriptions that prohibit women from spending their money for their personal gains but rather the lack of it. To the question of whether an employed woman has the freedom to spend her own money over tea with her friends, some of the women in the FGD2 responded as follows:

*“Even if it is her own money, she cannot spend it with her friends because it is not enough. It is her living situation that prohibits her”.* (FGD2: 09.09.18)

Considering the modest wages associated with the type of informal and low-ranking jobs poor urban women tend to occupy, it can be predicted that there will not be much money left after paying for the daily subsistence needs of their families. Further, when a woman is earning income, however little it is, her husband expects her to cover at least some of the family’s expenses. The following examples from the first FGD illustrate this issue even more clearly:

*“The money which comes after begging will be challenged ‘you are working now, this much should be enough’ ...”.* (FGD1: 08.09.18)

*“What he does is that he stops giving you money. He will say ‘you have a job; you buy whatever is needed yourself’ ...”.* (FGD1: 08.09.18)

Evidently, husbands tend to withhold their income in an effort to force their wives to spend theirs. Hence, an increase in the income of the family (either through an increase in the husbands' or wives' earnings), does not necessarily translate into an increase in the income women have access to spend for the good of the family. It can be surmised from this that the poverty level of women cannot be fully captured by using monetary values since women's access to family income is constrained by their low bargaining power. Rather, women suffer from the case of 'secondary poverty', where they remain poor even when income is adequately available at the household level due to their diminished bargaining power (Chant, 2003; Fukuda-Parr, 1999; May 2017).

From the perspective of poverty as a denial of human rights, income-poor women suffer from a double whip i.e., gender inequality and poverty (Moghadam, 2005). Therefore, in line with Chant (2007), the study found that women's entitlement over family resources and bargaining power are more important determinants of their well-being than the income earned by women or the actual resource base of the household.

#### 6.5.4 Gender differences in income spending patterns

According to the study findings, the income spending patterns of women correspond to their gendered roles. This is exemplified in the following quotations:

*"A wife's money is spent on all expenses like groceries, and utensils". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*"A woman's money will not leave the oven/kitchen". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

It can be inferred from the above quotes that, wives' income is earmarked as housekeeping money to be strictly used for household consumption, and not for personal spending. Hence, in confirmation of previous findings by Dwyer and Judith, (1988), Haddad et al. (1996), Hoddinott and Haddad, (1995) and Zelizer (1989), the spending patterns of women correspond to their reproductive role. This is because domestic rules emanating from the gender power structure determine the allotment of money once it enters the household (Zelizer, 1989).

The study found mixed results with regard to how husbands and wives budget their income to cover household expenses. While some make financial plans together, other times the responsibility falls entirely on the women. These views are clearly expressed in the following quotes:

*“We discuss what we should do to utilize our income for the whole of the month”.*  
(P8: 11.07.18)

*“It is not a society where a husband and wife put out their money together and say that ‘I have this much money; let us use this much for the children’s school, this much for social activities, and this much for groceries’...”.* (FGD1: 08.09.18)

*“My husband takes no responsibility regarding this matter. Before he retired, he used to give me all his salary and I used to divide the money between our expenses”.* (P5: 10.07.18)

*“It is me. He (my husband) does not know anything”.* (P14: 27.07.18)

When it comes to spending on food, in particular, the study revealed that the husbands’ only responsibility is to give their wives a fixed amount of money regularly. They do not trouble themselves with how much of what food, which type of food is bought or if it is enough at all. This can easily be understood from the following response of women participants in the study:

*“Men, once they give you what they give you for the month’s groceries, it will be your problem to make it last the whole month. He already gave you what he has, so that is it”.* (FGD1: 08.09.18)

*“But once he has given the money to me, the money is mine to spend as I wish, as long as I do not ask for more”.* (FGD1: 08.09.18)

Evidently, women have decision-making power over family income allocated for groceries. This confirms previous findings by Pahl (1983) and Zelizer (1989) that women do not have control over household income except at the absolute lowest level. Women from poor households are often only in charge of budgeting within specific expenditure categories, and managing funds between various expenditures, but rarely the control of funds entering the household (Pahl, 1983). In such households, the tasks of managing and budgeting are chores rather than a source of power for the women, unlike men who have the power to delegate these chores to their wives (ibid.).

The other issue that came out boldly from the finding in the study is that asking for more money from their husband for food is a challenge for women given their lack of entitlement and bargaining power over family income and property. And this has serious implications for women in times of food inflation as discussed in the proceeding Section.

## 6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented important background information on the study participants regarding their age, marital status, migration history, educational attainment, income and employment status. It also explored the triple roles played by poor women in the study area and the factors behind their time allocation decisions in the family, market work and community obligations. It was also established in the study that gendered ideologies that are biased against women are behind their multiple constraints including time poverty, lack of access to entitlement and bargaining power necessary to make decisions over household income and assets. For instance, social norms have proclaimed that reproductive labour is the most essential role of women, while at the same time valuing it less than productive labour because it does not result in monetary gain.

Hence, while women in the study area are tasked with the responsibility of food purchasing and food preparation as part of their reproductive role by the prevailing gender norms, they lack the decisions making power that guides allocative and distributive decisions over family resources including labour, income and assets. Hence, women, while having little to no access to and control of funds entering the household, are in charge of making decisions at the absolute lowest level with regard to how much of what food is needed within a specific budget. Due to this unique predicament of poor women in the study area, it can be assumed that they are affected differently by food inflation compared to the rest of their family members, which is the main topic of discussion in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 7 : The gendered effect of food inflation and the coping strategies of poor women in Addis Ababa

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings with regard to how the gendered social structures of constraint that were discussed in detail in the previous chapter influence the ways women in the study area are affected by food inflation, and how well they cope with it. These privations of women include lack of bargaining power and entitlement over family income and property, time poverty and lack of education or marketable skills. The chapter starts by discussing the felt mental and nutritional impacts of food inflation on poor women given that the purchase and preparation of food make up a big part of their gendered reproductive role. It then proceeds into presenting the findings on how they cope with it given their gendered constraints.

### 7.2 The effect of food inflation on poor women

The participants in the study feel that food prices have risen steeply in recent years, especially on food items like *teff*, sugar, pasta, tomato and onion. This is conveyed by the following quotes:

*“Price is increasing. Nothing (no food price) is decreasing. Pasta used to be 1,50 Birr; now it is 15,00 Bir. They have both local and imported ones”. (P8: 11.07.18)*

*“There is no product whose price has not increased. If you go to shops, things that were sold at 12,00 – 13,00 Birr are now being sold for 30,00 – 40,00 Birr. The people are frustrated”. (P10: 19.07.18)*

*“The price of everything has increased. The price of sugar has increased. It used to be 52,00 Birr per 5 kilos, but now it is 92,00 Birr. In the old times, it used to be 0,75 cents per kilo, but it is now 18,00 Birr per kilo”. (P5: 10.07.18)*

As indicated in section 3.4, published data by the CSA (2020) in Ethiopia confirms that food inflation has been volatile and is the major driver of the general inflation in the country.

At the time of data collection i.e., August 2018, the country-wide year-on-year<sup>100</sup> general inflation rate stood at 13,4%, while the food inflation rate stood at 16% (CSA, 2018b). According to the study, poor women neither seem to understand nor be convinced by the economic and political justifications of retailers for increasing food prices. One participant expressed her encounter with food retailers as follows.

*They say “the dollar has increased” even when they sell onions and cabbage”. I sometimes say “is this small kale/cabbage imported?” ... If I go to Piasa, I do not come back without quarrelling with the retailers... I tell them “Isn’t this our product? or an imported product? Maybe Ethiopia alone produces the dollar. If that is the case, it would be good if we know” (P14: 27.07.18)*

As a result of the ever-increasing food prices, poor women in the study area not only feel frustrated and hopeless but also find it unbearable. The quotations below capture these sentiments.

*“Food prices are increasing and increasing beyond our capacity to buy. If we can we buy food, otherwise, we won't. We are telling this to only God, otherwise, I do not think this will be solved by human beings”. (P11: 24.07.18)*

*“The price is escalating every day. There is nothing whose price is declining. I think that is why our life expectancy is short”. (P12: 24.07.18)*

The findings also imply that poor women have lost faith in the government’s capacity to address the food inflation problem and are now hoping for divine intervention. One participant expresses her fear of the future if current food inflation trends continue as follows

*“I do not know how we will be able to live in the future”. (P5: 10.07.18)*

This indicates how powerless poor women feel against food price increments that increasingly undermine their food security due to their underlying lack of financial flexibility to cope with it. According to Coates et al. (2006), these feelings of worry, uncertainty, perceived lack of control and powerlessness are among the domains and subdomains of the core and proximate consequences of food insecurity in households.

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<sup>100</sup> This measurement compares current inflation with the inflation during the same month in the previous year (CSA), 2018a).



Further, food inflation directly threatens women's existing income-generating activity, thereby food security if they have involved in food preparation-related businesses as illustrated in the following quote from the interview transcript.

*“Teff used to be sold at 22,00 Birr per kilo, but it is now being sold for 27,00 Birr per kilo. So, it is not profitable to bake injera and sell it anymore”. (P3: 09.07.18)*

### 7.3 Intrahousehold differences in food consumption

In times of food inflation, women prioritize their children's consumption over themselves in the intrahousehold distribution of food. This is illustrated in the following response of women participants in the study to the question “Is everyone in the family equally affected by price increment in the major consumable commodities?”

*“My son and I are not affected equally...I do not want him to suffer. For example, if he wants eggs for breakfast, I buy him even if it is just one and then I eat my shiro”. (P6: 10.07.18)*

*I favour my children. If I have to make eggs for breakfast, I will make eggs for them. But I do not eat. Eggs are expensive, one is sold for 5,00 Birr. So, I buy for them and cook for them. But I eat my shiro (peas) and go to work. I want them to be full. If I eat, it will not be enough. (P15: 27.07.18)*

*since there are children, when we do not manage to buy the food that they are used to eating, they feel bad. It is really difficult. Even if I say 'I will save this amount this month', when I see the children wanting something, I say “no, what will happen if I do not save?’, then I will spend on what they want even if it is just for a day. (P15: 27.07.18)*

This shows how women's consumption needs are sacrificed in poor households in favour of their children, displaying a typical case of parental austerity (Kochuyt, 2004). Hence, women serve as shock absorbers of household food security by sacrificing their consumption, a practice which is also referred to as maternal buffering (Maxwell, 1996; Meerman and Aphane, 2012; Quisumbing et al., 2008; UNICEF and WFP, 2009). This is also consistent with the findings of previous research in various parts of Ethiopia that found women in both male- and female-headed households prioritising their children's consumption over themselves when faced with food insecurity (Amare, 2010; Uraguchi, 2010).

According to the study, this practice of favouring children in the intrahousehold distribution of food is something that most of these women have learnt from their parents. The following quotes from the interview transcripts can serve as examples of this finding:

*“I have inherited this tradition from my family. You observe that parents harm themselves to favour their children and feed them good food”. (P12: 24.07.18)*

*“That is how our mother raised us... She used to believe children must eat (first)... Now, I also give food to my children even while preparing the sauce”. (P14: 27.07.18)*

This shows how women have been socialized to put their children’s needs at the top of the household consumption hierarchy at an earlier age. Moreover, even though it is becoming less common in recent times, women have privileged their husbands’ consumption in the intrahousehold distribution of food, particularly with delicacies such as chicken stew in the past. The following stories shared by women participants in the study confirm this argument:

*“In the old times, we would not eat chicken stew unless the head of the household is home. But it has been many years now since we stopped this practice”. (P8: 11.08.18)*

*“My father used to ask ‘how do you eat/serve (chicken stew) before I come home?’...”. (P14: 27.07.18)*

On the other hand, the belief and practice of discounting women’s consumption needs are well embedded in the culture and language of the country as demonstrated by the following Amharic proverbs (Assefa, 2002).

“A woman and a horse taste whatever they can access”

“A woman’s heart is selective, but not her abdomen”

However, most participants feel that favouring male members of the household over females in the intra-distribution of food is outdated. Some are also of the view that there is no significant difference between the apportioned size and variety of food between members of a household.

This is indicated by the following responses of study participants to the question of whether food inflation has differential impacts on the consumption levels of household members.

*“The effect is the same for all of us. We cannot (afford to differentiate consumption levels) among family members even if we wanted to”. (P9:12.07.18)*

*“Yes, the effect is equal. We eat from the same pot”. (P2: 05.07.18)*

Hence, as Amare (2010) indicated when available food is insufficient to partition among family members, members often ate from the same plate, avoiding all variations in food allocation as a manner of promoting family cohesion in the face of scarcity. However, even when there is no difference in intrahousehold consumption, women still carry a much bigger psychological burden in coping with food inflation. The following quotes exemplify this situation:

*“I am the one who suffers the most. Who else is there? Since I am responsible for everything. It is the mother who suffers the most. It is the mother who thinks about all alternative solutions”. (P13: 27.07.18)*

*“When faced with inflation, a woman worries... She also stresses to economically use whatever she has”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

Hadley et al. (2012) and Amare (2010) also found the most often reported consequence of the surge in food prices for poor urban dwellers in Ethiopia is being anxious about what to eat from meal to meal and how to pay for it. Given that buying and preparing food are both deemed as part of “woman’s work” by the dominant gender beliefs outlined in the previous chapter, this anxiety is likely to be significantly worse for women. Gebreyesus et al. (2017) also found evidence of the link between maternal depression and food insecurity in Ethiopia. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, women do not have the necessary bargaining power to access family income and guide spending priorities within the household, making their job of coping with inflation all the more difficult. Therefore, there is no guarantee that women will get additional money from their husbands to account for increased food prices.

The following stories shared by the study participants in the second FGD are testaments to this argument:

*“There is no additional money that she gets (from her husband) to account for inflation. So, she has to do whatever she can, because it is her problem.... He will say ‘I have already given you (money)...other women save in Iqqub, why don't you do that?’ ... If he does not have money, he will say ‘there you go again with the nagging’ ...” (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

However, most of the women participants in the study do not believe that this reflects the lack of concern on the part of their husbands for the family, but simply their inability to afford the additional money required to cope with food inflation. The following quotations from the first FGD (on 08.09.18) illustrate this argument.

*“He does not have additional income until the next month... Even if he complains, he won't let you go to bed with an empty stomach.... If he has money, he will give it to you. It is not like he will let his family starve. But, if he does not, he cannot do anything even if he feels bad”. (FGD1:08.09.18)*

In the absence of bargaining power that gives women access to family income, they have to rely on themselves and their existing role in food purchase and preparation to come up with strategies with minimal disturbance to the existing marital power structure. This is in line with other studies that indicated that even if everyone in the family is affected by food inflation, women carry the extra mental, emotional, and physical burden of adjustment (Cappellini et al., 2014). In the proceeding Section, some of the main food inflation adjustment techniques of poor women living in urban areas are outlined and discussed.

#### **7.4 Coping strategies of women**

Women, despite their gender-specific challenges as outlined in the preceding sections, are still primarily responsible for smoothening the family's consumption during shocks such as food inflation as part of their reproductive responsibility. Poor women implement several consumption-modifying/food-related strategies to cope with rising food prices including shifting to cheaper substitutes and ingredients, cutting out non-staple foods, reducing the portion and frequency of meals, and modifying the food buying and preparation process.

They also employ several non-consumption-modifying/livelihood-related strategies including shifting the budget away from non-food expenses, engaging in income-generating activities (IGAs), purchasing food in bulk, borrowing from others and selling assets. Each of these strategies is discussed briefly in the proceeding Sections.

#### 7.4.1 Switching to cheaper, less preferred or lower-quality food

The most common and immediate response involves making concessions in the quality<sup>101</sup> of diet, or, in the words of Hadley et al. (2012, p.2415), shifting towards "poor people's food," to be able to maintain meal portions (energy levels). This is exemplified by the quotations below:

*"The family does not reduce its consumption levels despite price increments. I try to manage according to my ability". (P9: 12.07.18)*

*"If lentils become expensive, I shift to shiro". (P6: 10.07.18)*

*"I buy teff only when I can. When I can't, I just buy bread. How can I buy teff monthly? It used to be the case in old times, but not anymore". (P11: 24.07.18)*

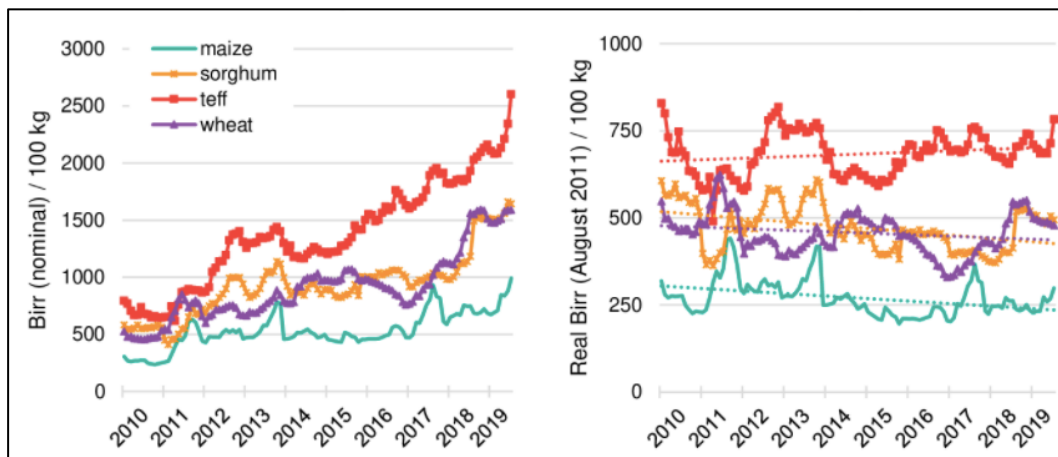
*"To avoid running out of teff and the need for buying more, I bake qita from wheat and corn and give it to my children, I also boil nifro". (P13: 27.07.18)*

Replacing grains more preferred by urban dwellers, such as teff, with less preferred grains, such as wheat, maize, and sorghum, is comprehensible given that the former has consistently been far more expensive than the latter (Minten and Dorosh, 2019). This is shown in Figure 7:1 below.

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<sup>101</sup> In this study, quality of diet does not necessarily indicate the nutritional content of the diet in scientific terms, but the respondents' preferences in terms of taste and variety. For example, among this particular study group, animal sources of food are more valued than legumes or vegetables, lentil stew is more valued than *shiro*, and *teff (injera)* is more valued than *qita* or *nifro*.

Figure 7:1 Nominal and real Price trends of major cereals in Addis Ababa



Source: Minten and Dorosh (2019)

Even though the nominal price of all major cereals in Addis Ababa has been increasing over the last decade, it is only the real price<sup>102</sup> of *Teff* that has increased over the period as displayed on the right panel in Figure 7:1 (Minten and Dorosh, 2019). Further, as a result of the surge in food prices, there is a general decline in the consumption of non-staple foods and a shift from animal protein and carbohydrates towards grains and legumes by poor urban households. This is evident in the following quote from the interview transcript.

*“We have stopped consuming items that are becoming expensive entirely...No children in poor households are raised on milk these days. But, in the past, we had managed to feed our children milk”. (P3: 09.07.18)*

This above quote also is in line with the theory and empirical evidence in Ethiopia and elsewhere that children’s complementary meals are among the first food items that are eliminated to cope with food crises such as food inflation (Amare, 2010; Compton et al., 2010; Martin-Prével et al., 2000). This finding seems reasonable given that over the period of data collection (July-August 2018), the inflation rate for milk, cheese, and eggs climbed by 19,6% while it increased by 15,6% on average for bread and cereals (CSA, 2018a, 2018b).

<sup>102</sup> The nominal price of teff divided by the CPI for Ethiopia (Minten and Dorosh, 2019).

Bachewe and Minten (2019) have also confirmed that the real prices of dairy products and animal sources of protein in urban areas have increased significantly higher than that of grains, roots and tubers between the years 2007 and 2016 as displayed in Table 7:1 below.

Table 7:1 Percentage of change in retail and producer prices, by food group between 2007 and 2016

Food group	Urban retail prices
Grains, roots, and tubers	-2,3
Legumes and nuts	26,2
Dairy products	26,9
Eggs	43,1
Flesh foods and small animal protein	33,4
Other Vitamin A-rich vegetables and fruits	61,9
Other fruits and vegetables	18,8
Oils and fats	-35,2
Sugar and honey	-23,6

Source: Bachewe and Minten (2019)

The drop in price of sugar and oils, which are mostly eaten in metropolitan areas like Addis Ababa, is attributed to government control over these food items' production, distribution, pricing, and quantities, which isn't reflective of their actual prices (Ameye et al. 2021). This is one of the government response initiatives put in place since 2007/2008 to protect its vulnerable people from the effects of food inflation, as detailed in section 3.6.5. The trend in the CPI of the major food groups in Addis Ababa as shown in Figure 3.3 also reveals that the price of all food components except oils and fats has remained above that of bread and cereals until 2017. However, since 2018, the CPI for bread and cereals surpassed the CPI for dairy products as below.

This finding is consistent with prior research by D'Souza and Jolliffe (2016), who found that as food prices rise, household expenditure on animal-source of protein decreases substantially more than on non-animal of source protein. It was also revealed in the study that, the consumption of high-value crops and nutritious foods such as fruits and meat by poor urban dwellers varies across the various seasons during the course of the year. This is discussed in further detail in the next Section.

□ **Seasonality in diet content**

The diversity in the diet of poor urban households varies across the various seasons during the course of a year in response to the changes in the price of various food groups as shown in Figure 7:2 below.

Figure 7:2 Seasonality in the variety of food consumed over a course of a year

Seasons in Ethiopia	FGD1	GD2
<b>Food groups</b>		
<i>Belg/ Autumn:</i> Sep- Nov		
<i>Bega/ Summer:</i> Dec - Feb		
<i>Tseday/ Spring:</i> March-May		
<i>Kirment/Meher/</i> Winter: Jun-Aug		

Note: The Ethiopian calendar has 13 months and begins on September 11 of the Gregorian calendar

Source: Timeline exercises conducted by research participants during the FGDs (Left: FGD1 & Right: FGD2)<sup>103</sup>

What has boldly come out of this exercise is that poor urban households consume grains and pulses regularly while consuming vegetables less frequently, and fruits and animal proteins occasionally throughout the year. The following quotes from participants of the FGDs confirm this finding:

*“Isn't shiro eaten forever? There isn't a day that we do not eat shiro; shiro is the base of our home (diet)”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

*“Even though our diet does not have variety, we won't lose injera and shiro”. (P15: 27.07.18)*

*“We only eat fruits when we crave them, like once every month or two months”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

<sup>103</sup> Participants were presented with an illustration of four food groups (animal-sources of food, legumes, vegetables and fruits), and they were asked to indicate the variety of their diet and how it changes within the course of the year (across the four seasons) by putting bids in cups placed in each box. Participants put one, two and three bids to indicate that they have consumed specific food components “occasionally”, “sometimes”, and “regularly” respectively.



*“You eat kale, but not always. The money is not enough”. (FGD1:08.09.18)*

*“Tomatoes, carrots, pepper, potato we eat a lot...I eat vegetables throughout the year”. (FGD1:08.09.18)*

Some women during this exercise simply asked to put all bids in the *shiro* cup to indicate that their diet lacks variety. As discussed in the previous Section, the inflationary trends of nutritious food groups such as fruits and meat may explain why the diets of poor people tend to be very monotonous, dominated mainly by cereals and grains. This is in line with the existing data by WFP and CSA (2019) that indicates that the composition of cereals and pulses<sup>104</sup> in the diet of Addis Ababa’s residents amounts to 61%. While on the other hand, the proportion of animal products and vegetables in the diet stand at 2% and 4% respectively, fruits are entirely non-existent.

Figure 7:2 above also indicates that there is seasonality in the consumption of an animal-based diet. Accordingly, animal products are consumed in a relatively more frequent manner during the *Bleg* and *Tsedy* seasons in FGD1, and during the *Belg* and *Bega* seasons in FGD2. This seems to suggest that consumption of animal-sources of diet is related to the major national and religious holidays, particularly that of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church (EOTC) faith<sup>105</sup> as exemplified by the following quotations from the first FGD.

*“We used to eat meat around Enkutatash, and in January ...then during Fasika it became over 200,00 Birr”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*“We don’t eat meat during December, it is the fasting season; it is a shiro season”. (FGD1:08.09.18)*

*“During the fasting months of April and May, meat becomes expensive”. (FGD1:08.09.18)*

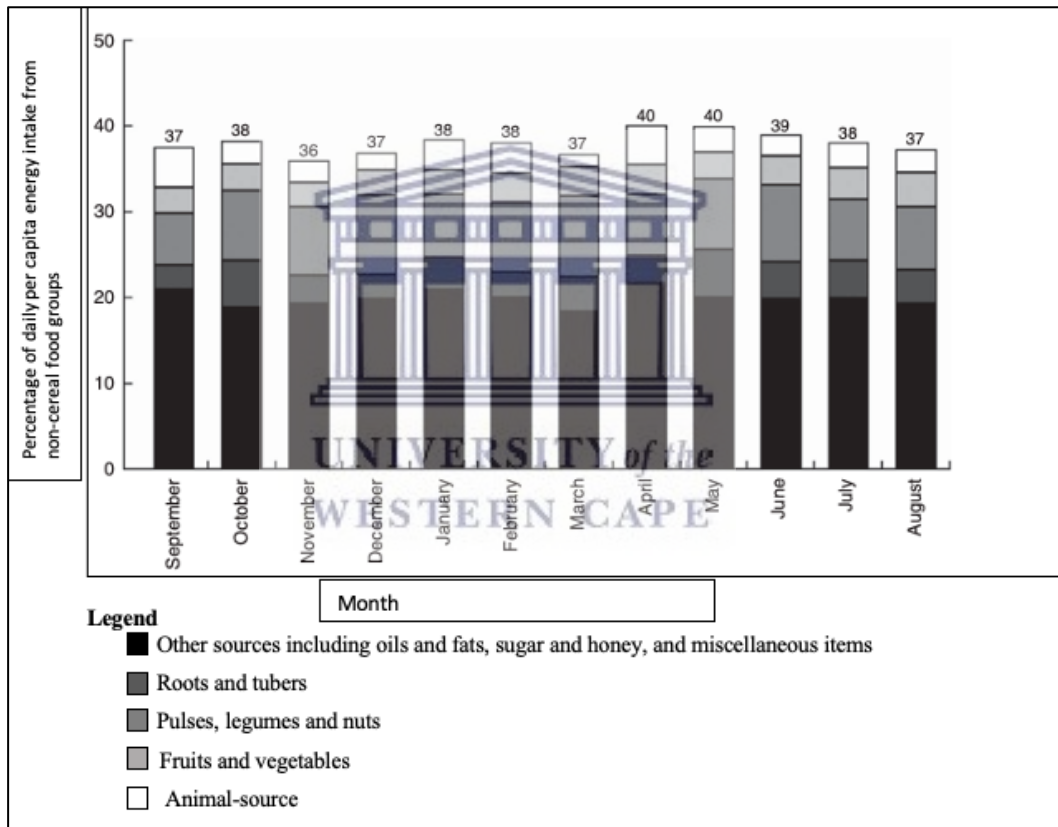
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<sup>104</sup> In the Ethiopian diet, pulses are consumed as *shiro* (stew), as *qollo* (roasted), as *boqolt* (germinated) and as *nifro* (boiled) forms (WFP and CSA, 2019).

<sup>105</sup> According to the population and housing census of the CSA in 2007, followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo faith make up 44% nationally and 75% of Addis Ababa population (Central Statistical Agency (CSA), 2014). The holidays that are widely celebrated by followers of the EOTC faith include *Enkutatash* (the Ethiopian New year) and *Meskel* (Finding of the true cross) in September, *Gena* (Christmas) and *Timket* (Baptism) in January, and *Faika* (Easter) in April or May.

Hirvonen et al. (2015) also confirm that on average, in Ethiopia, the months of September and April have the largest proportion of daily per capita energy consumption derived from animal sources (out of the total non-cereal intake), followed by January and February. This is because national and religious holidays in the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian faith involve the slaughtering of animals, following a 40-56 days-long fasting period characterised by abstinence from animal products like meat and dairy (Bachewe et al., 2017; Hirvonen et al., 2015; The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, 2003). This is illustrated in Figure 7.3 below.

Figure 7.3 Percentage share of daily per capita energy intake from non-cereal food groups by month in urban settings



Note: On this graph, the number at the top of each bar indicates the percentage of energy coming from non-cereal foods (Hirvonen et al., 2015).

Source: Hirvonen et al. (2015)

As Figure 7:3 above indicates the percentage share of the daily per capita energy coming from animal sources is relatively the highest during the holiday months of September and April, followed by January and Feb. And there is a shift in consumption away from animal proteins to other sources before and after the major fasting and holiday seasons. This is an indication that urban diets in Ethiopia somewhat imitate national and religious fasting and holidays (Hirvonen et al., 2015).

In line with o Bachewe et al. (2017), the study also found some level of correlation between the consumption of animal products and the seasonality of agricultural production in the country. As shown in panel 2 of Figure 7:2 above, there is a surge in the consumption of animal products during the post-harvest season of December – November when livestock prices are lower following relatively improved accessibility of animal feed.

#### 7.4.2 Reduction of overall food intake

Further, if food inflation persists, consumption-modifying measures may eventually involve reducing overall food (calorie) intake as illustrated by the following examples.

*“You can spend the day without eating...I do what I can, just to stay alive, even if it is qita, or whatever it is, I will have a very small amount and spend the night”. (P11: 24.07.18)*

*“Whatever you used to buy 25 kilos can now only buy 10 kilos. You will be obliged to reduce your quota”. (P9: 19.07.18)*

These findings of the study discussed in sections 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 are consistent with the findings of previous studies in Ethiopia by Birhane et al. (2014), WFP and CSA (2019), Amare (2010) and Hadley et al. (2012) that demonstrated that reducing the total food intake, particularly of high-value crops and nutritious foods, reducing dietary diversity, and shifting to cheaper substitutes are some of the most common food consumption-based coping mechanisms applied by poor urban households.

For example, Admassie (2015) also found that during the food price crisis of 2007/08, urban households responded by switching from *teff* to cheaper alternatives such as maize and sorghum, as well as lowering the portion and frequency of meals from three to two. As indicated in Chapter 3, food inflation-driven deterioration in diet could have short and long-term negative implications, particularly for women of reproductive age, infants and children (Bachewe and Minten, 2019; Kalkuhl et al., 2013; Ruel et al., 2010; Uraguchi, 2010).

#### 7.4.3 Adjusting the food buying and preparation process

Consumption-modification tactics to cope with food inflation involve adjusting both the food shopping and preparation process, including adjustment of ingredients as the following quotes from the interview attest.

*“I reduce the amount I buy and the amount I use during cooking. If I used to buy three litres of oil, now I am buying 2 litres”. (P9: 12.07.18)*

*If you want to make tasty food, there are things you need to add. But doing so will use up what you have (your stock) and you will not have enough for the remainder of the month. So, I just put a pinch (of the inputs) and cook economically just to have something to eat for the day. (P12: 24.07.18)*

*“We used to make nice (tasty) things...but, not anymore. I tell my daughter to just use one onion or two; do not use many”. (P14: 27.07.18)*

*“A woman when she is faced with scarcity, rather than arguing with her husband for additional money, she might even cook without oil”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

It is also evident that, when food prices soar, the most important concern of poor women is putting something on the table for their families to eat by the end of the day. Hence, the taste of food becomes a quality that gets sacrificed in the process. Women also have to choose and prioritize among various food groups to cope with food inflation since they cannot afford to buy everything they need at once. This is evident in the following quotation from the interview transcript:

*I cannot buy everything that I need at once. So, once I bought teff I buy the other things as much as I can (with the money I still have left with me). (P9:12.08.18)*

Hence, foods like *teff* are prioritized over others such as oil, whose purchase is dependent on the amount of money that is left in the grocery budget after purchasing *teff*.

This is consistent with Tolossa's (2010) findings in Addis Abeba's Berta Gibi and Gemechu Sefer (communities typically known to be home to people with low living standards), where residents cope with food shortages by switching to less expensive grains, cutting back on the number of meals per day and the amount of food per meal, among other techniques. Further, such strategies require poor women to exert more pressure on themselves in terms of both time and energy in buying and preparing food. The following quotations exemplify some of the strategies women employ to cope with food inflation:

*“I buy shiro at Shola because it is a little cheaper there”. (P11: 24.08.18)*

*“I wake up at 5:00 am to buy bread... I also ask others to buy it for me or to hold a space for me in the queue until I complete my job and go there”. (P14: 27.08.18)*

Hence, some women travel far to buy cheaper food, others wake up early to line up for long hours to buy food at cheaper prices, and some carry heavy-weighting food/grocery from the market to their homes to save the money that would have been spent on a help/labourer to cope with food inflation. Furthermore, resorting to a cheaper variety of food to cope with food inflation as discussed in Section 7.4.1 above adds to the work burden of women.

This can be gathered from the following response of the FGD participants regarding how women cope with food inflation:

*“If she buys a low-quality product, she would take longer time to clean it. It might also take longer to be cooked. That variety that she bought because it is cheaper will take more effort from her (to cook)”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

Therefore, in line with previous studies by Kumar and Quisumbing (2011), Urguchi (2010), and Meerman and Aphane (2012), rising food prices further tighten the already scarce time of poor women as long as societal norms tend to delineate different economic and social roles for men and women. However, these options are not workable for women who are already constrained by time poverty as discussed in the previous chapter, and for those who do not have the physical fitness necessary to handle the extra work pressure such as older women.

One respondent expressed the extent of her time poverty and her challenge to put extra time into preparing food as follows:

*“Sometimes, I do not even have time to cook what I have bought”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

#### 7.4.4 Shifting the budget away from non-food expenses

As discussed in Section 6.2.2 of the previous chapter, for the study participants, food-related expenses are among those budget items such as house rent and utility expenses that take precedence above others. Some of the women respondents found budgeting for expenses such as clothes bizarre as the following quotes from the FGDs illustrate.

*“What clothes are you talking about? We do not buy clothes”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*“Even some do not buy clothes at all”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

This suggests that after spending on food, poor households' budgets do not have much left over to allow for any flexibility in times of shock. This signals that the poor devote a significant share of their expenditure to food, and hence are vulnerable to shocks reaffirming previous findings by (CSA and WFP, 2019; Matz et al., 2015). In those rare circumstances where they have budgeted some money for expenses other than food, it seems that they can shift it to food easily, save for some exceptions like children's education as indicated here:

*“We reallocate resources from clothes to food, but not from school expenses. Because clothes can wait”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

This finding is in direct contradiction to the nationwide study in Ethiopia that found that reducing essential non-food expenditures such as education, and health is the most common coping strategy of households experiencing unusually high prices (CSA and WFP, 2019). Furthermore, as discussed in the previous chapter, most women in low-income households have little or no say in the decision-making process of allocating funds among various expenditure categories, rendering this coping method ineffective.

#### 7.4.5 Income-generating activities

When faced with food inflation, poor women also try to earn additional income and sustain the level of consumption their family is accustomed to by selling their labour given that they have the physical and mental capability. Regarding the question of how women smooth out their family's consumption in times of price inflation, the following responses were given by participants.

*“I do whatever job I can get. I bake injera and work even during the night time”. (P6: 10.08.18)*

*“I started the Safety net job to cope with food price increments”. (P4: 09.08.18)*

*“Yes, sometimes, when I find work like washing clothes, I do that”. (P13: 27.07.18).*

*“To cope with inflation, a woman tries to get additional income by selling her labour, if she is healthy and has the physical fitness to do so”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

This is comparable to Moser's (1998) results, which showed that in reaction to the economic crisis, women increased their labour force participation, primarily in the informal sector. However, as it was stressed in section 6.3.2 Chapter six, the involvement of women in income-generating activity is conditional on having the necessary capital, education and marketable skill set, health and physical condition, and time. The last component indicates not just having adequate time, but also control over it, as well as cooperation from their spouses and other family members. Hence, women who lack one or more of these factors are at further risk of food insecurity in times of food inflation. When asked how she copes with increases in food prices, a woman participant in the study said this:

*“Nothing. What can I do? If I had any education, maybe, I would have done something. But since I do not have any education how can I do that?” (P15: 27.07.18)*

Amare (2010) and Kumar and Quisumbing (2011) also found that poor education, poor health, lack of necessary capital and market constraints undermine women's ability to cope with food insecurity by reallocating their labour hours to generate additional income. Furthermore, as mentioned in section 6.4.1.3 of Chapter six, in the absence of own-labour substitution possibilities, and cooperation of other members of the family, women's increasing involvement in income-generating activities further exacerbates their existing time poverty problem.

#### 7.4.6 Buying in bulk and financing food through *Iqqub*

Poor women purchase certain food items like *teff*, *shiro*, *berbere* that they need for the year (for at least a few months) at once in bulk quantities to ensure themselves against consumption shocks resulting from seasonal food price increments. Nonetheless, as discussed in section 7.4.3, most poor people find it difficult to buy all the food they require at a time, much less to buy large stocks to smooth out their family's consumption in the future. Hence, this food inflation coping strategy is only affordable for a few due to its capital-intensive nature. However, as seen in the testimony of a woman participant below, some women utilize their *Iqqub* money to pay for the considerable investment that this coping mechanism necessitates.

*We buy earlier in January/February up to April/May since the price is better then. So we maintain our consumption level and quality of diet regardless of the seasonal price increment...I use my savings. I collect and save my iqqub money just for this purpose. (P4: 09.08.18)*

This is consistent with previous findings by Alamirew and Tsehay (2013) in Addis Ababa, which highlighted the role of community institutions such as *iqqub* in serving as social capital and shielding their members from severe food insecurity in times of shock.

#### 7.4.7 Borrowing

The study found that some poor urban women eventually resort to borrowing from others to cover their food-related expenses if things got so bad and if all else fails. Some may also borrow to finance the purchase of a few months of food at a time and take advantage of the economies of scale in terms of time and labour. The following justification of a participant for borrowing from others demonstrates this logic.

*“You can also borrow from others to buy teff that can be used for two months to save time. And you can pay back the money the next month”. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

Moreover, as mentioned earlier in this sub-section, buying in bulk through borrowing enables poor women to cushion their family's consumption against unpredictable price hikes.



However, as the following responses from participants indicate, most women do not consider this as a viable alternative due to the mental stress of paying back the debt, and its unsustainability as a strategy as food prices continue to increase. One woman in the FGD said:

*"Shall I worry about paying back after borrowing? No!" (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

Borrowing, according to Hadley et al. (2012) and Amare (2010) is not a practical or sustainable option for poor urban Ethiopians to cope with food price increases due to the difficulty of repaying the loan.

#### 7.4.8 Selling assets

For most poor women, selling assets to buy food is a "God forbid" scenario that they will explore only "when it gets really bad" as a measure of last resort. The respondents in the study view this as something they will consider only if they are desperate and on the verge of starvation as the following quote from the FGD exemplifies.

*"If it is a must, yes, we sell. Because your stomach (hunger) does not give you time". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*"If we do not have anything to eat, we sell our properties". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*"If you have gold, you sell it. It is only gold that you can sell anyway". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

However, for this alternative coping mechanism to work, at least two conditions must be met. Women must have access to something of value like gold that can easily be liquidated into cash, and also the decision-making power to sell such assets. As discussed in the previous chapter, both of these conditions are highly unlikely for most poor women. Overall, the study revealed that food inflation worsens the food insecurity of poor urban dwellers as demonstrated by a decrease in the variety and quality of their diets, and feelings of worry and uncertainty about food. It also indicated that poor women's most preferred coping strategies in times of food inflation are reducing the amount, variety and quality of diet; and provision of more time and energy for buying and cooking food. The thesis argues that this is mainly because, these coping strategies do not require access to additional capital or having knowledge/skills on the part of women.

## 7.1 Chapter Summary

In light of the gendered constraints faced by poor women in the study area, this chapter examined how they are affected by food inflation and how they cope with it. Poor women in the study area utilize several consumption-modifying and non-consumption-modifying strategies to cope with food inflation. Among these, the former group of strategies with the objective of maintaining the amount of food consumed are most preferred by poor women in the study area due to their lower requirement in terms of additional capital or having knowledge/skills. The chapter asserts that women are more severely affected by the adverse consequences of food inflation because they are mainly responsible for purchasing and preparing food, and their coping techniques are limited by their gender-specific privations. While poor women prefer to buy food at cheaper prices, cheaper food items usually require a longer time to buy, to cook or both. Hence, poor women suffer from the additional nutritional, mental, emotional and time burden of coping with food inflation.

Therefore, for women who are income-poor and time-poor, the decision to buy food in times of food inflation involves making a difficult choice with immediate and long-term consequences to them. This issue of how women chose where to buy their food and the reasons behind it in light of the unique ways that they are affected by food inflation is further elaborated on in chapter 9. The proceeding chapter evaluates the implementation of the public distribution system (PDS) of basic goods in Addis Ababa, by the GoE with the goal of stabilizing supply and food prices to protect the food security of the vulnerable population, along with its achievements and challenges.

## CHAPTER 8 : Evaluation of the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa

### 8.1 Introduction

Since the 1960s, the GoE, having recognized the social, economic and political harmful effects of inflation, has been implementing a series of policies against inflation (Admassie, 2015; FAO, 2014; Gebremeskel, 2020; PDC, 2021; Worako, 2012). As discussed in Chapter 3 of this study, the policies employed by successive governments in Ethiopia include monetary and fiscal policies, maintaining buffer stocks, controlling marketed supply and distribution channels, and establishing commodity exchange and Social Safety net programs. The GoE's interventions have particularly focused on the cereal sub-sector throughout the various regimes, with the market share of government-distributed cereals reaching as high as 57% in the 1980s during the Socialist regime (Rashid and Negassa, 2011).

Since 2013, the GoE has been implementing a new PDS of goods to improve the accessibility of basic goods, stabilize prices and mitigate the harmful effects of food inflation on the poor (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). This chapter analyses the implementation process of this program in Addis Ababa its perceived faults, and its accomplishments in terms of realizing its envisaged outputs and outcomes from the perspectives of both the implementing organizations and targeted beneficiaries. This allows for analysing the gender responsiveness of the program and how that impacted its outcomes from the perspective of women beneficiaries using a feminist policy analysis framework in the next Chapter.

Towards meeting the envisaged objective in this chapter, the study follows a theory-driven program evaluation approach that allows examining both the process, implementation and outcome of the intervention program. It starts by explicating how a program theory was extracted, followed by constructing the logic model<sup>106</sup> of the intervention to be able to define and analyse the numerous components of the program, including inputs, strategies/activities, outputs, and outcomes.

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<sup>106</sup> A logic model is a diagrammatic representation of a program theory (Funnell and Rogers, 2011).

The final section summarizes the evaluation findings and interprets the results before concluding the chapter.

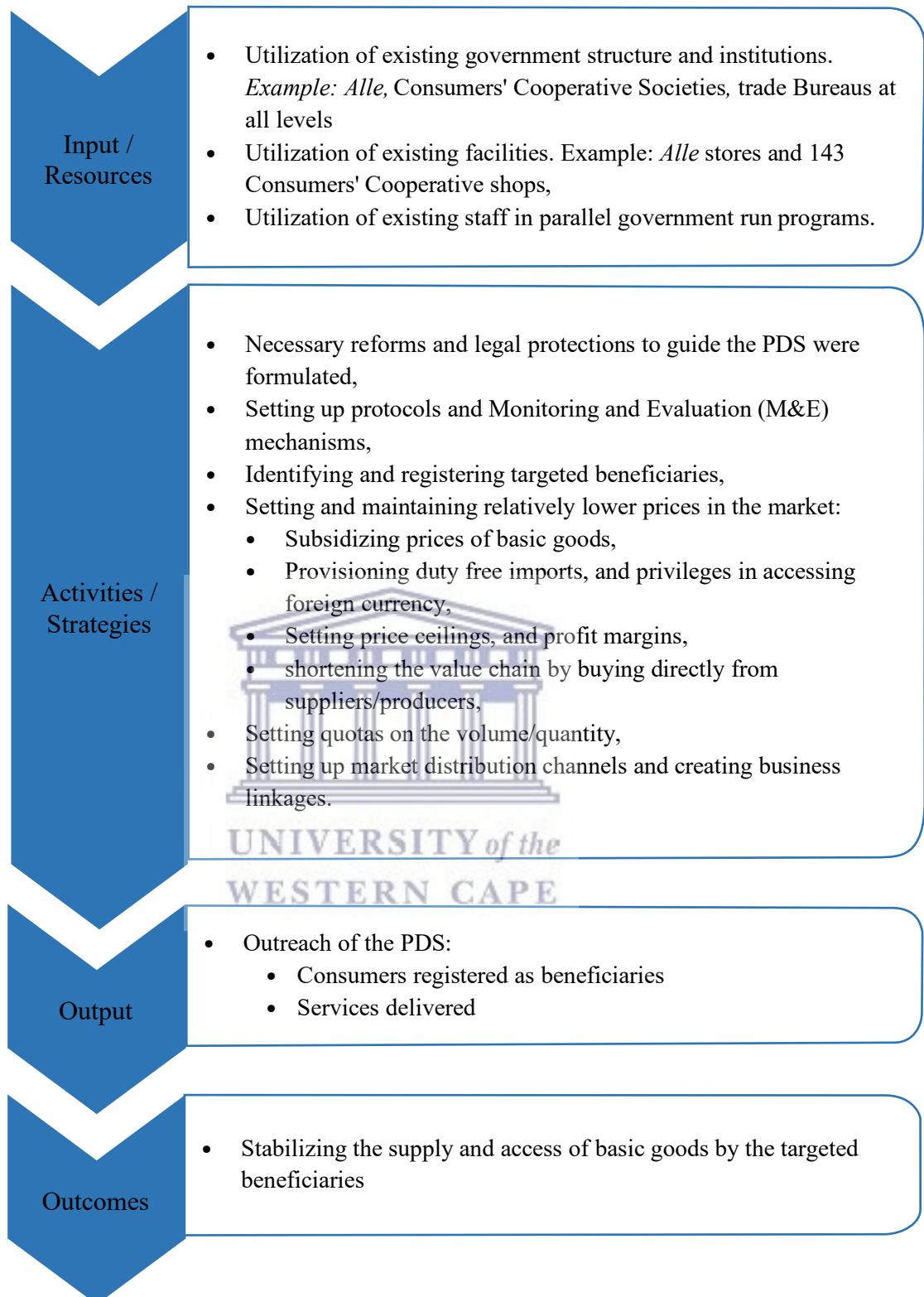
## 8.2 Extracting program theory for the PDS of basic goods

The PDS for basic goods is said to have an implicit program theory since it does not adequately and explicitly define and document its objectives, outputs, outcomes, nor its attendant activities, and underlying assumptions (Rossi et al., 2019). Therefore, it was necessary to develop the program theory of the intervention program prior to evaluation by elaborating on the presumptions underlying the constituted concepts and linkages.

The program theory illustrated by the logic model in Figure 8:1 below was constructed, through understanding and describing the assumptions behind the program's structure and operations, what they ought to achieve and how "as intended" by the MoT, the program's primary decision-maker, and other relevant actors (Funnell and Rogers, 2011; Rossi et al., 2019). This study used a variant of the Pipeline logic model known as the United Way logic model, which comprises inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes for participants to evaluate the implementation of PDS and its effect on the targeted beneficiaries. This model is championed for its simplicity and effectiveness in representing the intervention and its consequences as a series of results (Funnell and Rogers, 2011).

As shown in Section 8.3, the process of extracting the implicit program theory involved detailing the program's objectives, components, functions, associated activities, and the logic connecting them. This is followed by evaluating the validity/plausibility of the underlying assumptions of the logic model in light of the information presented on program implementation and performance using the method described in Section 8.2.2

Figure 8:1 The logic model of the PDS of basic goods in Ethiopia

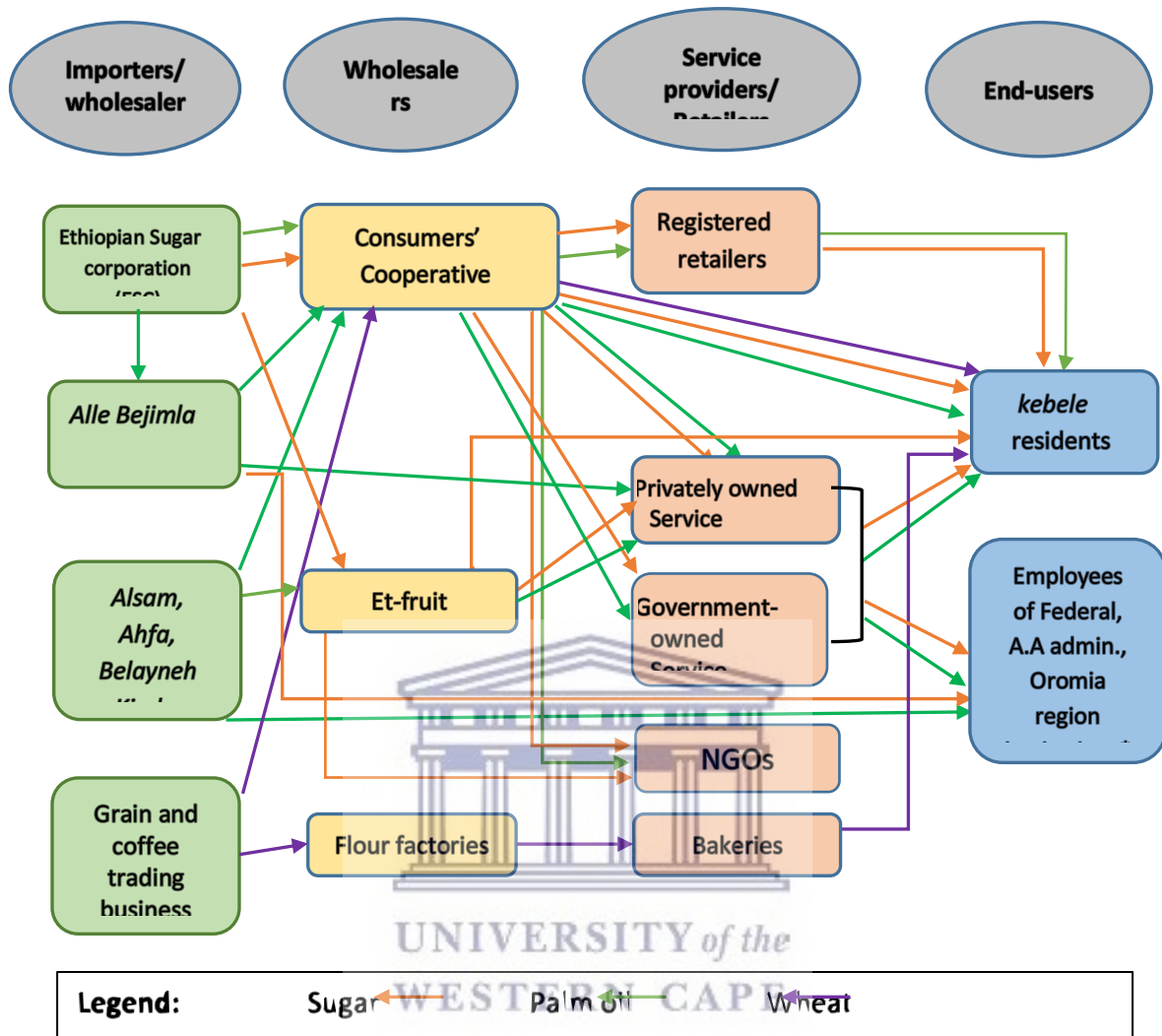


Despite the application of a simple Pipeline logic model to illustrate the program theory of the intervention program under investigation in Figure 8:1 above, it has both complicated and complex characteristics for the following reasons. It is complicated since it involves various stakeholders such as the MoT, Consumers' Cooperative Societies, private retailers, and *Alle Bejimla*, that have different objectives and mandates, and work at different sites and levels of government (Funnell and Rogers, 2011; Rogers, 2008).

In addition, it takes several simultaneous causal strands involving importers, wholesalers, and service providers/retailers for the intervention to meet its objectives as shown in Figure 8:2 below. As depicted in the figure, the current distribution system of the PDS constitutes multiple business linkages among the various implementing partners. This is discussed in further detail in section 8.3.2.6. The intervention is also complex because its success is conditional on each actor on the chain playing their parts in acquiring the basic goods in the right amounts and price, as well as in time to deliver them to the next actor along the chain (Rogers, 2008). This process is referred to as activating a “virtuous circle” in which one accomplishment fosters subsequent successes (*ibid.*, p. 38).

For instance, if the Ethiopian Sugar Corporation (ESC) and Grain and coffee trading business fail to acquire the required sugar and wheat in time for collection, the Consumers' Cooperatives and private retailers cannot succeed in meeting their objectives. Hence, there was a need to ensure there is adequate coverage and sufficient prioritization of the multiple and competing imperatives, objectives and various casual strands and levels of intervention (Funnell and Rogers, 2011). The study gave priority to the objectives of the MoT as the primary owner of the program and focused on analysing the casual strands it introduces in the program, both for the goal of constructing the program theory and evaluating the intervention.

Figure 8:2 The public distribution system of basic goods in Addis Ababa



**Note:**

- \* These are privately-owned companies that are allowed to import palm oil to be distributed to residents in Addis Ababa
- \* This refers to both non-VAT-registered small businesses and VAT-registered businesses.
- \*\* This refers to cafes and restaurants operating in government-managed institutions.
- \*\*\* This refers to employees of federal, Addis Ababa Administration, Oromia regional Bureaus, Agencies, Ministries, government-owned development organizations, government-owned universities and hospitals.

Source: Adapted from Tegegne et al. (2018)

The next section outlines and describes the main components of the program theory of the intervention program i.e., objectives, inputs/resources, activities/strategies, and outputs of the intervention program. Simultaneously, it examines the success of the program through the use of the evaluation criteria and technique outlined herein. The type of evaluation that is conducted in the study is a combination of implementation-process/formative evaluation, and summative/ outcome/ impact evaluation (Ile et al., 2012; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2017). Hence, both the distribution system itself and the targeted beneficiaries of the intervention program are taken as the units /focuses of analysis in the evaluation.

Interpreting the overall findings of the evaluation of the intervention program necessitates taking into account the findings of the assessment of its program theory/design, in addition to the assessment of the program process, implementation and outcomes (Rossi, 2019). In this chapter, the study assesses the validity of the program theory by examining the degree of accuracy of its underlying assumptions. While Sections 8.3.1 through 8.3.3 present the findings of the process evaluation of the intervention, Section 8.3.4 highlights the results of the impact evaluation.

### **8.3 Description of the program theory and its evaluation**

As mentioned in the introductory section, the rationale behind GoE's decision to implement the PDS of basic goods is to stabilize the market by reducing food inflation by distributing them to consumers in the low and middle-income quantile at subsidized prices (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018, p. 5). At this point, the assumptions behind the intervention program with regards to the problem that is to be addressed, the method with which that can be done, the capacity of the implanting institutions to deliver the intended outputs, and how the program can bring about the desired impact on the targeted beneficiaries can be traced to the following points.



- Among the basic consumer goods that are necessary for the daily lives of people, sugar, palm oil, and wheat flour are susceptible to price increases and unfair trade practices, with serious consequences, especially for consumers in the low and middle-income quantiles (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018; FDRE, 2014).
- Stability in market supply and prices of basic goods can be achieved by controlling both the price and distribution channels. This implies that the private sector alone cannot be trusted to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of these goods. This sentiment is reflected in the following quotation of the representative from A. A Trade Bureau:

*When private traders were importing these primary goods, they were setting prices as they wish. The government decided to import them through merchandising companies like Alle so that residents will have access to them at a subsidized price and will not suffer (from inflation) (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau: 06.08.18)*

- Implementing institutions have the organizational capacity and resources needed to effectively and efficiently implement the activities outlined in the program, reach targeted beneficiaries, and deliver their services.
- The services delivered by the intervention program can bring the intended results of stabilizing the supply of basic goods and their accessibility to the targeted beneficiaries.

In the proceeding sections, the study assesses the degree to which these assumptions of the intervention program are accurate.

### 8.3.1 Inputs/Resources

Inputs/resources refer to all assets that the intervention program has at its disposal for the task, including all financial, organizational, human, and community resources (Funnell and Rogers, 2011; Rogers, 2014; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2017). This section first explicates the resources employed by the intervention program, focusing on the organizational structure of the implementing institutions and their functions.

This is followed by an analysis of the performance by assessing whether the program is well organized, coordinated and equipped with the necessary resources to accomplish its essential tasks. Towards meeting the objectives outlined in the previous section, the PDS has taken advantage of the existing human and physical resources in government structures including the MoT, *woreda* and *kebele* level administrations.

The MoT is the main organ of the government that is entrusted with the responsibility to determine the conditions of distribution, sale and movement of basic goods and services within the country (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018; FDRE, 2014). State-run enterprises are positioned strategically within the distribution system to purchase basic goods from both the local and international markets and distribute them to consumers through Consumers' Cooperatives and private retailers (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). These institutions, which are also referred to as 'Government-owned development organizations' are the ESC, Grain and Coffee Trading business, Et-fruit, and the CPTU/ *Alle Bejimla* (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). As mentioned in Section 2.7.5, it also made the necessary institutional arrangements with the Consumers' Cooperatives and their *Hibret suks/Shemachoch* in urban settings.

According to Tegegne et al. (2018), several other actors play important roles in the PDS of basic goods including private importers, flour factories, bakeries and registered retailers. However, the study focuses on the Consumers' Cooperatives and *Alle* because of their relatively *higher* importance in the distribution. That is, in the current basic goods distribution set up in Addis Ababa illustrated in Figure 8:2, 90% of sugar and 81% of palm oil is traded through the consumer's cooperatives, while 2% of sugar and 27% of palm oil is traded through *Alle*. Among the 81% of palm oil traded through Consumers' Cooperatives, 26% of it is sourced from *Alle* (ibid.).

While Consumers' Cooperatives play a vital role due to the volume of basic goods that are traded through them and their proximity to end-users, the latter plays a double role both as an importer and a wholesaler. *Alle* is a government-owned Cash & Carry wholesaler that was established in 2013 to facilitate competition and stabilize prices mainly through selling low-priced food and FMCG that can modernize the trade sector<sup>107</sup> (Alle Bejimla, 2020; Aurik, 2014; Enkosa, 2016; Raya, 2015; Tegegne et al., 2018). According to the enterprise's representative, *Alle* is currently serving 5,461 registered retailers even though they are not all active<sup>108</sup> through its 7 stores in the country, 3 of which are in Addis Ababa.

Similarly, a representative of the A. A Cooperative Agency revealed that there are 143 Consumers' Cooperatives and 10 cooperative unions<sup>109</sup> spread out across the 117 *woredas* in Addis Ababa with more than 400,000 members. The study found that, in addition to the basic ones, several other goods are traded through these two institutions. For example, 750 Store Keeping Units (SKU)/goods are traded through *Alle* alone (Enkosa, 2016). Hence, the involvement of *Alle* in the distribution of basic goods to Consumers' Cooperatives, service providers, and employees of federal offices and Bureaus in Addis Ababa is only an additional assignment.

The decision to distribute sugar and palm oil to consumers through private retailers in the intervention program came at a later point in the implementation of the PDS when the number of beneficiaries increased beyond the managing capacity of Consumers' Cooperatives. One of the women participants who took part in the process shared her experience as follows:

*We did not do this at first. It is a decision that was made at a later point when the number of consumers increased. When they said we should assign consumers to a shop that is closer to their homes, we organized it for three days starting in the morning. (P14:27.07.18)*

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<sup>107</sup> According to the representative from the enterprise, the CPTU prides itself as being Ethiopia's first modern cash and carry wholesaler of food and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) that utilize the Enterprise Resource Productivity (ERP) system to increase its efficiency in the distribution and traceability of goods.

<sup>108</sup> According to the enterprise representative, active customers are those that have visited the store at least 8 times.

<sup>109</sup> There is one cooperative union with 10-20 primary Consumers' Cooperatives, in each of the 10 sub-cities in Addis Ababa.

The MoT did not apply clear criteria for selecting private retailers to distribute subsidized basic goods to end-users as evident in the quotation below.

*Those retailers who have good attitudes and those who showed interest to distribute the products were given the chance. Any retailer who is interested to distribute will be given a copy of customers who are assigned to her/him along with their quota. (Consumers' cooperative 2: 19.07.28)*

In some cases, selected committee members of the Consumers' Cooperatives directly approached retailers and requested them to distribute subsidized basic goods. One of the private retailers explained:

*"They came to my shop and asked if I can distribute the products. I agreed then they registered my shop and the list of people who live around my shop. Then they asked me to distribute the products to them". (Private retailer 2: 24.07.18)*

If correct, this is a blatant divergence from the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018, which lays out certain criteria to be applied in selecting private retailers, in addition to their willingness to partake in the program (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). These include a good record of business ethics and customer service, possession of adequate capital, a clean and sufficient storage space, and a weighing scale. Once the retailers have agreed to distribute the subsidized basic goods, cancelling the contract for financial or other reasons proved difficult as explained by a registered retailer below.

*They estimate the shop's capital and tell them that they should be able to accommodate their products. The second thing is that the government considers the work of registered retailers as a service to the community. So, it is obligatory. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

This gives the impression that intimidation tactics were at times used to recruit private retailers into the PDS by members of the Consumers' Cooperative committee. If accurate, this is in contrast with the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018 which outlines the willingness of retailers to be involved in the PDS of basic goods as one of the pre-requisites for selection (Addis Ababa City Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). According to the private retailers, there is no written contract with the Consumers' Cooperatives to become distributors of subsidized basic goods other than a verbal agreement.

This lack of a comprehensive written contract between retailers and Consumers' Cooperatives has at times proven to be a source of confusion, misunderstanding and conflict. One retailer shared his experience as follows:

*We made an agreement after we started the work. In the beginning, they just told us to distribute it...There were no limitations as to whom we should sell it to...But after we started the work, they set the selling price and posted a notice on our shops. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

The retailers also complained about the changing rules and procedures of the PDS as captured by the following quote from a private retailer.

*Initially, they had instructed us to keep the items on our shelves until the assigned customers show up regardless of our other customers' needs to buy more...Now, they allow us to sell the products to other interested consumers if those who are assigned to buy from our shops fail to buy the goods within 20 days of delivery. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

This demonstrates the inconsistency of the program implementation with the appropriate standards of the procedure outlined in the implementation guidelines. It also appears that the implementing institutions such as *Alle* and Consumers' Cooperatives are hindered by a lack of financial, physical, and human resources to effectively execute the activities outlined in section 8.3.2. This is denoted by the following quotes from the representatives of implementing institutions:

*"If this enterprise was established to stabilize the market, it should not have to wait 6-7 months for LC (letter of Credit) from the banks...We also have a serious shortage of capital". (Alle Bejmla: 01.08.18)*

*Alle faces shortages of foreign currency. This is a problem of the MoT...Moreover, the government was supposed to cover additional expenses related to the depreciation of the birr. However, it does not pay this money in time. It might take up to a year to pay them. But Alle needs the money to continue with its operation. We have found out that the government owes millions of Birr to Alle and Belayneh Kinde to account for the depreciation of the Birr. The government is not giving the money to them as promised. (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau: 06.08.18)*

*The number of cooperatives we have and the number of auditors we have is not comparable. This is because auditors are paid much higher salaries elsewhere. Unless we hire fresh graduates, we are not able to hire a lot of experienced auditors. (A. A Cooperative Agency: 07.08.18)*

Further, the intervention program seems to be challenged by structural flaws and government pressure as evident in the following quotations.

*“Alle imports certain things. But, at the moment, you cannot say it is operational. We can say it is dead. It has failed...Because of the pressure from the government, Alle is not functioning as it was supposed to”. (Consumers’ Cooperative 1: 27.07.28)*

*“We were successful before we were restructured under the Corporation (ETBC). Then, Alle used to decide to import and sell on its own”. (Alle Bejimla: 01.08.18)*

This suggests that the intervention program's organizational component suffers from infidelity as a result of its failure to adhere to implementation guidelines, and a problem executing its necessary tasks owing to a lack of coordination among implementing partners, and a lack of required resources.

### 8.3.2 Activities/Strategies

Activities refer to the processes and actions that are deliberately initiated and executed in the program to bring about the intended changes (Funnell and Rogers, 2011; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2017). This section explicates the intended strategies/major activities of the intervention program by relevant actors towards meeting the aforementioned objectives of the program. Additionally, it looks at whether the program is executed as planned, complies with the codes of conduct outlined in the implementation guidelines, and is adequately implemented to yield the outputs required to bring about the desired social changes.

#### 8.3.2.1 Formulation of necessary reforms and legal protections

The GoE has facilitated the formulation of Reforms and Legal protections which are necessary for the smooth operation of the intervention program (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018; Tegegne et al., 2018). These include the Trade System Reform Program of 2011, the Trade Competition and Consumers' Protection Proclamation No.813/2013, the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reforms of 2013 and 2016 and Subsidized Basic Goods Business Linkage, Allotment and Distribution Reform of 2018, and the Addis Ababa City Government Executive and Municipal Service Organs Re-establishment Proclamation No. 43 (Addis Ababa City Administration Trade Bureau, 2018; Tegegne et al., 2018).

The Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reforms of 2013, 2016 and 2018 serve as guidelines for implementation through availing information on the following issues: Roles and responsibilities of all involved actors, criteria for selecting suppliers and distributors, formation of a task force at all levels of the system to manage, control and monitor the distribution quotas, prices and restrictions on profit levels, and how to set up a system of accountability (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018, 2016, 2013). The “Trade and Consumers’ Protection Authority” was established in 2010 to promote a free and competitive market, and to protect both consumers and the business community from unfair market practices (Woldehanna and Tafere, 2015).

#### *8.3.2.2 Setting up protocols and monitoring mechanisms*

The MoT, through its commercial transaction and post-license inspection and regulatory directorates and teams, is responsible for setting standards, procedures and M&E within the PDS (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). The Ministry has focal persons and task forces composed of relevant stakeholders of the distribution system from City to *woreda* administration levels to monitor, control, handle complaints, provide support, and take corrective measures (ibid.). For instance, it regularly monitors those bakeries that receive subsidized wheat flour to check whether both the size/weight and price they set for their bread are consistent with the agreement. A representative from Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau explains this process as follows:

*The trade professionals at the woreda level monitor if the weight of bread (that is sold in the PDS) is correct. The minimum weight that is allowed per bread is 97 grams. If it weighs less, the bakery will be considered to be selling under the minimum weight requirement set by law. The same applies to the 200 gm and 300 gm bread. They also check if bakeries are selling at the price indicated on the initial agreement before receiving the wheat flour at subsidized prices. They also check the volume of wheat flour received by these bakeries. (Addis Ababa Trade Bureau: 06.08.18)*

Similarly, the Addis Ababa Cooperative Agency monitors the performance of cooperatives at the *kebele* level through its cooperative offices at the *woreda* and sub-city levels.

A representative of the Agency explained the monitoring process as follows.

*“We check what each cooperative bought and did not buy and its reasons, and why it has not stock products other cooperatives are selling...we monitor market distribution in the city and the performance of the Consumers’ Cooperatives”. (A. A Cooperative Agency: 07.08.18)*

According to the aforementioned representative of the Cooperative Agency, the current M&E setup is as follows. The Consumers' Cooperative offices at the *kebele* level, directly report to *woreda-level* cooperative offices weekly. If necessary, the cooperatives are referred to either the sub-city level cooperative offices or the Addis Ababa Cooperative Bureau. There is also an annual general assembly of all cooperative managers in Addis Ababa, where performance and financial reports are presented, reviewed, evaluated and approved.

The Addis Ababa Cooperative Bureau also provides services like inspection, auditing and legal services that the primary cooperatives would not have managed to do on their own due to their limited capacity. However, the Agency does not have the financial capacity to hire a sufficient number of qualified auditors to monitor all cooperatives in Addis Ababa<sup>110</sup> regularly as discussed in section 8.3.2.1.

A representative of the Agency explained this challenge as follows.

*The number of cooperatives we have and the number of auditors we have is not comparable. This is because auditors are paid a lot of money elsewhere. Unless you hire fresh graduates, you will not find many (experienced) auditors with us. Thus, we might take 2-3 years for auditing (A. A Cooperative Agency: 07.08.18).*

The lack of human and financial capacity, and the subsequent delay in the auditing process, may provide ample time for corrupt actors in the PDS to cover up their misdeeds and escape accountability. The management of the Consumers’ Cooperatives also monitors their shops/stores by setting up an inventory control system and a regular inspection of activities.

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<sup>110</sup> The total number of cooperative societies of all types including agricultural, marketing, saving and credit and Consumer’ cooperative societies in Addis Ababa was 14, 759 thousand by July 07, 2017 (Federal cooperative agency Ethiopia, 2018).



A representative of the Consumers' Cooperatives explains the monitoring process as follows:

*"We go there to monitor when items are being unloaded, to check if the shop has run out of its stock of oil... when it was sold, how much was sold, and how many people have bought it". (Consumers' Cooperative 2: 19.07.28)*

According to the testimony of the institution's representative, Consumers' Cooperatives apply a variety of techniques to monitor the service delivery of private retailers, including demanding that they post a price list of every item they sell and issue receipts for every transaction. The study found that private retailers are also expected to distribute the subsidized goods strictly following the customer's name list and the monthly oil and sugar quota assignment guide of the *Woreda* Trade Bureau. They keep a record of each transaction followed by the customer's signature. They also sign on the customers' cards illustrated in Appendices XVII and XVIII. Those retailers who breached the terms of their agreement with the Consumers' Cooperatives are reported to the MoT and get penalized. The following testimony from a member of the management committee of Consumers' Cooperatives confirms this.

*If the retailer repeatedly refused to sell products to the assigned customers, punitive measures will be taken and the customers will be re-assigned to the Consumers' Cooperative shop. That retailer will never again be given sugar and oil. (Consumers' Cooperative 2: 19. 07.18)*

However, according to some of the private retailers, the monitoring and control system of the PDS has not always been effective enough to make wrong-doers accountable in time. One private retailer shared his observations as indicated here:

*"There are those (private retailers) who did not respond to the call to collect products from the Consumers' Cooperative for some time, but because of the carelessness of the Consumers' Cooperatives, they were forgotten". (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

This problem could in part be explained by the lack of awareness about one's roles and responsibilities and failure to take ownership of the PDS on the part of the implementing institutions at lower levels of the distribution chain.

The following comment from the management committee of Consumers' Cooperatives exemplifies this argument:

*“Even if it is the Consumers' Cooperative that distributes sugar and oil to retailers, the monitoring is conducted by the MoT...It is the Ministry that controls them...monitoring them is not our concern”. (Consumers' cooperative 1: 27.07.28)*

This suggests that even though the Consumers' Cooperatives are members of the M&E task force of MoT both at the *woreda* and sub-city levels and are located in a strategically advantageous position in the PDS to monitor the activities of private retailers, they are reluctant to do so. In addition, the existing feedback mechanisms for learning and improvement within the PDS appear weak as can be verified by the quotation below:

*“I go to the meetings. A lot of people give feedback, but absolutely nothing has been done about it. People give them comments, but the service has not improved. There is no solution”. (P15: 27.07.18)*

The lack of adequate and timely response from the management may have discouraged the beneficiaries from utilizing the formal channels for feedback including reporting illicit activities as stated on the basic goods distribution card. This may explain why the Consumers' Cooperatives rely on informal and arbitrary methods to gather feedback from the beneficiaries. This is indicated in the following quotes.

*“When we see a consumer who did not get her/his quota scream, we ask ‘where is this person's share? Who did you give it to?’...” (Consumers' cooperative 2: 19.07.28)*

*“The customers come and inform us in case of any misbehaviour by the retailer. They will say ‘this retailer has sugar in stock but refused to sell for us’...” (Consumers' cooperative 2: 19. 07.18)*

*“If the customers complain to the Consumers' Cooperative saying that they could not find the product in my shop, the management of the Consumers' Cooperative will come and ask me”. (Private retailer 2: 24.07.18)*

This finding implies that feedback from customers is mainly focused on the availability of goods at the private retailers' shops.

Such gaps in the M&E system of the PDS of basic goods have created a fertile ground for illicit trading of these goods in the parallel market as elaborated by a representative from Addis Ababa Trade Bureau below:

*There is a weakness in the regulation and inspection process to ensure that the Consumers' Cooperatives are properly distributing the primary goods that they have sourced from Alle to deserving consumers. As a result, while the consumers who should be getting these goods have not had an opportunity to access them, the goods could be sold in the parallel market<sup>111</sup> or the regions outside Addis. (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau: 06.08.18)*

It is also not uncommon to find news in the media of large quantities of hoarded subsidized basic goods that have been smuggled out of the PDS illegally by authorized government bodies in the media. For instance, in February 2021, 132, 000 litres of oil were discovered hidden by illicit traders in *Kolfe Keranyo* sub-city with the hope of artificially hiking prices in the market (Addis Maleda, 2021).

Similarly, on March 22 of 2022, 19, 000 litres of oil that were supposed to be distributed were discovered illegally hoarded in a store in *Akaki Kaliti* Sub-city (Addis Ababa Mayor Press Secretariat, 2022). A discussion evaluating the performance of the PDS led by the MoT found that there is a lack of coordination in the M&E system including failure to ensure receipts are issued during all transactions and food prices are uniform across the board (Tegegne, 2021). The widely observed embezzlement and the lack of accountability and action against wrong-doings in the PDS of basic goods may have eroded the consumers' confidence in the M&E system. The following quote from the interview transcript captures the essence of the customers' frustration.

*The audit is an inside job. It is not independent and it is not free ... people have stolen thousands and thousands of money but they have not done anything about it thus far. It looks like the committee members themselves have shared the money amongst themselves as a capital (profit) distribution...If the subsidized basic goods are being sold in the parallel market, they know about it. They catch this happening... So, they are thieves. Besides, they do not control. (P14: 27.07.18)*

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<sup>111</sup> Since the MoT has the monopoly of distributing the basic goods, the alternative suppliers are those in the parallel market.

This seems to suggest that the existing M&E system is both inefficient and ineffective to hold into account those actors within the system who do not adhere to the rules in the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018. For example, the Reform directs that retailers who are found selling subsidized basic goods in the parallel market for the first time be given a written warning and their stores are to be shut down for 20 days. In line with Tegegne et al. (2018), the findings in this section suggest that the M&E system of the PDS of basic goods is inadequate for lack of necessary human resources, awareness of roles and responsibilities, and commitment by implementing institutions.

### *8.3.2.3 Identifying and registering targeted beneficiaries*

According to the management of Consumers' Cooperatives, several sensitization meetings were held with potential members and interested retailers at a *kebele* level before the establishment of the Consumers' cooperatives. Members of Consumers' Cooperatives had to pay a minimum fee of \$2,08 for registration and were given a red identification card. As can be referred to from Appendix XVII, a monitoring sheet is attached to this card to keep a record of members' monthly purchases. Once the Consumers' Cooperatives were commissioned to distribute subsidized basic goods to beneficiaries, another round of registration of all residents in the *kebele* was conducted to allow everyone to buy from the Consumers' Cooperatives shops (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018).

Registered beneficiaries were also given yellow cards titled "Basic goods distribution cards linking heads of families with retailers". These cards also have monitoring sheets attached to them as can be inferred from Appendix XVIII. Women beneficiaries who participated in the study share their experiences as follows:

*"In the beginning, they gave us a red card which is for the Consumers' Cooperative. But now, they abandoned that one and have given us a yellow card". (P13: 27.07.18)*

*"Previously, people who do not have a card could not get sugar and oil. But now, anyone whether a tenant (of private property) or not can get cards issued even if they are not shareholders/members of the Consumers' Cooperative)". (P12:24.07.18)*

The manager of a Consumer's Cooperative describes the targeted beneficiaries as follows:

*Our job is to stabilize the market. Without specifying the poor and the rich...we are not concerned with who buys what. All members including the poor and others are organized to establish the Cooperative Society...we serve whoever comes. (Consumers' cooperative 1: 27.07.28)*

Hence, Consumers' Cooperative shops are currently serving every resident of the *kebele* who owns a yellow card regardless of their income status, membership in Consumers' Cooperatives, and possession of residential IDs. A representative from the Consumers' Cooperative explains why this is the case:

*There is the understanding that those who have lived in the neighbourhood for 6 months should be able to have access to sugar and oil. So, they get the registration card/coupon to buy from Shemachoch. So, we register their names and get them certified at the Ministry of Trade. Then we bring their registration cards and distribute them to them. (Consumers' Cooperative 2: 19. 07.18)*

This seems to be in clear violation of the Cooperatives Societies Proclamation No. 985/2016, which stipulates that the Consumers' Cooperatives should exclusively serve their members and the Subsidized Basic Goods Reform of 2018 that identified the targeted beneficiaries to be residents in the low and middle-income quantile (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018; FDRE, 2016a). Moreover, this is an indication of the intervention program's over-coverage, which entails the provision of services to individuals who are not in need, and thereby an ineffective use of program resources (Rossi et al., 2019). This confirms the findings by Woldu et al. (2013), which indicated that the lack of effective targeting by the urban food retail program of those most vulnerable to food price increases has led to its inefficiency and high and unsustainable costs.

This is especially concerning given the massive government funding that the PDS of basic goods requires to run. For example, it was recently stated by the MoT that \$1,9 billion is needed for importing crude edible oil for the next two years starting from the Ethiopian fiscal year beginning on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 (Taye, 2021a).

Further, registering this group of consumers was not without its challenges, particularly because some targeted beneficiaries were suspicious of the true intentions of the government. This is apparent in the following quote from the interview transcript.

*Once we spent about 2 months going door-to-door and asking if there are people who are renting a house in the kebele and registering them and their house numbers... but, most landlords hide their tenants. Even the people we have lived with are suspicious when we go to their homes. They say 'enemies do not come from far!' What have you come to do in our compound'? (Consumers' Cooperative 2: 19.07.18)*

Therefore, the registration process of beneficiaries was delayed and inefficient owing to people's deep mistrust of the government. In addition, in the assignment of targeted beneficiaries to private retailers, the proximity of the residences of beneficiaries to the retailer shops was used as a criterion as denoted by the following quote:

*People register in their villages specifying their household numbers and we just distribute them among the retailers. (Consumers' Cooperative 2: 19.07.18)*

The number of customers per retailer was determined in consultation with the retailers as a representative from the management of the Consumers' Cooperative explained below:

*There was a number the retailers indicated. Some said 40, and others said 30. We divided the consumers accordingly and some consumers were left unassigned to any shop in the end. So, we were instructed by the management to assign those people to the retailers...So, we did that. (Consumers' Cooperative 2: 27.07.18)*

However, some participants are not convinced that the matching of beneficiaries to Consumers' Cooperative shops and private retailers was conducted fairly following a uniform procedure. This is expressed in the following comment from a woman beneficiary.

*My son who supports me ... lives around here. Shouldn't he be assigned to the same shop that we buy from? But where was he assigned? Frank Addis...We are being cheated like the way you throw a piece of bread for a dog...They assigned those people they do not like at the retail shops and those that they like at the kebele. (P11:24.07.18)*

This could be the case that, despite allowing private retailers to have a say in the matter to some extent, the same privilege was not extended to beneficiaries.

This appears to be at odds with the Cooperative Societies Proclamation 985/2016, which stipulates that cooperatives operate in a democratic manner allowing members to actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions (FDRE, 2016). This lack of transparency and irregularities in operation procedures may have contributed to the sceptical behaviour of the targeted beneficiaries towards the management of the Consumers' Cooperatives.

#### 8.3.2.4 *Setting and maintaining relatively lower prices in the market*

The GoE has employed various strategies to ease the inflationary pressure of basic goods on the targeted population. These include subsidizing the price of basic goods, granting importers of basic goods duty-free privileges, and preferential access to foreign currency (Fentaw, 2022). For instance, between August 2021 and January 2022, the GoE lost \$ 658 116, 000 that would have been accrued from taxing imports of sugar, edible oil, and wheat. Another strategy utilized by the PDS to maintain lower prices of basic goods is, setting price ceilings and profit margins for wholesalers and retailers as illustrated in the table below.

Table 8:1 The selling price and profit margins of basic goods in the PDS in May 2018

SN.	Product type and unit of measurement	The selling price of ETBC/ ESC/Flour factory		Selling price to retailers		The selling price of Consumers' cooperatives or retailers to consumers	
		Selling price (\$)	Profit margin	Selling price	Profit margin	Selling price (\$)	Profit margin
1	Bread						
	✓ 100 gm.					0,05	
	✓ 200 gm					0,09	
	✓ 300 gm					0,14	
2	Flour/MT	291,1	3.7%	-	2.31%	314,4	5%
3	Wheat / MT	201,1		-			
4	Sugar/ MT	599,8	1.5%	625,2		672, 7	6%
5	Palm oil						
	✓ 1 lit.			0,86	3%	0,97	4%
	✓ 3 lit.			2,50	3%	2,84	4%
	✓ 5 lit.			4,04	3%	4,59	4%

✓	10 lit.			7,77	3%	8,87	4%
✓	20 lit.			15,16	3%	17,35	4%
✓	25 lit.			18,43	3%	21,13	4%

Source: Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau (2018)

As illustrated in table 8.1, the profit margins of the goods distributed through the PDS system are set between 4% and 6% of purchased price (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). Some private retailers seem to be discouraged by the discounted government-mandated tariffs of basic goods in the PDS vis-à-vis expenses incurred in the process. One retailer voiced his frustration as follows:

*I do not think they have adequately studied the price they set for these products... There is wastage related to retail selling. Plus, we pay for labour costs when we transport it to our shops; and when we use plastic bags when we sell it. When you consider all these expenses, there is no advantage to selling these products at all... When we complained that it is not profitable because of the related transportation costs and the volume of products, they told us it is an obligation. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

If true, the PDS could be falling short of meeting one of the main conditions for achieving efficiency in “intervention price” due to its narrow and ambitious price band that runs contrary to the long-term price trends in the market (Galtier, 2009, p.11). The effort to maintain low prices by the PDS also involved shortening the value chain by avoiding middle-men and directly selling to end-users as shown in Figure 8:2. This is also reflected in the following testimony from the representative of *Alle Bejimla*:

*“The advantage of working with government employees is that the end-user can directly access our products”. (Alle Bejimla: 01.08.18)*

However, even though there are 300 importers with duty-free privileges, some of the imported commodities are misappropriated into the parallel market. This is evident in the following quote from Ms Meskerem Bahru, Director of the Commodity Price Research and Control Directorate at the MTRI (Fentaw, 2022).

*“The duty-free deed mainly aims at overcoming the shortage of commodities, which is one of the biggest challenges in Ethiopia. However, importers using the duty-free privilege are not acting according to the expectation. The importers are selling the commodities without receipts and at higher prices, despite the privilege, they get from the government,” said Meskerem, adding the duty-free scheme is not going as planned.*



### 8.3.2.5 Setting quotas on the volume/quantity of subsidized goods per customer

According to the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018, the quota assigned per household is determined by the size of the family<sup>112</sup> (Addis Ababa City Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). Table 8:2 below further illustrates the monthly quotas of sugar and palm oil allocated to households.

Table 8:2 Quota allotment of sugar and palm oil

Size of the family (no. of members of the household)	Monthly quota of sugar (in kilos)	Monthly quota of palm oil (in litres)	Type of packaging*
1	2	2	3-litre pack oil
2	3	3	3-litre pack oil
3	4	5	5-litre pack oil
4	5	5	5-litre pack oil
5	6	8	3-litre pack oil + 5-litre pack oil
6	7	8	3-litre pack oil + 5-litre pack oil
7	8	10	2X (5-litre pack oil)
8 and above	=size of the family + 1	10	2X (5-litre pack oil)

**Note:** The palm oil that is being imported and distributed by the PDS of basic goods only comes in 3-litre and 5-litre packages.

Source: Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau (2018)

As shown in Table 8.2, the distribution system does not cater for families larger than 8 when it comes to oil. This is inconsistent with the basic products distribution card (attached in Appendix XVIII), which indicates that each family is given a monthly allotment of 5 kilos of sugar and up to 5 litres of oil without specifying the size of the family. It also states that the amount may vary depending on the packaging when it comes to oil.

<sup>112</sup> This includes everyone who lives in the same household including members who are older than 18 years, but who still live with the family (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018).

Contrary to the distribution guideline illustrated in Table 8.2, the study found that the quantity allocated per household per month does not exceed 3 kilos of sugar and 5 litres of palm oil regardless of the size of the family as indicated by retailers who took part in the study below:

*“The maximum amount of sugar allowed per family per month is 5 kilos. But on the registration card of the customers, it is indicated that it should be given per 15 days. But they only distribute sugar every month”. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

*“If it is a family of 3, I am supposed to sell 3 litres of oil, and if the family size is bigger than 3, I am supposed to sell 5 litres of oil”. (Private retailer 2: 24.07.18)*

In times of shortages in supply, the amount distributed per household per month is further reduced as indicated below:

*whenever there is a shortage of supply, a family of 5 might get only 3 litres of oil to make sure that everyone gets some amount...3 litres of oil is not enough for a family of 5. (Private retailer 2: 24.07.18)*

Despite all government efforts to boost supply by facilitating domestic production and imports from overseas, the chronic lack of basic goods on the market has also been established by Tegegne (2021). For instance, in the last three years, it has managed to increase the number of palm oil-importing and pressing plants from 14 to 30 and the annual production capacity of the country from 89 million litres to 1,25 billion litres (Taye, 2021a).

Nevertheless, the monthly demand for edible oil and wheat in Ethiopia is still short by 26 million litres and 160 thousand MT respectively compared to the supply from both local and international sources (Tegegne, 2021). According to Woldu et al. (2013), these shortages in supply are the typical characteristic of the cooperative retail system in Addis Ababa where food prices are subsidized and strictly controlled. Such problems in the supply of basic goods have facilitated the proliferation of the parallel market for these goods as discussed in the next section.

### 8.3.2.6 *Setting up market distribution channels and business linkages*

As elucidated by Figure 8:2, the MoT has entrusted government enterprises like ESC and the “Grain and Coffee Trading Business” to buy sugar and wheat respectively from both local and international markets and distribute them through wholesalers. Palm oil is imported and distributed in Addis Ababa by *Alle* and four other private companies. These basic goods go further down in the distribution channel to end-users, first through wholesalers such as the Consumers’ Cooperatives, Et-fruit, and flour companies and later through service providers and retailers such as bakeries and non-Government-owned Organizations (NGOs).

*Alle* distributes sugar to Consumers’ Cooperatives, employees of federal-level offices, Addis Ababa administration bureaus, Oromia regional offices, agencies, government-managed development organizations and ministries located in Addis Ababa. It also distributes palm oil to Consumers’ Cooperatives and privately-owned service providers in three sub-cities of Addis Ababa.

A representative from the MoT described the distribution process as follows:

*we have stocks of sugar at Alle... every month, civil servants in Addis Ababa and from the federal bureau request to buy sugar and oil through a letter. Then, if they have fulfilled all the requirements, we request Alle to sell it to them. Then we monitor how much of the sugar stock has been distributed. They cannot sell without our permission. (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau: 06.08.18)*

Consumers’ Cooperatives distribute sugar and palm oil to end-users both directly and through private retailers. They also supply these goods to non-VAT registered service providers, NGOs, and government-owned service providers. A representative from Addis Ababa Cooperative Agency said:

*The situation at the moment is that primary goods are sourced from government-owned and private supplier organizations like Alle Bejimla, Belayneh Kinde, etc. There are something like 5 or 6 of them. Once the Ministry of trade imports these primary goods through these organizations, our Consumers’ Cooperatives collect the quota allowed for the city. Then we distribute it to the people (Addis Ababa Cooperative Agency: 07.08.18)*

However, there are numerous problems with the current structure of the PDS that makes it difficult for the basic goods to move effectively and efficiently.

For instance, getting a new stock of goods by retailers within the PDS involves a long bureaucratic process as evident in the quotations below:

*We first send our request to the woreda trade Bureau and then we will go collect wherever we are told to collect. Then, the woreda trade Bureau writes to the sub-city Trade Bureau. Then, we will know how much money we should pay, and pay the money through a CPO. Then the goods will be delivered and we will be distributed to retailers in the kebele according to their quota. (Consumers' Cooperative 1: 27.07.28)*

*But now, to buy anything we establish a procurement team then we go there and see the product etc. The chain has become longer... this is how government procedures are. (Alle Bejimla: 01.08.18)*

This suggests that MoT's firm grip on the distribution system may have undermined the efficiency of the system in delivering its services and weakened the business linkage among the implementing institutions involved, thereby diminishing the potential benefits that could have been realised from such a relationship. It may also have eroded the implementing institutions' enthusiasm for the program by giving them little to no opportunity to make independent judgments. This is reflected in the following quotations from the interview transcripts.

*“Both the import/purchasing price and selling price are set by the MoT. To begin with, the product is not even ours...We consider it as if they (MoT and ESC) are using our stores for distribution”. (Alle Bejimla: 01.08.18)*

*Flour and oil belong to the government. We sell on behalf of the government because the consumers can be reached through us. It could be from Alle Bejimla, or the other two suppliers, we collect where the government tell us to collect. (Consumers' Cooperatives 1: 27.07.28)*

It is clear that *Alle* and the Consumers' Cooperatives do not consider the subsidized basic goods as their products, but as something that they are obliged to do on behalf of the MoT. This could be detrimental to the sustainability of the distribution system in the future. The Consumers' Cooperatives seem to be making plans that do not involve *Alle* as verbalized by the following testimonies:

*We plan to establish a Federation of Unions. According to the proclamation, each primary cooperative should buy a share from its respective Union worth 25% of its capital. If all 143 cooperatives transfer 25% of their capital to their respective Union, the Union will have big capital. Thus, instead of waiting for supplies from Alle Bejimla, the Federation can directly start importing itself. Hence the Federation can replace Alle Bejimla. (Addis Ababa Cooperative Agency: 07.08.18)*

Further, some of the private retailers have found it challenging to make the required financial arrangements to stock up on supplies due to the lack of proper communication from the Consumers' Cooperatives regarding delivery dates. This frustration of retailers is evident in the following quotes from the interview transcripts.

*“Once, they did not call to inform me. So, I went the next day. They asked me 'how come you did not hear from the neighbours?'...” (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

*“The Consumers’ Cooperative just informs me that I will be supplied with the products this month without specifying the date. It could be at the beginning of, or the end of the month”. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

Moreover, the Consumers’ Cooperatives are also accused of failing to execute the basic tasks like weighing the size/volume of goods being sold to ensure that they are as per pre-existing agreements by the private retailers. Here is what one private retailer has to say about the matter:

*“There is a volume difference between the amount we pay, and the amount we receive”. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

This suggests that the private retailers may be bearing the cost of the incompetency in the service delivery of implementing institutions within the PDS. Such issues may have contributed to weakening the business relationships between registered retailers and Consumers’ Cooperatives, threatening the sustainability of the distribution system in the future. Private retailers in the study do not consider involvement in the PDS of basic goods as a lucrative business for several reasons. As discussed in Section 8.3.2.4, they feel that the prices of basic goods set by the PDS allow for only a slim profit margin. Secondly, some of the private retailers feel that the PDS of basic goods had redistributed customers in such a way that those retailers who had a solid customer base before the arrangement ended up losing out on the deal. One retailer explained:

*“They have re-assigned some of my customers to other retail shops to access the basic goods, and they never come back to me”. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

They also seem to feel that the competition from Consumers' cooperative shops in their vicinity is threatening their profitability. One retailer in the study said:

*"I sometimes wish the Consumers' Cooperative shop was not selling the products I am selling like pasta. Because they are becoming competitors". (Private retailer 2: 24.07.18)*

Additionally, the pursuit of higher profits by the key players in the PDS may have undermined the business ties between them, derailing the efficiency and efficacy of the system in delivering the basic goods to its beneficiaries.

A representative from the MoT explained the situation as follows:

*Alle has been permitted to buy 200 MT of sugar from the ESC every month to distribute to Federal offices and government bureaus in Addis. But we have learnt that Alle has failed to do so repeatedly...When this happens, the ESC complains that it is left with a large amount of stock...when we investigate why this happens, we found that Alle is repeatedly buying sugar (that is confiscated from the parallel market) at much cheaper prices, to make a bigger profit. (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau: 06.08.18)*

*We have observed the same problem with the Consumers' Cooperatives as that of ALLE. They only collect sugar from the sugar corporation whenever there is scarcity in the Addis Ababa market to distribute it to some people and channel the remaining amount into the black market. ... Last July only 90 Consumers' Cooperatives from the 142 collected the allocated sugar from the corporation. The remaining have not (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau: 06.08.18).*

A discussion on the driving forces behind the current food inflation in the country led by the MoT also revealed that the Consumers' Cooperative associations and Consumers' Cooperatives unions are also hoarding subsidized basic goods in pursuit of higher profits (Tegegne, 2021). Recent news by the Ethiopian Reporter (2021) also confirmed that over 4 million litres of oil are idly waiting in the stores of oil importers and producers because distributors including *Alle* are not collecting them in time (Birhane, 2021). The private retailers and beneficiaries are also not passive spectators to the illegal trading of these goods, as is clear from the remarks that follow.

*There are those landlords who have 6-7 tenants and they get registration cards issued for all of them from the Consumers' Cooperative association. And they buy using those cards in the name of their tenants, but they resell the product to other traders instead of giving their tenants their fair share. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

*Yes, there had been times I bought the goods from clients at a higher price to resell them to my other customers...Because of the severity of their problem...even if I was to sell it at twice the price, my customers do not mind at all. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

Tegegne et al. (2018) also found that the supply of basic goods responds more to the demand in the parallel market as opposed to the demand in the PDS, due to the bigger price margins and profits it offers. This is especially true for subsidized palm oil which is illegally diverted from the PDS to the parallel market to be resold at much higher prices either by the targeted beneficiaries or retailers including the Consumers' Cooperative shops (Taye, 2021b). This tends to imply that, from the perspective of the implementing institutions, the business linkages created by the system aren't always the most efficient and lucrative ones.

This finding also hints at the unsustainable nature of the PDS in the long run. Further, Tegegne et al. (2018) indicated that Consumers' Cooperatives and registered retailers often fail to collect the basic goods from the distributors and importers in time due to their financial, human capital, and storage facility limitations. This seems contradictory to the rules in the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018 that instruct Consumers' Cooperatives to start processing the delivery of their next batch of stock as per their quota allotment, once they have sold 75% of their stock (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018).

The operations of implementers farther down the distribution chain, such as the private retailers, as well as the system as a whole, are seriously impacted by the failure of importers and wholesalers like *Alle* to collect and distribute the basic commodities on time.

The following quotes from interview transcripts attest to this claim.

*We have also found that Alle Bejimla is late in the shipment of sugar and oil at times. The problem could have emanated from a delay in order leading to a delay in shipment. Hence, the delivery may be delayed for up to a month. And a month's delay will create a lot of crises at a national level. (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau: 06.08.18)*

*When the MoT fails to import in time, our members complain that the consumers' association do not have oil and sugar...The ministry and Alle tend to not take accountability for their problems. When they import an amount less than they are supposed to and when consumers are not able to buy the volume they are used to, they only blame the Consumers' Cooperatives, not Alle Bejimla...We do not feel that Alle is supplying the goods as it is supposed to. (Addis Ababa Cooperative Agency: 07.08.18)*

*"Alle does not stock products in time. And when we delay stocking products, the community blames the Consumers' Cooperative". (Consumers' Cooperative 2: 19.07.28)*

These findings outlined in sections 8.3.1 and 8.3.2 seem to refute the PDS's assumptions regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of its organizational plan including the capability of its implementing institutions to execute the planned activities with sufficient fidelity, consistency, and quality.

### 8.3.3 Outputs

The term "outputs" refers to the immediate results of the intervention program's activities and strategies, such as the volume or quality of services provided (Funnel and Rogers, 2011; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2017). This section first explains the level of outreach by the intervention program and its service delivery to the targeted customers. After that, it looks into whether the program is reaching the right target audience, whether service delivery adheres to the program's design and the Codes of conduct stated in the implementation guidelines, and whether the targeted beneficiaries are aware of the services delivered.

By May 2018, the number of beneficiaries including heads of households and civil servants of the PDS had reached 1,077,160 (Tegegne et al., 2018). Among them, 728,599 households are linked with private retailers, 291,585 households are linked with Consumers' Cooperatives, 25,460 civil servants are linked with Consumers' Cooperatives, and 31, 556 civil servants are linked with *Alle* (ibid.). A representative from the MoT explains the benefits of distributing the basic goods through the Consumers' Cooperatives as follows:

*"Consumers' Cooperatives are doing a good job distributing goods to the community. If this job was left for Alle, it would have created a lot of pressure on the enterprise". (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau: 06.08.18)*



The distribution of subsidized basic goods through neighbourhood stores has made it possible to specifically approach a certain demographic of the intended beneficiaries. This is evident in the following testimonies:

*Mothers with low income and employees who are at work all day can buy sugar even in the evening since the shop is in their neighbourhood. Even children can be sent to buy from these shops. If they were sent to the kebele shop (Shemachoch) they would have needed to cross the street. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

The targeted beneficiaries became members of these Consumers' Cooperatives with various assumptions and expectations, including the ability to purchase items at lower costs, get priority access to limited consumer goods, dividend payments as shareholders, and have job prospects. This is evident in their testimonies below.

*“Once wheat was being sold and we were told to register and get our cards. Then we paid 60,00 Birr and got our cards issued. Since then, we are members. We were told all items that are sold at Shemachoch will be cheaper”. (P9: 12.07.18)*

*“Yes, they promised that we will get priority in buying consumer goods”. (P6: 10.07.18)*

*So, one thing, I can get from the Consumers' Cooperative shops is commodities that are scarce in the marketplace...The second thing, I hopping for was that when a job opportunity arises in the future, the share company would give priority to shareholders. (P12: 24.07.18)*

Some of the beneficiary expectations, such as the one conveyed in the last quotation, suggest that the targeted beneficiaries were either unaware or misinformed about the Consumers' Cooperatives and the potential benefits of being a member from the very beginning. Most of the targeted beneficiaries and private retailers who participated in the study are generally aware of the goods supplied by the Consumers' Cooperatives. They are particularly informed about the prices of the subsidized basic goods as demonstrated in the following quotations from interviews and FGD transcripts.

*“The price is already known. 5 kilos of flour are sold for 45,00 Birr. That is how we buy. Also, if it is the 3-lire pack oil, it is sold for 78,00 Birr”. (P11: 24.07.18)*

*“We know the price already. The price does not change”. (FGD1: 08.08.18)*

*I serve 54 people (assigned by the Consumer' Cooperative) and I know the price. It does not change, except sometimes when there is scarcity. But even then, it is only the quantity distributed that will be reduced, but the price per product remains the same. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

This indicates that prices of basic goods have been stable to the point that they have become predictable. Hence, the distribution system meets some of Galtier's (2009, p.11) criteria for price efficiency, particularly with the price of sugar, since it is published and respected by private retailers. With regards to the supply time, the customers only know that the subsidized basic goods, sugar, in particular, become available once a month, usually towards the end. But due to inconsistencies in supply time, the exact date remains unknown to consumers. This is exemplified by the following quotes from the study participants.

*“New stock arrives on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the month. For example, it has now been three days. New stock may or may not come. There is no one calling us to let us know about the arrival of new stock in the shops”. (FGD1: 08.08.18)*

*“At the Consumers’ Cooperative shop, oil was last in stock during Easter (April). Then, it was in stock again after three months”. (Private retailer 2: 24.07.18)*

Due to the lack of proper communication from the implementing institutions of the PDS, the customers only learn about the arrival of new stock of goods through informal methods as indicated in the following quote from the interview.

*I learn that goods have arrived at the shops when I see passers-by carrying them. Then I ask and confirm. Otherwise, I do not know the supply time of the shops. Or, I hear people talking about its availability, and then, I go running there to buy. (P8: 11.07.08)*

*Those who saw the new stock getting unloaded from the truck inform those who did not... We repeatedly go there to ask to get the things that we want... We hear goods are being distributed, so we go to the retail shop we have been assigned to. (FGD2: 09.08.18)*

If true, this method of operation violates the rules of procedure set out in the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018, which instructs Consumers’ Cooperatives to inform their beneficiaries upon the arrival of new stock and ensure their distribution within 15 days (Addis Ababa City Administration Trade Bureau, 2018).

#### 8.3.4 Outcomes

In the study, outcomes refer to the final results of the intervention program that is shown on the logic model in Figure 8:1, indicating the changes in the stability of the supply of basic goods, and their access by beneficiaries (Funnel and Rogers, 2011).

This is the most important step in the assessment process since an intervention program can only be deemed effective if it affects some kind of positive change in the outcomes as intended (Rossi et al., 2019). This section presents the findings with regard to how well the intervention program achieved its goal of stabilizing the supply of basic goods and their accessibility to the targeted beneficiaries. Hence, stability both in the quantity supplied/distributed through the program and the accessibility/affordability of its price by the beneficiaries serve as outcome determinants<sup>113</sup>. It also consolidates the unintended outcomes of the intervention program.

#### *8.3.4.1 Ensuring stability in supply/availability*

The women beneficiaries felt that the allotted amount/quota of the basic goods distributed through the PDS is too small. For those consumers with big family sizes, in particular, the quota assigned falls too short to meet their needs and they are obliged to buy some of the quantities they need from other sources at much higher prices. This is illustrated in the testimonies of study participants below:

*“The quantity supplied is not enough. For instance, 5 kilo of flour is too small for a family. We take whatever they supply from them and we exchange it with others for more”. (P7: 11.07.18)*

One beneficiary expressed her frustration with the Consumers’ Cooperatives as follows

*“When the 5-litre pack of oil is in short supply, we asked them to give us two 3-litre packs of oil instead. But, they said, we do not have it. But it is there. They deal with other traders and sell them in the parallel market”. (P14: 27.07.18)*

This suggests that the beneficiaries are suspicious of the implementing institutions' involvement in the illicit trading of basic goods. Further, some beneficiaries of the program feel that the gap in the distribution system, including shortages in supply has allowed retailers to deny them their rightfully assigned quotas. Women participants explained the issue as follows:

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<sup>113</sup> These are presumptive causes of the problem, and hence a leverage mechanism, on the basis of which an intervention is developed (Chen, 2015).

*“The shop owners keep (hide) the 5-litre-pack oil and sell the 3-litre-pack oil. They claim that what has been given to them is only the 3 litre-pack oil...because the 5-litre pack oil is the profitable one”. (P14: 27.07.18)*

*The consumers’ cooperative people knowingly facilitate theft. They tell the retailers to sell the 5-litre packs of oil on a first-come-first-served -basis, and not based on the allocated amount to families.... They tell the private retailers to sell the 3-litre packs of oil because it is available in abundance...If the procedure was to sell it based on family quotas, I could have insisted to buy what has been allocated for me. (P14: 27.07.18)*

Further, according to the beneficiaries, the supply of these goods especially oil and flour in retail shops have become so irregular and unpredictable for the targeted beneficiaries in recent years. That is, oil is only available in the retail shops every few months, while wheat flour is available occasionally. This situation is evident in the following testimonies of women participants.

*“These days they don't sell oil there anymore. It has been 3 months since oil was available at the hibret suk”. (P9: 12.07.18)*

*When it comes to flour, we do not get it at all. It has almost been a year since we bought flour there. After you go there, you may be told that they have run out of your quota. For example, today we left in the morning and at 6:00 AM, we were told that they have run out of stock. We have not been able to find anything. (FGD1: 08.08.18)*

*“They will not stock flour now. Maybe they will stock it during the new year. That is because they do not stock it in time and they run out quickly. The last time I bought it was during Easter (April)”. (FGD1: 08.08.18)*

Some of the women participants feel that there are inconsistencies in the quota allocation of basic goods, particularly palm oil between Consumers’ Cooperative shops, and private retail shops. That is, while those assigned at the former are can be assured to get their assigned quotas, there is no guarantee that those assigned at the latter will. The frustration of women consumers can be read in the following two quotations from the interviews.

*All those people that live behind us, who were assigned to buy from the Shemachoch, buy the 5-litre-pack oil. We may buy the 3-litre pack oil once, but they can buy the 5-litre packs 3-4 times...And then we wait for the next month's supply, but we are told that it is not available at that time. But they buy the 5-litre pack. I do not know what kind of scarcity the private retail shops are facing. (P11: 24.07.18)*

*What they do is, keep the 5-litre packs of oil for the Shemachoch and give only the 3-litre packs of oil to the private retailers. When we complain saying “this is not fair”, they give a mix of the 5-litre and 3-litre packs of oil for the registered retailers...The rule says to sell the 5-litre packs (only)to those who came first since there is a shortage. (P14: 27.07.18)*

Hence, according to the beneficiaries, the private retail shops do not always receive adequate volumes of the 5-litre pack of palm oil, and by extension, the beneficiaries with a family size of 5 and above that are assigned to them. Thus, they are obliged to serve their customers on a first-come-first-served basis as opposed to the size of the family, in contradiction to the quota allotment guidelines mentioned in the previous chapter. The beneficiaries also feel that whenever there is scarcity, the Consumers' Cooperative shops always get priority over the private retail shops.

This is denoted by the following quotations from interview transcripts.

*Sometimes, at the retail shop, you may not find these goods for over a month. The Consumers' Cooperatives may tell you that there is a shortage, and they might decide to not distribute it to their registered retailers at all. But those who are assigned to buy from the Shemachoch can still go and buy their quota. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

*“Those who were assigned to the Consumers' Cooperative shop are favoured. Those of us buying from the retail shops wait for two months to buy goods”. (P14: 27.07.18)*

Furthermore, the beneficiaries who are assigned to buy subsidized basic goods from the retail shops also claim that they can only do so strictly within the specified dates, usually around the beginning of, or the end of the month. On the other hand, those consumers who are assigned to buy directly from the Consumers' Cooperative shops can buy their assigned quota at any time of the month. A woman consumer explains the advantages of being assigned to buy from the Consumers' Cooperative shops directly as follows:

*I buy from the Shemachoch after the long line clears up since my quota is still there... Even if I come around the end of the month, I can still find my quota. If it was at the private retailers', he would have sold it. If you did not come in time, it is over, he will sell it. (P12: 24.07.18)*

This reveals the women participants' belief that those who have been assigned to buy from the Consumers' Cooperative shops get preferential treatment over those who have been assigned to buy from private retail shops. Some of the women respondents in the study also feel that the distribution is not fair, favouring committee members and their affiliates in the Consumers' Cooperatives.

This sentiment is conveyed by the following quote from a woman participant:

*It is those who say I am the committee, I am whatever, and other sycophants that are benefiting...The sycophants get the 5-litre packs of oil while we are only getting the 3-litre packs of oil. But, the others, if they wish so, can get the 10-litres and 20-litre packs. We know that. (P11: 24.07.18)*

If true, this defies the rules in the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018 that stipulates all beneficiaries be treated equally and fairly (Addis Ababa City Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). This also confirms previous findings by Tegegne et al. (2018) that found inconsistencies between the observed distribution of basic goods and the one indicated in the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018.

#### *8.3.4.2 Ensuring stability in access*

Both the end users and private retailers in the sampled study believe that the PDS of basic goods is providing cheaper alternatives for consumers, as evident in the following excerpts:

*“Wheat flour is sold for 8,60 Birr per kilo at the Consumers’ Cooperative shop, while it is sold for 22,00 Birr per kilo by private traders”. (FGD2: 09.08.18)*

*“The type provided by the Consumers’ Cooperative shop (i.e., palm oil) is sold for 78,00 Birr; while the other type is sold for 215,00 Birr”. (Private retailer 2: 24.07.18)*

This supports previous findings conducted by Tegegne et al. (2018) that indicated that the price of sugar, oil and wheat supplied by the PDS is lower by 89,7%, 84,25% and 60,9% respectively compared to the price it commands in the other market<sup>114</sup>. However, sustained shortages and irregularities in supply within the PDS as discussed in section 8.3.4.1, have forced the targeted beneficiaries to buy from other suppliers either in the open or parallel market at much higher prices.

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<sup>114</sup> In this case, the other market refers to the underground market which is operated illegally as the state has the monopoly of supplying all subsidized basic goods through its parastatals.

This is evident in the following testimonies of the participants:

*“Because the goods were not available at the retail shops we were supposed to buy from for a long time, I had to buy the oil that is sold for 125,00 Birr at the Shemachoch for 250,00 Birr in the parallel market”. (P14: 27.07.18)*

*Since the consumers are not getting the oil adequately from the Consumers’ Cooperatives, they buy in the parallel market...If you go to Mercato you can find our products. (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau: 06.08.18)*

The substantial price discrepancy between basic goods supplied through the PDS and those on the open market is a topic that frequently appears in the headlines. For example, in March 2021, the Reporter Ethiopia indicated that the 20-litre-pack palm oil that was supposed to be sold for \$18,98<sup>115</sup> at the Consumers’ Cooperative shops was being sold for \$27,11 – 39,44 in the parallel market (Taye, 2021b). This shows that efficiency in the stabilization of prices is not achieved by PDS as it has not managed to control prices across all markets (Balakrishnan and Ramaswami, 1997). According to Ramaswami (2002), doing so requires taking a market share big enough to influence prices by becoming a preferred supplier which the PDS has not been able to do. These results concur with Amare's (2010) finding that the beneficiaries considered the lower prices offered by the PDS as inadequate because food costs still remained high and not much different from market prices.

As has been indicated in this chapter, the intervention's implementation process exhibits infidelity since it does not follow the protocols and implementation rules, as well as the program theory (logic model) shown in section 8.2.2. It is also hindered by a lack of resources, poor management and coordination, and weak business linkages amongst its implementing partners, preventing it from executing its intervention activities sufficiently as intended. This is demonstrated by the long operational procedures, and delays in order, shipment, delivery and collection of subsidized basic goods in the system. The service it delivers is also perceived as inconsistent and is charged with favouring some clients over others by the beneficiaries.

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<sup>115</sup> This was calculated at the monthly average exchange rate of March 2021, which was i.e., 1Birr= \$ 0.024648 (CalcProfi.com, 2022).

Thus, it can be argued that, despite reaching a large volume of beneficiaries, the quality of the actions and activities undertaken in the program implementation process is less than satisfactory. This seems to suggest that the changes affected by the intervention program were not sufficient and effective enough to bring about the intended outputs in terms of reaching the targeted beneficiaries and delivering the service as intended, exposing the gaps in the program's ToA. Similarly, even though the PDS has made it possible for the targeted beneficiaries to access the subsidized basic goods at cheaper prices to some extent, sustained shortages and the erratic nature of the supply have still driven them to the parallel and free markets where they are exposed to exorbitant prices.

This indicates that the intervention program is ineffective in stabilizing the supply of the basic goods and their accessibility to the targeted beneficiaries as planned, revealing the shortcomings in the program's ToC. A sustained shortage in supply coupled with failure in the M&E system of the PDS has contributed to the unintended consequences of hoarding, embezzlement and illicit trading of basic goods in the parallel market.

Similarly, the PDS's lengthy and rigid processes, the inefficiency of the commercial ties, and low-profit margins have undermined the implementing institutions' motivation to remain in the system, endangering its sustainability. This PDS's inability to have the desired effect might also be attributed to its universalist approach of serving everyone, including those who are not at immediate risk of food insecurity, its failure to select an inappropriate commodity<sup>116</sup> for subsidization, and its application of a narrow "intervention price" that is at odds with long-term pricing patterns in the market (Amare, 2010; Galtier, 2009; Woldu et al., 2013).

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<sup>116</sup> The subsidization of locally produced and less preferred cereals, such as black teff or maize rather than highly demanded and imported cereals, such as wheat, can facilitate self-targeting to take place for the benefit of poorer customers and avoid further price increases in the market (Amare, 2010).



## 8.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the study's findings on the theory-driven evaluation of the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa. For the purpose of evaluation, a program theory illustrated by a logic model was extracted, and the assumptions behind were made explicit. The validity of these assumptions was then examined in light of an assessment of the actual program implementation and performance. The study concluded that, in addition to implementation issues, the program theory is flawed because it fails to achieve the desired outcomes in terms of stabilizing prices across all markets, safeguarding its intended beneficiaries from rising food costs, and ensuring that they consistently have access to basic goods at discounted prices. This is manifested in how the targeted beneficiaries continued to buy their food in the open or parallel market where they have no protection from the PDS against exorbitant prices. This could be attributed to the intervention program's theory being based on faulty assumptions about the problem to be solved, the needs to be addressed, the tactics to be employed and the ability of the implementing institutions to handle it, etc.

In the proceeding chapter, the study further scrutinizes the validity of the intervention program's design/theory by evaluating how its objectives, implementation and delivery compare with the gendered needs and constraints of its women beneficiaries. It also examines the implications of the program's gender sensitivity not only for the program's success in attaining its intended goal of enhancing beneficiaries' access to basic foods, but also gender equality.

## **CHAPTER 9 : Responsiveness of the PDS of basic goods to the gendered needs of poor women beneficiaries**

### **9.1 Introduction**

As discussed in previous chapters, food inflation results in reduced calorie consumption, nutrition, and additional emotional and time burdens for women living in urban areas, which could undermine their health, income status and food security both in the short and long run. This is due to the multiple and interconnected deprivations of women resulting from gender ideologies that are biased against them. Furthermore, the discussion in Chapter 8 has demonstrated that an intervention program's success hinges on addressing the demands of its intended beneficiaries concerning the specific attributes of the goods and services offered. This chapter takes the discussion further by assessing whether the PDS of basic goods has made considerations for the gender-specific challenges of its poor women beneficiaries in defining the food inflation problem, formulating its mitigation strategies and implementation using a feminist policy analysis framework. It also investigates whether and how the gender sensitivity of the intervention program has affected its effectiveness and efficiency.

The chapter starts by elaborating on the requirements of women beneficiaries about what consumer products they see as essential and how they value the different features/qualities of the commodities/services provided by the PDS. The results of this exercise—a need assessment—are then utilized as a benchmark for assessing how well the PDS recognised and catered to the particular requirements of its beneficiaries, poor women. The last section of the chapter summarizes the findings and draws conclusions.

### **9.2 Responsiveness of PDS to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries**

The study found that the implementing institutions within the PDS of basic goods do not make a deliberate or/and adequate effort to identify the needs of the targeted customers to be able to respond to them better.

*Alle* only conducts a market study of its existing and new goods whenever there is an interest to stock the goods and ensure their sustainability in the market, or whenever the number of customers or products declines. This explains why the enterprise sometimes pushes unwanted goods that it had stocked on its customers, undermining its profitability. One of the retailers in the study shares his experience as follows:

*When you decide to buy something, there is another product that you are obligated to buy along with it. For instance, when you buy Mirinda they say 'you should also buy Pepsi'. In the end, the products that are not wanted by customers started filling up my store. Then I started selling it for a cheaper price. There are many products I had to throw out because they have expired. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

Even when the enterprise is aware of the exact needs of the targeted customers of the PDS of basic goods, it is reluctant to shape its offer in such a way that it meets those needs. A representative from *Alle* responded to the question of whether or not the enterprise extends any preferential treatment to the Consumers' Cooperatives in the distribution of goods other than those considered "Basic" by the MoT as follows:

*Not so much. Because private traders buy from us monthly unlike the Consumers' Cooperatives (outside of the PDS) ...we stock first-grade quality flour.... Government employees are interested in and are used to queuing and buying the 10,00 Birr per kilo flour that Consumers' Cooperatives are selling. And Alle does not stock that type of flour... These government institutions do not have any standards when it comes to quality; they are only interested in very cheap prices. (Alle Bejimla: 01.08.18)*

This mismatch between the product offered and the product demanded may also explain the weak business relationships between the implementing institutions in the PDS as was discussed in the previous chapter. Further, as indicated in chapter 8, the intervention program assumed that the basic goods that are in high demand in the country are sugar, palm oil, wheat grain/ flour. However, according to the women participants in the study, the three most important and regularly purchased goods are *teff*, oil and onion. As illustrated in Table 9:1 below, *teff* is the most important one of the three.

Table 9:1 Important and regularly purchased goods by targeted beneficiaries

FGDS	Order of importance			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4 <sup>th</sup>
1	teff	oil	onion	sugar
2	teff	onion	oil	lentils

Tegegne et al. (2018) also found that the three food items that the targeted beneficiaries consider to be basic and would have preferred to be distributed by the PDS in chronological order are *teff*, lentils and oil. This reveals that the distribution system was founded based on some incorrect assumptions about the targeted beneficiaries from the very beginning. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 8, one of the main assumptions of the PDS of basic goods was that the basic items could be made accessible to the intended beneficiaries by controlling the distribution route, quantity delivered, and pricing, with no consideration for the other characteristics of the commodities and services provided.

However, as shown in Table 9:2 below, the study found that, for both groups of women, quality is the number one reason behind their decision regarding where to buy their food. The second most important factor influencing the choice of a marketplace is 'Price' for the 1<sup>st</sup> group of women, while it is 'Availability of all items and quantities required in one-stop' for the 2<sup>nd</sup> group of women.

Table 9:2 Pair-wise ranking of the reasons behind the choice of a marketplace

	Factors behind the choice of a marketplace	Older and retired women (FGD1)	Younger and economically active women (FGD2)
1	Price	2	3
2	Location/distance	4	5
3	Customer service	4	4
4	Availability of all needed items in one-stop	3	2
5	Quality	1	1
6	Volume /quantity	4	3

Source: Group exercise during the FGDs

In the following sections, the research goes into further detail on how these factors influence the decision-making process of poor women when buying food, to assess how well the PDS's services meet those needs.

### 9.1.1 Quality

As indicated in Table 9:2 above, quality is the number one factor behind decisions regarding where to buy food for both groups of women. This means that poor women opt for higher quality products even if it means they will have to spend more money or/and buy less quantity. Women participants and private retailers in the study view the quality of goods supplied by the Consumers' Cooperatives as sub-standard, except in the case of sugar and wheat (which are not the top priority items for women in this study). This sentiment is best conveyed by the following quotation from the stories shared below:

*“Quality at the Consumers’ Cooperative shops is low; they only have volume or varieties. The Consumer’ Cooperative shops focus on price while they stock their products”. (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)*

*“We do not buy the legumes they sell, because it is not of good quality. They bring cheaper quality. Even if they bring cheaper teff, we do not buy it. In fact, we do not even look at it”. (P4: 9.07.18)*

*“Their teff has sprouting seeds in it... it makes a certain sound i.e., kech-kech. You cannot lift the injera from the mitad (a traditional pan)<sup>117</sup>. When you eat it, it does not taste like food”. (P14: 27.07.18)*

*I do not buy, because sometimes there are things which do not have the required quality. So, I do not want to be stressed. An old women's eyes do not work very well. Besides, among all women's chores, I do not like cleaning dirt from lentils. Instead of buying one kilo there, I buy half a kilo from ordinary traders. Isn't that better? (P12: 24.07.18)*

*I buy the oil which is good for health. I buy the unpacked one (locally produced oil) at a higher price. I do that for the sake of my son who suffers from gastritis. I do not know what the oil provided by the Consumers' Cooperatives is made of. (P6: 10.07.18)*

*“The solidified oil that is supplied by the Consumers’ Cooperatives is bad for your legs... it is believed to be related to high cholesterol levels”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

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<sup>117</sup> This is to say that because of the low quality of the flour it sticks to the pan and do not make a good injera.

It can be deduced from the above testimonies that, women's perception of quality emanates from the product's attributes such as appeal, flavour, suitability for health, the type and difficulty of work required for preparation, and women's competence and willingness to do it. The time required to cook the food is of particular importance for the younger and economically active group of women. This is clearly articulated by the women in this group as follows:

*Lentils are sold for 28,00 Birr per kilo at the Shemachoch, while it is sold for 40,00 Birr per kilo in ordinary retail shops. However, the one you buy from the Shemachoch has a lot of dirt in it and I do not have time to clean it.... their peas take a long time to cook. I once had to cook it from 8:00 in the morning to 5:00 in the afternoon. (P7: 11.07.18)*

*"Instead of spending your time sitting and cleaning the peas, it is better to buy good quality peas elsewhere and use your time for something else". (P15: 27. 07.18)*

This is understandable given the fact that women who are involved in productive labour are more pressed for time than retired women as discussed in section 6.4. It can also be inferred from the above quotations that poor women, particularly those actively employed in the market, do not consider the additional time that poor-quality food requires for preparation as worth the money saved from its lower cost. Moreover, when quality is compromised, it could involve additional expenses, counterbalancing the gains in income from lower prices. Some examples are provided below:

*"The one you buy from kebele, even if it is cheaper, it still has a lot of expenses. you still have to throw out many unwanted things. So, all and all the price becomes the same (as the private retailers)". (P15: 27. 07.18)*

*"I once incurred a loss after buying teff from the Shemachoch. I had to throw out 30 kilos of dirt from 100 kilos of teff". (P5: 10.07.18)*

*"50 Kilos of Teff that I had bought from the Shemachoch was once spoiled". (P14: 27.07.18)*

However, the management of the sampled Consumers' Cooperatives brushes off these accusations as stemming from the customers' lack of awareness.

This is noted in the following excerpt from the interview.

*The community always think good quality products are not sold at the Consumers' Cooperative shops. We always try to create awareness but to no avail...If they find a problem in one (product), they conclude all products sold at the cooperative shop are problematic. (Consumers' Cooperative on 2: 19. 07.18)*

Nonetheless, recent news on the subject that disclosed the health risks associated with the MoT's importation of low-quality palm oil supports the aforementioned perspective of the women beneficiaries (G/Kirstos, 2019; Mulugeta, 2019). Research conducted by the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) using the standards set by the WHO demonstrated that Ethiopia is importing one of the lowest-rated quality<sup>118</sup> palm oils (Mulugeta, 2019).

Hence, in the long run, the use of this oil may cause high cholesterol in consumers due to its high saturated fatty acid content (ibid.). To rectify this problem, the MoT has implemented a new edible oil import and distribution reform to ensure that imported palm oil in the country meets the health criteria which led to a shift from the previous quality level “CES138:2015” to “CES245” (Addis Maleda, 2020). The type of palm oil that is currently being imported is in liquid form which is referred to as Palm olein and contains adequate levels of vitamin A and Vitamin D (ibid.).

### 9.1.2 Volume and availability

Table 9:2 also indicates that the availability of the amount/quantity demanded is another important determining factor for decisions regarding where to buy goods. This view of the targeted beneficiaries of the program is demonstrated in the following quotes from the FGD.

*Availability of all needed items is important .... Otherwise, we will be wasting more time going to another shop to buy the remaining stuff that we want.... The time cost will be double because you will go to a distantly located shop and also another one where you will not find everything you need. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

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<sup>118</sup> Measured by its cloud point, a temperature at which the wax begins to separate from oil when chilled, Ethiopia is currently importing a palm oil that earns 10 out of 10 on the scale, hence the lowest possible quality (Mulugeta, 2019).

*“I will not go to a shop to buy just one kilo when I need to buy two. Even if the price is higher, I would prefer to go to a place where I can buy goods in as many quantities as I need”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

This is especially true for younger and economically active women who do not have the time to buy goods from multiple suppliers. Because younger women typically have smaller children who require more care and income-generating activities, as explained in Chapter 6, they experience time poverty more severely. As a result, it seems sensible that they would want to make the most of their time while buying food. On the contrary, for most of the older and retired group of women, the availability of every item and quantity required in one stop is a non-issue, especially when compared with prices. This is illustrated in the following quotes from the FGD.

*“Availability of all times that we need in one market is not a determining factor for us at all. It only affects the trader”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*“We buy whatever volume we can get and we go elsewhere to buy the rest of the quantities that we need”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

This can be explained by the fact that older and retired women relatively have more time on their hands, but less regular income compared to younger and economically active women. A woman in this group reiterated the following popular *Amharic* saying concerning the issue of choosing a marketplace for buying food:

*“The poor do not economize on their labour/ energy”. (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

This may help to explain why some of the women who are registered in the UPSNP's direct support program because they are unable to work owing to advanced age or/and major illnesses are now under additional time or/and labour strain in order to save money on food purchases. The following quotations from the same women exemplify this paradox.

*I have pain in my ears, I cannot hear my child. My head disturbs me... Sometimes, when am stressed nothing goes into my ears and my head. Because of these problems they understood and they made me under the direct support program (in the UPSNP). So, I get supported just like a pensioner. (P11: 24.08.18)*

*Let me tell you as my child, whenever I go to the millers' even if it is 20kilos or 25 kilos, I carry it home myself. So that whatever I was going to pay for the labourer would be for me. Even if I go to the market and buy shiro, I carry it myself. (P11: 24.08.18)*



This primarily illustrates how, for older and poorer women, income poverty outweighs all other privations in terms of time poverty and poor health. The study also found that the unit of measurement or the minimum quantity sold per transaction is another determining factor behind the choice of a marketplace for food by the targeted customers. Poor women prefer to buy from suppliers who are willing to sell in smaller fractions as opposed to standard scales like kilos and litres, even if it eventually costs them more. One woman participant said:

*“At the millers’, they only sell 1 kilo. But at the shops, they sell whatever volume you desire to buy, even if it is more expensive... Because I cannot afford to buy them in large quantities at once. I buy smaller quantities from shops”.* (P15: 27. 07.18)

It can be deduced from this that for the income poor meeting the daily food security demands is more vital than saving on food expenses, time and effort in the long run. This affirms Amare's (2010) finding that higher engagement with the market through purchasing very small amounts of food repeatedly is one way of coping with food insecurity for poor urban households in Ethiopia.

### 9.1.3 Price

As indicated in Table 9:2 above, price is one of the most important factors behind poor women’s choice of a marketplace for buying their food. This is evident in the following quotations from interview transcripts.

*“I check for price differences and buy the cheaper one”.* (P8: 11.07.08)

*“I do not buy from private shop traders; they are expensive for poor people like us”.* (P13: 27.07.18)

For the older and retired group of women, in particular, price is the most influential factor next to quality because they suffer the most from income poverty, as discussed in the previous section. This is confirmed by the private retailers in the PDS, as shown in the following excerpt from the interview.

*“Even when you tell the customers about the sub-standard quality of varieties, they still chose to buy from them if they are cheaper, because they are poor”.* (Private retailer 1: 16.07.18)

Hence, even though the quality is the most important attribution for both younger and older groups of women, they may knowingly continue to buy low-quality food from the PDS due to their financial constraints. In so doing, the poor may not only be forced to incur additional costs and shoulder additional work burdens for cleaning and cooking low-quality food but also compromise their long-term well-being for the sake of meeting their immediate food security needs.

#### 9.1.4 Service delivery

Even though the quality of customer service is not among the most crucial determining factors behind poor women's choice of a marketplace as shown in Table 9:2, it is not inconsequential. Regardless of their income status, women consumers still take into account the quality of customer service, the convenience of location and working time when they choose a marketplace to buy their food. As evident in the quotations below, the study participants generally feel that the working hours of the retail shops of the Consumers' Cooperative are suitable:

*"They are open for half a day on Saturdays. I find their decision to serve those who are employed on Saturdays convenient". (P9:12.07.18)*

*"It is convenient. They are open between 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM during the day. To serve those consumers who have to work during the day, they remain open until 7:00 in the evening". (P5:10.07.18)*

However, the beneficiary women are not too pleased with having to stand and wait in long lines at their retail shops especially when a new batch of stock arrives. The following excerpts from the stories shared by participants capture the essence of their frustration.

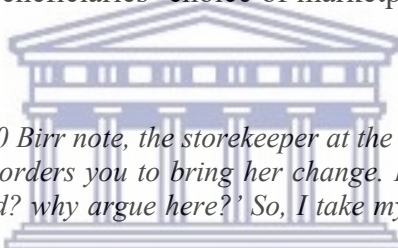
*"When the three main consumption goods (i.e., sugar, flour and oil) are in stock in the Consumers' Cooperative shops, there is a long queue and people shout/complain". (Consumers' Cooperative 2: 19.07.18)*

*"When they stock flour there is usually a long line to buy it. So, unless you stay home from work, you cannot buy it... I was not able to buy it, because it does not go with my work schedule". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*"I usually buy oil from other traders, because, I do not want to come here and stand at the Shemachoch'. There is usually a line there. The price difference is only 5,00-10,00 Birr anyway. I cannot stand (for long). I have some illness". (P12: 24.07.18)*

This reveals that accessing the basic goods from the PDS outlets may directly conflict with reproductive labour, especially for those employed in the formal sector with fixed hours, and may not be optional for those with poor health. Another issue that became evident here is that some of the beneficiary women feel that the PDS's discounted prices on basic goods are not worth the inconvenience of standing in queues for long to get hold of them. This problem persists despite the effort by the PDS to increase its distribution outlets through private retailers in the neighbourhood as discussed in section 8.3.3.

This may be explained by the first-come-first-served manner of service delivery at retail shops due to shortages and the irregular nature of supply as discussed in section 8.3.4.1. Regular lack of supplies and long queues, according to Woldu et al. (2013) are indications of the inefficiencies of the price control policy of the public retail system. Further, customer service and other value additions are factors that can influence women beneficiaries' choice of marketplace for food as highlighted below:



*If we take a 100, 00 Birr note, the storekeeper at the Consumers' Cooperative shop mistreats you and orders you to bring her change. I tell myself, 'Why don't I buy from Hadid instead? why argue here?' So, I take my money and buy it elsewhere. (P15: 27. 07.18)*

*"At the millers', you give it to them and they mill it and deliver it to your home. But at the Hadid market, you have to bring it home first and then take it to the millers later yourself". (P14: 27.07.18)*

*If it was a private organization, it would stay open even after 3:00 PM...I heard they were running out of flour and I went to the Consumers' Cooperative shop to buy, but the storekeeper said 'it is closing time; I will not sell it to you now'. (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

This is another proof of how some of the women beneficiaries may feel that the PDS outlets' fixed operating hours and poor customer service are not adequately compensated by its discounted prices. This confirms that quality, as perceived by customers, refers not only to the essential characteristics of goods but also to unobserved private transaction costs such as customer service and waiting time in queues (Balakrishnan and Ramaswami, 1997; Ramaswami, 2002).

### 9.1.5 Location/distance

As can be referred from Table 9:2 above, convenience in location is relatively the least important factor determining women beneficiaries' decision regarding where to buy their food. It is the amount of money that is available for buying food that determines how far they are willing and able to travel to buy food as shown by the testimonials of women participants below:

*I buy vegetables from a nearby market; not only because it is near, but because I do not have a big capital (for buying vegetables). You can go to Piasa to buy it. But, when your budget is too small, you can just buy from here in small quantities as needed. When you go there, you need a lot of capital for groceries. (P10: 19. 07.18)*

*"I do not have money to go to Piasa". (P13: 27.07.18)*

*"I buy from a market that is at a reasonable distance from where I live". (P12: 24.07.10)*

It can be deduced from this that for poor women who buy in small quantities the promise of gains from improved quality and cheaper prices from marketplaces in distant locations are not appealing, considering the additional time, effort and transportation expenses it may involve. This may also be explained by problems in the transportation system of the city as previously indicated by the participants in relation to its influence on their daily task arrangements and contribution to their time poverty.

This is indicated in the following quotes from women participants in the study.

*"We go to the market early, because, if we go later, we cannot get transportation". (FGD1: 08.09.18)*

*"A working woman spends some time travelling from home to work and faces difficulties because transportation is not reliable". (FGD2: 09.09.18)*

Overall, most women beneficiaries in the study seem dissatisfied with the services of the Consumers' Cooperative shops and have resorted to buying only the basic goods that were allocated to them by the distribution system. The following quotations from women participants can be testaments to this claim.

*"I buy sugar, oil and flour from Shemachoch because they are not available elsewhere". (P9: 12.07.18)*

*“We find sugar and oil at Shemachoch. We can't find those elsewhere at all”. (P5: 09.07.18)*

This also shows that despite the PDS's failure to meet their needs in terms of quality (observed and unobserved), delivery time, and quantity, the targeted beneficiaries still buy the basic goods from the retailers in the system not by choice, but for lack of other options. This failure of the distribution system seems to have resulted from its reluctance to acknowledge that its beneficiaries may have specific needs concerning the characteristics of the goods other than cheaper prices, let alone to identify those needs. To the questions of what the targeted customers want/need, the management of the sampled Consumers' Cooperative responded as follows:

*“But what do the customers want? Everything that is sold at the Consumers' cooperative shop is what customers want”. (Consumers' Cooperative 1: 27. 07.18)*

*There is no such thing as customers' needs. The focus here is to be able to deliver the products to the Consumers' Cooperative shop... We have the capacity to reach out to all customers. But our society has a problem; when you offer them to buy, they are too proud. Particularly, our mothers instead of buying here would prefer to go that far in the hustle and spend the whole day. (Consumers' Cooperative 1: 27. 07.18)*

This seems to suggest that the management of the Consumers' Cooperatives seems to hold on to their incorrect presumption that the targeted beneficiaries are poor, they should be willing to accept whatever is offered to them as long as it is cheaper, regardless of the private costs it involves. Hence, instead of identifying the needs of its targeted beneficiaries, the Consumers' Cooperatives simply conduct a product assessment to identify the available varieties and prices of specific food items. A representative from the management committee explains the process as follows:

*No, we do not conduct a market study...mainly, members of the marketing committee go around Mercato and Ehel berenda, and they bring samples for the 7 board managers. Then, we look at the samples and their quality and decide which one to buy.... Then, the purchasing committee will go and buy the selected product. (Consumers' Cooperative 2: 19. 07.18)*

On the other hand, as discussed thus far in this chapter, female beneficiaries know exactly which goods and features of the goods they want and, decide whether or not to purchase them through the PDS after carefully weighing the financial and personal costs involved.

One woman beneficiary said:

*I do not buy from them. Even if they bring the things that are wanted by the people, they never bring things that can satisfy the people... I mean, who will buy from them?... They do not stock good things. Good things do not last long. The people know and talk amongst each other. For example, with flour even if they stock it in thousands, it does not even last three days. Why? Because it is a good thing. They should sell what the people need. (P14: 27.07.18)*

The failure of the PDS's implementing institutions to address the issue at hand from the perspective of the intended beneficiaries has not only resulted in its underutilization but also wasted effort, as well as a loss in income and revenue. This is exemplified by the following quotes:

*There are some instances where products had been sold to traders...Once the soybean oil had piled up in the Consumers' Cooperative shop because it was not wanted by the people. it was finally the private retailers who bought it in large quantities...soybean oil is... But previously the assumption was that it was demanded by the people. But we do not stock it anymore. (Consumers' Cooperative 2: 19.07.18)*

This shows that the intervention program's suggested remedies did not make enough of an attempt to understand and solve the issue of food inflation through the experiences of women by taking into consideration their hidden costs associated with subpar goods and services. These costs include not just the extra time and effort required for food preparation and purchasing, but also the emotional harm brought on by maltreatment at some of the PDS's retail stores. The lack of responsiveness of the PDS of basic goods, particularly to the gendered needs, priorities and related constraints of its targeted beneficiaries may explain its ineffectiveness in making the desired impact.

This mainly refers to its lack of attention to their needs in terms of the quality of the goods/services it offers, and how it may affect them, given their gendered constraints in the form of time poverty. This obliges the targeted beneficiaries to buy their food in the open or parallel market where they have no protection from the PDS against high prices. This is just another illustration of how the intervention program's underlying premise, which guides its objectives, is flawed since it falls short of meeting the needs of women beneficiaries as discussed in Chapter 8.

The next section further investigates the extent to which the intervention program is designed and implemented in a gender-sensitive manner using a feminist policy analysis framework

### 9.3 Gender sensitiveness of the PDS of basic goods in Ethiopia

As I draw this thesis to a close, it remains to propose a policy analysis framework. In this regard, it is useful to recall Bustelo's (2017) advisory:

*“Evaluation is the best time to bring gender issues back into the policymaking process if the other stages have failed to do so” (Bustelo, 2017, p. 95).*

In the proceeding section, the thesis draws together the evidence presented above and systematically analyses the PDS of basic goods through a feminist lens using the analysis framework discussed in section 5.6.2. It evaluated the gender sensitiveness of the PDS of basic goods on the basis of women's involvement in it (power), their visibility in the policy (context), the language used to refer to women and their roles, whether or not the policy assumes gender neutrality and equality, and values or penalizes their contributions. It examines if the PDS understood the gendered nature of the food inflation problem and the specific needs and constraints of its poor women beneficiaries to cope with it. It also scrutinizes the distribution system's efforts to address the unique challenges of women and to promote gender-equitable livelihoods and well-being.

#### □ Power analysis

The PDS of basic goods as a strategy to stabilize food inflation and improve the accessibility of basic goods in the country was formulated by the MoT with the participation of regional administrations (Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau, 2018). Similarly, the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa was formulated by the Addis Ababa Administration Trade Bureau using the nationwide subsidized basic good distribution Reform as its basis (ibid.).

This is in line with Admassie's (2013) argument that the process of policy formulation in Ethiopia is characterised by a centralized and authoritarian process dominated by the legislative branch of the government. This implies that women beneficiaries of the PDS did not have the opportunity to either define the problem or shape the intervention program. The women beneficiaries' lack of understanding about the Consumers' Cooperatives and its procedures, such as how beneficiaries are paired with outlets, and their roles as members, as indicated in Chapter 8, serve as examples of this. They also played no role in electing their representatives into the various committees of the Consumers' Cooperatives, and in the recruitment process of employees in the Consumers' Cooperative stores and shops. To the question of how committee members are elected and employees at the consumer cooperative shop are recruited women participants in the study responded as follows:

*“How do we know anything? The people do not know anything. They say it is the committee, but since I am not a member<sup>119</sup>, I do not have a deeper knowledge about it”. (P14: 27.07.18)*

*“This I do not know in depth. When a consumers' meeting, etc. is called, to be honest, I do not go. Because even if you speak out, it is useless. Even if I go there, I will not make any difference, so I do not go”. (P12: 24.07.18)*

There is an apparent lack of interest in the workings of the PDS and a feeling of powerlessness to make any difference by women beneficiaries, due to the system's inability to address their concerns and respond to their feedback as also mentioned in section 8.3.2.2. This lack of participation by the intervention program's female beneficiaries in the numerous procedures and decisions that have an impact on their access to food demonstrates their lack of agency (HLPE, 2020).

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<sup>119</sup> The participant is not a member of the Consumers' Cooperative, but is still a beneficiary of PDS.



## □ Context

Women are invisible in the PDS of basic goods, and accompanying Proclamations/Reforms, as there is no explicit or implicit mention of them, their lived realities or their unique gendered challenges, including how their agency is constrained by social norms, and or how they might be affected by the intervention program. For instance, the "Trade Competition and Consumers' Protection Proclamation No. 813/2013" which also guides the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018 defines a consumer as "*a natural person who buys goods and services for his personal or family consumption...*" even though the task of shopping for food usually falls under women's gendered reproductive role (FDRE, 2014, p. 7311). Hence, from the outset, one can predict that the PDS for basic goods was not conceived, planned, and implemented with a gendered perspective.

The Trade System Reform Program of 2011 is an exception to this rule since it briefly mentions the detrimental effects of women's low participation in trade on economic growth (Addis Ababa City Administration, 2011). Similarly, the subsidized basic goods registration card indicates that the beneficiaries of the intervention program could be either female or male. This can be referred from Appendix XVIII. Even yet, the intervention program can still be referred to as a "woman's issue" in Ethiopia since it disproportionately affects women as purchasing and cooking food is historically seen as a "woman's work" and falls under their jurisdiction. As discussed in Chapter 8, poor women act as shock absorbers to smoothen family consumption not only in times of food inflation but also when inflation-mitigating programs like the PDS fail to serve the family's needs by providing more labour time.

## □ Gender neutrality and equality

The PDS for basic goods can be considered gender-neutral, as it does not treat women any differently than men.

The manager of the Consumers' Cooperative committee replied to the question of whether the PDS of basic goods gives women beneficiaries priority as follows:

*“No, there is no such thing as male and female. The proclamation states that the association is open to all”. (Consumers' Cooperative 1: 27. 07.18)*

As discussed in Chapter 7, women in the study area are more severely affected by food inflation, since they are primarily responsible for purchasing and preparing food due to their gendered position as the family's primary safety net providers. Further, their coping ability is constrained by their multiple gendered privations including lack of bargaining power, time poverty, and lack of access to income and assets. Similarly, as discussed in the previous section, poor women in the study area are bearing the private costs related to the distribution system's poor-quality goods and services by spending more energy and time cooking and making multiple trips to shops and standing in long queues to buy food.

Nonetheless, the PDS through maintaining its gender neutrality failed to appreciate both the gendered effect of the food inflation crisis and the possible impact of the intervention on women beneficiaries. The PDS is best characterized as gender-blind rather than gender-neutral since it has ignored systemic disparities between men and women in the family, community, market, and legal institutions that might result in gender-differentiated effects of both the economic crisis and the intervention (Bakker, 1994; Elson, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Mellor, 1997; Williams, 1994).

Owing to its failure to offer a service that meets the gendered needs of women beneficiaries, it has laid the greater burden of the food inflation crises on their shoulders by adding to their reproductive work burden, thereby aggravating the existing gender inequality. Drucza et al. (2020), Gebreselassie and Haile (2013) and Tsige et al. (2020) also found that Ethiopia's development and food security policies, including the PSNP, were incompatible with women's multiple life-cycle vulnerabilities and gendered needs, undermining their ability to improve their food security and general well-being.

### □ Language

The study has not found an explicit indication of male dominance or gendered expectations in any of the PDS's implementation guidelines and supporting reforms. However, there have been some practices during the implementation process that exposed its underlying biases in favour of men. For instance, during the registration of households as beneficiaries of the PDS, only the names of the husbands were recorded even though it was women who handled the actual registration process. This is exemplified by the quotation below:

*They registered my husband's name as he is the head of the household. Then I provided his picture and other information regarding my husband, but I am the one who does the work. (P4: 9.07.18)*

This practice, while consistent with the existing patriarchal culture of the country as discussed in Chapter 6, conceals women's active involvement as members and customers of Consumers' Cooperatives, and their vital role in ensuring the food security of their families. Further, as was indicated in the preceding section, the intervention program's obstinate insistence on preserving gender neutrality by failing to recognize their heightened susceptibility to the food inflation problem and treat them differently is making women invisible.

### □ State/Market control

Despite not being explicitly stated, the PDS's intended effect on its customers depends in part, on the extra work and time that women freely give in the private domain to make up for its shortcomings in terms of meeting the beneficiaries' needs. That is, the provision of lower quality goods and services in an erratic manner by the PDS likely adds to the burden of women in terms of standing in queues for long, making several trips to the outlet shops, and preparing and cooking for long, as these activities fall under their reproductive responsibility. Hence, it can be argued that while the intervention takes women's reproductive labour for granted by denying it recognition through maintaining gender neutrality, it still relies on the additional labour time they provide to make the desired impact.

### □ Rights and Care/Responsibility

Women in particular bear the cost of the PDS's incompetency to deliver its objectives of stabilizing food prices and ensuring accessibility for the targeted beneficiaries, as buying food and cooking food is part of their reproductive role. For example, as stated in section 9.2.1, the low-quality goods provided by the PDS often require women to allocate a much longer time to cook food. Similarly, as discussed in previous sections, the lack of adequate information, scarcity and inconsistency in the supply of subsidized goods necessitates for women to make frequent trips to several marketplaces and wait in long lines to buy the amount needed by the family. Women who are involved in productive labour are even more penalized by failures of the PDS as their time is even more stretched between their multiple roles. It follows from this discussion that the gender-blindness of the PDS of basic goods has perpetuated women's relative disadvantage in line with previous findings by Elson (2010), Elson and Cagatay (1999) and Jennings (1994).

### □ Values

According to the study's findings, the PDS of basic goods has not put into consideration most of the above core feminist values in defining the problem, formulating strategies and implementing the program. The intervention program seems to be based on assumptions that typically characterize androcentrism in policies. These include the assumption of a homogenous society that is equally affected by food inflation and policies; and decontextualization of the food inflation problem without any regard for the unique experiences of poor women in urban areas.

For example, the Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform of 2018 specifies its targeted beneficiaries as "*consumers in the low and middle-income quantile*", without making any references to other socially marginalised groups on the basis of gender (Addis Ababa City Administration Trade Bureau, 2018, p.5). Further, gender neutrality and objectivity are assumed in formulating the PDS of basic goods by exclusively focusing on the public sphere of men while ignoring the private and invisible spheres of women's social lives.

This is demonstrated by the program's emphasis on reducing the financial cost of basic goods with no regard for the additional private cost of women in the domestic sphere as was previously highlighted.

#### 9.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter looked at how gender-sensitive the PDS for basic goods has been in terms of accounting for the gender-specific challenges and needs of its poor women beneficiaries, and how that has affected its effectiveness and efficiency. Towards that end, it utilizes a feminist policy framework and the results of a need assessment of its women beneficiaries on the various features of the food they buy as a yardstick to gauge the success of the intervention program. The finding revealed that both goods termed as "basic" and the various features of the goods offered by the intervention program are not aligned with the needs of its poor women beneficiaries. Despite the relatively cheaper prices it offers, it has not been able to meet women beneficiaries' demands in terms of mainly quality, but also scale/volume, supply time, and customer service. This is an indication of the PDS's flawed assumptions about the issue or needs it intended to address, proving the fallacy of its program theory/design.

These issues can be traced to the PDS's lack of appreciation for both the gendered effects of food inflation and the gender-specific challenges of coping. While women and the vital role they play in food provisioning remain invisible in the intervention's program documents, they were penalised for the program's inefficiencies in terms of increased reproductive burdens. Furthermore, the study's findings made it clear that, despite the intervention's neglect of women's reproductive work to maintain gender neutrality, its success nevertheless hinges on the additional free labour time provided by them.

It also became clear in the study that the PDS is devoid of core feminist values such as failure to understand the food inflation crisis and possible solutions from the perspective of poor women, and denial of women the agency in shaping programs that affect their food security.

The intervention program shifted the weight of the crisis to women, exacerbating existing gender inequalities, due to its disproportionate focus on cutting the financial cost of food while ignoring the hidden costs it involves for women in the domestic domain. This is proof that androcentric intervention programs that fail to recognize women's particular sensitivity to an economic crisis as a result of their gendered vulnerabilities tend to not only fail in achieving their intended goals but also reinforce the stereotypical reproductive role of women.



## CHAPTER 10 : Conclusion

### 10.1 Introduction

The study is summarized and drawn to a close in this chapter, which begins with the presentation of an integrated synthesis of each objective, the research methodology used, and the key findings. It then elaborates on each of its key findings under the following themes: Multiple deprivations of women in the study area, Women's heightened vulnerability to food inflation, the gap in the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa, and gender-blindness of the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa. The next section explicates the study's empirical, methodological and theoretical contributions to research, policymaking and development. These include the expansion of knowledge on the gendered effects of food inflation and the gendered-differentiated effects of government programs, the incorporation of some of the key components of feminist epistemology in its methodology and the use of a theory-driven evaluation of the intervention program.

Using a feminist economic framework, the study has expanded existing discourse on the role of the prevailing patriarchal social/cultural norms in constraining economic behaviour and determining how women are affected by an economic crisis and government response programs. The last section provides the summary of the study findings, followed by recommendations for gender-responsive policy work in the future and closing remarks.

### 10.2 Integrating research questions and methods

The study sought to accomplish four main objectives. The first one was to explore the gendered constraints of poor women residents of Addis Ababa. The second one was to examine the effect of food inflation and its coping mechanisms from the perspective of women, given their gendered constraints. The third objective was to analyse the implementation of the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa, its achievements and challenges in terms of ensuring a stable supply of basic goods at affordable prices for the poor. And the last one was to analyse the impact of the PDS in terms of its responsiveness to the gendered needs of poor women beneficiaries in Addis Ababa.

A feminist economics theoretical framework was adopted to better understand the lived experiences of women in their social context, the gendered hurdles they encounter, and the unique ways in which an economic crisis and government intervention measures influence them (Benería et al., 2016; England, 1989; Folbre, 1994; Harding, 1982; Himmelweit, 2002; Kuiper et al., 1995; Kumar and Quisumbing, 2013; Levin, 1995; Nelson, 2021, 1996; Quisumbing et al., 2008; Sen, 1987, 1995). To accomplish its objectives, the study utilized a qualitative research design method, which enabled a thorough comprehension of the food inflation crisis from the perspective of underprivileged women in the study region within the social setting in which they are situated.

Particularly, the case study approach employed in the study allowed to narrow the study focus to a particular case within its social, political, economic, and other settings and peculiarities for an in-depth understanding of the issue and drawing lessons from the experience. Hence, the study sought to have a better understanding of the particular situation concerning the gender-specific constraints faced by poor women living in Addis Ababa, before embarking on its investigation of how they are impacted by food inflation. Similarly, by focusing on the Addis Ababa PDS for basic goods and its implementation process, it examined the gender sensitivity of Ethiopia's food price and supply stabilizing policies.

To resolve the marginalization of women in knowledge creation, the study was centred on their contextual and lived experiences and used data collection methods like IDIs and FGDs. The employment of PRA tools was especially beneficial in enabling underprivileged women with low educational and social standing to express themselves more freely and effectively. Participatory data collection methods have the advantage of allowing for an exploration of in-depth information, diversity and complexity of ideas and interpretations of social life by the respondents themselves. Primary data was also collected from implementers of the government response program including private retailers, government enterprises and officials at various levels to ensure its empirical adequacy. The study also used secondary data sources, such as Reforms, Proclamations, periodical reports, and other pertinent studies, to corroborate its findings drawn from primary data sources.



To assess the effectiveness of the intervention program, the study employed a theory-driven evaluation approach that required generating a program theory/logical model that systematically illustrates the steps and links between the various components of the intervention program. This has made it possible to illuminate and analyse the program implementation process and its outcomes and interpret its results by distinguishing between the validity of the program theory and the validity of the program implementation. A feminist policy analysis framework adopted from Mcphail (2003) was employed to meet the study's final objective of analysing the gender sensitivity of the intervention program based on the following themes: language, power analysis, context, gender neutrality and equality, and state-market control.

The software program ATLAS.ti 8.4.3 was employed to create a database, as well as for a more efficient analysis of the data. In line with the rhetorical assumption of a qualitative study, text and figurative descriptive methods with direct quotations from the study participants were also used to convey the study's findings (Creswell, 2007). The study's findings contributed to a better understanding of how poor women in Ethiopia are affected by rising food prices, how they manage those effects and the effectiveness of government measures targeted at stabilizing prices in light of women's gender-based limitations.

### 10.3 Summary of study findings

This section elaborates in further detail on the four major findings of the study as follows.

#### 10.3.1 Gender roles and multiple deprivations of women in the study area

The study revealed that poor women in the study area face several gendered and interconnected constraints in the form of time poverty, poor education and lack of access to income and assets. The first constraint is a result of the multiple roles women are made to assume in the family, community obligations and productive work mainly in low-paying and labour-intensive work in both the formal and informal sectors.

Despite some differences between younger and older groups, poor women on average spend 4 hours/day on reproductive work and 5-7 hours/day on productive work. The reproductive role of poor women involves several strenuous activities such as hand-washing clothes and baking *injera* that are taxing on their time and labour. Poorly functioning utility services in Addis Ababa make women's reproductive roles more difficult, as evidenced by their lack of enough sleep to cope with the inconsistent water and power supply. Poor women residents in the study area typically engage in casual and labour-demanding work such as petty trading in the open market, running MSEs and cooperative businesses in groups and participating in UPSNP. This might be because of their lack of capital and their poor education, especially for those who were born and raised in rural areas. Additionally, the government-led projects and initiatives they participate in as well as the community commitments of women such as *Iddirs*, which can last anywhere from a few hours to three days, take a toll on their time and energy.

Among the key determinants of women's labour time allocation, male partners, who impose their authority through verbal and physical aggression, rate highly. While at the same time, an acknowledgement of women's contribution to the family and a corresponding reward and support with the reproductive work from male partners is missing. The gender ideologies that have persuaded women that being a woman equates to being the first and most responsible person for meeting the families' food needs, which includes conserving the little resources of the home, are the major causes of the time poverty of women. Women's economic poverty, which denies them alternatives to substitute their labour and lessen their load, is another factor contributing to this issue.

In addition to the physical and mental toll that time poverty takes on women, it forces them to make the difficult choice of assuming one role at the cost of the other. For example, the UPSNP job, in which many poor women are involved requires cleaning the neighbourhood early in the morning from 5:30/6:00 – 9:00 AM, which interferes with their other tasks such as breakfast preparation.

Women who only attended primary school as adults during the National Primary Literacy Campaign (1979–1991) of the *Derg* regime were compelled to stop their education since it interfered with their childcare-related responsibilities, which eventually undermined their productivity and competitiveness in the labour market. This suggests that the various gendered constraints of women interact and reinforce each other to entrap them into a vicious cycle of interrelated deprivations.

The study also found that women lack access to information regarding their spouses' earnings, entitlement over family income and assets, and the bargaining power necessary to guide income-allocative and distributive decisions in the household. Women do not know how much their husbands are earning because, for one they have no right to ask, and even if they do, it is unlikely that they would receive accurate information. This is mainly attributable to the prevailing social norms that refer to men “as pillars of the household” and confer them leadership positions regarding managing family resources. Even though the law grants women equal ownership of marital property as men, they are still held back by social/gender norms from claiming those entitlement rights. Women’s relatively lower education and failure to earn income in the market also contribute to their low-self esteem and resulting weak bargaining positions in household decisions.

This asserts that women who are undereducated and therefore unable to find employment in the market do not believe that their contribution to the family through reproductive work gives them legitimacy in household bargaining, despite how demanding it is on their time and energy and how essential it is for the survival of the family. The same social order that is biased against women guides the flow of funds within the household, declaring the money earned by women as belonging to the family in general, while money earned by men is individualized private property. In most instances, money earned by women “do not leave the oven/kitchen”, as it is spent on food and housekeeping in line with their gendered reproductive roles.

One of the ways husbands can assert control over their spouses' income is by withholding their earnings from the household, thereby forcing their wives to spend theirs'. As per the prevailing gender ideology, most women in the study area have the decision-making power only over the various expenditure categories within the budgeted amount of money for food. Meanwhile, it is uncommon for male members of the household to get involved in the specifics of food expenditure, leaving all the stress of coping with increases in food prices to their wives, who do not have the authority to reallocate additional money from the family income to the food budget. Thus, the finding of this study supports the widely held view that women's entitlement and bargaining power are more accurate indicators of female well-being than family income and property.

### 10.3.2 Women's heightened vulnerability to food inflation

Food inflation in Ethiopia has been on the rise for the last two decades, to the dismay and frustration of poor women who cannot fathom the reasons behind it, but also feel helpless and find it intolerable. These women tend to frequently forgo their meals to ensure the food security of their children; yet, doing so for their spouses is viewed as "outdated" and rare. Even though there isn't that much variation in the food consumption of individual members of a household as poor families eat from the same pot, women still carry a much bigger psychological burden to cope with food inflation since buying and preparing food is an important part of their gendered role as wives and mothers. Meanwhile, women's lack of resources and bargaining power to access additional income following rises in food prices without causing marital strife renders them entirely responsible for coping.

Women's most frequent coping mechanism against food inflation is switching to cheaper and less preferred alternatives and components, such as shifting from *teff* to *qita* and *nifro*, and from lentils to *shiro*. In response to the rising prices of particularly fruits, vegetables, and animal sources of protein over the years, poor women residents of Addis Ababa are shifting their diets in favour of grains and pulses.

There is also a shift in the diet composition across the various seasons of the year, following price variations that mimic religious holidays, particularly the EOTC and to some extent the seasonal agricultural production. Poor women also implement a variety of additional consumption-modification techniques to cope with rising food prices including reducing the portion and frequency of meals and modifying the food purchasing and preparation process. As the ultimate focus of poor households becomes putting food on the table, having the desired flavour in food becomes a luxury that they can no longer afford. The other coping strategies they employ include prioritizing staples like *teff* over oil or entirely cutting non-staples out of their diets, as well as buying in bulk quantities to mitigate themselves against seasonal food price shocks by utilizing money from *Iqqubs*. The additional labour and time these strategies take in terms of travelling far to buy cheaper food and taking longer to cook food further exacerbate women's already existing time poverty.

Poor women also sell their assets, shift their budget away from non-food expenses, and participate in IGAs if possible, to cope with food inflation. However, this group of strategies are not options available for most women as they are constrained by their lack of decision-making power over household income and assets, poor education and time poverty, as discussed in the previous section. For instance, getting engaged in IGAs is not a viable option for most women unless their husbands or other family members are willing and able to assist with the childcare work which is unlikely in most cases. For the reasons outlined above, food inflation is a double-edged sword that impinges on poor women in two ways: by having a greater impact on their food insecurity and by laying a greater load of coping on their shoulders. As a result, relative to other family members, women have greater nutritional, emotional, and time challenges during periods of food inflation.

### 10.3.3 The gap in the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa

According to the study, the PDS of basic goods, an intervention program of the government put in place to alleviate the negative consequences of food inflation, has to some degree made it feasible for the intended beneficiaries to get the subsidised basic goods at lower costs.

However, even though the targeted beneficiaries can only legally access the basic goods through the PDS, they have continued to buy their food in the open or parallel market where they have no protection against inflated prices. This is because the beneficiaries feel that the supply is insufficient and the delivery is inconsistent, which forces them to purchase these goods outside of the system at markedly higher costs. For instance, the majority of recipients believe that the occasional distribution of 5 kilos of wheat flour and 3–5 litres of oil is both inadequate in amount and unpredictable in terms of timing. This indicates that the PDS is ineffective in protecting low-income households from the adverse effects of food inflation by ensuring stability in both the supply of basic goods and prices across all markets. The widespread illegal trading of these goods at substantially higher prices on the parallel market is one way in which this is manifested.

This has resulted from gaps in the implementation process, starting from the lack of resources, inadequate administration and coordination, and weak business linkages among program implementers. These challenges have hindered the program from carrying out its intervention efforts as effectively as envisaged. For instance, the M&E activities are not being carried out as intended due to the lack of funding to hire experienced auditors and the implementers' lack of commitment and awareness of their responsibilities. These activities include regularly carrying out audits and inspections, responding to beneficiary feedback, and promptly holding wrongdoers accountable, which explains the pervasive illicit trade of basic goods in the system, as mentioned above.

The gaps in the implementation process are also shown by its failure to adhere to existing guidelines and protocols and carry out program activities with the intended quality. The alleged lack of transparency and irregularities in the assignment of beneficiaries to retail shops is one way this is illustrated. It is also manifested by the system's lengthy operational procedures, and delays in the ordering, shipment, delivery, and collection of the subsidized basic goods. For instance, *Alle Bejmla* is late at times in the collection and delivery of sugar and oil, with a rippling impact on other implementers in the supply chain including the Consumers' Cooperatives.

The output or service delivery of the program is also perceived by the beneficiaries, as inconsistent and privileging some outlets and clients such as members of the management committee and their affiliates over others. One way this is shown is by how the Consumers' Cooperative Shops/*Shemachoch* are given priority in the shipment of basic goods, particularly in times of shortages in supply, giving those beneficiaries designated to buy from them better access than those designated to buy from the private retailers.

In addition to the poor implementation, the failure of the intervention program to produce the intended outputs and outcomes may also be attributed to the flaws in the program's theory and design. This is reflected in the program's inability to affect changes sufficiently and effectively enough to produce the intended outputs in terms of reaching the targeted beneficiaries and delivering the service as intended. For instance, the intervention has not been successful in creating sustainable business linkages to be able to reach and deliver its services to the targeted beneficiaries efficiently and effectively.

The study found that most of the implementing partners including *Alle Bejimila*, Consumers' Cooperatives and private retailers do not consider their involvement in the system as a lucrative business, due to its low-profit margins. This may be the motivation behind their alleged involvement in the illicit trading of basic goods in the country, undermining the effectiveness and efficiency of the system in getting these goods to the intended beneficiaries. The invalidity of the program theory is also demonstrated by the fact that the program's outcomes have proven to be insufficient to stabilize either market supply or prices across all markets, thereby ensuring their accessibility to the targeted beneficiaries. This suggests that the program theory's presumptions about the problem that needs to be addressed, the approach that should be employed, and the ability of the institutions implanting the program to secure the required funding, carry out their duties, and produce the intended results to have the desired impact on the targeted beneficiaries are flawed or invalid.

#### 10.3.4 Gender-blindness of the PDS of basic goods in Addis Ababa

The failure of the PDS to meet its objectives can be traced back to its lack of attention to the particular gendered needs and priorities of its targeted beneficiaries. One of the ways this is demonstrated is in the misalignment of what goods are considered to be priorities between the PDS and its beneficiaries. Even if the PDS treats sugar, oil, and wheat to be the basic goods, women beneficiaries of the program rate *teff* as the most essential good, followed by onion and oil, and sugar with relatively less importance. The intervention also assumed that the proliferation of unfair trading practices by private merchants, such as charging exorbitantly high prices that rendered them inaccessible to the intended beneficiaries, was caused by shortages in supply. Hence its main remedy for the prevailing food inflation of basic goods was to control the distribution and set prices and quotas, without paying attention to other characteristics of the basic goods.

However, the study found that quality is the most important factor influencing the decision of women beneficiaries with regard to where to buy their food. In addition to price, women's purchasing decisions are also heavily influenced by other aspects of goods, such as availability of all items and quantities required in one-stop, volume/quantity, customer service and location. Quality is a key consideration, especially for younger and economically active women who already struggle to manage their multiple roles, as they cannot afford the additional time poor quality food requires for preparing and cooking. Similarly, since they do not have the time to make multiple trips to marketplaces, the availability of all items and quantities they need in an outlet shop is an important determinant of their purchasing decisions.

Lower-quality food may also result in a loss for women beneficiaries in terms of adverse consequences on health, waste generated during preparation and greater energy costs as a result of the longer cooking time, which offsets the benefit of its lower price. This makes it undesirable even for older and retired women who tend to not economize on their labour, energy or time when making decisions regarding a marketplace to buy their food.



Similarly, the unit of measurement or the minimum quantity sold per transaction is another determining factor behind the choice of a marketplace for poor women who can only afford to buy in quantities smaller than the commonly used scales such as kilos and litres.

Despite maintaining the government-mandated lower tariffs in the market it controls, the PDS has failed to meet the demands of its targeted beneficiaries in terms of quality, scale/volume, supply time and customer service. For example, women participants view the quality of the palm oil supplied by the PDS as sub-standard and harmful to health and rate its customer service poorly due to the long lines they must wait in at the retail shops. Hence, poor women beneficiaries only buy the basic goods from the PDS, mainly for lack of choice as they cannot legally buy them elsewhere.

This is an indication that the solutions proposed by the intervention program did not make adequate effort to comprehend and address the food inflation problem through the experiences of women by taking into account their hidden transaction costs related to poor quality goods and services. It can also be argued that the intervention program has not given adequate attention to gender-differentiated impacts of food inflation, and women's gendered needs and constraints in coping with it. It has also denied women the agency to be involved in shaping the intervention, for instance through electing members of the management committee of Consumers' Cooperatives, despite the consequences of such actions on their food security.

Further, the invisibility of women in the implementation guideline and related Reforms of the PDS, and its insistence on maintaining gender neutrality is an indication of the lack of effort in appreciating women's unique vulnerabilities to food inflation. Poor women's reproductive responsibilities were eventually made heavier by the PDS's distribution of goods and services that fell short of satisfying the requirements of the targeted beneficiaries, compelling them to spend more time shopping for and preparing meals.

The intervention program's lack of acknowledgement of women's reproductive work, while relying on it to make up for its inefficiency in making the desired effect on its beneficiaries might be seen as adopting the attitude of the patriarchal state. The PDS's distribution of products and services that didn't meet the needs of the intended recipients ultimately increased the burden on poor women's reproductive duties by obliging them to spend more time buying and preparing food. The program's objectivity and gender neutrality, which completely disregard the local context of poor women in Addis Ababa and how social norms/gender ideologies result in the gender-differentiated impact of both food inflation and government response programs, betray the androcentric assumptions at the core of the intervention program. For this reason, the intervention is better characterized as gender-blind rather than gender-neutral (Bakker, 1994; Elson, 1994; Elson and Cagatay, 1999; Mellor, 1997; Williams, 1994).

#### 10.4 Contributions of the study

The following contributions to theoretical understandings, methodological frameworks, and empirical knowledge are also made by this study.

##### 1. Empirical contribution

To my knowledge, this study is one of the few empirical works in Ethiopia that examined the gendered effects of food inflation and the first that analysed the government programs designed to counteract those negative effects in urban markets from the perspective of poor women beneficiaries. It contributes primarily to existing knowledge regarding how gender norms that are biased against women in Ethiopia have led to their relative privations in the form of time poverty, poor education, and lack of bargaining power resulting in diminished access to family income and assets. It also affirms how these constraints of women coupled with their normatively assigned responsibility in buying and preparing food make them particularly vulnerable to the effects of food inflation as demonstrated by their reduced food security, and additional emotional, and time burdens.

The study discovered that the PDS of basic goods has to some degree made it feasible for the intended beneficiaries to get the subsidised basic goods at lower costs. However, owing to the gaps in the implementation process and the program design including its flawed underlying assumptions, it was ineffective in producing the desired impact in terms of stabilising both supply and access to basic goods for the targeted beneficiaries. The intervention program's failure to have the desired effect on poor women beneficiaries, in particular, can be attributed to its disregard for their requirements concerning the product characteristics such as quality, and the gendered constraints they encounter such as time poverty.

## **2. Theoretical contribution**

The study's adoption of a feminist economic framework to capture the distinct ways that food inflation and government response initiatives affect impoverished women in Ethiopia for the first time is justified by the empirical findings that were presented above. This has allowed the study to expand the existing discourse on women's heightened vulnerability to the impact of high food prices by explicating the system of interrelated gendered constraints they face across the home, community, and market institutions. It, therefore, suggests that an economic crisis, such as food inflation, arising from a gendered economic process and institutions where access to capabilities needed for coping varies along gender lines, has gendered-differentiated impacts. The study has also shown the risk of response programs against an economic crisis that discount the role of gender relations in miscalculating its relative severity on women, failing to achieve their objectives, and aggravating the already existing gender disparities.

It advocates for such programs and policies to factor in the role played by gender differences in intrahousehold bargaining power over allocative and distributive decisions of household resources including food, labour, income and assets once the crisis transcends into the domestic sector. It also reiterates the feminist economics argument that before economic policies are implemented, policymakers should do a comprehensive gender analysis to assess how they could alter social relations, and existing power dynamics in both the paid and unpaid sectors.

### **3. Methodological contribution**

The study has produced the following key methodological contributions, guided by the theoretical framework of feminist economics and incorporating some of the basic tenets of feminist epistemology:

1. Valuing women as a valid source of knowledge and emphasizing their experiences related to food provisioning, encounters with food insecurity and government response programs, and the role they play in coping with the food price crisis and the challenges they confront. A feminist policy analysis was used to examine the underlying presumptions about women in the PDS, thereby gauging the extent of its sensitivity to women's gender-specific constraints and needs.
2. It promoted the use of participatory methods and tools such as PRA that can diffuse existing power discrepancies by empowering underprivileged women to articulate their needs/interests, priorities, contributions and constraints more freely and effectively.
3. It demonstrated its concern for the social and economic consequences of knowledge by outlining how food inflation and government response programs influence women's ability to provide basic services, including care, and perhaps offering possible solutions.
4. The other methodological contribution of the study is employing a theory-driven evaluation approach to assess the intervention program under investigation. This required drawing out the implicit theory of the intervention program ex post by uncovering the underlying assumptions of the constituted concepts and links using data acquired from program staff and documents, previous evaluations, and research on related programs.

### **10.5 Recommendations for future policies and intervention programs**

Based on its findings, the study recommends formulating gender-responsive programs/policies along with the commonly utilized techniques and tools, and specific steps that should be taken to improve women's ability to cope with economic crisis for implementation as discussed below.

### 10.5.1 Formulating gender-responsive programs/policies

Studies assessing the impact of an economic crisis in Ethiopia should consider gender as an explanatory variable for a more comprehensive understanding of how individual members of a household are affected. This includes understanding how patriarchal gender norms deprive women of the necessary bargaining power to have access to coping mechanisms while simultaneously holding them accountable for the provision of food and care of other family members. Similarly, response programs against economic crises need to be gender-sensitive enough to account for the gender norms and related gender constraints of women within the sociocultural context that determine how they are affected. A gender-aware response program or policy should start with conducting women-driven research with affected communities (Gebru and Demeke, 2014).

It is also important to investigate and map the potential gendered consequences of proposed changes, such as who would carry the heavier burden of the adjustment (King and Sweetman, 2010). The focus of such programs and policies should not just be limited to economic growth and price stability, but should also be concerned with employment, equality and general well-being in the non-monetized sector (AfDB, 2013). The gender perspective must be included in the planning processes at all levels and among all stakeholders and implementers by increasing awareness and providing the necessary tools for gender planning, analysis, monitoring, evaluation, and accountability (Gebru and Demeke, 2014). This involves using sex-disaggregated data in statistical analysis to reflect the differences between men's and women's economic circumstances and to show how policies potentially affect men and women differently (Gebru and Demeke, 2014; King and Sweetman, 2010; United Nations, 2009).

Similarly, GRB could be employed to create awareness of the importance of gender equality and ensure that the needs of women have been taken into consideration in the budgets of programs/policies to improve gender equality (AfDB, 2013; United Nations, 2009).

Additionally, there is a call for the national accounts to include unpaid work done in the reproductive economy, the need for information on the time use of individuals including on caring activities, and the use of new indicators to measure the quality of employment, constituting details on the flexibility of working hours and conditions (King and Sweetman, 2010; United Nations, 2009).

#### 10.5.2 Improving women's ability to cope with food inflation

To improve women's ability to cope with inflation-driven food insecurity, the findings of this study point to the need for the GoE as well as private sector institutions and civil society to implement measures that promote gender equity in sectors and services where women have historically been underrepresented and marginalised. The GoE may do this through the use of a range of gender-responsive policies that acknowledge the existence of systematic inequalities in capabilities and differences in needs between women and men (Steinhilber, 2009; United Nations, 2009).

NGOs and civil society organizations can also play a critical role in advancing gender equality through advocacy and public awareness campaigns that shed light on the current barriers facing women and inspire action for change (Ruminska-Zimny, 2009). They may also facilitate communication and collaboration among stakeholders including governments and academics. They can also monitor progress and launch studies to evaluate the progress made toward gender equality in order to offer recommendations (ibid.). Some of the major policy measures, reforms and actions that should be taken towards meeting this goal are described further below.

##### □ Gender-responsive public expenditure

Investing in women's education, healthcare and social security has enormous potential in advancing gender equality and enhancing women's economic situation especially in emerging and developing economies (Georgieva et al., 2022; United Nations, 2009). Women's capacity and autonomy to make informed decisions about their market work and domestic work are enhanced by education (King and Sweetman, 2009).

When it comes to social protection systems, family benefits help women become more employable by enabling them to balance work and family obligations, while pensions help them preserve their income as they age (Steinuilber, 2009). To fully address the needs of women, including those who work in the informal sector and the self-employed, gender-sensitive social responsive policies that minimize systematic and gendered imbalances in social security are urgently needed (King and Sweetman, 2010; Steinuilber, 2009). A comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming in social security and care programs, including steps to improve women's political representation, education, and training, as well as their legal protection from discrimination in all spheres of economic and social life is commended (Steinuilber, 2009).

□ **Formulating gender-responsive monetary policies**

Central banks have the potential to significantly contribute to the advancement of gender equality by making provision of credit responsive to women's financial constraints, promoting investment in priority sectors where women are overrepresented, and maintaining a stable and competitive exchange rate that smooths price shocks for imported commodities (AfDB), 2013; Papadavid and Pettinotti, 2021). Having access to credit, particularly in nations with underdeveloped social safety nets, enable households to pay for necessities like food while also generating additional income in the market (Georgieva et al., 2022; King and Sweetman, 2010).

Achieving gender equality in monetary policy requires adopting a gender-focused strategy with specified goals in terms of output and employment, that can achieve gender-equalizing impacts (AfDB, 2013). This is done by earmarking specific actions to target certain industries, instead of the crude technique of giving inflation control greater significance. For instance, decreasing interest rates to encourage investment in the industry and agriculture sectors to support female employment, and relaxing lending standards at financial institutions to make credit simpler for women entrepreneurs, those running MSMEs and those employed in the informal sector.

### □ **Increased female participation in labour markets**

By increasing women's employment, households become more productive, have easier access to money and savings, and are subsequently more resilient to the effects of complex crises and poverty (King and Sweetman, 2010). Governments can also employ a range of fiscal policies to bring about gender-equal employment in the economy by setting gendered targets and addressing women's barriers to participating in paid employment with equal footing as men, such as the burden of their domestic duties (AfDB, 2013; Papadavid and Pettinotti, 2021). An integrated approach that combined labour market policies, tax and financial regulations favourable to women's work, the provision of subsidized childcare, investments in infrastructures like water and sanitation, and investment in health, social protection, and educational services is advisable (AfDB, 2013; Georgieva et al., 2022). For instance, crucial sources of employment for women like entrepreneurship require legislative support to provide access to capital, networks and markets (United Nations, 2009).

A national employment plan that takes gender equality into account may help to integrate traditional macroeconomic policy goals such as growth and price stability with employment, as was noted in section 10.5.1 (AfDB, 2013). Employment of poor women can be facilitated through the promotion of women-run cooperatives and MSEs, and directly providing them jobs in government-funded initiatives (AfDB, 2013; King and Sweetman, 2010). Government industrial strategy should also be based on the requirements of social reproduction, including achieving gender equality by promoting labour-intensive, gender-equitable technologies rather than capital-intensive and male-dominated sectors of the economy (King and Sweetman, 2010). Further, to boost and stabilize the incorporation of women into the export sector, governments should adopt a comprehensive strategy that addresses women's limitations in relation to a lack of education and training, health and safety at work, and childcare needs in collaboration with other stakeholders, including corporations and NGOs (AfDB, 2013).



The private sector could make gender equality a core part of its corporate social responsibility not only in the workplace but also through civic and community engagement (Elson, 2009). This can be accomplished by putting in place standards that promote equal pay and ensure gender equality in hiring, training, retention, promotion, and layoffs, as well as safeguarding women's health and safety, including from GBV. The promotion of family-friendly employment practices and a wider variety of talent in the workforce may also be used as indicators of the efficient management and development of human resources since they lower employee turnover and improve product quality (ibid.).

□ **Improving the agency of women**

Women's resilience to an economic crisis may be boosted by increasing their agency by supporting women groups and giving them a voice by improving their representation in leadership positions and engagement in the decision-making process of policies which may affect them (Georgieva et al., 2022; King and Sweetman, 2010). Addressing women's limitations through the reform of formal and informal institutions, as outlined below, can also enhance women's agency.

□ **Reforming formal and informal institutions to enhance women's access to assets**

Biases against women in formal and informal institutions should be addressed through social and legal reforms, awareness-raising advocacy campaigns and training, to make them more accessible, allow for greater participation, and criminalize issues that undermine women's agency and capabilities such as underage marriage and domestic violence (Georgieva et al., 2022; King and Sweetman, 2010; Tsige, 2019). However, unless the prevalent patriarchal norms in nations are reformed to acknowledge that women have the same rights as men, the desired social transformation toward a more gender-equal society cannot be realized by altering formal institutions through legal acts alone (Oduro and Staveren, 2015; United Nations, 2009).

This is confirmed by the evidence on Sub Saharan Africa, where intervention programs targeting informal institutions that constrain women's agency at group levels through public awareness, community-based empowerment, and the creation of incentives for behavioural change proved more effective in addressing gender inequality (Mabsout and van Staveren, 2010; Oduro and Staveren, 2015). Therefore, laws and development policies that intend to bring about gender equity should improve women's capabilities to challenge and transform the norms and institutions that are the foundations of their discrimination instead of focusing only on their economic empowerment (Aluko, 2015; Oduro and Staveren, 2015).

## 10.6 Closing Remarks

*"We can't get ahead if we leave half the population behind. We need to break down the legal, economic and social barriers holding girls and women back"*  
(ONE Campaign, 2022).

Ethiopia's 10-year development plan demonstrates the country's commitment to gender equality, by promoting equal rights, representation, and access to resources (PDC, 2021). This is planned to be accomplished through the following strategies: taking steps against harmful traditions, and physical and emotional violence against girls and women; improving the participation and representation of women at various levels of decision-making; and improving women's access to resources through closing the wage gap, granting women land ownership rights, promoting women-owned SMEs, and boosting women's access to credit (ibid.).

The steps the nation has taken to integrate gender equality goals with macroeconomic policy goals like price stability suggest that it has grasped that gender equality is "smart economics", at least at the policy level. Ethiopia's National Employment Policy and Strategy (NEPS) serves as an example of this, asserting the need for gender mainstreaming in employment generation through affirmative action, intentionally focusing on women in skill and business development programs, promotion of women-friendly technologies, and child-care centres for working mothers (MOLSA, 2009).

However, despite all the efforts, the country is yet to achieve the envisioned gender-transforming results owing to the lack of adequate sensitivity to women's gendered restrictions including patriarchal norms across formal and informal institutions. Common sense and worldwide evidence suggest, if Ethiopia is to achieve its food security and development objectives, it must ensure that the obstacles preventing the country's majority-female population from fully participating in, contributing to, and benefiting from the economy are addressed. And to do so, it must resist treating the gender equality issue only as a pawn in the pursuit of other economic objectives or as a means to an end.



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## APPENDICIES

### Appendix I: List of market regulating state-run enterprises, proclamations and notices in Ethiopia, 1950- 2018

Proclamations, notice or regulation number and year	Relevant institution directly affected	Sate objectives of policy interventions
Ethiopian Grain Board Proclamation 113/1950	Ethiopian Grain Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To license grain export and control quality</li> <li>• To oversee marketing intelligence</li> <li>• To regulate domestic and export purchases and export sales prices</li> </ul>
General Notice 267/1960	Ethiopian Grain Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To purchase and sell grain in local and foreign markets</li> <li>• To establish grain purchase and sales outlets throughout the country</li> <li>• To hold stocks to stabilize prices</li> </ul>
Agricultural Marketing Corporation Establishment Proclamation 105/1976	Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To purchase agricultural products for export or sale in the domestic market</li> <li>• To import agricultural products</li> <li>• To purchase and sell inputs within Ethiopia or abroad</li> <li>• To purchase, process, mill, transport, sell, or store agricultural products and inputs for profit or otherwise</li> </ul>
Legal Notice 103/1987	AMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To buy grain from suppliers and sell to (a) mass organizations and other organizations engaged in retail trade, (b) public enterprises engaged in export trade, and (c) government offices</li> <li>• To supply grain to government, mass organizations, and private factories that use it as a raw material</li> <li>• To maintain a national emergency grain reserve</li> <li>• To construct, equip, and maintain, for its own use, buildings, silos, storage facilities, grain elevators, and other structures and machinery</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To sell or otherwise dispose of any grain prone to deterioration or unfit for human consumption in accordance with directives from the minister</li> </ul>
Council of Ministers Regulation 25/1992	Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise (EGTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To stabilize markets and prices in order to encourage producers to increase their output and protect consumers from unfair grain prices</li> <li>To export grains to earn foreign exchange</li> <li>To maintain a grain buffer stock for market stabilization</li> <li>To engage in any other related activity for the attainment of its objectives</li> </ul>
Council of Ministers Regulation 58/1999	EGTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To purchase grain from farmers and sell it in local and mainly in export markets</li> <li>To contribute to the stabilization of markets for farmers' produce to encourage them to increase their outputs</li> <li>To engage in other related activities conducive to the attainment of its purposes</li> </ul>
Proclamation 67/2000	Emergency Food Security Reserve Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide adequate capacity to prevent disasters on the occurrence of slow- and fast-onset disasters through the provision of loans to the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission and organizations engaged in relief activities until additional relief food can be mobilized through other mechanisms</li> </ul>
Proclamation 212/2000	National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Fund Establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain a readily available cash reserve to combat disasters that are likely to threaten the lives of people and livestock until such time as other resources can be mobilized locally or from abroad</li> <li>To assist the implementation of employment generation schemes that would support the achievement of national food security</li> </ul>
Warehouse Receipts System Warehouse Operators Proclamation 372/2003	Warehouse operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To put in place a legal framework creating a warehouse system in order to help farmers cope with price fluctuations</li> </ul>
Proclamation 380/2004	Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise (EGTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To change the accountability of the EGTE from the public enterprise authority to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</li> </ul>

Ethiopian Commodity Exchange Proclamation. 550/2007	Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create an efficient, transparent, and orderly marketing system that serves the needs of buyers, sellers, and intermediaries and promotes the increased market participation of Ethiopian small-scale producers</li> <li>• To provide an automated back-office operation to record, monitor, and publicly disseminate information on ECX transactions</li> </ul>
Ethiopian Commodity Exchange Authority Proclamation 551/2007	ECX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the development of an efficient modern trading system and to regulate and control the secure, transparent, and stable functioning of a commodity exchange and to protect the rights and benefits of sellers, buyers, intermediaries, and the general public</li> </ul>
Trade and Consumers' Protection Authority' in 2010	Ministry of Trade (MoT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote a free and competitive market, and</li> <li>• To protect both consumers and the business community from unfair market practices</li> </ul>
Trade System Reform Program of 2011	Trade and Industry development Bureau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote modern, efficient and fair trade on the basis of free-market principles for the benefit of all involved including consumers thereby supporting macro-economic development and creating positive outlook</li> <li>• Creating an organized development force, improving implementation capacity and preventing rent-seeking attitude from taking roots in the trade system thereby promoting developmental political economic attitude</li> </ul>
Trade Competition and Consumers' Protection Proclamation No. 813/2013	MoT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to protect the business community from anti-competitive and unfair market practices, and also consumers from misleading market conducts</li> <li>• to establish a system that is conducive for the promotion of competitive free market;</li> <li>• to ensure that consumers get goods and services safe and suitable to their health and equivalent to the price they pay</li> <li>• to accelerate economic development</li> </ul>
Consumer Product Trade Unit (CPTU)/ <i>Alle Bejimla</i> , 2013	Ethiopian Trading Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To facilitate competition and stabilize prices mainly through selling low-priced food and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) to retailers</li> </ul>



	Corporation (ETBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To modernize the sector, thereby increasing its efficiency and traceability in the distribution and of goods.</li> </ul>
Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform No. 2/2013, Subsidized Basic Goods Distribution Reform No 2/2016, and Subsidized Basic Goods Business Linkage, Allotment and Distribution Reform No. 01/2018	MoT	To ensure effective access to government-subsidized basic goods for the benefit of low-income consumers, with the purpose of minimizing the consequences of frequent inflation and stabilising the market



## Appendix II : Interview guides for women participants

### 1. Introduction

My name is Tsega Girma Tefera and I am a PhD candidate at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research entitled 'The cost of gaps in existing food price- stabilizing market systems in urban areas for poor women and their families: the case of Addis Ababa'. The objective of the research is to investigate existing food marketing systems in Ethiopia and their impact on women living in urban areas, especially in times of food price inflation. I would like to extend my gratitude for agreeing and making the time to participate in this research's data collection process. All information you provide during the interview process will be completely anonymous and will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

### 2. Demographic information and Background

1. Age:
2. Marital status
3. What is your education level? Why didn't you go further in your studies?
4. How did your education level affect your current lifestyle?
5. What is the size of your family? How many children do you have? How many of them are infants that require care?
6. What role/s do you play in your family? How did you come to play this role?
7. What role/s do you play in your community? How did you come to play this role?
8. How many hours of unpaid labour (caring for family members and community work) do you spend per day?
9. Do any of your other family members assist you in caring for the family and in your community management-related activities? How about from other non-family members? Please elaborate. If the answer to this question is yes, please elaborate on who among the household members helps and how.

### 3. Employment in income-generating activities

10. Are you employed? If the answer this question is yes, please elaborate on the type of work you do, and how much it pays per month.
11. If the answer to question no. 10 above is yes, how did you come to play this role?
12. Please state the no. of labour hours you spend on work that contributes directly to the family income on average per day.

### 4. Information on household Income and wealth

13. How many of your family members contribute financially to the household income?

14. Income/Expenditure<sup>120</sup>: How much do you spend per month on house rent, food, education, health, utilities, insurance and taxes?
15. Who makes the decisions regarding how the family income is allocated within your household? Please explain why it is so.
16. Who makes the decision regarding how the family wealth (savings and assets) is used in times of need? Please explain why it is so.

## 5. Migration history

17. For how long have you been living in Addis Ababa? Where did you live before? Where were you born?
18. If you were not born in A.A, why and how did you come to live in A.A?
19. If you were not born in A.A., how has that affected you?

## 6. Consumption goods and market outlets

20. Which consumable commodities do you mostly purchase from retail shops?
21. From which retail shops do you normally buy these consumable commodities mentioned above?
22. How do you select which market outlet to buy from? Please explain your answer and why it is so.
23. Whose responsibility is buying consumable goods within the household? Please explain the reason for this.

## 7. Information related to ALLE Bejimla and its retail agents

24. Are you aware of *ALLE Bejimla*? If your answer to this question is yes, please explain what you know regarding its objectives and operation techniques.
25. How did you learn about it?
26. Are you a member of a consumer association? If your answer to this question is yes, please explain how and why you decided to join one.
27. If your answer to question 26 is yes, what was your obligation as a member according to the membership agreement?
28. Can you identify *ALLE Bejimla*'s retail agents (including *Hibret suks*)? If your answer to this question is yes, please explain how you manage to do that.
29. Can you identify *ALLE Bejimla*'s products? If your answer to this question is yes, please explain how you manage to do that.
30. Are you informed about the availability and the prices of *ALLE Bejimla*'s products in its registered shops (including *Hibret suks*)? If your answer to this question is yes, explain how you manage to do that.

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<sup>120</sup> For the purpose of this research and data from CSA (2018), the 'High income' category refers to those households with an expenditure per capita of > \$ 698,04, the 'Middle income' category refers to those households with an expenditure per capita of \$355,18 – 698,04 USD, and 'Low income' category refers to those households with an expenditure per capita \$ 248.53 – \$355,18 or less.

## **8. Evaluation of services provided by ALLE Bejimla and its registered shops**

31. Do you usually find the major consumable commodities (mentioned in question no. 20) at *ALLE Bejimla*-registered retail shops (including *Hibret suks*)?
32. How do you compare the prices of these major consumable commodities in *ALLE Bejimla*-registered retail shops (including *Hibret suks*) with other ordinary shops in the market?
33. If you are a member of a consumer's association, have you been receiving the benefits you hoped (were promised) as a result of being a member? Please explain your answer.
34. How do you evaluate the convenience of *ALLE Bejimla*-registered shops (including *Hibret suks*) in terms of location? Please explain your answer.
35. How do you evaluate the convenience of *ALLE Bejimla*-registered shops (including *Hibret suks*) in terms of operation time? Please explain your answer.
36. What would you suggest to improve the services of *ALLE Bejimla*-registered shops (including *Hibret suks*)?

## **9. Effect of price increment and women's response**

37. How do you evaluate the prices of the major consumable commodities over the years at PDS-registered retailers or in the market in general? Please explain your answer.
38. How does price increment in the major consumable commodities affect you and your family's consumption?
39. Is everyone in the family equally affected by price increments in the major consumable commodities? If your answer to this question is no, please explain which member/s of the family (including yourself) are more affected and in what ways they are affected. Why do you think this is so?
40. What do you do to smooth out your family's food consumption in times of price inflation in the major consumable commodities? Please explain your answer.
41. Do you get support from other family members in maintaining previous consumption levels during such times of financial pressure? If your answer to this question is yes, please specify from which specific family members you receive support and the type of support they provide.
42. Does an increment in the prices of the major consumable commodities affect your workload both at home and outside the home? If your answer to this question is yes, please explain how, and your coping techniques.

**Thank you very much!**

## Appendix III : Interview guides for implementing partners

### I. Introduction

My name is Tsega Girma Tefera and I am a PhD candidate at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research entitled ‘The cost of gaps in existing food price- stabilizing market systems in urban areas for poor women and their families: the case of Addis Ababa’. The objective of the research is to investigate existing food marketing systems in Ethiopia and their impact on women living in urban areas, especially in times of food price inflation. I would like to extend my gratitude for agreeing and making the time to participate in this research's data collection process. All information you provide during the interview process will be completely anonymous and will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

### II. Background information about ALLE *Bejmla*

1. Time of establishment
2. What makes the enterprise different from similar initiatives in the past such as Merchandise Wholesale and Import Trade Enterprise (MEWIT)?
3. Who is the owner of the enterprise?
4. Please elaborate on the organizational set-up and governing structure of the enterprise.
5. How much was the starting capital of the enterprise? Who was the source of the fund?
6. Which relevant proclamations and commercial laws were consulted and applied for the establishment of the enterprise?
7. What previous research had been conducted before launching the enterprise? What was the finding?
8. Was the data in this previous study (ies) sex-disaggregated? If so, what strategies were put in place to address the gender inequalities and serve both men and women fairly during the enterprise's establishment?
9. In your opinion, what is the rationale for establishing the enterprise by the government?
10. How many percent of consumable goods traded in the market did the enterprise plan to cover as stated in its objectives? What were the major strategies to meet this objective?
11. Which institutions were consulted and involved in the process of the enterprise's establishment? What was the reason behind it?
12. Was there a specific target group that the enterprise aimed at serving? If yes which group was that? Explain why? Are there any other groups left out for a reason? Please elaborate.
13. Was the target group involved in the consultative meetings before the enterprise's objectives and strategies were finalized? If so, what was the finding?

14. Have you considered poor women living in urban areas as a target group? If your answer to this question is yes, how much did you know about these women in terms of their access to income and information, and their limitations? Please elaborate on your answer.
15. How did the enterprise plan to reach and serve the target group?

### **III. Performance assessment**

16. Has the enterprise been monitoring the retailing price of its registered agents? How? What was the finding?
17. If an impact assessment has been done by the enterprise, please elaborate on its major findings in terms of the following:
  - 17.1. stabilizing prices and regulating inflation
  - 17.2. distributing consumables within the reach of targeted beneficiaries
18. In your opinion what have been the major operational and strategic successes of the enterprise since its establishment? Who has been affected and how?
19. In your opinion what have been the major operational and strategic challenges of the enterprise since its establishment? Who has been affected and how?
20. Was the data on this impact assessment study sex-disaggregated? If so, please elaborate more on the following questions.
  - 20.1. Did women and men have equal levels of information about the services of the enterprise? Why do you think that is?
  - 20.2. Did women and men have equal access to the services of the enterprise? Why do you think that is?
21. In your opinion what are the major potential risks of the enterprise in the future? Explain why it is so.

**Thank you very much!**



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## Appendix IV: Interview guides for PDS-registered private retailers

### I. Introduction

My name is Tsega Girma Tefera and I am a PhD candidate at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research entitled ‘The cost of gaps in existing food price- stabilizing market systems in urban areas for poor women and their families: the case of Addis Ababa’. The objective of the research is to investigate existing food marketing systems in Ethiopia and their impact on women living in urban areas, especially in times of food price inflation. I would like to extend my gratitude for agreeing and making the time to participate in this research's data collection process. All information you provide during the interview process will be completely anonymous and will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

### II. Demographic information and business background

1. Age
2. Sex
3. What type of business ownership does the shop have?
4. What roles and responsibilities do you have in the shop?
5. How long did you stay in this business?
6. How many customers do you serve per day on average?
7. Which demography (age and sex) do most of your customers belong to? What do you think is the reason behind this?
8. In your opinion, which particular income group/s of society do most of your customers belong to? How can you tell? What do you think is the reason behind this?

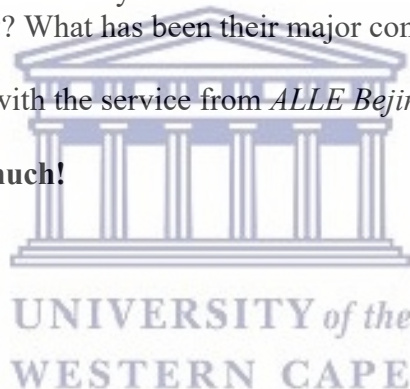
### III. Information related to ALLE Bejimla

9. How long have you been a registered *ALLE-Bejimla* retail agent?
10. Why did you become a registered retailer of *ALLE Bejimla*?
11. What percentage of your current stock is bought from *ALLE Bejimla*?
12. Explain what you know about the objectives and operation techniques of *ALLE Bejimla*?
13. What is your obligation as a registered client of *ALLE Bejimla*?
14. Do you sell your products to anyone who is interested to buy or is there a pre-requisite for selling? Why is it so?
15. Is there a maximum quota per customer or per household? If your answer is yes, please explain why and how it works.
16. How does *ALLE Bejimla* monitor your shop to check if you are holding your end of the agreement?
17. How do you stay informed about the availability and prices of commodities at *ALLE Bejimla* stores?

#### IV. Evaluation of services provided by ALLE Bejimla

18. What changes have you observed in the performance of your business after becoming a registered retailer of *ALLE Bejimla*? What do you think is the reason behind this?
19. From your experience, which consumable commodities are most demanded by consumers?
20. How do you evaluate the availability of these commodities mentioned above at *ALLE Bejimla*'s stores?
21. What do you do when you can't find the major consumable commodities mentioned in question no.19 in the quantities you require at *ALLE Bejimla*'s stores?
22. Who are your other suppliers of *ALLE Bejimla* products if any?
23. What are your criteria for choosing suppliers? Please elaborate on the reasons behind this.
24. How do you evaluate the price of the major consumable commodities mentioned in question no. 19 at *ALLE Bejimla*'s stores compared with other suppliers? In your opinion, what is the reason behind this?
25. How do you think *ALLE Bejimla* affects the prices of these major consumable commodities in the market? Why do you say that?
26. How has the feedback from your customers been since you have registered with *ALLE Bejimla*? What has been their major complaints and why do you think that is?
27. Are you satisfied with the service from *ALLE Bejimila*? Explain your answer

**Thank you very much!**





## Appendix V : Focus Group Discussion Guides for women participants

### I. Introduction

My name is Tsega Girma Tefera and I am a PhD candidate at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research entitled 'The cost of gaps in existing food price- stabilizing market systems in urban areas for poor women and their families: the case of Addis Ababa'. The objective of the research is to investigate existing food marketing systems in Ethiopia and their impact on women living in urban areas, especially in times of food price inflation. I would like to extend my gratitude for agreeing and making the time to participate in this research's data collection process. All information you provide during the interview process will be completely anonymous and will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

### II. FGD questions

1. What roles/s do you play in your household and the community? Probe for differences. (Participants will be asked to list down their daily chores using Daily activity (routine) clocks from PRA) What factors determine the number of hours spent on household care and community management? Probe for differences.
2. What factors determine the decision to get involved in income generating activities? Probe for differences.
3. How does involvement in income generating activities affect your other roles in household care and in the community?
4. How are decisions regarding family income and wealth allocations made by households? Please explain the reasons behind. Probe for differences.
5. Which consumable commodities do you mostly purchase from retail shops? (Participants will be asked to generate a list of things they purchase and then sort them according to priority using cards)
6. What factors determine the choice of retail shops for buying consumable commodities? (Participants will be asked to generate a list, then use pairwise ranking to prioritize the list)
7. How is the role of buying consumable commodities from retail shops assigned to household members? Please explain the reasons behind. Participants will be asked to construct a Venn diagram to see convergence and divergence in their ideas.
8. What do you know about *ALLE Bejimla* and its registered retail shops? (Participants will be asked to generate a list using cards)
9. What are the factors behind your decision to join a consumer association? (Participants will be asked to generate a list and score according to their importance using cards)
10. How do you evaluate the services provided by consumer associations thus far? Please also explain the reasons behind.

11. How do you evaluate the information channel through which you get informed about the availability and prices of *ALLE Bejimla*'s products' in its registered shops (including *Hibret suks*)? Please explain the reasons behind.
12. How do you evaluate the prices of goods in *ALLE Bejimla* registered shops (including *Hibret suks*) compared with other ordinary shops in the market? Please explain the reasons behind.
13. How do you evaluate the availability of the major consumable commodities (mentioned in question no. 1) at *ALLE Bejimla* –registered retail shops (including *Hibret suks*) compared with other ordinary shops in the market? Please explain the reasons behind.
14. How do you evaluate the convenience of *ALLE Bejimla*-registered shops (including *Hibret suks*) in terms of location? Please explain the reasons behind.
15. How do you evaluate the convenience of *ALLE Bejimla*-registered shops (including *Hibret suks*) in terms of operation time? Please explain the reasons behind.
16. In what ways does increases in the prices of the major consumable commodities affect your family? How does it affect individual members of the household and women in particular?
17. What factors determine who and how each household member is affected by increment in the prices of the major consumable commodities?
18. How do you respond to the price increments of major consumable commodities either in *ALLE Bejimla*- registered retailers or in the market in general in order to: -
  - a. smooth out income? (Participants will be asked to use resource cards to show how their responses change overtime)
  - b. smooth out consumption? (Participants will be asked to use timelines to show how their responses change overtime)
19. How does increases in the prices of the major consumable commodities affect your workload both at home and outside the home?
20. How does increases in the prices of the major consumable commodities affect existing roles of members of a household?

**Thank you very much**

**Appendix I: ATLAS.ti -generated code and code group list**

Sn.	Code	Comment	Code Group 1	Code Group 2	Code Group 3
1	Choice of a market place: availability and variety of products	This also means flexibility in quantity or volume of the product per customer. <sup>[SEP]</sup>	Reasons for choosing a market place		
2	Choice of a market place: choicelessness	Choosing a market place for lack of other alternatives either because it isn't available anywhere else or because available capital does not allow to shop form elsewhere.	Reasons for choosing a market place		
3	Choice of a market place: price		Reasons for choosing a market place		
4	Choice of a market place: quality		Reasons for choosing a market place		
5	Choice of market place: Comfort	This code captures the comfort that comes from not having to stand in queues for long or not be mistreated by retail shops. <sup>[SEP]</sup>	Reasons for choosing a market place		
6	Choice of market place: proximity		Reasons for choosing a market place		
7	Choice of market: time		Reasons for choosing a market place		
8	Borrowing to cope with food prices		Coping mechanisms of inflation		

9	Modifying consumption habits to cope with high food prices	This refers to all the techniques women use to cope with poverty, inflation and food security [SEP]	Coping mechanisms of inflation		
10	Role of legal reforms		Decision making power		
11	Decision making power		Entitlement over food, money and property	Education and living standard	
12	Education level and living standard	This code captures how education affects the standard of living through the income generating opportunities it provides [SEP]	Entitlement over food, money and property	Decision making power	
13	Prioritization in the distributing of food within the household		Entitlement over food, money and property		
14	Role of social and cultural norms		Entitlement over food, money and property	Reasons for women's heightened stress over inflation	Decision making power
15	Alle: responsiveness to the demands	This refers to the degree that Alle is responsive to the needs/demands of its customers when it comes to its service delivery to service providers [SEP]	Implementation of intervention program	Govt intervention's responsiveness to the demands of customers	Product and service specification of Alle
16	Consumers' Cooperatives and retailers: Implementation procedures	This code captures the cooperative agency's structure, mode of operation and future plans in relation to Alle	Implementation of intervention program	Government policy implementation procedures	

		Bejimla, Ministry of Trade and consumers association. <sup>[11]</sup>			
17	Consumers' Cooperatives: communication method	This refers to the ways that consumers' cooperative association communicates its customers regarding its product, their availability and prices. <sup>[11]</sup>	Implementation of intervention program	Service delivery communication methods of govt institutions	
18	Consumers' Cooperatives: Monitoring and evaluation		Implementation of intervention program	Monitoring and evaluation methods for implemented policies	
19	Consumers' Cooperatives: outreach	This code is meant to indicate who benefited from the particular policy and in what way. <sup>[11]</sup>	Implementation of intervention program	Outreach of implemented policies	
20	Consumers' Cooperatives: responsiveness to the demands	This refers to the degree that Consumers' cooperative association is responsive to the needs/demands of its customers when it comes to its service delivery. <sup>[11]</sup>	Implementation of intervention program	Govt intervention's responsiveness to the demands of customers	
21	Consumers' Cooperatives.: strategic and operational success		Implementation of intervention program		
22	Customers' profile		Implementation of intervention program		

23	Efficiency in implementation		Implementation of intervention program		
24	Evidence based intervention		Implementation of intervention program		
25	Gender-aware policy making and implementation		Implementation of intervention program		
26	Identified problems during implementation	This code tries to capture those existing and already identified problems related to the implementation of government polices. <sup>[1]</sup> <sub>[SEP]</sub>	Implementation of intervention program		
27	mistrust between private actors and government institutions	This code is meant to capture how ordinary citizens mistrust the intensions of government institutions, hence their failure to comply with their instructions, rules and procedures. <sup>[1]</sup> <sub>[SEP]</sub>	Implementation of intervention program		
28	MoT and Alle: implementation procedures		Implementation of intervention program	Government policy implementation procedures	
29	MoT and Alle: monitoring and evaluation		Implementation of intervention program	Monitoring and evaluation methods for implemented policies	
30	MoT and Alle: outreach	This code is meant to indicate who benefited from the particular policy and in what way. <sup>[1]</sup> <sub>[SEP]</sub>	Implementation of intervention program	Outreach of implemented policies	

31	MoT and Alle: strategic and operational success		Implementation of intervention program		
32	Objectives of government intervention		Implementation of intervention program		
33	Sustainability of intervention	This code looks at interventions, and the relationship between various actors like individuals, private and public actors and whether or not their business relationship is a realistic to be able to predict its sustainability. <sup>[SEP]</sup>	Implementation of intervention program		
34	Transparency in formulation and implementation	This refers to the degree of transparency, voluntary participation and involvement of private actors in the establishment and implementation process of government policies and implementing institutions. For instance in the selection of committee members and hiring employees at Consumers' cooperative shops. <sup>[SEP]</sup>	Implementation of intervention program		

35	Political affiliation and vis-a-vis program implementation	This code tries to capture the relationship between political and party affiliation of individuals and the implementation of government policies. <sup>[SEP]</sup>	Implementation of intervention program		
36	Alle: communication method	This refers to the ways that Alle Bejimla communicates its customers including consumers" cooperative association regarding its product, their availability and prices. <sup>[SEP]</sup>	Implementation of intervention program	Service delivery communication methods of govt institutions	Product and service specification of Alle
37	Alle: in-time delivery		Product and service specification of Alle		
38	Alle: availability and volume of supply		Product and service specification of Alle		
39	MoT and Alle: price of products		Product and service specification of Alle	Implementation of intervention program	
40	MoT and Alle: quality of products		Product and service specification of Alle		
41	Awareness about services, procedures and obligations		Product and service specification of Consumers' assn.		
42	Consumers; quality of product		Product and service specification of Consumers' assn.		
43	Consumers: availability, variety and volume of supply		Product and service specification of Consumers' assn.		

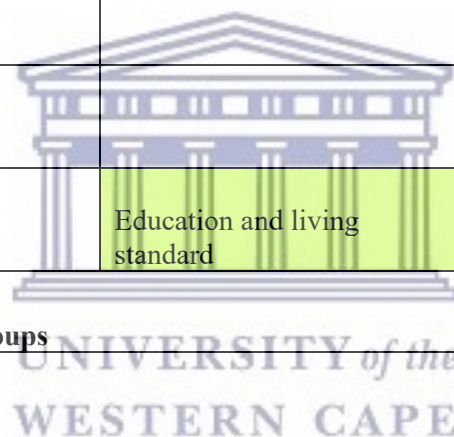


44	Consumers: convenience and customer service	This code captures the convenience that comes from not having to stand in queues for long, not having to travel far or not be mistreated by retail shops or the flexibility in terms of buying times during a given month. <sup>[L]</sup> <sub>[SEP]</sub>	Product and service specification of Consumers' assn.		
45	Consumers: in time delivery and time limitations	This includes service delivery time. <sup>[L]</sup> <sub>[SEP]</sub>	Product and service specification of Consumers' assn.		
46	consumers: price		Product and service specification of Consumers' assn.		
47	Lack of interest in government provided services		Product and service specification of Consumers' assn.		
48	Reluctance to provide info for fear of the repercussions		Product and service specification of Consumers' assn.		
49	Being born in rural areas and education		Reasons for lack of education.	Education and living standard	
50	Effect of marriage and children on levels of education		Reasons for lack of education	Education and living standard	
51	Impact of poverty on education	This code captures how poverty (resulting from being born from poor family, being widowed, etc.) has an impact on the level of education. <sup>[L]</sup> <sub>[SEP]</sub>	Reasons for lack of education	Education and living standard	

52	Parenting styles and education		Reasons for lack of education	Education and living standard	
53	Time poverty of women		Time poverty of women	Education and living standard	Reasons for women's heightened stress over inflation
54	Communal involvement of women		Time poverty of women		
55	Increasing labour hours to cope with high food prices	This refers to all the techniques women use to cope with poverty, inflation and food security. <sup>[1]</sup>	Time poverty of women	Coping mechanisms of inflation	
56	Free service of women		Time poverty of women		
57	Impact of failure in supply of utilities and energy on women's time		Time poverty of women		
58	Income generating work		Time poverty of women		
59	Various roles of women		Time poverty of women		
60	Women's reproductive role		Time poverty of women	Reasons for women's heightened stress over inflation	
61	Entitlement over food, money and property	This code captures whether or not women have entitlements over food, income and property of the household including their husbands' salary. <sup>[1]</sup>	Reasons for women's heightened stress over inflation	Decision making power	Education and living standard

62	Poverty vis-a-vis good health	This code indicates how lack of good health prohibits women from working and earning income (keeping them in poverty) and how lack of income and access to health services keeps women ill, hence in this vicious cycle of bad health-poverty-bad health. <sup>[1]</sup> <sub>[SEP]</sub>	Reasons for women's heightened stress over inflation	Education and living standard	
63	Causes of food inflation				
64	Frustrations caused by food inflation and poverty				
65	Support from family and friends (lack thereof)		Education and living standard		

**Legend: the colours represent various code groups**



## Appendix VI: Letter of research ethics approval



**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH  
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION**

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South Africa  
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13 July 2018

Mr TG Tefera  
Institute for Social Development  
**Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences**

**Ethics Reference Number:** HS18/5/8

**Project Title:** The cost of gaps in existing food price-stabilizing market policies in urban areas for poor women and their families: the case of Addis Ababa.

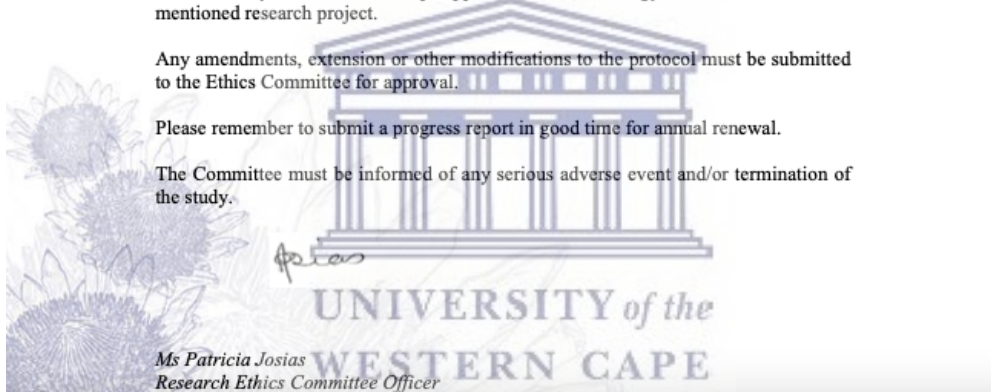
**Approval Period:** 10 July 2018 – 10 July 2019

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.



*Ms Patricia Josias*  
*Research Ethics Committee Officer*

## Appendix VII : Sample of the information sheet for study participants



### Information sheet for women respondents

**Project Title:** Title: The cost of gaps in existing food price-stabilizing market policies in urban areas for poor women and their families: the case of Addis Ababa

#### **What is this study about?**

My name is Tsega Girma Tefera and I am a PhD candidate at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The objective of the research is to provide a gendered analysis of food inflation and its coping mechanisms. Moreover, of special interest to this project are price-stabilizing market policies in Ethiopia, particularly the case of *ALLE Bejimila* and consumer cooperatives; and their impact on women living in urban areas.

Hence, as a woman living in Addis Ababa, I am inviting you to participate in this research by sharing your experience. Your ideas and opinions will be of great value to this research and will be highly appreciated.

#### **What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

If you agree to participate in this research project, you will be asked to answer questions and share your experience pertaining to food inflation, how you are affected by it and how you cope with it; and your experience with *ALLE Bejimila* registered shops and *hibret suks*. The interview will take 45 minutes to an hour and will be held at a place of your choice.

#### **Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

All information you provide during the interview process including your name will be completely anonymous, and will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

In this research project I will take notes and record the discussion using audiotapes so that I can accurately transcribe the conversation at a later point. All information obtained from the interview will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only.

The recorded notes and audio tapes during the interview will be kept in a secure location. Furthermore, you and I will be asked to sign a consent form that binds me to keep to what we would have agreed upon.

**What are the risks of this research?**

There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.

**What are the benefits of this research?**

This research is not designed to help any individual directly. However, the results may help us understand better in what ways women living in urban areas are affected by inflation and how they cope with it. Moreover, the study will shed some light on whether or not food policies are considerate of the particular situations of women in urban areas. Therefore, I am hoping that it will advise food policies of governments in the future, thereby ensuring food security for all.

**Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalised or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

**Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?**

This research will not expose you to any harm as a result of your participation.

**What if I have questions?**

If you have any questions feel free to contact Tsega Girma Tefera, the researcher through her email address: [3601435@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3601435@myuwc.ac.za) , or by phone number: +251 911 439 747.

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact my supervisor Prof. Julian May at The Institute for Social Development (ISD), the University of Western Cape his email address [Jmay@uwc.ac.za](mailto:Jmay@uwc.ac.za)

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Doctor: Sharon Penderis  
Head of Department: Institute for Social Development  
School of Government  
University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X17  
Bellville 7535

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.



**Appendix VIII : Sample of the consent form for study participants**



University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa  
Telephone : (021) 959 3858/6 Fax: (021) 959 3865  
E-mail: [pkippie@uwc.ac.za](mailto:pkippie@uwc.ac.za) or [spenderis@uwc.ac.za](mailto:spenderis@uwc.ac.za)

**Letter of consent for participants of FGDs**

**Title: The cost of gaps in existing food price-stabilizing market policies in urban areas for poor women and their families: the case of Addis Ababa**

**Researcher: Tsega Girma Tefera**





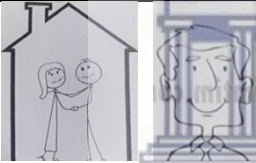




1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I am free not to participate and have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to explain myself. I am aware that this interview might result in research which may be published, but my name may be/ not be used.
3. I understand my response and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I gave permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that the information derived from this research is confidential and treated as such.
4. I agree that the data collected from me to be used in the future research.
5. I agree to take part in the above research project.
6. I agree to let my response be recorded and used in the research.
7. I agree to treat the information I have received in the discussion as confidential.








Name of the participant:.....Signature..... Date .....

Name of the interviewer.....Signature.....



**Appendix IX: Agreed meaning of pictures utilized during the FGDs**

	<b>Cartoon figures/symbols</b>	<b>Agreed meaning of pictures</b>
1		The woman participant in the study
2		Presence of infants and small children requiring care in the household
3		Presence of older family members such as parents requiring care in the household
4		Big family size
5		The role of marriage and husbands
6		Sons and daughters
7		Involvement in the community/social life
8		The role of jobs/ income generating activities (IGAs)
9		The role of religious institutions

10		Buying groceries
11		Baking <i>enjera</i> with the use of traditional oven and grinding grain representing cooking
12		Cleaning
13		Traditional coffee ceremony indicating rest/leisure time
14		Income/ economic status
15		Ownership of jewellery
16		Ownership of vehicle

Appendix X : A sample of a membership card for a Consumers' Cooperative Association



የአባል የተሰጠው መቆጣጠሪያ የ200 ዓ.ም.

ተ.ራ. ቁ.	ወራቶች	ተሳትፎ በግዢ	መጠን በክ/ግ በሌትር
	መስከረም		
	ጥቅምት		
	ህዳር		
	ታህሣሥ	በከፊት	20/4/08
	ጥር	በከፊት	16/05/09
	የካቲት		
	መጋቢት	5ክፍ	2/7/09
	ሚያዝያ	ሁለት	20/8/09
	ግንቦት	አራት	08/09/09
	ሰኔ		
	ሐምሌ	5ክ	14/10/09
	ነሐሴ		

የሽግግር ፊርማ \_\_\_\_\_

የአባል የተሰጠው መቆጣጠሪያ የ200 ዓ.ም.

ተ.ራ. ቁ.	ወራቶች	ተሳትፎ በግዢ	መጠን በክ/ግ በሌትር
	መስከረም		
	ጥቅምት		
	ህዳር		
	ታህሣሥ		
	ጥር		
	የካቲት		
	መጋቢት		
	ሚያዝያ		
	ግንቦት		
	ሰኔ		
	ሐምሌ		
	ነሐሴ		

የሽግግር ፊርማ \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix XI: A sample of subsidized basic goods distribution card



0303127

በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ንግድ ቢሮ  
የመሰረታዊ ሽቀጥ አባወራን/አማወራን ክቸርቻሪ  
ሱቆች ጋር ለማስተሳሰር የተዘጋጀ  
የስርጭት ካርድ

አዲስ አበባ

ማሳሰቢያ

ይህ የመሰረታዊ ሽቀጥ የስርጭት ካርድ በንግድ ውድድር እና ሽማግሌ ጥበቃ አዋጅ 813/03 መሰረት ለመሰረታዊ ሽቀጥ ምሳሌ ስኬት እና ዘይት ስርጭት ላይ የሚውል ሲሆን ለሌላ ለማንኛውም ተግባር ማዋል የማይችል ሲሆን ይህንን ካርድ በመሸጥ ካርዱን ለተጠቃሚዎች ለመሰጠት በስርጭት ውስጥ በሚሰማሩ አካላት ሌላ አስገዳጅ ነገሮችን ማስቀመጥ በንግድ ህጉ መሰረት በወንጀል ያስተዳድራል።

የአንድ አባወራ/አማወራ ወርሃዊ የስኬት ኮታ 5 ኪሎ ግራም እና ዘይት እስከ 5 ሊትር ድረስ ሲሆን የዘይት መጠን እንደ አቅርቦቱ የሚለያይ ይሆናል ምሳሌ ባለ 20 ሊትር አቅርቦት ሲኖር በዛው ልክ የሚከፋፈል ይሆናል። ከዚህ መጠን በታች ለሚጠይቁ ባለሰቆ የማስተናገድ ግዴታ አለበት።



- ☛ ስርዓተ ገቢ ስርዓት በመከላከል በቀለት ጊዜ መደገም ይህ ክርም በወር መጠቀም ለአንድ ወይ ብቻ ጊዜያት የሚያገለግል ነው።
- ☛ በገንዘብ መቶ በዚህ ክርም ላይ ምርቶች የሸጠው ባለሰውን ማስረጃም አባላቱን ለመቆየት ስለሚገባው ማረጋገጫ ነው።
- ☛ በዚህ ክርም ላይ የክፍያው የክፍያው እና የወረዳው ማህተም መግቢያ ማረጋገጥ ይገባል።
- ☛ በሽያጭ ስርዓት ለሚያገለግሉት ማንኛውም ሀገራዊነት በዚህ ስልጠና የክፍያ 8588 ክፍያ ጽ/ቤት ስልክ ቁጥር፡ 0115 536541 በመደገል ወይም በአቅራቢያ ላለ የፖሊስ ኮሚሽን ላይ አባል በማለጠፍ መቆየት ይገባል።

ተ.ቁ	ድር	ስርዓት ተገ	ስካፎ ኪግ	ዘይት ሲተር	ፊርማ
1	መስፈርት				
2	ጥቅምት				
3	ሀዳር				
4	ታህሳስ				
5	ጥር				
6	የጥር				
7	መገንጠያ				
8	ግዴታ				
9	ገበያ				
10	ሴ				
11	ሥራ				
12	ገቢ				

