TRAFFICKING OF ETHIOPIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS TO THE MIDDLE EAST

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Public Policy

in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts in Public Policy

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Budapest, Hungary

2013

Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned ……. hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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Abstract

Trafficking of human beings has become a growing international challenge. Although there is lack of a comprehensive research, available evidence suggests that the overwhelming majority of Ethiopian women and girls who migrate to the Middle East are victims of trafficking to work as housemaids. It is clear that effective strategies to address trafficking can only be designed when there is a holistic understanding of and approach to the problem. Thus, this thesis examines the main features and causes (both the push and pull factors) of the trafficking practice. It also discusses about the extent of human rights violations that victims of trafficking encounter in the Middle East, the extent of anti-trafficking initiatives that have been made in Ethiopia and the significant challenges the country faces in the efforts to mitigate trafficking.

One of the biggest challenges in the study of human trafficking is lack of reliable data. The study is qualitative, and it uses secondary data sources of information. By studying the problem clearly within its social and cultural context it is hoped that it will contribute to the creation of successful anti-trafficking programs and policies in the country. For instance, it has revealed that the three major causes of the trafficking practice are poverty, unemployment and gender inequality. Furthermore, the study argues that though efforts are being made, and preventing and combating trafficking poses significant challenges to Ethiopia, the government's response is still inadequate compared to the scale of the problem.

Keywords: Ethiopia, human trafficking, Middle East, migration

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List of Abbreviations

ARCPPT	Asia Regional Cooperation to Prevent People Trafficking
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GAATW	Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISSP	International Social Security Program
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PEAs	Private Employment Agencies
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Migration is not a new phenomenon. It has been an integral part of human activity since time immemorial. However, international migration has increased steadily during the past half a century, and it is now much more complicated than it was before the First World War (Opeskin, Perruchoud and Redpath-Cross 2012). Predominantly due to its intricate web of demographic, social, economic and political determinants and consequences, migration has moved to the forefront of national and international agenda (UN 2006, 24). Nevertheless, it must be noted that it is not only challenging as a concept and process, but also challenging in terms of methodology. More broadly, there is a common presumption that for the most part international migration is beneficiary for both sending and receiving countries. Unfortunately, this is not always the case (Lucas 2005, 311). For example, the 'migration industry' has a very lucrative and highly exploitative criminal dimension, the most problematic being human trafficking (Bedford 2012; Bales 2005).

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), trafficking (despite increasing global attention and significant national responses) still remains "a crime with low risks and high profit" (UNODC 2008, 1). This is partly because "people unlike other commodities can be used repeatedly; and because trafficking in person does not require a large capital" (Bales 2005, 139). The main purpose of this study is, therefore, to give an overview of migration with a particular focus on human trafficking. To be more specific, as poverty, unemployment and gender inequality disproportionately affect women and girls, and in turn trafficking has become a growing phenomenon in

Ethiopia, this paper focuses on trafficking of Ethiopian women and girls to the Middle East. However, it should be noted from the outset that due to the complex and interlinked nature of migration, smuggling and trafficking into the Middle East it is very difficult to clearly identify the occurrence of trafficking. As a result, "the most that can be said is to show the patterns, systems and policies which are making migrants vulnerable to trafficking" (GTZ 2006, 16).

1.2. Statement of the Research Problem

Like other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, socio-economic, environmental and political factors are prompting high rates of Ethiopian out-migration within the region and farther afield. Although there is lack of a comprehensive research, the overwhelming majority of women and girls who migrate to the Middle East are victims of human trafficking to work as housemaids. For instance, by quoting Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), the United States Department of State has reported that "60 to 70 percent of labour migration is facilitated by illegal brokers" (United States Department of State 2012, 154). Worse even, their vulnerability has not been limited to the illegal migration process alone, but also to oppressive and almost unbearable working and living conditions in the destination countries. According to the abovementioned report, "Many Ethiopian women working in domestic service in the Middle East face severe abuses, including physical and sexual assault, denial of salary, sleep deprivation, withholding of passports, confinement, and murder. Many are also driven to despair and experience psychological problems, with some committing suicide" (United States Department of State 2012, 154).

Furthermore, if they happen to be lucky enough to receive their salaries, they are nine times lower than their counterparts' salaries from other nations (AllAfrica 2012). Despite all these problems and the difficulty to give an exact figure, the influx of women and girls to the region is unprecedentedly increasing and trafficking has become a business in the country. In Beydoun's (2006) words, "Poverty, a lack of viable employment alternatives, and desperation establish fertile ground for traffickers' exploitation of despondent Ethiopian women. Once the birthplace of mankind, Ethiopia today serves as a cradle for traffickers pursuing profit, ...a virtual one-stop shop for inexpensive and convenient servitude" (Beydoun 2006, 10).

Despite a substantial progress over the past years in addressing the problem through law enforcement effort, the Ethiopian government does not fully comply with minimum standards (United States Department of State 2012). In addition, it is still defending the regular increase as a voluntary labour migration (Lemma 2013). Generally, from the above reports it seems clear that there is a paucity of Ethiopian government's and labour-receiving countries' support. For example, Lebanon being the major destination country Beydoun observes that "the failure of Ethiopia and Lebanon to implement formal and enforceable legal injunctions prohibiting trafficking has undermined the likelihood of the *de facto* abolition of this channel of human trafficking….there are too few campaigns addressing the trafficking of Ethiopian domestic-workers in Lebanon, and those that do exist are disjointed and poorly coordinated" (Beydoun 2006, 1036).

Admittedly, there is a lack of resources. Nevertheless, the central argument put forward in this study is that despite the fact that efforts are being made, and preventing and combating trafficking in human beings poses significant challenges to Ethiopia, the government's response is still inadequate compared to the scale of the problem. As has been highlighted, Ethiopian women and girls have regrettably become the most exploited people throughout the trafficking process, more specifically in destination countries. Part of the problem that exacerbates their vulnerability from the supply side is issuance of the 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation (No.621/2009) that prohibits NGOs, charitable trusts and foundations, and mass membership based societies from working on a number of activities that promote human rights (Amnesty International 2012). It is thus reasonable, in view of the aforementioned discussion, to further examine the trafficking of Ethiopian women and girls to the Middle East.

1.3. Objectives of the Study and Research Question

As briefly highlighted above, the central aim of this study is to present an overview of the main features of trafficking of women and girls from Ethiopia to the Middle East, its dynamics, and its root causes. Accordingly, it will address the following main research question:

- What are the main features and causes of trafficking of Ethiopian women and girls to the Middle East?

The study also discusses about the extent of human rights violations that victims of trafficking encounter in the Middle East, the extent of anti-trafficking initiatives that have been made in Ethiopia and the significant challenges the country has faced in the efforts to mitigate trafficking. Moreover, it discusses about best practices that the country can

learn from other labour-sending countries to the Middle East to help it protects its citizens' rights.

1.4. Limitation

The key limitations of the study that should be borne in mind are:

- Because of the underground and illegal nature of trafficking, it is very difficult to find precise data and gathering is even dangerous. Particularly in Ethiopia, easy to access, up-to-date and organized data is almost non-extant. Often, only media and anecdotal evidence is available.
- The study is not a comprehensive assessment of the trafficking problem in Ethiopia. The attention is placed on women and girls trafficked to the Middle East for domestic work purpose.

1.5. Structure

This study has five chapters. The first chapter presents a background, the research problem, the research objective and question, and limitation of the study. The second chapter presents a methodology, a definition of concept and outlines a theoretical framework. The third chapter reviews available literature in the area of human trafficking at international, regional and national levels. The fourth chapter discusses about the main features and causes of trafficking of Ethiopian women and girls to the Middle East. It then discusses about the extent of human rights violations that victims of trafficking encounter in different countries of destination. Moreover, as mentioned in the previous section it discusses about anti-trafficking initiatives and challenges that have been encountered by the Ethiopian government and best practices that it can adopt from other countries. The final and fifth chapter concludes and forwards recommendations.

CHAPTER 2- METHODLOGY, DEFINTION OF CONCEPT AND THEORETICAL FRAMWORK

2.1. Methodology

In his analysis of the relationship between methodology and methods, Castles notes that while quantitative approach is crucial to "describe macro-social changes linked to migration"… " 'qualitative approaches' are needed to provide understanding both of individual and community-level social action, and of the history and cultures of sending, transit and receiving societies" (Castles 2012, 21). Thus, qualitative in nature the study uses secondary data sources of information. One of the biggest challenges in the study of human trafficking is lack of reliable data. Although it has become a growing political priority internationally, it still remains true that only relatively few studies are based on extensive research. Often, it is based on anecdotal information (Bales 2005). The problem is even more serious in many developing countries in general and Ethiopia in particular. For example, in a global database of human trafficking cases developed by UNODC there is not a single case brief for Ethiopia. Therefore, by taking the country's context and specific needs into account, available and key migration related policies and legislations in the country, grey literatures and documents from international organizations such as the IOM, ILO and UNHCR will be reviewed and analysed to answer the research question.

2.2. Definition of Concept: Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a slavery-like phenomenon that has been in existence since the beginning of human history (Bales 2005, 126). That said, before discussing about human trafficking any further, it is important to define it. Supplementing the United Nations *Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, in 2000 the UN adopted *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (hereinafter Palermo Protocol). For the first time under international law, the Palermo Protocol adopted a definition of trafficking in persons. Article 3 (a) defines it as:

> the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (United Nations 2000, 2).

The three important elements in the definition for an act to constitute trafficking in persons are:

- the *act* (recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons);
- the *method* (by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person); and
- the *motivation* (for the purpose of exploitation) (United Nations 2000, 2).

Furthermore, in Article 3 (b) it states that "The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used" (United Nations 2000, 2).

2.3. Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this section is to present a theoretical model that can explain the causes of the trafficking being discussed. Therefore, the model that is found to be appropriate to better understand the issue is neoclassical migration theory.

2.3.1 Neoclassical Migration Theory

It is true that people migrate due to different reasons/factors. To adequately understand the causal factors underlining international migration or why individuals move from one place to another, different theories have been developed in the past couple of decades or so. Basically, the three main reasons why people migrate, and the factors that sustain migration flows are "…demand-pull factors in the destination area, supply-push factors in the origin area, and network factors that link origin and destination" (Martin 2003, 10). One of the main theories that attempts to explain people's movement across borders is neoclassical theory. It operates at both macro and micro levels. A key insight of this theory is that international migration arises from geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labour. As a result, people in search of employment migrate from the low wage country to the high wage country (Massey et al. 2006, 36). The assumption of migration approach specific to trafficking is "the supply and demand of trafficked persons is driven by socioeconomic conditions in both the source and destination countries, conditions heightened by the stratifying effects of globalization along gender, ethnic, and geographic lines" (Hebert 2012, 89).

CHAPTER 3- REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURE

3.1. Trafficking and Smuggling

In this chapter the distinction between trafficking and smuggling, the scale of trafficking at international, regional and national levels are briefly presented. As noted previously, human trafficking is one of the most expansive and complex crime against humanity that is rapidly being recognized as a global issue. Moreover, because of its very nature there are no precise data available. Nevertheless, according to the Trafficking in Persons Report prepared by the United States Department of State (2004, 5), an estimated 600,000-800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked annually across international borders. It has also been estimated that women and girls together account for about 75 per cent of all trafficking victims detected globally (UNODC 2012, 6). Trafficking is commonly known as a criminal practice that takes place for the purpose of sexual exploitation. However, this narrow focus has obscured the bigger picture of the problem (Bales 2005, 126). People are also trafficked for their labour or for harvesting their body organs (Piotrowicz and Redpath-Cross 2012, 235-236).

Although they are different and at the same time intricately intertwined, smuggling and trafficking are often confused and used interchangeably. The reason being both of them involve moving human beings for profit (Bales 2005, 132). This confusion, in turn, prevents victims from receiving proper protection and accessing legal supports (UNODC 2008), and inappropriate responses by governments and non-governmental organizations are common. For instance, it is pertinent to note that when governments approach trafficking from the angle of smuggling they direct their policies and legislative frameworks that aim at combating human trafficking towards restricting migration and

criminalizing trafficked persons for being illegal or undocumented migrants (Olateru-Olagbegi and Ikpeme 2006, 5). Sometimes states also reject the existence of victims of trafficking in their territory for a number of reasons such as lack of resource, commitment and understanding (Gallagher 2010, 278). The critical importance of rapid and accurate victim identification and why it is an obligation has been underscored in the chapeau to Guideline 2 of *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking.* It is noted that "a failure to identify a trafficked person correctly is likely to result in a further denial of that person's rights. States are therefore under an obligation to ensure that such identification can and does take place" (United Nations Human Rights 2010, 73). However, it is important to acknowledge that prompt and accurate identification of victims of trafficking is practically very difficult (Gallagher 2010, 278).

Smuggling is defined as "the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person(s) across an international border, in violation of one or more countries laws, either clandestinely or through deception, such as the use of fraudulent documents" (United States Department of State 2006, 2). Nevertheless, it should still be noted that both smuggling and trafficking are forms of irregular migration. The subtle differences between smuggling and trafficking are listed in the following table (see Table 1).

Table 1. Differences between Human Trafficking and Smuggling

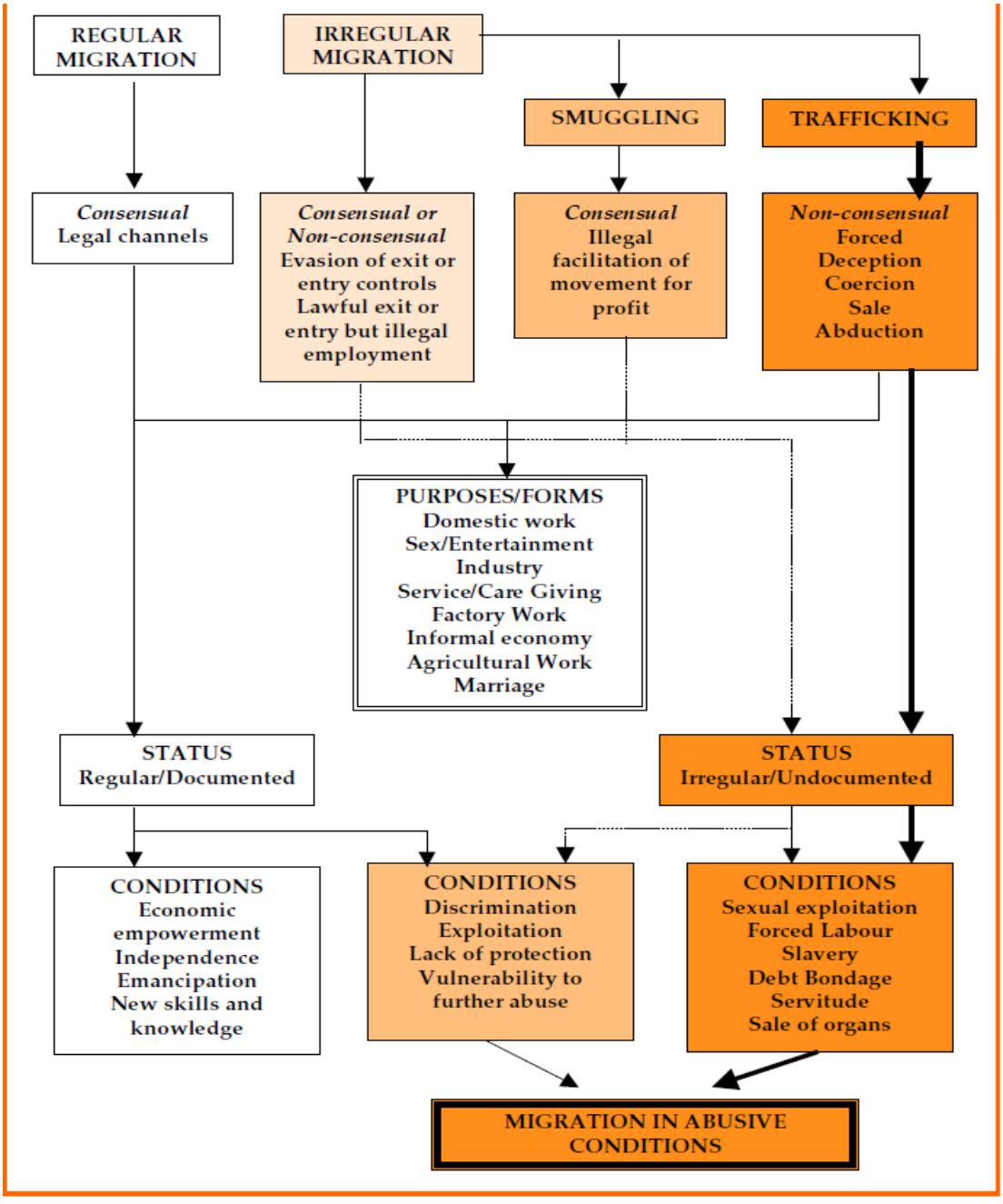
TRAFFICKING	**SMUGGLING**
Must Contain an Element of Force, Fraud, or Coercion (actual, perceived or implied), unless under 18 years of age involved in commercial sex acts.	The person being smuggled is generally cooperating.
Forced Labor and/or Exploitation.	There is no actual or implied coercion.
Persons trafficked are victims.	Persons smuggled are complicit in the smuggling crime; they are not necessarily victims of the crime of smuggling (though they may become victims depending on the circumstances in which they were smuggled)
Enslaved, subjected to limited movement or isolation, or had documents confiscated.	Persons are free to leave, change jobs, etc.
Need not involve the actual movement of the victim.	Facilitates the illegal entry of person(s) from one country into another.
No requirement to cross an international border.	Smuggling always crosses an international border.
Person must be involved in labor/services or commercial sex acts, i.e., must be "working".	Person must only be in country or attempting entry illegally.

***Source** : Adapted from United States Department of State (2006)*

Another challenge is conflation of trafficking with different manifestations of migration on the one hand and with sex work on the other hand. But this may lead to unrealistic and simple solutions to the problem (ILO 2003). For example, it has been argued that

"conflating trafficking with migration results in reinforcing the gender bias that women and girls need constant male or State protection from harm, and therefore must not be allowed to exercise their right to movement or right to earn a living in a manner they choose" (ILO 2003, 19). The following figure (see Figure 1) highlights the interrelations between regular and irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling.

Figure 1. Interrelations between Regular and Irregular Migration, Trafficking and Smuggling



***Source**: Adapted from ILO 2003*

3.2. Human Trafficking at the International Level

> *Slowly and painfully a picture is emerging of a global crime that shames us all. Billions of dollars are being made at the expense of millions of victims of human trafficking. Boys and girls who should be at school are coerced into becoming soldiers, doing hard labour or sold for sex. Women and girls are being trafficked for exploitation: forced into domestic labour, prostitution or marriage. Men, trapped by debt, slave away in mines, plantations, or sweatshops.* (Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2008)

The above quote suggests that human trafficking is a serious humanitarian problem of global scale. According to Bales, there are three major factors that contribute for trafficking to happen: "(1) within the origin countries, a large supply of victims is available for exploitation, (2) within the destination countries there seems to be an endless demand for the services of the victims, and (3) organized criminal networks have taken control of this economic supply-and-demand situation in order to traffic the victims and generate enormous profits for themselves" (Bales 2005, 141).

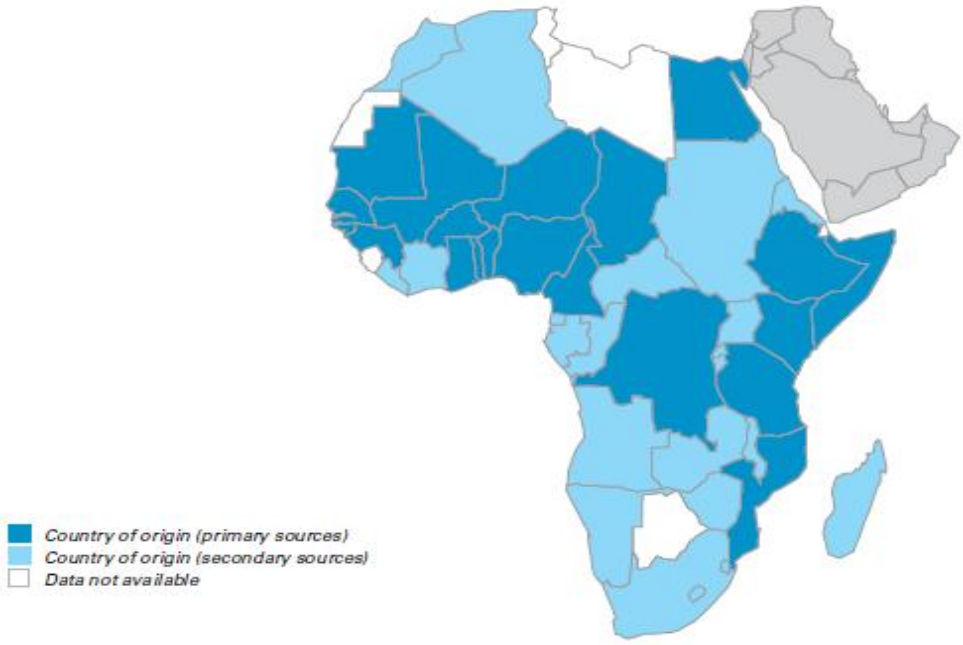
In addition, as already mentioned before, trafficking's covert and criminal nature makes it very challenging and difficult to obtain accurate information. What is most worrying is "what we do not know is much greater than what we do know, but the pattern is clear: *trafficking in person is extensive and growing* (Bales 2005, 136 emphasis added). Since it is a lucrative criminal business, its economic value is estimated to be between $10 and $12 billion annually. This means that it is the third largest criminal business, exceeded only by drugs and arms trade (Obuaha 2006). Schauer and Wheaton (2006, 164) argue that since traffickers take advantage of arbitrage, human trafficking is now more profitable than drug trafficking. Moreover, they argue that in 10 years time it is possible that human trafficking will replace drug trafficking and become the number one international crime (Schauer and Wheaton 2006, 165). However, while the vast majority

of human trafficking horror occurs in Africa, South Asia and the Middle East, still programs excessively concentrate on women trafficked from Eastern Europe and South Asia to the United States and Western Europe (Brysk 2012, 78).

3.3. Human Trafficking at the Regional Level

In recent years there has been a considerable consideration of trafficking in Africa in general and the sub-Saharan African region in particular as a real challenge. However, a study by UNICEF (2005) notes that the severity differs from one part of the region to the other. Moreover, child trafficking is more severe than trafficking in women. According to the study, whereas trafficking is considered as either severe or very severe problem in more than 70% of West and Central African countries, it is identified as so in 33% of East and Southern African countries. Moreover, in comparison, it is less severe in the Eastern and Southern sub-regions than the Western sub-region. As for the Northern sub-region of Africa, there is limited information on trafficking and low level of awareness (UNICEF 2005, 8). Figure 2 shows countries reported as country of origin in Africa.

Figure 2. Countries Reported as Country of Origin in Africa



***Source**: UNICEF 2005*

Some of the regional instruments that are important for the anti-trafficking effort are African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990). There are also different initiatives at the sub-regional level. This is particularly strong in the West Africa. For instance, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that was established in the mid-1970s plays a critically central leadership role (UNICEF 2005, 19)

Both internal trafficking and transnational trafficking do exist in East Africa. Internally, children and young women from rural area are trafficked to urban areas for prostitution and domestic work. Internationally, women and girls are trafficked for prostitution purpose to other African countries, the Middle East and Europe. In addition, they are trafficked to the Middle East primarily for domestic labour (GTZ 2003, 3).

3.4. Human Trafficking at the National Level

As noted in the introductory and the research problem sections, human trafficking is a significant challenge in Ethiopia. A state can be origin, transit and/or destination or all three for the crime of human trafficking. According to the 2012 US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report, Ethiopia is a source country for men, women and children (United States Department of State 2012). Often, trafficked women are "lured by false promises of good jobs, high salaries and a comfortable life" (Kebede 2002, 6). Although the exact number of victims of trafficking is not known, available data show that it is significantly higher than official figures suggest. For instance, between 1996 and 1998, 2,247 women left for the Middle East via legal means. However, in 1999 there were 17,000 Ethiopian domestic workers in Lebanon alone. In 2003, the number increased to 25,000. These figures indicate that majority of them left Ethiopia through illegal channels (GTZ 2003, 4; GTZ 2006, 10). To show how simple and cheap trafficking of Ethiopians is, Beydoun concludes that:

> unskilled, trafficked women from Ethiopia have become the most accessible and affordable for patrons, and most lucrative for traffickers. Illegal trafficking from Ethiopia is nothing short of big business. Culprits that look to exploit Ethiopian girls and women can expect to earn seven thousand Ethiopian Birr (More than US $800) for each subject they send to Lebanon, the most popular destination. (Beydoun 2006, 1023)

As a profile of traffickers, the ILO (2011) study identifies six categories of people that facilitate the trafficking process: (1) local/community level traffickers; (2) brokers responsible for the transportation, harbouring and smuggling of migrants across borders; (3) unlicensed employment agencies; (4) legally registered and licensed overseas private employment agencies (PEAs) that work against the law; (5) returnees, visitors, and their representatives; and (6) destination-point traffickers (ILO 2011, ix).

CHAPTER 4- DISCUSSION

While the previous chapters have focused on the research problem; the international migration theory used as a framework; the distinctions and interrelations between trafficking, smuggling and trafficking; and the extent of trafficking at international, regional and national levels, this chapter turns to discuss some of the main features and causes of trafficking of Ethiopian women and girls to the Middle East. In addition, it discusses about the extent of human rights violations that victims of trafficking encounter in the Middle East, the extent of anti-trafficking initiatives that have been made in Ethiopia and the significant challenges the country has faced in the efforts to mitigate trafficking. Moreover, it discusses about best practices that the country can learn from other labour-sending countries to the Middle East to help it protects its citizens' rights

4.1. Understanding the Trafficking of Women and Girls from Ethiopia to the Middle East

As Chuang (2006, 140) explains, "The problem of trafficking begins not with the traffickers themselves, but with the conditions that caused their victims to migrate under circumstances rendering them vulnerable to exploitation. Human trafficking is but "an opportunistic response" to the tension between the economic necessity to migrate, on the one hand, and the politically motivated restrictions on migration, on the other". Therefore, effective strategies of trafficking can only be designed when there is a better understanding of the push and pull factors that perpetuate it. This section presents an overview of the main features of trafficking of women and girls from Ethiopia to the Middle East, its dynamics, its root causes and plights faced by the victims.

4.1.1. Country Profile

Ethiopia, officially known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), is an ancient and a poor country located in East Africa commonly recognised as The Horn of Africa. It is the tenth largest country in Africa that covers an area of 1,104,300 square kilometres and bordered by Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and the Sudan (CSA 2008, 8). Currently it is administratively structured into nine regional states—Tigray, Affar, Amhara, Oromiya, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP), Gambela, and Harari—and two city administrations namely, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa Administration Councils. With a total population of more than 80 million, it is the second most populous country in Africa, following Nigeria. The majority (83.9%) resides in rural areas. The average household size is 4.7. The average life expectancy is 51 years for males and 53 years for females. Population distribution by age group shows a pyramidal age structure, with 44% less than 15 years. While the sex ratio between male and female is almost equal, women in the reproductive age group constitute 24% of the population (CSA and ICF International 2012; UNFPA 2011).

4.1.2. Major Causes of Trafficking

Trafficking is one form of irregular migration. At the individual level there are a number of reasons why people move (temporarily or permanently) from their home countries to other countries of destination. It is often discussed that "migration is essentially a way of coping with conflict, unemployment, natural or man-made disasters, a mechanism for people to try and improve their social standing, a mechanism for building up social insurance, or a combination of all of these" (GTZ 2006, 9). The following table lists factors behind the trafficking of women and girls in the world.

Table 2: Factors behind the Trafficking of Women and Girls

Supply-side	*Demand-side*
▪ Feminization of poverty ▪ Chronic unemployment and lack of economic opportunities ▪ Growing materialism and desire for a better life ▪ Dysfunctional family situations ▪ Gender inequality in access to education and training ▪ Lack of access to information ▪ Discrimination on the basis of gender and/or ethnicity ▪ Cultural contexts and community attitudes and practices which tolerate violence against women ▪ Sex-selective migration policies ▪ Ineffective legal and regulatory frameworks ▪ Displacement and disruption due to natural and human- created catastrophes	▪ Employer demand for cheap and exploitable labour ▪ Consumer demand for services sometimes provided by trafficked persons ▪ Gender discrimination ▪ Increasing casualization and informalization in the labour market ▪ Growth of sex and entertainment industries ▪ Low-risk, high-profit nature of trafficking ▪ Absence of effective regulatory framework and lack of enforcement ▪ Lack of organization and bargaining power of workers ▪ Discriminatory socio-cultural practices relating, for example, to marriage ▪ Lack of respect for/violations of human rights

***Source**: Adapted from ILO 2003*

Although, as listed above, countries in the world share some of the contributing factors to human trafficking, there are some root causes specific to a certain region or country and broad variation across cultures. This means that a uniform answer to the question 'What causes trafficking?' is impossible (Bales 2005, 138). Hence, in order to understand the problem clearly within its social and cultural context and to help create a successful anti-trafficking policy it is important to study the major causes of trafficking in women and girls from Ethiopia to the Middle East. Indeed, the factors that make them vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation are varied and complex. However, there are three major and often interrelated factors: predominantly the combination of poverty, gender inequality

and unemployment, and compounded by, *inter alia*, inadequate legislations and weak law enforcement (GTZ 2003; ILO 2011). What follows is an attempt to discuss and illuminate the supply side factors and the demand side factor.

4.1.2.1. Supply-side factors

4.1.2.1.1 Feminization of Poverty

It is not surprising that poverty is one of the major determinants of trafficking. It has a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights enshrined in international human rights instruments such as the two interdependent Covenants: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (Obokata 2006, 122). As noted above, Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Of the 187 countries included in the *2011 Human Development Report*, it ranked 174 (UNDP 2011, 126). As elsewhere in the developing world, the unfortunate reality is that Ethiopian women and girls are marginalized politically, economically and socially. As a result, they constitute the larger portion of the population trapped by poverty. The concept most commonly used to capture this type of poverty trap is feminization of poverty.

Therefore, due to their dire economic circumstances and a growing demand for female labour in the Middle East they are among the most vulnerable targets to the evils of human trafficking. It is maintained that "labour migration is often not only a way of coping with crises but also a way for migrants to build up a social insurance for themselves and their families, which the country of origin is often not able to guarantee" (GTZ 2006, 5). Indeed, it is often claimed that those who migrate are not the powerless and poorest of the poor. But according to Lucas (2005, 261), "much of the evidence in

support of this notion refers to remittance patterns, rather than migration itself". This suggests that even if it is less destitute or not necessarily the poorest that are often trafficked, young and healthy people from poor backgrounds are usually the targets. In other words, poverty and deprivation are still the major contributing factors (Bales 2005, 141), and with few options available to migrate legally, trafficking becomes the only viable alternative (Taran and Chammartin 2003, 5). This is particularly evident where there are also additional contributing factors such as lack of opportunities of employment and gender inequality. Both of these factors will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.1.2.1.2 Unemployment

It is well-known and theorized that the current context in the world that is characterised by such issues as stagnation in employment and income creation, economic and financial crises makes migration an increasingly important strategy for securing livelihoods for migrants and household members left behind. In addition, the changing global context contributes to the increment of illegal and vulnerable migrants (Hujo and Piper 2010, 20). For instance, due to globalisation and new technologies transnational crimes such as trafficking have been exacerbated. Indeed, in African context the internal factors, exacerbated by the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s and 1990s, are more important than the impacts of globalization in explaining trafficking. However, globalization worsens migration pressure and creates fertile ground for traffickers to target women and girls in dire need of income (Onuoha 2011, 149).

A basic contradiction is that in this age of globalization, there is an increasingly free movement of information, goods, services, capital and raw materials, but increasingly tightening up control of population's transnational movement (Bedford 2012, 22). On the

other hand, according to basic labour economic theory, "placing barriers between high demand and strong supply creates a potentially lucrative market for services of getting the supply to where the demand is" (Taran and Chammartin 2003, 5). It should not be surprising then that the strong pull-push pressure and restrictive immigration policies fuel illegal migration.

From the demand side in the Middle East there is continued demand for cheap labour. From the supply side in poor countries such as Ethiopia where the population is alarmingly increasing and the country is unable to generate jobs, the migration option offers an important safety valve for many women and girls. Kebede argues that "women in Ethiopia have less opportunity to receive an education than do men. As a result, women also have less opportunity for employment. It is not surprising that the trend of migration among women is higher than that of men" (Kebede 2002, 5). According to UNHCR spokesperson Adrian Edwards, until 2008 majority of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa who made their journey across the Gulf of Aden and the Red sea were Somali refugees. Yet, since 2009 this trend shifted and Ethiopian migrants who left home because of a lack of economic and livelihood opportunities have been the majority. In 2011, three out of every four arrivals in Yemen were Ethiopians (UNHCR 2012). In recent years, Yemen has increasingly become both a transit and destination country for migrants from East Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular. There is no doubt that the trafficking victims would not try the perilous journey across this region if jobs were available at home. This section has presented a lack of employment opportunity as one of the major push factors. The following section provides an overview of the third major contributing factor i.e., gender inequality.

4.1.2.1.3 Gender Inequality

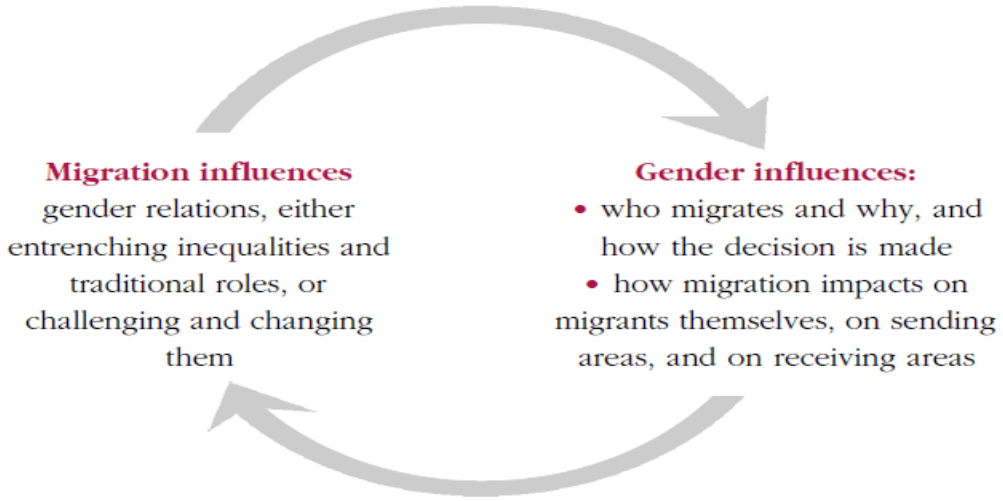
It is not surprising that labour migration is often by young and physically capable persons. But equally important is cultural or social practices such as the devaluation of women and girls in society contribute to trafficking (Bales 2005, 139). In other words, there is a connection between gender and migration. To be more specific, "People's experiences of gender are central to the patterns, causes and impacts of migration. Gender roles, relations and inequalities affect who migrates, how, why, and where they end up" (BRIDGE 2005). There are also increasing evidences on the gender dimensions of trafficking. Indeed, the gender dimension is part of the main reasons for the growing global concern over the trafficking of human beings and a "uniting and pervasive factor" that exist on both the supply and demand sides (ILO 2003, 9 and 29). In addition, the role gender plays is evident throughout the trafficking process in terms of its contribution for victims' vulnerability (ARCPPT 2003).

Though both women and men migrate for various reasons, and they share some of them, many other factors contribute in the decision making process of female migrants. These are usually due to their status as women in their country. Like other countries in Africa, Ethiopia is a patriarchal society where deep-rooted gender inequality is common and often tolerated. For instance, according to Ethiopian Society of Population Studies report, "statistically significant level of gender gaps were observed in literacy, educational attainment, work status, type of earning for work, occupation, access to media, age at first marriage and fertility preference or desire for children" (2008, 7).

In a situation where gender inequality is present women face difficultly to earn money and be independent. Consequently, for many of them, "migrating is a way of empowering

themselves and escaping a discriminating, socio-cultural environment, even if they come from poor conditions" (GTZ 2006, 17). The following figure (see Figure 3) highlights the two-way interplay between gender and migration. Simply put, migration influences gender and gender influences migration.

Figure 3. Gender and migration connections



***Source**: Adapted from BRIDGE 2005*

As has been emphasised already, it is in such situation that Ethiopian women and girls have become particularly vulnerable to traffickers. Unfortunately, as will be discussed later, a new proclamation that prohibits development organization from employing a rights based approach was also issued in 2009. The prohibition includes the promotion of gender equality (Amnesty International 2012). Generally, from the supply side feminization of poverty, unemployment and gender inequality are major factors for Ethiopian women and girls to be trafficked to the Middle East for the purpose of domestic work. A focus on the supply side of trafficking without looking at the demand

side will make the discussion incomplete. Therefore, the focus of the following section will be on the demand side.

4.1.2.2. Demand side factor: Strong Demand for Domestic Workers

A seemingly endless demand for female domestic workers in the Middle East is the key pull factor. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that one of the preconditions for trafficking to occur is destination countries' economic context that is amenable to the exploitation of enslaved workers. Moreover, the social context must tolerate treating human beings in an inhumane way (Bales 2005, 156). For example, Beydoun criticises the Lebanese government that it has done little to "prevent their nationals from engaging in deceptive contracts, and excludes trafficked Ethiopian women from legal protection. Consequently, illegal contracts are not only rampant but also used as instruments to intimidate and compel trafficked domestic-workers into servitude" (Beydoun 2006, 1029).

Like other victims from East Africa, the major destinations for trafficked Ethiopian women and girls to the Middle East are Lebanon, Yemen and the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The trafficking of Ethiopian women and girls to the Middle East has proliferated since the late 1980s and specifically after the regime change in 1991 (Beydoun 2006; Regt 2002). According to Regt (2006, 37), nearly all recruitment agencies that arrange employment for Ethiopian women and girls as domestic workers to the region are non-registered and they can be considered as traffickers. However, in 2004 in an effort to control trafficking of this vulnerable group the Ethiopian government instituted a new regulation. This regulation requires those who want to migrate to the

Middle East to do so via a legal agent, recognised by the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA). Besides, it obliges the agent to make sure that the employer at the destination country signs a contract, pays the employee's ticket and health insurance, and a monthly salary of at least $100. Moreover, the agent should take responsibility to solve any disputes between the employee and her employer. If they do not reach an agreement, the agent will be responsible for finding an alternative employer. Nevertheless, due to the time consuming bureaucratic procedure involved in the legal migration many prefer to use traffickers, despite additional cost (Regt 2006, 38).

For traffickers, victims are "the money making 'product' of the criminal enterprise…and analyzing the selling points of trafficked people as products should help us understand the context and reasoning behind the demand for trafficking victims" (Bales 2005, 154). According to the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) (2011), the demand for exploitative labour practices in any sector that involves trafficking generally refers to labour that is:

- Low cost - including non-payment or underpayment;
- Easy to control - including keeping workers from leaving abusive situations; and
- Unprotected - social attitudes that normalise or justify exploitation and discrimination, unregulated labour (GAATW 2011, 8).

GAATW (2011) further points out that these three things happen when:

- Labour market demands are undermined by immigration policies;
- Migrant workers are labelled or constructed as 'illegal'; and when

- Discrimination against migrants is normalised or justified (GAATW 2011, 8).

Generally, human trafficking in Africa stems more from internal (push) than external (pull) factors (Onuoha, 2011, 150). Ethiopia is no exception.

4.1.3. Plights of Victims in Countries of Destination

Trafficking is not the end of the story. It is just part of the crimes committed against trafficked persons. It can be viewed as a process rather than a single offence. For instance, before, during long journeys and after arriving in the destination country, most of the time victims are subjected to different threats including, but not limited to, physical and sexual violence, working for long hours without any payment and undergoing forced abortion. Unfortunately, these crimes often involve corrupt state officials (Bales 2005, 129). In these situations, looking at trafficking from a human rights perspective is very important as "it not only allows different actors to pay particular attention to the plights of victims, but also promotes a holistic approach to trafficking in which due consideration is given to wider issues such as the causes and consequences of the practice" (Obokata 2006, 6). For instance, under international human right law all states (regardless of their status as states of origin, transit and destination) are obliged to "1) prohibit trafficking and related acts; 2) investigate, prosecute and punish traffickers; 3) protect victims of trafficking; and 4) address the causes and consequences of the practice" (Obokata 2006, 147). However, as discussed throughout this paper trafficking is complex, and it is usually only confirmed once the exploitation has occurred. These challenges explain why destination countries' obligation weighs more than origin countries' (Gallagher 2010, 283). So with all the above said, what are the major plights that Ethiopian women and girls face in the Middle East?

Because of their migration status (entering illegally and/or working illegally) trafficked women and girls are vulnerable to varied forms of human rights violations. UNDP has captured the essence of particular vulnerability of victims as follows:

> Once caught in a trafficking network people may be stripped of their travel documents and isolated, so as to make escape difficult if not impossible. Many end up in debt bondage in places where language, social and physical barriers frustrate their efforts to seek help. In addition, they may be reluctant to identify themselves, since they risk legal sanctions or criminal prosecution. (UNDP cited in Bedford 2012, 49)

As will be discussed below, the situation in the Middle East is not different from what has been observed by UNDP. For instance, Amnesty International (2010) points out that "… the failure of the governments of the Gulf states to uphold the rights of women migrant domestic workers" is the basis of the problem. For example, according to D'Souza "…runaway migrant domestic workers are sought after by the police, imprisoned and deported. Some governments charge fees for every day spent in the country without an employer. Women who escape abusive employment situations, are thus literally fined for the abuse of their employers" (D'Souza 2010, 31). In addition, confiscation of employees' passports and work permits is a common practice throughout the Middle East (D'Souza 2010, 31; Gardner, 2011, 10).

Furthermore, one of the distinct features of the GCC is that migrants constitute a majority of the labour force all over the region. As a result, labour migrants are recruited through a restrictive system that is often called sponsorship (*kafala*). Under this system, a migrant needs to have a sponsor-employer (*kafeel*) who takes full economic and legal responsibility during the contract period (Longva 1999, 20). Whereas it gives sole right for sponsors in many aspects, it imposes a number of restrictions on migrants. The logical

corollary is that sponsors exercise unreasonable degree of control over the domestic worker, and in case of dispute or abuse the worker is not free to change employer (D'Souza 2010, 31). What is more, on the basis of their country of origin the domestic workers receive different treatments. For instance, Peebles observes that

> Filipina women shine bright at the top of the human bling chain, followed by Indonesian and Sri Lankan, with African/Ethiopian women at the bottom. Human beings reduced to assets, to be used and abused as their owners see fit. Such is the attitude of many Gulf families to the fragile, lonely, isolated women in their charge.(Peebles 2012).

In addition, as stated above, gender has a significant role to play in the trafficking process. Therefore, Ethiopian women and girls are multiply vulnerable to exploitation and human rights abuses: as workers, migrants, victims of trafficking, Africans and women. It is also important to remember that due to the gendered nature of the work in the destination countries "the engagement of women in domestic work, whether done by a local woman or a migrant, is not regarded as work" (GTZ 2006, 17). Moreover, in many of the Middle East countries, domestic work is often unprotected by labour laws. For example, although there are around 1.5 million domestic workers in Saudi Arabia, the 2005 labour law did not extend to them (Human Rights Watch 2011). Similarly, in Kuwait the Labour Law that was revised in 2010 continues to exclude them (ILO 2011). Since most Ethiopian domestic workers in the region live under abusive and almost unbearable working environment, many have committed suicide and the frequency rate has increased since 1996. For instance, one study has reported that in three years or so (between 1996 and 1999 alone) 67 bodies of Ethiopian women and girls returned home. The causes of the death, according to the study, range from hanging to jumping from high-rise apartments (Kebede 2002, 23).

In summary, the key points that can be drawn from the above discussion include the following:

(1) Ethiopian women and girls domestic workers in the Middle East are tremendously in precarious and almost unbearable living and working conditions that demand urgent attention from the international community in general, and the Ethiopian and the Middle East countries' governments in particular;

(2) Although Middle East countries seek Ethiopian women's and girls' cheap labour, they fail to respect, protect and fulfil their rights.

(3) Policies and programs that aim at preventing and combating trafficking should be formulated from a human rights-based perspective.

4.1.4. Anti-Trafficking Initiatives in Ethiopia

Effective anti-trafficking initiative requires a multistage process and a careful understanding of each stage— recruitment in the source country, transportation of the trafficked person through transit countries to a destination country, delivery of the trafficked person to an employer and their subsequent exploitation (Bales 2005, 136). Article 2 of the UN Protocol against Trafficking states that the overall purpose of the Protocol is:

> a) To prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children;
>
> (b) To protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights; and
>
> (c) To promote cooperation among States Parties in order to meet those objectives (United Nations 2000, 2).

4.1.4.1. National Laws and Policies

As human trafficking is a human rights issue and as states are the holders of duties to protect and promote those rights, they can be held directly accountable. One obligation upon them is to prohibit trafficking through national legislation (Obokata 2006, 148). Unfortunately, often states deny responsibility for trafficking by arguing that they have done what is reasonably possible to avoid the harm. Moreover, they try to justify that it is committed by criminals not by the state itself (Gallagher 2010, 219). Despite the fact that Ethiopia does not have a comprehensive national legal framework that clearly defines trafficking, enables prosecution of traffickers and adequately combats the high rate of incidence of trafficking in person, there are key provisions articulated in different legal instruments. For instance, Article 18 (2) of the constitution states that "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; trafficking in human beings, for whatever purpose it might be, is prohibited". Moreover, Articles 597 and 598 of the Criminal Code criminalize trafficking as follows:

Article 597- Trafficking in Women and Children

(1) Whoever by violence, threat, deceit, fraud, kidnapping or by the giving of money or other advantage to the person having control over a woman or a child, recruits, receives, hides, transports, exports or imports a woman or a minor for the purpose of forced labour, is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from five years to twenty years, and fine not exceeding fifty thousand *Birr* (nearly $2800 at the current exchange rate).

(2) Whoever knowingly carries off, or transports, whether by land, by sea or by air, the victim mentioned in sub-article (1), with the purpose stated therein, or

conducts, or aids such traffic, is liable to the penalty prescribed under sub-article (1) above.

Article 598 - Unlawful Sending of Ethiopians for Work Abroad

(1) Whoever, without having obtained a license or by any other unlawful means, sends an Ethiopian woman for work abroad, is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from five years to ten years, and fine not exceeding twenty-five thousand *Birr* (nearly $ 1400 at the current exchange rate).

(2) Where the Ethiopian woman sent abroad, owing to the act mentioned above, suffers an injury to her human rights, or to her life, body or psychological make-up, the sender shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment from five years to twenty years, and fine not exceeding fifty thousand *Birr* (nearly $2800 at the current exchange rate).

Furthermore, in June 2012 Ethiopia acceded *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.* It has also ratified most of the other international conventions that have direct relevance to trafficking, among others:

- UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1949;
- ILO Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957;
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979;
- ILO Convention No. 181 on Private Employment Agencies, 1997;

- the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, December 2000

4.1.4.2. Enforcement

As noted in the previous sections, there is often criminalization of trafficked persons for entering or working illegally in countries of transit and destination. Some of the other major challenges to prevent and combat trafficking are absence of effective criminal justice responses and the existence of a general culture of impunity for traffickers and their accomplices. Nevertheless, criminalization of trafficking (i.e., investigation, prosecution and appropriate punishment of traffickers) has been acknowledged by the international community as an important component of a comprehensive national response and lasting solution to trafficking (Gallagher 2010, 370-71).

In the past few years, an increased number of transnational traffickers were convicted and punished by the Ethiopian government. However, the government has been criticised for failing to utilize the trafficking-specific articles of its criminal code (United States Department of State 2012, 154). This could have many implications. For example, as already discussed, gender inequality is common in the country. As in many other places, women and girls are also trafficked to the Middle East in ways that are "specific to their gender and with impacts that can also be very gender-specific" (Gallagher 2010, 389). Therefore, if the failure to utilize the country's criminal code is compounded by absence of a gender perspective response to trafficking, it may lead to further victimization of the trafficked women and girls, and ineffective response in terms of both ending impunity and securing justice (Gallagher 2010, 389). In addition, the government has been criticised that despite recent overall improvement in law enforcement capacity, there is

still a mismatch between police's response and the high incidence of trafficking in the country (United States Department of State 2012, 154).

4.1.4.3. Victim Support and Protection Measures

Even if the precise obligations that states owe to victims of trafficking is far from settled, there seems to be general agreement on the importance for victim protection and support (Gallagher 2010, 276). However, Ethiopian government's assistance to victims of trafficking is limited, and its over-reliance on international organizations and NGOs to provide the required assistance has made the service availability unpredictable (United States Department of State 2012, 155). In addition, according to the U.S. Trafficking in Persons report:

> The limited and inconsistent assistance provided to trafficking victims by Ethiopian diplomatic missions in the Middle East was inadequate compared to the scale of the problem; the parliament did not allocate funds for the establishment of labor attaché positions in these missions (United States Department of State 2012).

What is more, in 2009 the government issued a Charities and Societies Proclamation (No.621/2009) that prohibits NGOs, charitable trusts and foundations, and mass membership based societies which receive more than 10% of their funding from foreign sources from working on a number of activities that promote human rights. However, it is practically impossible to raise 90% of their funds locally. Obviously, it has negatively affected the ability of some NGOs in adequately providing a full range of services such as assisting victims of trafficking in filing cases against their traffickers (United States Department of State 2012, 155). For example, after this Proclamation was passed the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) — an independent and the only major

organization working on women's rights advocacy at the national level— is barely functioning (Amnesty International 2012, 25-26). Moreover, in all Addis Ababa police stations the joint police NGO identification and referral units ceased operation in 2010 (United States Department of State 2012, 155).

4.1.5. Challenges Encountered

Given the complexity of trafficking, it is not possible to review here all the challenges associated with it. Instead, this section highlights some of them. It is clear that in order to effectively prevent and combat human trafficking, a holistic approach that addresses the causes and consequences of trafficking is very important. To begin with, there should be a clear definition of trafficking that can be used by different actors to formulate legislations and polices (Obokata 2006). However, due to lack of a clear legal definition of trafficking, the Ethiopian Federal Police and Ministry of Justice have faced difficulty in effectively investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases (United States Department of State 2012, 154). Moreover, the following are some of the challenges that have been identified from different sources:

- Although victims' participation in investigations and prosecutions is strongly encouraged by police, resource constraint is often a challenge (United States Department of State 2012).
- There is absence of a clear understanding of trafficking in human beings among key stakeholders and the community in general (ILO 2011).
- There are legally registered private employment agencies that are engaged in human trafficking (ILO 2011).

- Like many developing countries, there is a wide spread lack of birth registration (UNICEF 2005).
- Regional law enforcement entities all over the country do not have a clear understanding of the distinction between trafficking and smuggling (United States Department of State 2012).

4.1.6. Best Practices from Other Countries

As already mentioned, although there are efforts in Ethiopia to prevent and combat trafficking, they are not adequate. Therefore, all while having their own limitations, there are countries that the Ethiopian government could take anti-trafficking lessons from. One of the best practices is establishing/strengthening bilateral and multilateral agreements with labour receiving countries in the Middle East. Though the focus was on the sex sector industry, for example, a report indicates that where there are cooperative agreements between receiving states and the Philippine government, the trafficking incidence among Filipino irregular migrants is low. The Filipino situation is rather characterized by "ample channels for regular labour migration monitored through government supervision, extensive experience with migration, and the amplitude of consequent contacts and connections to Filipinos" (Taran and Chammartin 2003, 7-8). Given that trafficking involves fraud and deception, awareness raising and information campaigns are crucial. In this regard, one of the best practices from other countries is a month-long march campaign throughout Bangladesh that aimed at highlighting trafficking in human beings and other crimes against women. Government officials and members of the society participated in the marches (ILO 2003).

International Social Security Program (ISSP) that was agreed in March 2013 between Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia is another best practice. The Program, effective since 14 March, is devised to support Sri Lankan domestic workers in Saudi Arabia and their sponsors. It is claimed that it is a win-win insurance scheme for both parties. The important features of the scheme include insurance, legal aid, language translation, meet and assistance at airports, ground services and provision of up-to-date information of visa processed and workers statuses in Saudi Arabia. The insurance premium is paid by the sponsor on behalf of his/her employee (Arab News, 14 March 2013).

CHAPTER 5- CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Trafficking is a worldwide concern that affects everyone. It is unfortunate that majority of Ethiopian women and girls who migrate to the Middle East to work as housemaids are prey of trafficking. Though complexity of trafficking poses a major challenge internationally, of greatest and most direct concern of this study has been the fact that the influx of trafficked Ethiopian women and girls to the region is alarmingly increasing. The study has revealed that the three major causes of the trafficking from Ethiopia to the Middle East are poverty, unemployment and gender inequality. In addition, it has highlighted the plights of the trafficking victims in major countries of destination. Furthermore, the study has argued that despite the fact that efforts are being made, and preventing and combating trafficking in human beings poses significant challenges to Ethiopia, the government's response is still inadequate compared to the scale of the problem. In light of these problems and the gaps highlighted in the discussion section, the following points are suggested to the Ethiopian government.

Firstly, as noted above, poverty and lack of opportunities for employment are the two root causes that compel women and girls to seek opportunity in the Middle East and make them vulnerable to trafficking. Therefore, anti-trafficking initiatives in the country need to consider creating alternative livelihoods by involving all the key stakeholders. Secondly, since the underlying gender inequality in the country is the third factor that has triggered the women and girls to migrate and has made them vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers, the government should take legislative and programmatic measures that properly address gender discrimination and inequality. Thirdly, although it is common to see different definitions of trafficking being used by academics, activists and policy

makers, the Ethiopian government needs to have a common legal definition. In this regard, of the various definitions that have been given so far, the most accepted definition internationally is the one given by the UN under the Palermo Protocol. Therefore, using this definition would have great relevance to Ethiopia's anti-trafficking activities. Last, but not least, the government must strengthen bilateral and multilateral agreements with major destination countries in the Middle East to mitigate the problem and protect the rights of trafficked Ethiopian women and girls.

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