

**INDRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION**

**“POVERTY AND LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF RURAL  
LANDLESS IN AMHARA REGIONAL STATE OF ETHIOPIA: THE  
CASE OF MECHA DISTRICT”**

**BY MEZGEBU WERKU AYALEW**

**MAY 2014**

**ADDIS ABABA**

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AMHARA REGIONAL STATE OF ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF MECHA  
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**BY**

**MEZGEBU WERKU AYALEW**

**A THESIS FOR THE PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MA IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT SUBMITTED TO INDIRA  
GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF CONTINUING  
EDUCATION**

**MAY 2014**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

## DECLARATION

I hereby Declare that the Dissertation entitled “**POVERTY AND LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF RURAL LANDLESS IN AMHARA REGIONAL STATE OF ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF MECHA DISTRICT**” submitted by me for the partial fulfillment of the M.A. in Rural development to Indira Gandhi National Open University, (IGNOU) New Delhi is my own original work and has not been submitted earlier either to IGNOU or to any other institutions for the fulfillment of the requirement of any courses of study. I also declare that no chapter of this manuscript in whole or in part is lifted and incorporated in this report from any earlier work done by me or others.

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## CERTIFICATION

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His Project Work entitled “**POVERTY AND LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF RURAL LANDLESS IN AMHARA REGIONAL STATE OF ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF MECHA DISTRICT**”, which he is submitting, is his genuine and original work.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis manuscript to my beloved younger brothers Aemro, Amha and Yohannes Werku. I need to remind you, it is your turn to do much more than this.

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## ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ACSI	Amhara Credit and Saving Institute
ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
AGP	Agricultural Growth Program
BoFED	Bureau of Finance & Economic Development
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
CSTC	Community Skill Training Center
DFID	The United Kingdom’s Department for International Development
EDHS	Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SHG	Self Help Group
SLF	Sustainable Livelihood Framework
SPSS	Statically Package for Social Science

# **“Poverty and Livelihood Strategies of Rural Landless in Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia: The Case of Mecha District”**

**By Mezgebu Werku Ayalew**

**Advisor: Eylachew Zewdie (Dr.)**

## **ABSTRACT**

*Access to land is an important issue for the majority of Ethiopian people who, in one way or the other, depend on agricultural production for their income and subsistence. However, agricultural land is becoming very scarce, fragmented and its productivity becomes diminishing. In Amhara Region no land redistribution has happened for the last 18 years. This means that farmers, particularly the youth, who were not old enough to get land in the land reallocations, have no future in farming. With this intention, this paper tries to examine the poverty situations and livelihood strategies of rural landless in Mecha district. Thus, for this study, qualitative and quantitative information's are used from primary and secondary sources, in which 118 sample rural landless households that are selected from two Kebeles of Mecha district using simple random sampling method are interviewed.*

*Based on the assessment result of this study, it is found that the major livelihood activities of the rural landless households are farming/crop production, livestock rearing, and paid agricultural jobs, small businesses, sale of fire woods/charcoal, casual works, service provision and beekeeping. The rural landless are spending a significant proportion of their income to rent in agricultural land, food purchase, health care and input cost. Also, the majority of the rural landless households face food shortage for about four consecutive months in year where adults eat less than two times a day, and children less than three times a day. The study identified that absence of adequate agricultural land, inappropriate land management practices, poor quality of land, pests & insects, and lack of improved agricultural inputs like fertilizers and improved seeds are a major causes of food shortages. These target households face numerous undesirable consequences; however, poverty, exploitation, insecurity, and migration are the major. As a coping strategies and food stress response the rural landless are usually used reducing the quality of meals, eating less preferred foods, reducing the number of meals, reduce the amount of food eaten by adults so that children can eat, and borrowing grain or cash to buy food from friends/neighbors or relatives. On the other hand, the provisions of financial services, trainings, extension and supports for the rural landless are too inadequate to create employment opportunity.*

*In general, based on this research finding, it is found that the segment of the population in Mecha district is found in extreme poverty situation, and the root causes of poverty is lack of agricultural land, absence of skill training schemes, and limited provision of services (credit, input and training).*

*Finally, this paper recommends that, since agricultural land becomes scarce and unable to absorb the new entrants to the farming, the government, nongovernmental organizations, and other concerned stakeholders shall work on promoting off farm & nonfarm activities; facilitating credit, skill training, and extension services; promote rural enterprises; design specific target group development programs; promote saving led literacy; support community skill training so that to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for the rural landless.*

- **Key Words: Rural landless, Livelihood, Poverty**



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Annex II. List of survey respondent & Key Informant Interview (KII) participants

## GLOSSARY OF SOME TERMS

**Derg:** A provisional military government that ruled Ethiopia for about seventeen years, 1975-1991

**Equib:** *Equib* is Ethiopia's indigenous informal rotating saving and credit association formed by groups of individuals who meet regularly (typically every weekend) and contribute to a common fund. Conventionally, each member is eligible in turn to receive the pooled amount using a lottery or some other agreed-upon system. In the traditional form of *Equib*, enforcement of the association's rules and norms of behavior were realized largely through community controls and potential sanctions on members.

**Kebele:** A **kebele** (Amharic: ቀበሌ, qäbäle) is the smallest administrative unit of Ethiopia similar to a ward, a neighborhood or a localized and delimited group of people. It is part of a district, or district, itself usually part of a Zone, which in turn are grouped into one of the Regions based on ethno-linguistic communities (or *kililoch*) that comprise the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Each *kebele* consists of at least five hundred households, or the equivalent of 3,500 to 4,000 persons. (*Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia; accessed on 10 May 2014*)

**Lole/Lij Azay:** Children from poor families who are employed at better-off households and paid a monthly or year's salary (*Lole for boys and Lij Azay for girls*).

**Qadda:** A unit locally used to measure land size (four *qadda* is equal to one hectare)

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1. Background of the study**

Land lies at the heart of social, political and economic life in most of Africa, where agriculture, natural resources and other land-based activities are fundamental to livelihoods, food security, incomes and employment. Land also continues to have major historical and spiritual significance for Africa's people. At one time land seemed an almost inexhaustible asset in Africa, but population growth and market development are creating mounting pressure and competition for land resources, especially close to towns and cities, and in productive, high value areas. Customary land management is under pressure, and the coverage of formal land institutions is generally very limited (Julian et al. 2004).

Land is a fundamental livelihood asset. Shelter, food production and other livelihood activities all depend on it. Secure, safe and affordable land is a necessary, but not always sufficient condition for reducing poverty. For most poor people, access to land resource must be complemented by improved access to services (health, education, skills, finance, transport and knowledge), technologies and markets if they are to realize better livelihood opportunities and escape from poverty (DFID, Nov 2012).

Large numbers of the world's poorest people, especially in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, live in farming households and depend for their livelihoods and food security on the productive use of land. In almost all developing countries, agricultural productivity makes a major contribution to growth, employment and livelihoods (DFID, Nov. 2012).



Likewise, in Ethiopia, more than 80% of the population is relies its livelihood on agriculture. Thus, agricultural land is a key asset for the livelihood of the rural people.

However, based on the Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS, 2011) report, 73.1% of Ethiopians, which is 87.8% of rural and 22.5% of urban households, have agricultural land. Which means a significant proportion of the population, i.e., 26.9%, 12.2% and 77.5% of the national, rural and urban communities respectively have not agricultural land.

Thus, to this extent, those landless people are vulnerable to poverty unless other forms of livelihood opportunities are created or policy measures are taken.

Therefore, this study is intended to examine the poverty situations of the rural landless people in Mecha district and also asses their livelihood strategies so that to recommend the possible livelihood options and/or indicate measures to be taken in order to enhance their livelihood sustainably.

## **1.1. Description of the topics and major concepts**

The major terms and concepts used in this research paper include poverty, livelihood, and livelihood strategies with respect to rural landless people.

### **1.1.1. Poverty**

When reviewing different literatures on poverty, one can understand that there is no typical thought or definition of poverty because of its multidimensional nature as well as

its dynamic properties. Some tried to approach poverty from statistical points of view while others followed a more ambiguous definition. Most economists and social workers use a combination of both methods to define poverty.

The United Nations defines poverty as “Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.”

While, the World Bank defines, “Poverty is an income level below some minimum level necessary to meet basic needs. This minimum level is usually called the “poverty line”. What is necessary to satisfy basic needs varies across time and societies. Therefore, poverty lines vary in time and place, and each country uses lines which are appropriate to its level of development, societal norms and values. But the content of the needs is more or less the same everywhere. Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.

Likewise, the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, agreed to define poverty as a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services. It includes a lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by lack of participation in decision making and in civil, social and cultural life. It occurs in all countries: as mass poverty in many developing countries, pockets of poverty amid wealth in developed countries, loss of livelihoods as a result of economic recession, sudden poverty as a result of disaster or conflict, the poverty of low-wage workers, and the utter destitution of people who fall outside family support systems, social institutions and safety nets.

In pure economic terms, income poverty is when a family's income fails to meet a federally established threshold that differs across countries. Typically it is measured with respect to families and not the individual, and is adjusted for the number of persons in a family. Economists often seek to identify the families whose economic position (defined as command over resources) falls below some minimally acceptance level (*Smelser 2001*). Similarly, the international standard of extreme poverty is set to the possession of less than 1\$ a day.

Frequently, poverty is defined in either relative or absolute terms. Absolute poverty measures poverty in relation to the amount of money necessary to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. The concept of absolute poverty is not concerned with broader quality of life issues or with the overall level of inequality in society. The concept therefore fails to recognize that individuals have important social and cultural needs. This, and similar criticisms, led to the development of the concept of relative poverty. Relative poverty defines poverty in relation to the economic status of other members of the society: people are poor if they fall below prevailing standards of living in a given societal context. An important criticism of both concepts is that they are largely concerned with income and consumption.

The concept of social exclusion emerged largely in reaction to this type of narrow definition of poverty. It has contributed significantly towards including multi-faceted indicators of ill-being into the conceptual understanding of poverty. To further develop the definition of the concept of relative poverty or relative deprivation, three perspectives are relevant; the income perspective indicates that a person is poor only if his or her income is below the country's poverty line (defined in terms of having income sufficient for a specified amount of food); the basic needs perspective goes beyond the income perspective to include the need for the provision by a community of the basic social services necessary to prevent individuals from falling into poverty; and finally, the

capability (or empowerment) perspective suggests that poverty signify a lack of some basic capability to function<sup>1</sup>.

Social scientists' understanding of poverty, on the other hand, is critical of the economical idea of free choice models where individuals control their own destiny and are thus the cause of their own poverty. Rather than being interested in its measurement, sociologists generally study the reasons for poverty, such as the roles of culture, power, social structure and other factors largely out of the control of the individual. Accordingly, the multidimensional nature of poverty, in particular social aspects such as housing poor, health poor or time poor, needs to be understood in order to create more effective programs for poverty alleviation.

Today it is widely held that one cannot consider only the economic part of poverty. Poverty is also social, political and cultural. Moreover, it is considered to undermine human rights - economic (the right to work and have an adequate income), social (access to health care and education), political (freedom of thought, expression and association) and cultural (the right to maintain one's cultural identity and be involved in a community's cultural life) (UNESCO).

For this study, the researcher considers poverty from its economic points of view, which includes a lack of income and productive resources (land and other resources), and also the income and expenditure level to ensure sustainable livelihoods for the case of the rural landless in the study area. In addition, absolute poverty measures of the target population,

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP Human Development Report, 1997

i.e., their position in relation to the amount of money necessary to meet their basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter is assessed.

### **1.1.2. Livelihood**

The Oxford English dictionary defines livelihood as “a means of securing the necessities of life”. A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. (Chambers & Conway, 1991)

In order to better understand how people develop and maintain livelihoods, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), building on the work of practitioners and academics, developed the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF).

This framework is an analysis tool, useful for understanding the many factors that affect a person’s livelihood and how those factors interact with each other. The SLF views livelihoods as systems and provides a way to understand:

- The assets people draw upon
- The strategies they develop to make a living
- The context within which a livelihood is developed, and

- Those factors that make a livelihood more or less vulnerable to shocks and stresses.

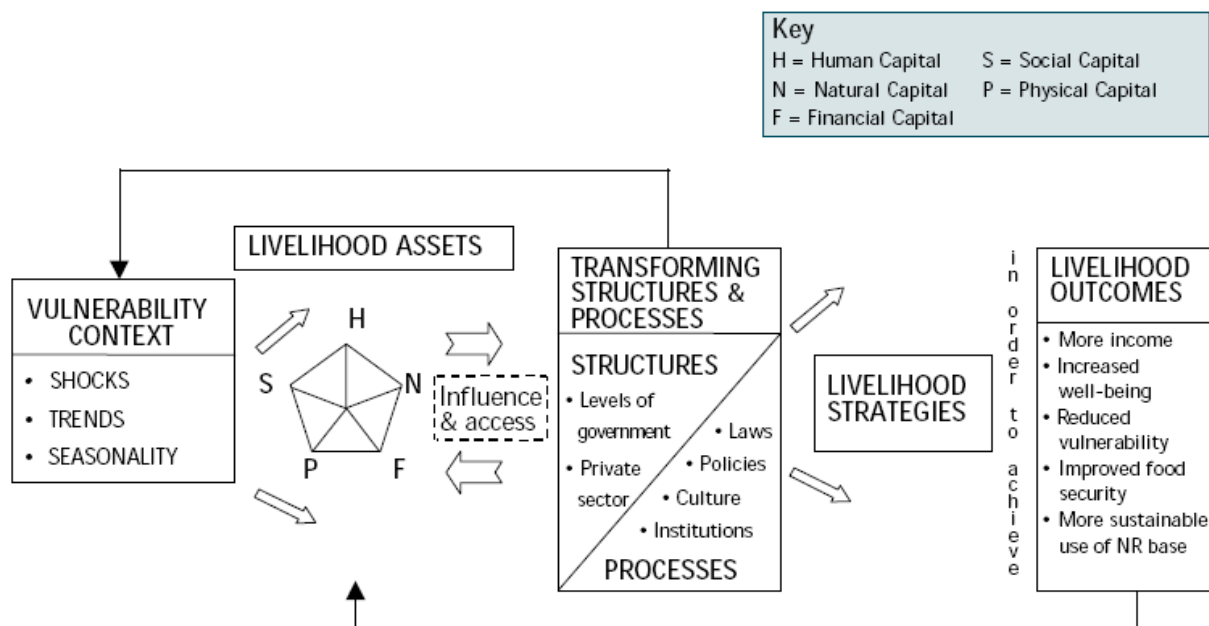


Figure 1: DFID's Sustainable Livelihood Framework Approach

### 1.1.2.1. Important characteristic of a livelihood

#### i. Livelihood assets

Assets may be tangible, such as food stores and cash savings, as well as trees, land, livestock, tools, and other resources. Assets may also be intangible such as claims one can make for food, work, and assistance as well as access to materials, information, education, health services and employment opportunities.

Another way of understanding the assets, or capitals, that people draw upon to make a living is to categorize them into the following five groups: human, social, natural, physical, financial, and political capitals.

- Human Capital: Skills, knowledge, health and ability to work
- Social capital: social resources, including informal networks, membership of formalized groups and relationships of trust that facilitate cooperation and economic opportunities
- Natural capital: natural resources such as land, soil, water, forests and fisheries
- Physical capital: basic infrastructure such as roads, water and sanitation, schools, ICT; and producer goods, including tools, livestock and equipment.
- Financial resources: financial resources including savings, credits, and income from employment, trade and remittances.

## **ii. Livelihood context**

Livelihoods are formed within social, economic and political contexts. Institutions, processes and policies, such as markets, social norms, and land ownership policies affect the ability to access and use assets for a favorable outcome. As these contexts change they create new livelihood obstacles or opportunities.

## **iii. Livelihood strategies**

How people access and use these assets, within the aforementioned social, economic, political and environmental contexts, form a livelihood strategy. The range and diversity



of livelihood strategies are enormous. An individual may take on several activities to meet his/her needs. One or many individuals may engage in activities that contribute to a collective livelihood strategy. Within households, individuals often take on different responsibilities to enable the sustenance and growth of the family. In some cultures, this grouping may expand to a small community, in which individuals work together to meet the needs of the entire group.

#### **iv. Livelihood Vulnerability**

The strength of a given livelihood is not only measured by its productive outcomes, but equally by its resilience to shocks, seasonal changes and trends. Shocks might include natural disasters, wars, and economic downturns. Availability of resources, income-generating opportunities, and demand for certain products and services may fluctuate seasonally. More gradual and often predictable, trends in politics and governance, technology use, economics, and availability of natural resources, can pose serious obstacles to the future of many livelihoods. These changes impact the availability of assets and the opportunities to transform those assets into a “living”. Under such conditions, people must adapt existing strategies or develop new strategies in order to survive.

#### **v. Livelihood Interdependence**

One final important characteristic of livelihoods is their interdependence. Very few livelihoods exist in isolation. A given livelihood may rely on other livelihoods to access and exchange assets. Traders rely on farmers to produce goods, processors to prepare them, and consumers to buy them. Livelihoods also compete with each other for access to

assets and markets. Thus positive and negative impacts on any given livelihood will, in turn, impact others. This is a particularly important consideration when planning livelihood assistance.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

In agricultural/production economics, land, labour, capital, and management are the major factors of production. Nonetheless, these basic resources are becoming scarcer and scarcer for a number of reasons in different contexts. Among these resources, land is one of the key productive livelihood assets for agrarian society in general and Ethiopian farming population in particular where the majority derive a living directly from it (*Reta*).

Access to land is an important issue for the majority of Ethiopian people who, one way or the other, depend on agricultural production for their income and subsistence. Since agriculture is the foundation of the country's economy, accounting for almost half (which is 46.3%) of the gross domestic product (GDP), 83.9% of exports, and 80% of total employment.

It is verified through various empirical findings that in Amhara region, agriculture is based on rain fed agriculture and is vulnerable to risks and hazards. Moreover, agricultural land is becoming very scarce, fragmented and its productivity becomes diminishing.

Land size per household is 0.5 to 1.5 hectares in highland areas, and 2 to 3 hectares in the lowland. Due to the scarcity of land, in 1996, land was given to landless youth and returnee ex-soldiers in Amhara Region by reducing the holding of farmers who were reportedly associated with previous governments. In Amhara Region no land

redistribution has happened for the last 18 years. This means that farmers, particularly the youth, who were not old enough to get land in the land reallocations, have no future in farming. They have to migrate to urban areas to seek other means of survival, or they are forced to depend on their parents. Thus, they are not able to be productive and active participants in the farming systems in their communities.

On the other hand, increasing population in the rural areas is thus absorbed in agriculture through leveling down of holdings, rather than through alternative forms of employment. Population growth could have been supported by rural non-farm employment creation, but this hasn't happened so young adults people remain in rural areas either unemployed, as landless labourers or as sharecroppers on someone else's land.

Similarly, large numbers of the rural poorest people in Mecha district who are living in farming households and depend for their livelihoods and food security on the productive use of land, and agricultural productivity makes a major contribution to employment and livelihoods of the people.

It is clear that, as a significant proportion of the population becomes landless, the access to adequate food in particular and the entire livelihood of that household will be in danger and the vulnerability to poverty becomes high.

Even though, the Ethiopian government, as a food security program intervention, has planned to address people who have very small plots and landless youth and women (FDRE, GTP. 2010). Based on the plan, these community members will be encouraged to engage in non-farm income generating activities with adequate support in terms of preparing packages, provision of skill and business management trainings, provision of

credit and facilitating markets, so that they can ensure their food security. However, there are limited trends in alleviation these root cause of problems.

The Amhara national regional state has conducted a land distribution before 18 years ago. Therefore, people who were young during the land distribution and born after that period remained landless. In addition, since most of the people are smallholder, they are unable to secure their minimum family consumptions.

This is therefore the paper will try to examine the poverty situation of those who are landless in rural Mecha and their livelihood strategies.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study:**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective:**

- To study the poverty situations and livelihood strategies of rural landless in Mecha district.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives:**

- To examine the state of poverty of the rural landless and to identify the root cause.
- To examine the livelihood strategies of rural landless individuals/households.
- To assess the provisions and services of the private, government and non-government sectors in creating livelihood opportunity for rural landless.

#### **1.4. Hypothesis**

The segment of the population in Mecha district is found in extreme poverty situation, and the root causes of poverty is lack of agricultural land, absence of skill training schemes, limited provision of services (credit, input and training).

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

Identifying the root causes of poverty for the rural landless, constraints and potentials of the study area seems to have short and long-term developmental implication to promote sustainable livelihood strategies. Therefore, understanding of the livelihood strategies of rural landless could be made only through academic research of such type. It is this very reason that necessitated conducting this study.

Thus this study will have the following specific significances:

- In identifying the status, constraints and potentials of the rural landless to support the economy if they are supported well.
- The region and other interested groups may obtain first hand information on the poverty situation and livelihood strategies of rural landless.
- Motivate potential researchers to undertake research on the poverty and livelihood strategies of rural landless in Amhara region as well as in other parts of the country.

Hence, this research indicates the extent to which the livelihood strategies of rural landless have been altered.

## **1.6. Scope and Limitations of the study**

This study was carried out in Amhara National Regional State at Mecha district. Due to time and budget limitations and accessibility problems, the study was conducted only at one district and two Kebeles namely: Enamirt and Kurt Bahir. It was focused on poverty and livelihood strategies of rural landless. Although poverty can have many forms, only the economic poverty was considered in this study.

## **1.7. Organization of the study**

This thesis research has been designed in five consecutive chapters. Chapter one is introduction and covers background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, it's significant as well as hypotheses and organization of the paper. Information on the previous works and empirical findings have been properly examined and entertained in chapter two. Chapter three also deals with research methodology where description of the area, tools and procedures of data collection, data processing & analysis, and limitations of the study are presented. Chapter four gives us the analysis and interpretation of descriptive analysis. Finally conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data, and recommendation are covered in chapter five.

## Chapter Two

### 2. Literature review

#### 2.1. Dimensions of Poverty in the World, Sub Saharan Africa, Ethiopia and Amhara region

According to new preliminary estimates (World Bank, IFAD; 2011), 21 percent of people in the developing world lived at or below \$1.25 a day. That's down from 43 percent in 1990 and 52 percent in 1981. It means that 1.22 billion people lived on less than \$1.25 a day in 2010, compared with 1.91 billion in 1990, and 1.94 billion in 1981. Notwithstanding this achievement, even if the current rate of progress is to be maintained, some 1 billion people will still live in extreme poverty in 2015. In some developing countries, we continue to see a wide gap – or in some cases – widening gap between the rich and the poor, and between those who can and cannot access opportunities. It means that access to good schools, healthcare, electricity, safe water and other critical services remains elusive for many people who live in growing economies. Other challenges, such as economic shocks, food shortages and climate change threaten to undermine the progress made in recent years.

The largest segment of the world's poor is the 800 million poor women, children and men who live in rural environments (IFAD, 2011). These are the subsistence farmers and herders, the fishers and migrant workers, the artisans and indigenous peoples whose daily struggles seldom capture world attention. Empowering rural people is an essential first step to eradicating poverty.

Poverty in Africa is predominantly rural. More than 70 per cent of the continent's poor people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for food and livelihood. In Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 218 million people live in extreme poverty. Among them are rural poor people in Eastern and Southern Africa, an area that has one of the world's highest concentrations of poor people. The progress of national and rural development is slow. Development assistance to agriculture has been declined. This has a negative impact on smallholder farming, the basic source of livelihood for the rural poor. In general, agricultural productivity per worker is stagnating or decreasing. More than 85 per cent of the rural poor live on land that has medium to high potential for increased productivity. The poorest people live in the desert or on semi-arid land that makes up almost 40 per cent of the land base of this part of Africa (IFAD, 2005).

While in Ethiopia, according to the 2010/11 HICES, the proportion of poor people (poverty head count index) in the country is estimated to be 29.6% in 2010/11. While the proportion of the population below the poverty line stood at 30.4% in rural areas, it is estimated to be 25.7% in urban areas (IFAD). Here also, the Ethiopian government in its interim report<sup>2</sup> on poverty analysis (MoFED, 2012), described that there has been a decline in the proportion of rural people who are below the poverty line and the average gap of the poor from the poverty line, but no improvement in the distribution of income among the rural poor. The decline in rural poverty can be attributed to the wide-ranging and multi-faceted pro-poor programs that have been implemented in rural areas such as extension of improved agricultural technologies and farming practices, commercialization

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<sup>2</sup> MoFED, *Ethiopia's Progress towards Eradicating Poverty: An Interim Report on Poverty Analysis Study (2010/11)*, March 2012, Addis Ababa



of smallholder farming agriculture, rural infrastructural development and a range of food security programs (productive safety net programs, provision of credit etc). Similarly, the proportion of poor people (poverty head count index) in Amhara region is 30.7% in Rural, 29.2% in urban and 30.5% total (MoFED, 2012)

Since 2007, Ethiopia has achieved strong economic growth, making it one of the highest performing economies in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet it remains one of the world's poorest countries. As stated above, about 29 per cent of the population lives below the national poverty line (World Bank Group, IFAD, and MoFED). Ethiopia ranks 174<sup>th</sup> out of 187 countries on the United Nations Development Programme's human development index, and average per capita incomes are less than half the current sub-Saharan average.

The intensity of poverty varies at the household level in relation to the land's size, quality and productivity, climate conditions and production technologies. Households headed by women are particularly vulnerable. Women are much less likely than men to receive an education or health benefits, or to have a voice in decisions affecting their lives. For women, poverty means more infant deaths, undernourished families, lack of education for children and other deprivations (IFAD).

## **2.2. Smallholder Agriculture in Ethiopia**

The Ethiopian agricultural system has had a significant share to the national economy but unable to free the nation from poverty and hunger, as a result the country is suffering series of a grim food insecurity situation year after year and experiencing bad macroeconomic trends. Agriculture contributes 45% to the GDP; generates 85% of foreign currency earning; employs about 83% of labor force; supplies the main sources

raw materials; and provides a means of livelihoods for the majority, which is around 80 percent of Ethiopian 80 million populations<sup>3</sup>.

Low productivity combined with extreme population puts enormous pressures on natural resources and the result is levels of soil erosion and vegetation destruction that are often irreversible. Farmers continue to use outdated technologies and have very limited access to yield-enhancing inputs, including quality seeds/breeds and fertilizers (FAO).

Ethiopia has enormous potential for agricultural development. At present only about 25 per cent of its arable land is cultivated, and agriculture is dominated by subsistence rain fed farming, using few inputs and characterized by low productivity. Smallholder farmers form the largest group of poor people in Ethiopia. More than half cultivate plots of 1 hectare or less and struggle to produce enough food to feed their households. About 12.7 million smallholders produce 95 per cent of agricultural GDP. These farmers are extremely vulnerable to external shocks such as volatile global markets and drought and other natural disasters (Future agricultures, January 2006)

The persistent lack of rainfall is a major factor in rural poverty. Drought has become more frequent and severe throughout the country over the past decade, and the trend shows signs of worsening. The impact of drought is most severe for vulnerable households living in the pastoral areas of lowlands and the high-density parts of highlands.

In addition to their vulnerability to climatic conditions, poor rural people lack basic social and economic infrastructure such as health and education facilities, veterinary services

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<sup>3</sup> *Land, Land Policy and Smallholder agriculture in Ethiopia; Policy Brief 001; future agricultures, January 2006*

and access to safe drinking water. Among the more specific causes of rural poverty in Ethiopia are: a) An ineffective and inefficient agricultural marketing system; b) Underdeveloped transport and communications networks; c) Underdeveloped production technologies; d) Limited access of rural households to support services; e) Environmental degradation; f) Lack of participation by rural poor people in decisions that affect their livelihoods (*Future agricultures, January 2006*).

Understanding the linkages between access to land (size and ownership structures) and access to other sources of income and capital is an essential element in the policy dialogue about food security and poverty reduction (*Jolyne & Susana, 1998*).

Most Ethiopians continue to struggle to make their living from smallholder farming, despite low returns, high risks, and the evident inability of agriculture to provide even a reliable subsistence income, let alone a ‘take-off’ to poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth. Policy-makers and analysts, both national and expatriate, have vacillated between arguing for increased investment in smallholder farming, commercializing agriculture, or abandoning unviable smallholder agriculture by promoting diversification or urbanization instead (*Future Agricultures, Policy Brief 001, Jan 2006*).

According to the DFID, in the 2000 cropping season, 87.4 % of rural households operated less than 2 hectares; whereas 64.5 % of them cultivated farms less than one hectare; while 40.6 % operated land sizes of 0.5 hectare and less. Such small farms are fragmented on average into 2.3 plots. The average farm size can generate only about 50% of the minimum income required for the average farm household to lead a life out of poverty, if

current levels of farm productivity and price structures remain constant. Such farmers have little or no surplus for investment and for input purchase. The increasing decline of farm size also leads to a reduction of fallowing practice or shortening of fallow cycles, and rotation, with a consequence of declining soil quality and fertility in some highland areas. The average farm size is considered by many to be too small to allow sustainable intensification of smallholder agriculture. The probability of adopting fertilizer and improved seeds decreases with declines in farm size. Households with relatively small farm size are generally poor in cash income, have less access to extension services and credit, and have less risk coping opportunities to take risks of rain failure, and less profitable technologies given higher transaction costs of acquisition and application of fertilizer per unit of operated land.

### **2.3. Rural Land Tenure in Ethiopia**

Land is a public property in Ethiopia. It has been administered by the government since the 1975 radical land reform. The reform brought to an end the exploitative type of relationship that existed between tenants and landlords. Tenants became own operators with use rights, but with no rights to sell, mortgage or exchange of land. The change of government in 1991 has brought not much change in terms of land policy. The EPRDF-led government that overthrew the Military government (*Derg*) in 1991 has inherited the land policy of its predecessor. Even though the new government adopted a free market economic policy, it has decided to maintain all rural and urban land under public ownership. The December 1994 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia proclaimed that *'Land is a common property of the nations, nationalities and*

*peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of transfer*'. Since the 1975 land reform, which made all rural land public property, the possession of land plots has been conditional upon residence in a village. The transfer of land through long-term lease or sales has been forbidden, and government sponsored periodic redistribution, though, discouraged administratively since the early 1990s, has not been outlawed (Mulat, 1999).

As explained above, Ethiopia is one of the few countries in Africa that has not made significant changes in its basic land policy for over three decades; except for occasional land redistributions to accommodate the growing population. Land redistribution was more frequent during the *Derg* time and has been discouraged since 1991, though not totally eliminated. No redistribution has happened for 10 years in Amhara Region, 15 years in other regions. In 1996, land was given to landless youth and returnee ex-soldiers in Amhara Region by reducing the holding of farmers who were reportedly associated with previous governments. Even though equity or social justice seems the major objective of the redistribution, it also demonstrates the loophole in the policy which allows local authorities to use the land policy as a political instrument. In other regions, communal grazing and woodland was allotted to new claimants (Mulat, 1999). Increasing population in the rural areas was thus absorbed in agriculture through leveling down of holdings, rather than through alternative forms of employment. Population growth could have been supported by rural non-farm employment creation, but this hasn't happened so young adults people remain in rural areas either unemployed, as landless labourers or as sharecroppers on someone else's land. This consequence of the land redistributions and

the current land policy does not seem to have been foreseen by the government of Ethiopia.

Access to land is an important issue for the majority of Ethiopian people who, one way or the other, depend on agricultural production for their income and subsistence. Land tenure issues therefore continue to be of central political and economic importance, as they have been at several junctures in Ethiopia's history. The decisive significance of the land question was perhaps most explicitly expressed in the course of events leading to the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974.

However, a restricted short-term leasing of land use right has been allowed since 1991. '*Land to the Tiller*' was the rallying cry of the student and opposition movement, which eventually prevailed and toppled the old regime (Helland, 1999). Historically, as in contemporary Ethiopia, the issue of rural land is primarily a political or social question. The land question of the 1960s or early 1970s was primarily a political question aimed at ending the feudal form of exploitation of peasants by a few landlords, especially in the southern part of the country. The 1975 radical land reform accomplished this objective and was applauded at the time as it seemed that the question of rural land had got an adequate answer. However, the level of poverty and food insecurity has been worsened and failed to subside, despite fundamental changes in the land tenure system. This situation has called for development experts to revisit the role of the over three decades old land policy to foster/hinder rural development. The fact that farmers have only usufruct rights to land has sparked a debate among Ethiopian and foreign scholars

regarding the effect of the tenure system on land investment and management, factor mobility and the development of the non-farm sector (*Gebremedhin and Nega, 2005*).

Despite policy constraints, land rental markets remain important in Ethiopia. Taking fixed rental and sharecropping together, 22% and 23% of households in Tigray and Amhara regions, respectively, cultivate someone else's land obtained through land rental markets. Such markets help land transfer from relatively old, resource poor farmers to young, healthier and/ or relatively resource rich farmers. Land rental markets can improve the allocative efficiency of factors of production and so expand the use of purchased farm inputs like inorganic fertilizers and improved seeds. Farm households that rent-in or share-in lands not only applied more improved technologies, but also got the opportunity to use labour and oxen that otherwise would be under- or unutilized (*Future agricultures, Jan 2006*).

The land issue, perhaps more than any other policy issue, is hotly contested. An enhanced free operation of land rental market, some commentators argue, could have positive effects, encouraging land consolidation and increasing incentives for land investments and commercialization. But many policy makers have a less positive view. A freely operating land rental market could lead, they argue, to unproductive accumulation of land or translate into the creation of a large landless class, with unknown social and political consequences (*Future agricultures, Jan 2006*).

#### **2.4. Vulnerability of rural landless to poverty**

Access to land and land tenure security are at the heart of all rural societies and agricultural economies. Having land, controlling it and using it are critical dimensions of

rural livelihoods, and determine rural wealth and rural poverty. In rural societies, landless or near-landless people and people with insecure tenure rights often constitute the poorest and most vulnerable groups. Poorer and marginalized groups tend to have secondary rights that rarely extend beyond use rights. And what rights they have are often unprotected and weak, especially in the case of women.

Land is not simply an economic resource. It is an important factor in the formation of social and cultural identity and in the organization of religious life. It is also an enormous political resource, defining power relations between and among individuals, families and communities under established systems of governance.

Land issues have an impact on the everyday choices and prospects of poor rural people. For example, issues of land access and security of land tenure strongly influence decisions on the nature of crops grown, whether for subsistence or commercial purposes. Such issues also influence the extent to which farmers are prepared to invest (both financially and in terms of labour) in improvements in production, in sustainable natural resources management, and in the adoption of new technologies and promising innovations. They also have an impact on people's access to financial services and on their capacity to interact and take advantage of markets. The structure and functioning of land tenure systems are important factors in determining how the benefits of agriculture-based activities are divided among various individuals and groups within households and communities (IFAD, 2013).



## 2.5. Livelihood strategies of rural landless

Most poor rural households depend on agriculture as the main source of their livelihoods and hence rely on the productive use of land. However, livelihood sources have now become diverse across and within countries in which rural households engage in farming, agricultural wage labour, employment in rural non-farm economy and migration. Chambers (1997) argued that poor people have to engage in diversifying their livelihood sources against risks and uncertainties. Despite increasing diversification of livelihood sources, agriculture continues to play a vital role through its contribution to growth, employment and livelihoods in most of sub-Saharan African countries though food security remains at stake.

Samuel (2006), recommended that, the major pathways that the Ethiopian agriculture should take are; Intensification of smallholder agriculture, livelihood diversification, Commercialization of agriculture, and 'Depopulation. He further describes that, given the inability of most Ethiopian smallholders to make a living from agriculture, because of resource constraints and recurrent shocks, increasing policy attention has turned to supporting alternative livelihood activities. The government's strategy of 'Agriculture Development-Led Industrialization' (ADLI) recognizes the reciprocal linkages between agriculture and other sectors, but has had little impact to date. Recently, the government has promoted 'livelihoods packages' that aim to support secondary sources of income such as beekeeping by smallholders, as a way of supplementing and diversifying household incomes against drought and other production shocks. Another approach to supporting livelihood diversification is to promote the growth of small towns in rural

areas. Survey evidence from Wollo and Tigray confirms the benefits to farmers of being located within walking distance of urban centers. Towns provide access to employment, basic services, and markets for commodities, agricultural inputs and outputs. In Wollo, the decentralization programme and the proclamation of towns as district or zonal capitals created local centers of economic growth that had beneficial ripple effects throughout the surrounding villages. In Tigray, significant differences in household incomes and agricultural production were recorded between villages located near and far from towns and markets, partly because farmers nearer towns enjoyed preferential access to input credit, fertilizer traders and extension services *Future Agricultures, Jan 2006*).

Off-farm employment opportunities in rural Ethiopia are limited in both availability and income-generating potential. Only 44% of rural households surveyed by the Ministry of Labour in 1996 reported any non-agricultural sources of income, and these contributed only 10% to household income (Befekadu and Berhanu 2000:179). Another survey in Hararghe Region confirmed that off-farm activities generated only petty incomes: women collect and sell firewood and forage, men and women seek irregular, low-paid work as farm laborers, and some men migrate seasonally (ICRA et al. 1996:28). In an Amhara Region survey, 25% of households had one or more members migrate during the dry season in search of work, mostly to nearby rural areas. One in three migrants had difficulty securing employment, while half brought back no food or income for their families (FSCO 1999:24).

## Chapter Three

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Description of the study area

The study area is Mecha district<sup>4</sup>, which is located, between 11<sup>0</sup>10' and 11<sup>0</sup>25' North latitude and 37<sup>0</sup>2' and 37<sup>0</sup>17' East longitude in Blue Nile basin, within the Highland of

Ethiopia, and administratively the district is found in West Gojjam Zone of the Amhara National Regional state. The district is bordered on the south by Sekela, on the southwest by the Agew Awi Zone, on the west by the Gilgel Abay River (Lesser Abar River) which separates it

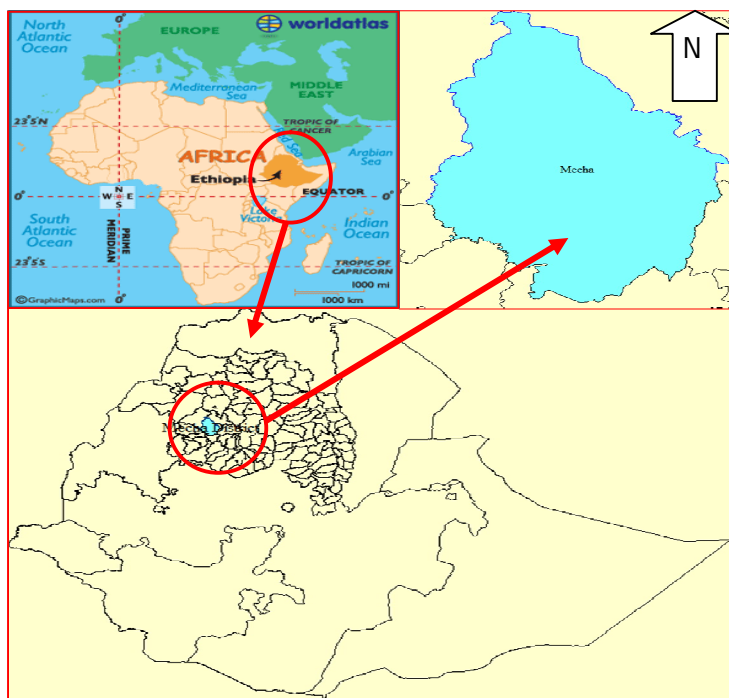


Figure 2: Map of the study area

from South Achefer and North

Achefer, on the northeast by Bahir Dar Zuria, and on the east by Yimana Densa District.

The mean annual rainfall recorded in the area is 1480 mm with mean monthly temperature of 25.8<sup>0</sup>C. The elevation ranges between 1885-3131 meters above sea level, and the slope

<sup>4</sup> Administratively, regions in Ethiopia are divided into zones, and zones, into administrative units called *Districts*. Each *District* is further subdivided into the lowest administrative unit, called *Kebele*.

ranges from nearly flat to very steep (Fikur, 2009). It is one of the food secure areas with no history of relief assistance. Surplus crop production ensures food self sufficiency and generates relatively higher cash income specifically for the better-off and middle households. Crop-livestock mixed farming is the dominant production system in the district. The main crops cultivated are maize, finger millet, teff, barley, pulses and oil crops.

Based on the 2007 national census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), this district has a total population of 292,080, an increase of 36.55% over the 1994 census, of whom 147,611 are men and 144,469 women; the majority of the population, which is 269,403 or 92.24% are rural inhabitants. With an area of 1,481.64 square kilometers, Mecha has a population density of 197.13, which is greater than the Zone average of 158.25 persons per square kilometer. A total of 66,107 households were counted in this district, resulting in an average of 4.42 persons to a household, and 64,206 housing units. The majority (98.91%) of the inhabitants practiced Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity as their religion. The largest ethnic group reported in Mecha was the Amhara (99.91%). Amharic was spoken as a first language by 99.96%.

### **3.2. Research Design**

To achieve the defined objective of the study, the researcher uses qualitative and quantitative information from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from 118 sample household selected from two Kebeles (Enamirt and Kurt Bahir Kebeles). Secondary data was also used in order to triangulate the results obtained by qualitative and quantitative methods. The following section gives an insight into how the research project

was carried out. It outlined sampling size and techniques; data collections tools and procedures; and methods of data analysis.

### 3.2.1. Sampling (Size & Technique)

The study is undertaken in the rural areas of Mecha district. Accordingly, from 39 PAs (Kebeles) found in the district (having similar characteristics), two PAs (namely Kurt Bahir and Enamirt) were selected in random sampling method.

The sample size in this study was determined based on the formula derived from the binomial theorem (Levin 2005). Thus, the minimum sample size, N for a given confidence level and precision is calculated as:

$$N = \frac{Z^2 \times P \times (1 - P) \times D}{E^2}$$

Where:

**N=Minimum sample size**

**Z= Z value (Z score)** is derived from the anticipated confidence level, for this study the confidence level is 95%, which has a Z score of 1.96.

**P=anticipated proportion that is to be measured**, this is the estimated value of what the researcher is going to measure (or the hypothesis that is going to be tested) using the sample. Since the research anticipates to study the extent of poverty of the rural landless people, thus just by taking a reasonable guess based on other studies, i.e., in Ethiopia, according to the 2010/11 HICES, the proportion of poor people (poverty

head count index) in the country is estimated to be 29.6% (which is 30.4% in rural areas and 25.7% in urban areas). Therefore, P for this study is taken at 30 %, (or 0.3).

**D=design effect.** This reflects the sample design with D at 1 for simple random sampling.

For social rating it is recommended that D=1.5 for random sampling.

**E=precision (or margin of error).** E is the precision with which the researcher wants to measure something. In most statistical studies E is kept at 10%, particularly for poverty assessment studies it is recommended using E=10%.

Therefore, to calculate the sample size for this study, let us use the above value;

$$N = \frac{Z^2 \times P \times (1 - P) \times D}{E^2}$$

$$N = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.3 \times (1 - 0.3) \times 1.5}{0.1^2}$$

$$N = \frac{1.210104}{0.01}$$

$$N = 121.0104 \approx \underline{\underline{121}}$$

Thus, 121 sample households/individuals were selected in a simple random sampling method from the list of rural landless people which are available at each Kebele land administration offices. From the preliminary visit conducted by the researcher, the number of landless households and individuals in Kurt Bahir and Enamirt Kebeles are 279 and 259 respectively, which makes the total landless in these two Kebeles at 538. The proportion of sampling is therefore 63 from Kurt Bahir and 58 from Enamirt Kebeles. Accordingly, to take 63 samples from 279 landless populations, firstly by dividing 279 by 63 results the interval at 4. Hence, from the list of landless population the name of

household was picked at 4 intervals until the required number (63) are drawn. Similarly for Enamirt Kebele, the number of landless (which is 259) is divided by the required number of sample (which is 58) results 4, which is the interval used to pick samples from the list of landless.

It was also ensured that all sample household heads/individuals selected to be landless who are in line with the objective of the study.

### **1.1.3. Data Collection tools and procedure**

Regarding the data collection instruments, the research uses two major tools, questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussions.

The first tool is the interview schedule, which was administered through designing both structured and semi structured questioners.

Primary data's that is collected from sample households includes information's such as : household demographic characteristics (education, age, family size, sex, marital status, household type); extent of poverty of the rural landless, and the root causes (land holding/landlessness, access to assets, major household expenditure, food security); livelihood strategies of rural landless individuals/households (livelihood base/activities of the household, constraints to livelihood activities, coping strategies, migration, and trends of saving and access to credit service); and provisions of services other supports was surveyed from the target households and individuals.

Secondary data about the exclusive programs/projects rendered for landless, poverty situations, livelihood of landless in the district as well as in the region was also collected from published and unpublished sources from the regional bureaus and others.

The other tool is key informants interview. The key informants in this study were consisting of government appointed officials from environmental protection, land use & administration office; agricultural & rural development office; women, children and youth affairs office; and administration affairs office at regional and district levels. Focus group discussion was also conducted to understand the community perception about poverty and suggested solutions to improve the livelihood conditions of the rural landless.

### **3.2.2. Data analysis method**

For descriptive analysis of this study, data is collected and analyzed using SPSS statistical software. The researcher also used qualitative methods to understand the level of poverty, and also the constraints and challenges in livelihood strategies of rural landless people.



## Chapter Four

### 4. Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the main findings from the descriptive and key informant interview analysis made in this study. The descriptive analysis made use of tools such as frequency distribution, mean and percentage.

#### 4.1. Household Characteristics

Mostly in social studies, household is the primary unit of analysis. One needs to understand the basic characteristics of the livelihood situations of a household in order to design an appropriate research and development initiative. From the collected sample data, household characteristics, which are believed to influence livelihood of the household namely sex, position in the household, general health condition, age, education level, marital status, and family size were assessed and the following result was obtained.

For this study, the researcher takes random list of names of rural landless households and individuals from both the target Kebeles (Enamirt and Kurt-Bahir). Then from these selected households, 121 (19F) were interviewed based on the structured interview schedule. However, three of the questionnaires become invalid due to data inconsistency problem. So the result and discussions of this research is based on the findings of data's from 118(19F) respondents.

Table 1: Number of Respondents by Kebele and Sex Cross Tabulation

		Sex		Total
		Female	Male	
Kebele	Kurt Bahir	9(7.63%)	50(42.37%)	59 (50%)
	Enamirt	10(8.47%)	49(41.53%)	59 (50%)
<b>Total</b>		19(16.1%)	99(83.9%)	118 (100%)

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

From the total households interviewed for this study, the positions of the respondents in the household for 7(5.93%) of them were female headed household, 92 (77.97 %) were male headed households, 10(8.47 %) were wife's, 8(6.78%) were son, while one is a daughter.

Table 2: Respondent's relation to the household & Sex Cross tabulation

		Sex		Total
		Female	Male	
Relation to Household Head	Household Head	7	92	99
	Wife	10	0	10
	Son	1	7	8
	Daughter	1	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	19	99	118

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

Regarding the general health condition of the household heads, 116(98.3%) of them are adults and in a good health condition that can do productive works. While, only 2(1.7%) household leaders are in a serious illness or disability.

The educational status/background of the respondents, 64(54.2%) of them have no education, 33(28%) have attended formal education and the rest 21(17.8%) have attended some informal education like church school and adult literacy.

The native language, ethnicity and religion of all 118(100% of the respondents) are Amharic, Amhara and Orthodox Christianity respectively.

The marital status of the sampled respondents are, 100 (84.7%) of them are married, 12(10.2%) are not married, 2(1.7%) are widowed and 4(3.4%) respondents are divorced. In the study, it was also tried to sort out the reason for individuals who not married. Thus from 12 respondents, 7(58.3% of them) reasoned out that lack of adequate resources (land, livestock and other assets) is a major reason, while the rest 5(41.6%) is due to their young age. The following frequency table shows the marital status of the respondents

**Table 3: Marital Status of the respondent**

<b>What is your marital status?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Married	100	84.7	84.7
Not Married	12	10.2	94.9
Widowed	2	1.7	96.6
Divorced	4	3.4	100
Total	118	100	

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

With regard to the age of the respondents, it ranges from 19 to 38 and the average age is 26.34 year, which shows that most of the respondents are young, and they were children during the previous land redistribution of the region in 1996.

Now, let's discuss about the size of household members of the target respondents. From those 118 peoples asked, 90 of them have on average two children per households. This indicates us the child dependency ratio of the target population is 75.14%, which is calculated by dividing the number of children below and on 14 to the number of working

age population (15 to 64) that is 240 in this case. Thus, this result is consistent in line with the Amhara region child dependency ratio, which is 72.9% (Amhara BoFED 2014).

While the number of old age people (those >64 age) is only found at three households, which is very insignificant. The following descriptive statics table shows the family size of the sampled households.

**Table 4: Family size of the respondent’s household**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Age	118	19	38	26.34
Children (up to 14 age)	90	1	4	2
Young & Adult (15-64)	118	1	5	2.03
Old (age >64)	3	1	2	1.33

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

It is obvious that, as the ratio increases there may be an increased burden on the productive part of the population to maintain the upbringing and pensions of the economically dependent. This results in direct impacts on financial expenditures on matters like consumption and social expenses particularly education, health care and others, as well as it has many indirect consequences.

## **4.2. Livelihood Activities and Constraints**

### **4.2.1. Livelihood situations of the sample households**

In most households in rural Ethiopia, agriculture is the most important source of livelihood, whereas the scope for engaging in non-agricultural economic activity is generally very restricted. As a result, the latter may be perceived as being unreliable and only having survival value.

Although generally limited in amount, non-agricultural economic activity does play an important role in providing additional income to rural households. It enhances household economic viability and food security by fulfilling critical cash and food deficits when agricultural production falls short, and also by enabling households to avoid grain sales (Fleuret 1989; Shipton 1990). In this regard, from the assessment result, it is found that the major livelihood activities of the rural landless households are mostly farming/crop production, livestock rearing, and paid agricultural jobs, in which the livelihood of 99(83.9%), 91(77.1%), and 74(62.17%) of the respondents are relied up on these respectively. However, some segment of the target peoples are also based its livelihood in small businesses, sale of fire woods, casual works, service provision and beekeeping. The following table shows all the livelihood activities of the target households.

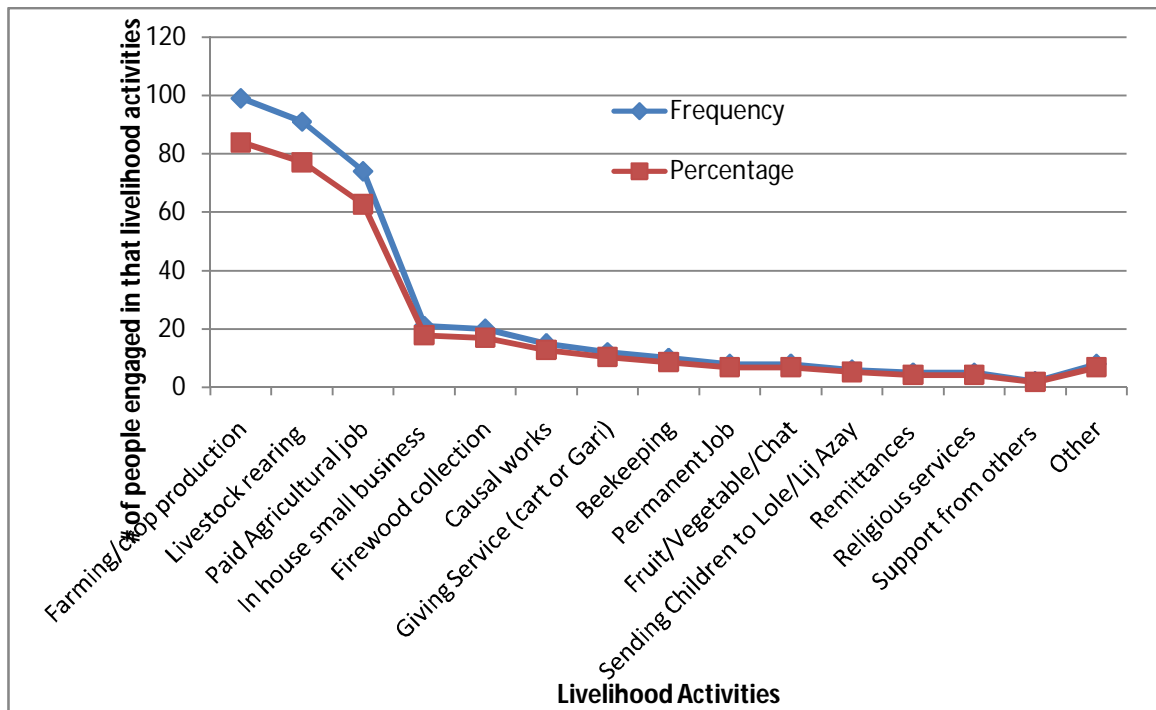
**Table 5: Livelihood activities of the sample households**

Livelihood activity	Frequency	Percentage
Farming/crop production	99	83.9
Livestock rearing	91	77.1
Paid Agricultural job	74	62.7
In house small business	21	17.8
Firewood sale (Selling Eucalyptus tree, charcoal)	20	16.9
Causal works	15	12.7
Giving Service (Cart or Gari)	12	10.2
Beekeeping	10	8.5
Permanent Job	8	6.8
Fruit/Vegetable/Chat	8	6.8
Sending Children away to work at better off households	6	5.1
Remittances	5	4.2
Religious services	5	4.2
Support from others in the community	2	1.7
Other	8	6.7

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

Graphically the livelihood activities of the respondents are shown as below:

**Figure 3: Graphical presentation of the livelihood activities of the target households**



*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

#### **4.2.2. Access to Resources/Inputs**

A key requirement for any rural individual or household to escape from poverty and hunger is access to productive resources. For the rural poor, land and financial resources are of foremost importance, but technology, seeds and fertilizer, livestock, irrigation, marketing opportunities, and off-farm employment are also essential.

In this context, the sample respondents were asked to list their need of resources and inputs so that to make their life decent. Accordingly, as outlined in the following frequency table, land, livestock, finance in the form of credit, and skill, which are reported

by 100%, 71%, 68%, and 57% of the total respondents respectively are the major resources needed.

**Table 6: Resources/inputs identified by respondent that are needed to make a decent living**

<b>What resources/inputs do you need to make a decent living?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Land	118	100
Livestock	84	71.2
Finance in the form of Credit	81	68.6
Skill	68	57.6
Permanent Job	52	44.1
Finance in the form of Grant	50	42.4
Other	11	9.3
Labor	10	8.5

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

#### **4.2.2.1. Indigenous Skill**

Concerning the indigenous skills that the respondents have skill such as farming, poultry, and fattening which comprises 88.1%, 79.7%, and 78.8% of the total respondent. However, in addition to those major skills, some segments of the samples have a beekeeping and carpentry skills.

**Table 7: Indigenous skills of the respondent households**

<b>What indigenous skills do you have?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Farming	104	88.1
Poultry	94	79.7
Fattening	93	78.8
Beekeeping	24	20.3
Carpenter	15	12.7
No skill at all	1	0.8

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

#### 4.2.2.2. Land ownership

Enabling the rural poor to have access to land; whether through land redistribution or resettlement or through changes in the nature of the rights and duties that underlies tenure - remains a crucial element in the quest to eliminate poverty and hunger. Landholding is too deeply embedded in other social processes - kinship, politics, religion, history, and often subtle forms of symbolism - for land to be treated solely as a resource to be allocated. The vested interests of politicians, bureaucrats, and local elites, have militated against implementation of agrarian reform policies, even when written into law (IFAD).

In this study, since the sample frame only includes the rural landless, all of them doesn't own any land. The major reasons that are they are arguing for being landless are: 98 (83.1%) respondents are because of their young age and not present during the recent land redistribution, 43(36.4%) respondents claimed the absence of inheritance from the family due to shortage of agricultural land, and the other 15(12.7%) reported that there is high shortage of land in the Kebele that can be arranged for them.

In addition, they were asked about the size of land that they need to make sustainable livelihood. Accordingly, the land size that is needed to cultivate using their current farming practices ranges from 1 qadda to 15 qaddas (which mean from 0.25 hectare to 4 hectares), but the average land size is 4.39 qadda which is around 1 hectares of land. While, the land size need using modern technologies ranges from 1 to 6 qaddas and on average 2.47 qaddas or half a hectare. The following table describes the responses of the sample households on the required land size.



**Table 8: Land size needed by the respondents**

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
What amount/size of land you need to make your livelihood sustainable? (with your current technology)	118	1	15	4.39	2.246
What amount/size of land you need to make your livelihood sustainable? (if you use improved farming technology, irrigation, fertilizers, seed, etc)	118	1	6	2.47	1.382

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

#### **4.2.2.3. Farming through Rent in & Sharecropping schemes**

Despite most farmers doesn't own any land, most of them were engaged in farming using other forms of land access arrangement. Accordingly, 99(83.9% of the total respondents) had been cultivate land during the past 12 months period.

Here, 19 respondents were not engaged in farming in any form since they neither own any land nor access through other forms of land arrangement. So they were asked about their main source of food. Accordingly, the main source of food for almost all (18 or 94.7%) of those who are not engaged in farming is purchase from the market, and only one respondent got food from the family gift.

Regarding the land obtaining strategy, majority 70(59.32%) of the rural landless who are interviewed for this study has got land using sharecropping scheme, while 23(19.49%) through rent in scheme and the rest 4(3.39%) cultivating land by receiving land as a loan.

The size of the land that they are cultivating in the sharecropping scheme ranges from 1 to 8 qadda, with a mean value of 2.03 qadda or half a hectare, and in rented in scheme the

land size ranges from 1 to 4 qadda with an average size of 1.6 qaddas or around one third of a hectare.

Farmers who are farming land in the form of rent in scheme are paying an annual fee of the non irrigable land with the range between 600 and 2000 and a median value of 1165 Ethiopian Birr, which mean that 4660 birr per hectare per annum.

On the other hand, farmers who are farming under the sharecropping pattern have different norms or ratios of sharing the produce of sharecropping, which ranges from half to half to one to four ratio. However, the significance segment which is about 34 (48.6%) of farmers are agreed to share half to half ratio, 16(22.9%) with 3:2 ratio, and 13(18.6%) with 1:2 ratio are agreed on 3:2 ratio of sharing produces. The following table portrays the responses of all the farmers who are engaged in sharecropping pattern.

**Table 9: Established Norms of Sharecropping**

<b>If you are cultivating any land in the form of sharecropping scheme, what is the established norm of sharecropping?</b>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1:1	34	28.8	48.6	48.6
	1:2	13	11.0	18.6	67.1
	1:3	4	3.4	5.7	72.9
	1:4	3	2.5	4.3	77.1
	3:2	16	13.6	22.9	100.0
	Total	70	59.3	100.0	
Missing	System	48	40.7		
Total		118	100.0		

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

## **Cropping Pattern**

The cropping patterns that peasant households maintain are a function of a complex variety of factors since peasant production is primarily oriented towards the provision of household food supplies; the dietary needs of households strongly condition their cropping strategies. The types and amounts of each crop that is planted are associated with its presence and importance in the household diet, the desire to minimize risk, the type of land available, in terms of amount, soil type and altitude, also serves as a basis for peasant decisions on the types and varieties of crops to be planted.

Given the limited amounts of resources available to households, the varying input demand of crops also plays an important role in decisions regarding planting. Thus, households may choose to plant greater amounts of crops like Teff, sorghum or lentils because of their lower seed requirements, especially if they had sustained reductions in production levels the previous year. Similarly, the low draft power requirements of crops like maize or sorghum may lead to the adoption of such crops particularly by households which lack sufficient draft power. Labor requirements are important as well, as crops which demand substantial labor inputs such as Teff may be avoided by labor-short households in preference for crops like chick peas or wheat. Households which have low grain supplies or which engage in joint ploughing of land due to draft power shortages may be more likely to leave land fallow in the case of crop loss (Yared 2001).

When we come to this study, the major types of crops that are grown by the rural landless under consideration are Maize, Finger millet and Teff which is reported by 72.9%, 56.8% and 20.3% of the respondents respectively. While Barley, Common vetch, Chickpeas,

Wheat and Potato are also grown by some of those farmers. Thus, based on the information collected from farmers at the informal communications, the choice of type of crops by the rural landless households are associated with the lack of sufficient draft power and the amount of seed required.

The following table shows the responses of target participant on the type of crops that are grown.

**Table 10: Types of major crops grown by the rural landless**

<i>What type of crops does your household grown in the past 12 months?</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent N=118</i>	<i>Valid Percent (N=99)</i>
<i>Maize</i>	86	72.9	86.9
<i>Finger Millet</i>	67	56.8	67.7
<i>Teff</i>	24	20.3	24.2
<i>Barley</i>	14	11.9	14.3
<i>Common Vetch (locally named as Guaya)</i>	7	5.9	7.1
<i>Chickpeas</i>	6	5.1	6.1
<i>Wheat</i>	5	4.2	5.1
<i>Potato</i>	2	1.7	2.0

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

#### **4.2.2.4. Access to other productive assets**

Respondents were also asked about their access to other productive assets other than agricultural land. Thus, 97(82.2%) have cattle, 76(64.4%) have chickens, 24(20.3%) have forest lands and 15(12.7%) of them have horse carts serving for income generating activities. The following table describes the frequency, range and average value of productive assets of the rural landless.

**Table 11: Households' access to other productive assets**

Number of productive assets	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Forest Land (in qadda)	24	1	2	1.06	.300
Cattle	97	1	8	2.50	1.374
Chicken	76	1	7	2.62	1.635
Beehives (Modern, transitional or traditional)	4	1	1	1.00	.000
Chat (in qadda)	3	1	1	1.00	.000
Water pump	1	1	1	1.00	.000
Horse/Donkey cart	15	1	1	1.00	.000
Sewing machine	0	0	0		

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

### **4.3. Perceptions about the role of land tenure and policy**

Despite the constitutional provisions that securely vested the ownership of land to the state, rural land policy in Ethiopia has remained to be one of the sources of disagreement and focus of debate among politicians, academics, and other concerned parties. That is not surprising given the agrarian nature of the Ethiopian economy and the role of land in the social and political history of the country.

In an assessment of the land policy debate in a present day Ethiopia Yigremew (2001a), shows that there is unfortunate focus on ownership, issues and dichotomy of views on state versus private ownership. The government and the ruling party advocate state ownership of land, while experts and scholars in the field, western economic advisors, international organizations such as the World Bank (World Bank 1992), and opposition political parties favor private ownership. However, despite some attempts (Desalegn, 1992; 1994; Gebru 1988; Yigremew 2001a,) there has not been a through and systematic study of patterns, diversity and rationale of alternative views on land tenure (EEC/EEPRI, 2002).

The main plank of the view advocating state ownership is that private land ownership will lead to concentration of land in the hand of few people who have the ability to buy resulting in the eviction of the poor peasants and those aggravating landlessness potentialities leading to massive rural-urban migration of people left without any alternative means of livelihood. Accordingly, in order to know the perception of the target respondent about the current land tenure policy, they were asked to reflect their view. In this accord, 69 (58.5%) of them answered that the policy has a negative impact on the ownership of agricultural land due to the prohibition to sale/buy. While, 49 (41.5%) of them said that the policy has not any impact at all for being they are landless.

#### **4.4. Constraints to livelihood of the rural landless**

From the total respondents, 115(97.5%) of them have reported that there are income generating activities that they would like to do and/or expand but cannot. Thus, they identified that the major activities that they are unable to do or expands are Livestock rearing, crop production, and fruit/vegetable production. There are also other activities as outlined in the following table.

**Table 12: Major activities that the rural landless are unable to do or expand**

<b>Major activities/Income sources that they are unable to do or expand?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Livestock rearing	103	87.3	89.6
Crop Production	91	77.1	79.1
Fruit/Vegetable production	64	54.2	55.7
Farming through Sharecropping	41	34.7	35.7
Poultry rearing/sales	38	32.2	33.0
Trading commodities	36	30.5	31.3
Charcoal or firewood sales	36	30.5	31.3
Hand crafts	32	27.1	27.8
Beekeeping	30	25.4	26.1
Food or drink processing	23	19.5	20.0
Domestic service	18	15.3	15.7
Migration for daily labor	16	13.6	13.9
Others	13	11.0	11.3
Local agricultural labor	11	9.3	9.6
Missing	3		

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

From this result, one can understand that the major interest areas of the rural landless are on-farm agricultural activities, while off-farm and nonfarm activities have less priority to be preferred by them.

Hence, the major factors/constraints that prevents rural landless from starting or expanding such income generating activities are lack of money/credit; lack of tools, equipment, and working place; shortage of agricultural land; and don't have skills and knowledge which have a proportion of 86%, 52%, 50% and 45% respectively. The

following table is extracted from the survey result and it depicts the detail constraints of the rural landless in the study area.

**Table 13: Constraints of rural landless to start and/or expand Income Generating Activities**

What prevents you from starting or expanding IGA activities?	Frequency (N=115)	Percent N=118	Valid Percent N=115
Don't have money or credit	99	83.9	86.1
Don't have tools, equipment, working place/buildings, etc	60	50.8	52.2
Shortage of agricultural land	58	49.2	50.4
Don't have skills or knowledge	52	44.1	45.2
Not Profitable enough	20	16.9	17.4
Not enough customer/market	17	14.4	14.8
Don't have animals (Oxen)	13	11.0	11.3
Women's work/men's work	13	11.0	11.3
Labor poor (Can't work, or not enough workers in the HH)	5	4.2	4.3
Don't have time	5	4.2	4.3
Other	4	3.4	3.5
Missing (who doesn't have constraint)	3		

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

#### **4.5. Major Household Expenditures**

Every household do have various expenditures to fulfill their household consumption as well as to sustain their livelihood. Moreover, rural landless have more expenditures than who have land, since they rent in agricultural land, purchase food items, and purchase inputs and fertilizers when cultivating in the form of sharecropping and rent in schemes. More importantly, as the individual or household members becomes resource poor, it is usual that it has vulnerable to diseases; as a result its health care costs are also high.

It is with this intention that the rural households were asked to list their major expenditures and its relative proportions from their total income. In this regard, target household members have an average expenditure of 1326ETB to rent in land, 2424ETB



for purchase of food, 901ETB for health care, and 1524ETB for fertilizer, input and miscellaneous expenses. The following table describes the range of expenditures for these types.

**Table 14: Major expenditures of sampled households**

<b>Expenditure Item</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Rent in Land	21	700	2500	1326.19	524.552
Purchase of food items (crops, grain, cereal, legume, animal products, etc)	85	100	10000	2424.71	1841.416
Health costs (Hospital/doctor fees, medicine, etc)	70	47	8000	901.30	1661.594
Input, fertilizers and other miscellaneous expenses	98	100	8000	1524.59	1650.189

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

The above table only shows the magnitude of expenditures for such items, thus it is necessary to understand the proportion of these expenditures from the total income that the household earned in the last 12 months. Hence the proportion of expenditures for some selected items from their annual income is described as follows.

- **Rent in:** from 18 households who made expenditure for rent in, the proportion of the expenses for rent in ranges from one fifth to half of the total household annual income. On average these sample households spend 30% of their income to rent in agricultural land.
- **Food Purchase:** from 79 households who made expenditure for food purchase, the proportion of the cost from their annual income ranges from one tenth to half of

the total household income. In this case on average these sample households spend 41% of their income for food purchase.

- ***Health Care:*** from 63 households who made expenditure for health care, the proportion of the health care cost from their annual income ranges from one tenth to half of the total household income. Thus, on average these sample households spend 20% of their income to the health care.
- ***Input, Fertilizers and Miscellaneous expenses:*** from 98 households who made expenditures for input, fertilizers and other miscellaneous matters, the cost ranges from one tenth to half of their annual income. In this regard, on average these households spent 20% of their annual incomes to the purchase of inputs, fertilizers and other miscellaneous expenses.

This implies that rural landless are spending a significant proportion of their income to rent in agricultural land, food purchase, health care and input cost. But, costs of land rent in and food purchase are extra ordinary costs for a landless household, which makes their livelihood challenging than people who have land.

The following table describes the detail proportion of each expenditure categories.

**Table 15: Proportion of expenditures from the total income earned in the last 12 months**

What proportion of your total income (from earned in the last 12 months), are spent for this type of expenditure? for	N	Min (proportion)	Max (proportion)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rent for land	18	20	50	30	9.226
Purchase of food items (crops, grain, cereal, legume, animal products, etc)	79	10	50	41	11.417
Health costs (Hospital/doctor fees, medicine, etc)	63	10	50	20	12.145
Input, fertilizers and other miscellaneous expenses	98	10	50	27	15.022

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

#### 4.6. Food Security and Coping Strategies

Households or individuals have food security when they have adequate access to food, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, either by producing or purchasing it. Progress toward achieving food security can be measured by: increasing food availability, increasing household incomes, and improved nutritional status of children.

From the total households interviewed (118) for this study, 54.2% (64) of the total respondent reported that there was food shortage in their household during the last 12 months, while the other 45.8% (54) did not.

The month that is frequently reported as acute food shortage is occurred for the majority 71.9 % (46) of the respondent is August, while there are also shortages in the months of September, July and October where 15.6%, 9.4% and 3.1% of the respondents respectively.

Here we can conclude a significant proportion of the rural landless are facing a food shortage for at least one third of the year, which has a negative effect on the nutrition, productivity, health care and other conditions of the household.

**Table 16: Months that food shortage is acute**

In which month was food shortage most acute for your household?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	September	10	8.5	15.6	15.6
	October	2	1.7	3.1	18.8
	July	6	5.1	9.4	28.1
	August	46	39.0	71.9	100.0
	Total	64	54.2	100.0	
Missing	System	54	45.8		
Total		118	100.0		

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

From the survey, it is found that during the worst month of food shortage more than 28% of the respondents are eating one times or less a day. Furthermore, more than 71.9% of the respondents are eating two or less times a day. The following table shows the frequency that an adult can eat during that worst month.

**Table 17: Frequency of eating by an adult during worst food shortage month**

Adults					
During that worst month, how many times a day did the adults in your household eat?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	.8	1.6	1.6
	1	17	14.4	26.6	28.1
	2	28	23.7	43.8	71.9
	3	18	15.3	28.1	100.0
	Total	64	54.2	100.0	
Missing	System	54	45.8		
Total		118	100.0		

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

Similarly, during that worst food deficit month more than 95.3% of children are eating three or less times a day. This implies that children are exposed to malnutrition and are vulnerable to different diseases as a result of food shortage.

**Table 18: Frequency of eating by children during worst food shortage month**

Children					
During that worst month, how many times a day did the children in your household eat?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	2.5	4.7	4.7
	2	15	12.7	23.4	28.1
	3	43	36.4	67.2	95.3
	4	3	2.5	4.7	100.0
	Total	64	54.2	100.0	
Missing	System	54	45.8		
Total		118	100.0		

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

Thus, the major causes of food shortages that are identified by the respondent are: absence of adequate agricultural land for household (79.4%), inappropriate land management practices (66.1%), lack of cultivable land (49.2%), poor quality of land (49.2%), pests & insects (44.1%), and lack of improved agricultural inputs like fertilizers and improved seeds (42.4%) are explained as major factors for food shortage problems. Also, few respondents mentioned the presence of too much rain and market inaccessibility as a factor of food shortage. The following frequency table shows the major factors that are contributed for food shortage.

**Table 19: Causes of food shortage/insecurity in the household**

<i>What do you think are the causes of that food shortage/insecurity in the household?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent N=118</i>	<i>Valid Percent N=64</i>
Lack of cultivated land at all	29	24.6	49.2
Too much rain	6	5.1	10.2
Insects/pests	26	22	44.1
Poor quality of land	29	24.6	49.2
Not enough agricultural land for household	50	42.4	79.4
Inappropriate land management practices	39	33.1	66.1
Use of traditional land implements	25	21.2	42.4
Market inaccessibility	12	10.2	20.3
Lack of inputs (fertilizers, improved seed, etc)	25	21.2	42.4

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

The sample respondents were also asked to let know their suggestions or possible solutions to tackle food shortages in their respective households. Accordingly, 57% (34) suggested that getting agricultural land and engage in farming is the solution for the food

shortage, 10.2% (6) suggested farming by obtaining land through other forms of land access arrangement (rent in and sharecropping), and 37.5% (24) suggest engage in off farm activities can be possible solutions to tackle their household food insecurity.

All the sample households were also asked to identify the major constraints that they faced during the last 12 months. The major constraints are therefore lack of adequate agricultural land, financial shortage, lack of credit facilities, absence of farm land at all, lack of farm implements, and lack of oxen are identified by most of the respondents. The detail frequency and percentage of each problem are outlined in the following table.

**Table 20: Major problems that the household faced during the last 12 months**

<i>What are the major problems that you face in the last 12 months?</i>		
	<i>Frequency</i> (N=118)	<i>Percent</i>
Lack of adequate agricultural land	86	72.9
Financial shortage	82	69.5
Lack of credit facilities	62	52.5
No farm land at all	53	44.9
Lack of farm implements	38	32.2
Lack of oxen	38	32.2
Lack of time	8	6.8
Labor constraint	4	3.4
Others (non agricultural)	4	3.4
No major problems	1	0.8

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

From the total respondents, 84.75% (100) of them have faced undesirable consequences in the last six years, while 15.3% (18) respondents did not. These major consequences are therefore; poverty, exploitation, insecurity, and migration, which are reported by 71.2%,

28%, 22.9%, and 21.2% of the respondents respectively. In addition, conflict, famine, diseases and others are stated as undesirable consequences that the sample households faced but with smaller proportions. The following table shows the major undesirable consequences that the sample households meet.

**Table 21: Major undesirable consequences for rural landless in the last 6 years**

<i>What are the major undesirable consequences that your household has encountered in the last 6 years?</i>		
	<i>Frequency (N=118)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Famine	14	11.9
Disease	12	10.2
Migration	25	21.2
Insecurity	27	22.9
Exploitation	33	28
Poverty	84	71.2
Conflict	19	16.1
No undesirable consequences	18	15.3
Others	7	5.9

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

Of these undesirable consequences, the most frequently occurring problems in the last six years is poverty followed by migration, which are reported by 71.2% and 21.2% of the total respondent. However, insecurity, diseases, and other problems are also stated by few respondents as the most frequently occurring. The following table shows the detail frequency and proportion of each response.



**Table 22: Most frequently occurring problem in the last 6 years**

<b>Of these, which one is the most frequently occurring in the last six years?</b>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Famine	2	1.7	1.9	1.9
	Disease	5	4.2	4.7	6.5
	Migration	12	10.2	11.2	17.8
	Insecurity	9	7.6	8.4	26.2
	Exploitation	1	.8	.9	27.1
	Poverty	69	58.5	64.5	91.6
	Others	9	7.6	8.4	100.0
	Total	107	90.7	100.0	
Missing	System	11	9.3		
Total		118	100.0		

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

Similarly, of these major problems the most severe is poverty, which is identified by the majority 62(57.9%) as the most severe of all problems in the last six years.

Here it is very important to understand the perception of the community about poverty. Thus, using the focus group discussion it is tried to define poverty. Thus, the respondents define the poor in line with the livelihood approaches to poverty. They classify households as poorest of the poor, poor, middle, and rich people based on the household heads fitness to work, presence as well as size of their landholding, number of livestock owned, and types of houses, possession of irrigated land and months of food shortage. Poorest of the poor people, who held almost neither of the assets and suffered from long months of food shortage (more than four months), are dependent on the community as well as the government and generally economically in active household. The poor own

only one oxen or none, mostly landless or with small or marginal land (not more than a qadda), and own thatched houses. The middle households possess at least an ox, one hectare of farmland, one adult male labor, corrugated iron-roofed houses, and two months of food shortage. However, the better-off households owned at least two pairs of oxen, had a (comparatively) large amount of land (2 hectare), owned corrugated iron-roofed houses, and engaged in capital-intensive activities such as livestock and grain trade.

Moreover, all of the key informant interview participants also identify the rural landless households are the most vulnerable group of the communities.

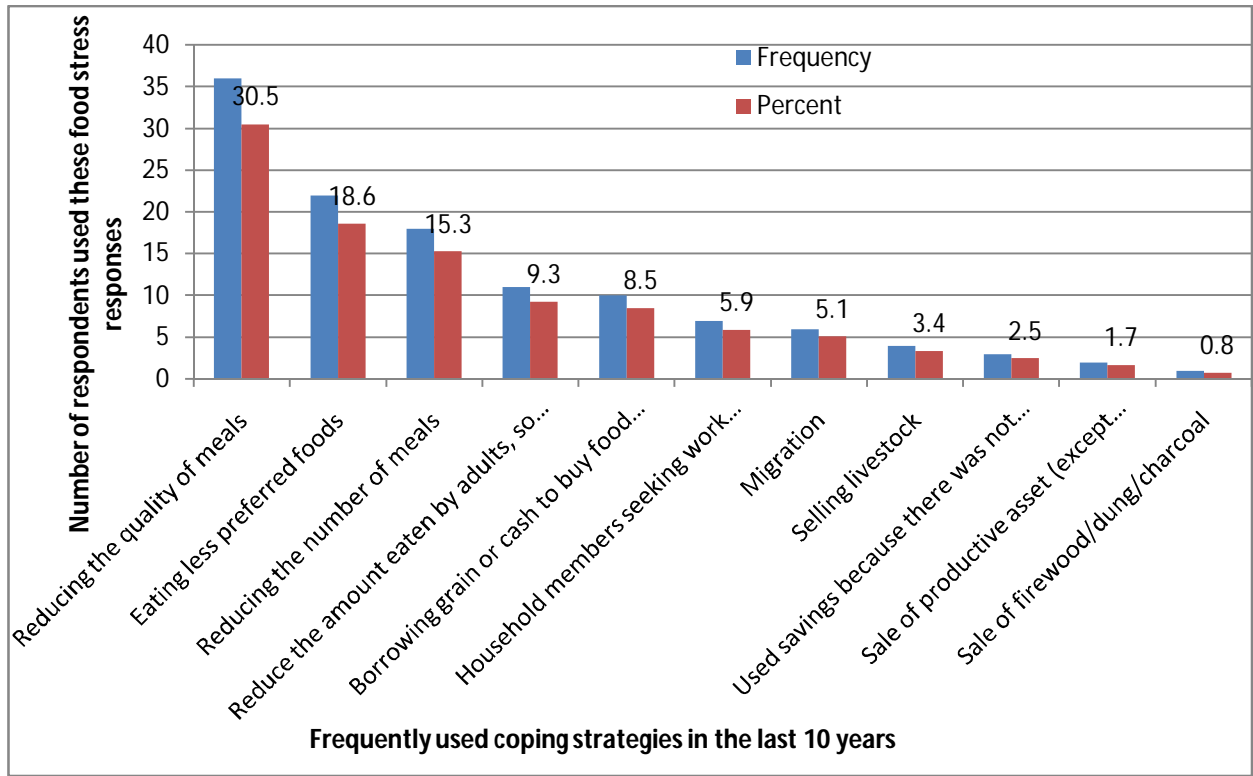
#### **4.7. Coping Strategies**

The coping strategies & food stress responses for the sampled households that are experienced for the last 10 years are identified and categorized in to two, which is frequently used and occasional used coping strategies.

##### **4.7.1. Frequently used coping strategies**

The most frequently used coping strategies are reducing the quality of meals, eating less preferred foods, reducing the number of meals, reduce the amount of food eaten by adults so that children can eat, and borrowing grain or cash to buy food from friends/neighbors or relatives are the major strategies. However, strategies like household members seeking work outside Kebele, migration, selling productive livestock's, and use of savings during times of hardship are also used in some respondents. The following graph shows the magnitude of each coping strategies that are used frequently during the last ten years.

**Figure 4: Frequently used coping strategies**



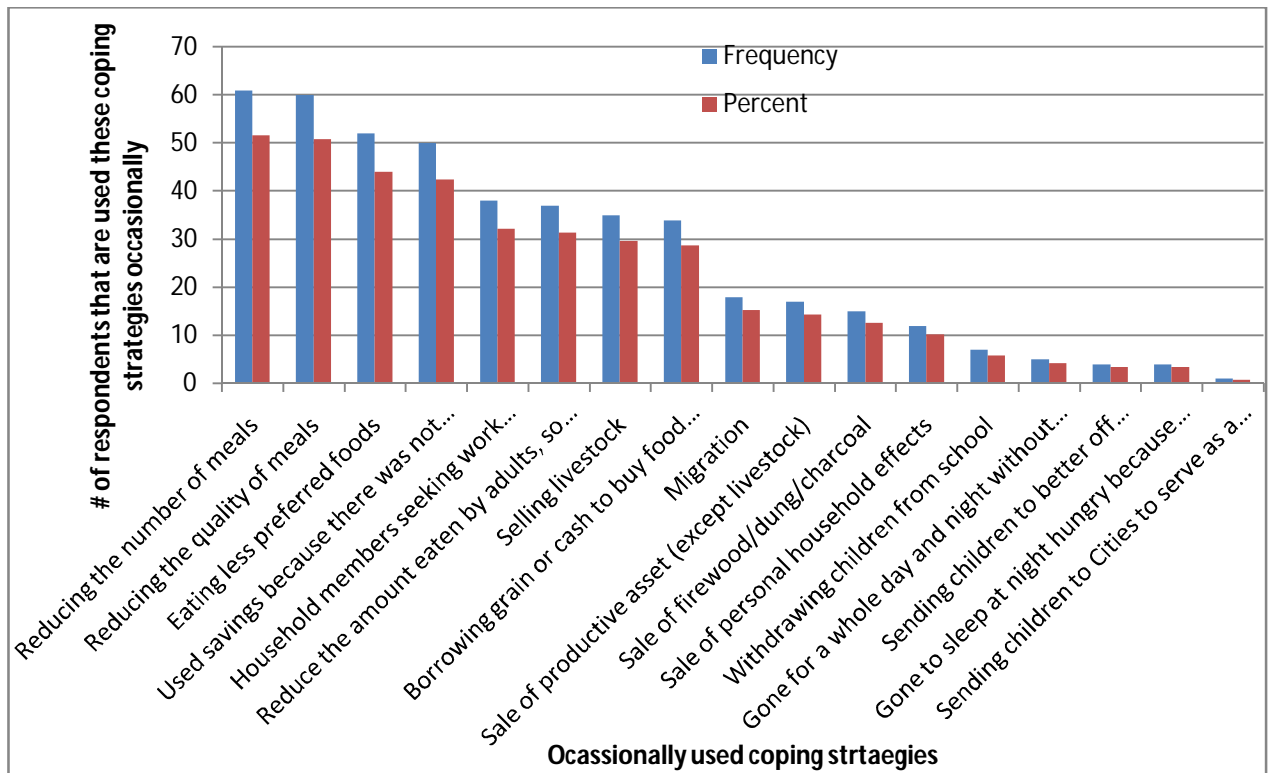
(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

**4.7.2. Occasionally used coping strategies**

Similarly, during the last ten years, coping strategies and food stress responses that occasionally used by the study community are reducing the number of meals, reducing the quality of meals, eating less preferred foods, used savings because there was not enough food, seeking work outside the Kebele, reduce the amount of food eaten by adults so that children can eat, selling livestock, Borrowing grain or cash to buy food from friends/neighbors or relatives, migration, sale of productive assets, sale of firewood/dung/charcoal, and sale of personal household effects.

The following graph shows the proportion of the respondents that are used these coping strategies and food stress responses in the last 10 years.

**Figure 5: Occasionally used coping strategies by the sample households**



(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

In this study it is also tried to assess whether the above coping strategies and food stress responses are used or not during the last 12 months. Thus, almost similar to the above, strategies like eating less preferred foods, reducing the number of meals, reduce the amount eaten by adults so that children could eat, used savings because there was not enough food, migration, household members seeking work outside Kebele, borrowing grain or cash to buy food from friends/neighbors or relatives, and selling livestock's are experiences in most of the respondents as outlined in the following frequency table.

**Table 23: Coping strategies used during the last 12 months**

<i>Was this coping strategies and food stress responses used during the last 12 months</i>	<i>Frequency (N=118)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Reducing the quality of meals	68	57.6
Eating less preferred foods	58	49.2
Reducing the number of meals	49	41.5
Reduce the amount eaten by adults, so that children could eat	37	31.4
Used savings because there was not enough food	37	31.4
Migration	35	29.7
Household members seeking work outside Kebele	33	28
Borrowing grain or cash to buy food from friends/neighbors or relatives	28	23.7
Selling livestock	25	21.2
Sale of firewood/dung/charcoal	10	8.5
Sale of productive asset (except livestock)	8	6.8
Withdrawing children from school	6	5.1
Gone to sleep at night hungry because there was not enough food	5	4.2
Sale of personal household effects	4	3.4
Sending children to better off households in the form of Lole/Lij Azay	1	0.8
Sending children to Cities to serve as a lottery vendor	1	0.8
Gone for a whole day and night without eating because there was not enough food	0	0

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

### **4.7.3. Extent of migration as a coping strategy**

As explained above at coping strategies and food stress responses migration is used as a coping strategy for a significant number of rural landless households, which is 35(29.7% of the total respondents) have used it. Hence, from these households who migrate in the last 12 months, 34(97.1%) of them were the household heads and only one individual is the son from a household.

The destination of most of these households (33 or 94.3%) were commercial farms in Amhara and Tigray regional states particularly Humera, Metema and Jawi sesame farms. While two of the respondents went to other areas.

Regarding the seasons of migration, most of them (45.7%) were migrated during the Ethiopian Summer that is from June to August, where there is high food shortage in the area. While, 34.3% are migrated during the spring season (March to May), 11.4% during the period from September to November and the rest 8.6% is during the Ethiopian Winter.

**Table 24: Seasons of migration as a coping strategy and food stress response**

Seasons of Migration		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ethiopian Summer	16	13.6	45.7	45.7
	Ethiopian Winter	3	2.5	8.6	54.3
	Spring	12	10.2	34.3	88.6
	Autumn	4	3.4	11.4	100.0
	Total	35	29.7	100.0	
Missing	System	83	70.3		
Total		118	100.0		

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

The period of absence ranges from one month to 12 months and the average number of months that the migrated individual stayed are 2.8 months or 84 days.

Based on the survey findings, of these migrated households, 30(85.7%) of them brought cash, while 3(8.6%) brought food and the rest 2 (5.7%) brought nothing to the households.

The income earned from migration were used for different purposes such as for the purchase of food, clothing, livestock, support to relatives and others, which is responded by 28.6%, 20%, 17.1%, 2.1% and 31.4% respectively.

The most interesting issue here is, for those household members who migrate to commercial farms, the migration by itself was funded by borrowing from relatives (60% of the respondent), and the rest 40% had used their own savings for transportation and other costs during the migration.

#### **4.8. Savings and Credit**

Financial services for the poor pose some specific problems of policy and program design. The poor have little or no collateral to offer. Savings and credit amounts and installments are small, rising per unit transaction costs. Credit needs for production and consumption cannot be clearly distinguished in poor households, where spheres of production and consumption are intertwined and often inseparable. Given the poor's vulnerable position, risk aversion and related risk insurance behavior play important roles. (Zeller 1995)

In the study area, there are a lot of rural credit service providers. The major are Amhara credit and saving institute, rural credit and saving cooperatives, formal banks and other informal sectors.

Thus, as part of the qualitative data collection, the researcher made discussion with a key informant staff from Amhara Credit and Saving Institute (ACSI), which takes the lions share in the provisions of rural financial service in Amhara region. Accordingly, it is learnt that theoretically ACSI gives priority to the economically productive, but poor individuals and households in the region. More specifically, the asset less poor of the region, i.e., the rural landless and female headed households is the major focus groups. Regarding the sectors, income generating activities, small enterprises, agriculture,

handicrafts, micro and small enterprise are the major areas covered by ACSI's credit extension package.

In most cases, ACSI prefers group collateral to provide loans. It is also thought that land is not considered for collateral since in Ethiopian law the community has a use right not an ownership right. There are also a variety of financial products including saving, micro insurance, fund administration and money transfer.

#### **4.8.1. Saving**

The sample households were asked about whether they saved any money in the last 12 months in any form or not. Accordingly, 75 (63.56%) of the respondents have saved money in different forms. The major ways of saving, as sorted out in the survey is saving money with an *Equib*<sup>5</sup> (33.9% of them), saved cash at home (28.8%), deposited money with a micro-finance institutes (21.2%), and accumulating livestock (13.6%). While, as shown in the following table, some proportions of the respondents have deposited money at a bank, some gave money to a friend or neighbor to take care-off, and others buying property.

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<sup>5</sup> *Equib* is Ethiopia's indigenous informal rotating saving and credit association formed by groups of individuals who meet regularly (typically every weekend) and contribute to a common fund. Conventionally, each member is eligible in turn to receive the pooled amount using a lottery or some other agreed-upon system. In the traditional form of *Equib*, enforcement of the association's rules and norms of behavior were realized largely through community controls and potential sanctions on members.



**Table 25: Number of respondents who save money in different forms**

<i>Form of saving</i>	<i>Frequency</i> (N=75)	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Saved with an Equib	40	33.9	33.9
Saved Cash at home	34	28.8	28.8
Deposited money with a micro-finance institute	25	21.2	21.2
Accumulating livestock	16	13.6	13.6
Deposited money with a bank	8	6.8	6.8
Given savings to a friend or neighbor to take care off	5	4.2	4.2
Buying property	5	4.2	4.2
Multi-year storage of grain	1	0.8	0.8
Loaning grain with interest	0	0	0

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

Based on the survey findings the purposes why they saved all the money in the above forms have different reasons. However, the major purposes are to use as a buffer in times of need (76%), for investment (47.9%), to improve their living conditions (36.8%), and as a buffer in times of disaster. However, there are also other purposes that are considered by the target households that include accumulating wealth, purchasing of consumer goods, purchasing of clothes, children education and for house renovation purposes. The following frequency table shows all the responses that the saved money will be allocated for each particular purpose.

**Table 26: Purpose of the saved money**

<b>If you saved, for what purpose would you use the saved money?</b>	<b>Frequency (N=75)</b>	<b>Percent (N=100)</b>	<b>Valid Percent (N=75)</b>
As a buffer in times of need	57	48.3	76
For investment	35	29.7	47.9
To Improve their living condition	28	23.7	36.8
As a buffer in times of disaster	26	22	35.6
Accumulated wealth	19	16.1	26
Purchase of consumer goods	19	16.1	25.3
Purchase of clothes	16	13.6	21.9
Children education	10	8.5	13.3
House building/renovating	8	6.8	10.8
Pay debt	3	2.5	3.9
Payment of taxes	2	1.7	2.6

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

That household who did not save any money in the above forms (which is 36.44% of the respondent) reasoned out that lack of money to save is their only reason for not saving in the last 12 months.

In order to understand the household coping capacity and/or the vulnerability of the rural landless, they were asked about the number of days that they can survive if their saving is the only assets that they have. Accordingly, the minimum is 30 days and the maximum is 730 days (two years), which has a mean value of 196.69 days or around six months. Here, as shown below in the following table around 70% of the household who save can survive only about six months using their savings, other factors remaining constant.

**Table 27: # of days that the household can stay if the current saving is the only asset you have**

Imagine that the money you personally and/or your household member/s have saved (in all the places mentioned in the previous question) were all the resources that your household had to live from. Approximately how many days would your household be able to survive for?						
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	1-90	28	23.7	37.3	37.3	
	91-180	24	20.3	32.0	69.3	
	271-365	19	16.1	25.3	94.7	
	366-730	4	3.4	5.3	100.0	
	Total	75	63.6	100.0		
Missing	System	43	36.4			
Total		118	100.0			
Descriptive Statistics						
		N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Imagine that the money you personally and/or your household member/s have saved (in all the places mentioned in the previous question) were all the resources that your household had to live from. Approximately how many days would your household be able to survive for?		75	30	730	196.69	161.206

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

#### **4.8.2. Credit**

Regarding the credit service, in order to understand the status of informal credit facilities, the sample households were asked to reflect their view where can they borrow if they need 500ETB so that to invest in some business opportunities. Accordingly, 55(46.6%) of them answered that they can borrow from relatives or neighbors in the communities; 20(16.9%) from private money lenders; 17(14.4%) from equib; 15(12.7%) from relatives outside the

community; and 11(9.32%) from other sources. The following graph shows the informal source of credit service for the rural landless households.

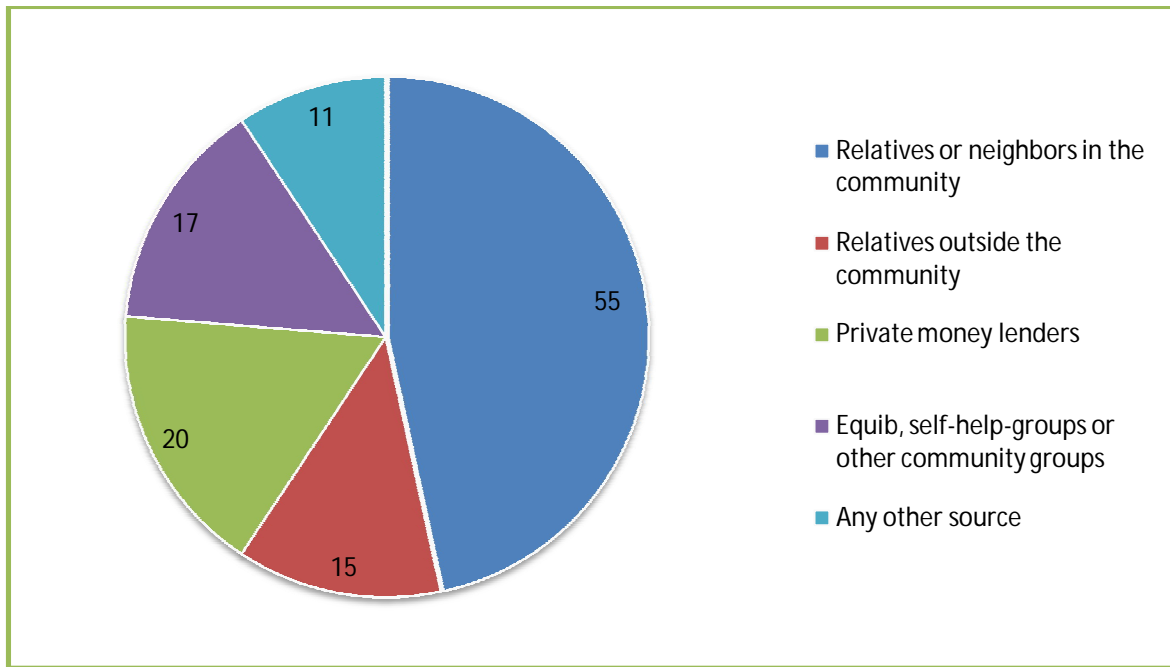


Figure 6: Possible Source of Informal Credit Sources

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

The target households have also used formal credit services. In this regard, from the total sample households, 58 (49.2%) have borrowed money from different sources during the last 12 months. Thus, from the major sources, 31(53.45%) have borrowed money from relatives or neighbors in the community, while 17(29.31%) of them have borrowed from micro-finance institutes. Similarly, equib, private/informal money lenders, and rural credit and saving cooperatives have also served as a source of credit for rural landless during the last 12 months.

The loan size that the target households have borrowed in the last 12 months ranges from 168 ETB to 15000 ETB with a mean value of ETB 2905.

Those rural landless people who borrowed money from the different sources have used it for different purposes. The major purposes are therefore, purchase of agricultural inputs (eg, seeds, fertilizers) (39.66%), purchase of livestock (36.21%); and investing in off-farm activities like beekeeping, poultry, fattening, etc (24.14%). In addition, they are also used for a variety of purposes such as for rent in agricultural land, day to day costs, repaying another loan, and others as shown in the following table.

**Table 28: Purpose of borrowing**

<i>What are all the purposes for which you have used loans taken in the past 12 months?</i>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent N=118</b>	<b>Valid Percent N=58</b>
Purchase of agricultural inputs (eg, seeds, fertilizers)	23	19.5	39.66%
Purchase of livestock	21	17.8	36.21%
Investing in off-farm activities like beekeeping, poultry, fattening, etc	14	11.9	24.14%
To rent in land	9	7.6	15.52%
Day-to-day costs (eg, food)	8	6.8	13.79%
Repaying another loan	7	5.9	12.07%
Investing in another type of household business (Eg, petty trade)	6	5.1	10.34%
Purchase of household goods	6	5.1	10.34%
Paying medical fees	5	4.2	8.62%
Construction or improvements to the house	4	3.4	6.90%
Purchasing of clothing	2	1.7	3.45%
Paying for a wedding or funeral	0	0	0.00%
Paying school fees	0	0	0.00%
Other	6	5.1	10.34%

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

Concerning the repayment status of the loan, the majority or 62.07% of the respondents have fully repaid their loan, while 15.52% of them partly paid, other 20.69% not yet paid and only one is defaulted.

## **4.9. Trainings and other supports**

### **4.9.1. Training**

With the aim to understand the type of trainings delivered to the rural landless, they were asked to brief the type of trainings, who gives them the training and at what frequencies does they take during the past 12 months.

As a result, (29)24.6% of the respondents have received training on crop production; also 24.6% on livestock development, 21.2% on business development skill, and 15.3% have received different skill trainings.

Regarding the training providers, from 29 households who have received training on crop production 82.8% of them have got from the government offices that is facilitated by the development agents. While, for the other 17.2% of the households have received from NGOs.

Similarly, for 24(82.8% of the household who attend training on livestock) the government through the extension agents have facilitated the training, while NGOs for 3(10.3%), and Micro finance institutes for 2(6.9%) of the households has provided the trainings.

From households trained on business development skill, 11(44%) of them have got the training from micro finance institutes, 8(32%) has got the training from government and the other 6(24%) from NGOs.

Lastly from 18 households who received skill training on any other types, 7(38.9%) have got from micro finance institutes, 6(35.3%) from government office and the other 5(29.4%) from NGOs.

**Table 29: Who gives you the training?**

Who gives this training?	Training on crop production		Training on livestock development		Training on business development skill		Skill Training on any other type to create IGAs	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
NGO	5	17.24%	3	10.34%	6	24.00%	5	27.78%
Government office	24	82.76%	24	82.76%	8	32.00%	6	33.33%
Micro finance institutes	0	0.00%	2	6.90%	11	44.00%	7	38.89%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

In relation to the frequency of the trainings, on average the trainings is provided 2.83 times a year on crop production, 1.83 times a year on livestock development, 1.46 times a year on business development skill, and three times a year on skill Training.

The sample households were also asked whether the trainings they received are useful or not, as a result, almost all of the training participants responded that the training they received in crop production, livestock development, business developments and skill training were useful for their household.

**Table 30: Has the training been useful to the household or not?**

Has this training been useful to your HH?	Training on crop production		Training on livestock development		Training on business development skill		Skill Training on any other type to create IGAs	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Yes, very useful	22	75.86%	25	86.21%	22	88.00%	13	72.22%
Yes, moderately useful	7	24.14%	4	13.79%	3	12.00%	1	5.56%
Not Useful	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	22.22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.00</b>
		%				%		%

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)

Similarly, the majority of the respondents have responded that the household members have often applied the techniques they learned from the training. While a few proportion of them do not apply the techniques learned at all. The detail responses of the respondent are tabulated under this table.

**Table 31: Applicability of the training**

Have you or other HH members applied the techniques you learned in this training?	Training on crop production		Training on livestock development		Training on business development skill		Skill Training on any other type to create IGAs	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Yes, Often	18	62.07%	16	55.17%	14	56.00%	11	61.11%
Yes, sometimes	9	31.03%	9	31.03%	8	32.00%	5	27.78%
No, not at all	2	6.90%	4	13.79%	3	12.00%	2	11.11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

(Source: Own survey, April 2014)



#### 4.9.2. Extension Service

The provision of extension service for the rural landless is also assessed in this study. Thus, during the last 12 months 65(55.1% from the total respondent) have met the health extension agent, while 53(44.9%) met the agricultural extension agent and also 20(16.9%) have met the representatives from micro finance institutes.

**Table 21: Frequency of respondent who met extension agents**

Have you ever met these officials?	Frequency	Percent
Agricultural extension agent	53	44.9
Health extension agent	65	55.1
Representatives of Producers primary cooperatives	7	5.9
Representatives of micro finance institutes	20	16.9
Representatives of project staffs from any NGOs	6	5.1
Representatives of technical/vocational/ Community Skill Training centers (TVET/STC)	0	0

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

On the otherhand, the number of households who are visited by these government assigned extension agents are relatively small as compared to the above (who ever met these officials), except who met and visited by the health extension agents are equal. As described in the above table, the number of households who met agricultural extension agents were 53 (44.9%) of the total respondent, however only 36(30.5%) of the respondent are visited by the agricultural extension agent, and only 8(6.8%) were visited by the micro finance institute personnels. Although, the number of households who met and visited by the projects staffs from NGOs, primary cooperatives and vocational skill training centers are too insignificant.

From the focus group discussions, it is learnt that the agricultural extension agents, micro finance institutes and other personnels met the rural community at a mass by using social gatherings like church, meetings and conferences. However, such type of mass communications are difficult to transfer the required information, train improved technological facilities and skills in a proper way.

**Table 32: # of households visited by extension agents in the last 12 months**

Have these officials visited you or other household members at any time during the past 12 months?	Frequency	Percent
Health extension agent	65	55.1
Agricultural extension agent	36	30.5
Representatives of micro finance institutes	8	6.8
Representatives of project staffs from any NGOs	3	2.5
Representatives of Producers primary cooperatives	2	1.7
Representatives of technical/vocational/ Community Skill Training centers (TVET/STC)	0	0

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

It is also important to see the frequency of visits by these extension agents and other officials to the rural landless households. Thus, the health extension agents takes the lead to frequently visit the rural landless people, which is 12 times a year or once a month. However, the agricultural extension agent visits on average 5 times a year, the staffs from micro finance institutes, cooperatives and NGO have visited on average less than two times a year, which is very insignificant to support the rural landless communities.

**Table 33: Frequency of visits by extension agents and government officials**

How many times has one of these officials visited you or other household members, during the past 12 months?	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Health extension agent	64	1	60	12.36	12.896
Agricultural extension agents	39	1	31	5.62	5.636
Representatives of micro finance institutes	5	1	4	2.00	1.225
Representatives of Producers primary cooperatives	4	1	2	1.75	.500
Representatives of project staffs from any NGOs	3	1	3	1.67	1.155
Representatives of technical/vocational/ Community Skill Training centers (TVET/STC)	0				

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

Finally, the respondents were asked to reflect whether the advice and supports they got from these officials are useful or not. Thus, the majority of the respondent have answered that the advice and support they provided are very useful to the household.

#### **4.10. Participation of the respondent in Natural Resource Management activities**

Literatures shows that rural livelihoods affect and are affected by natural resource management (NRM) initiatives. Even though all the respondents are landless, the majority which is 100(84.7%) of them were involved in natural resource conservation activities.

The types of activities were mostly terrace construction and top hills rehabilitation, which is 73.7%, and 17.8% respectively. However, from the informal discussions with the study population, it is learnt that this high proportion of the participants of the terrace construction is due to the obligatory demand of the local government to participate in the campaign.

**Table 34: Type of natural resource activities that the respondents were involved**

<b>In what type of activities are you involved?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Terrace construction	87	73.7
Top hills rehabilitation	21	17.8
Area closure	11	9.3
Nursery Site establishment	7	5.9
Others	0	0

*(Source: Own survey, April 2014)*

Finally, let's add some important points that are learnt from the key informant interviews.

As well described above at different places, Ethiopia is a country of smallholder. Moreover, there are a significant proportion of the landless people. The same is true in Amhara region, where a large proportion of the community is landless. Based on the information from the regional land use and administration Bureau, there is not as such free cultivable land that can be served for the rural landless. So, redistribution of land seems impossible.

## Chapter Five

### 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 5.1. Conclusion

This study targets the rural landless households, who lack land, which is the basic factor of production. Fortunately, almost all the landless households are found in the working age range and moreover, they are able to fit to do productive works.

Though they are landless, the household size and child dependency ratio is high for the study community. Thus, it is clear that as the ratio of child dependency increases there may be an increased burden on the productive part of the population to maintain the upbringing and pensions of the economically dependent. This results in direct impacts on financial expenditures on things like consumption and social expenses particularly education, health care and others, as well as it has many indirect consequences.

Based on the assessment result, the major livelihood activities of the rural landless households are farming/crop production, livestock rearing, and paid agricultural jobs, small businesses, sale of fire woods, casual works, service provision and beekeeping.

The major indigenous skills that the target respondents have include farming, poultry, and fattening, beekeeping and carpenter skills.

There are two major reasons identified for being landless. These are because of the absence of land redistribution, since most of them are young and not present during the recent land redistribution, and also the absence of inheritance from the family due to shortage of agricultural land in the region.

Despite all the sample households doesn't own any land, they are engaged in farming using other forms of land access arrangement such as through sharecropping and rent in schemes. Hence, the main source of food for almost all of those who are not engaged in farming, and even those who are farming others' land is purchase from the market.

The major types of crops that are grown by the rural landless under consideration are Maize, Finger millet, and Teff. The choice of type of crops is thus associated with the lack of sufficient draft power and the amount of seed required.

Regarding the perception of the study community about the role of the land tenure policy, more than half of them believe the current land tenure policy has a negative impact on the access to use or own agricultural land due to the prohibition to sale and/or to buy.

Other than land resource, the significant proportion of the target respondents have access to other productive assets like cattle, chickens, forest lands and horse carts that are used to earn income for the household. However, it is not found in an adequate amount as well as quality so that to satisfy the livelihood of their households.

Almost all of the target respondents reported that there are income generating activities they would like to do and/or expand but cannot. Some of the major activities that they are unable to do or expand are Livestock rearing, crop production, fruit/vegetable production, trading commodities, charcoal or firewood collection, handicrafts, beekeeping, food or drink processing, domestic service, and local agricultural labor. Here the major factors that hinder them to do or expand are lack of money/credit; lack of tools, equipment, and working place; shortage of agricultural land; and lack of skills and knowledge.

Based on this study findings, the rural landless have more expenditures than who have land, since they rent in agricultural land, purchase food items, and purchase inputs and fertilizers when cultivating in the form of sharecropping and rent in schemes. More importantly, as the individual or household members becomes resource poor, it is usual that it has vulnerable to diseases; as a result its health care costs are also high. This implies that rural landless has expending a significant proportion of their income to rent in agricultural land, food purchase, health care and input cost. But, costs of land rent in and food purchase are extra ordinary costs for rural landless households, which make their livelihood challenging than people who have land.

In this study, it is learnt that a significant proportion of the rural landless households face food shortage at least for four months in a year. The months such as August, September, July and October are the worst months in which adults eat less than two times a day, and children less than three times a day. As a result, landless households are suffering from shortage of food for about one third of the year, which has a negative effect on the nutrition, productivity, health care and other livelihood conditions. The major causes of food shortages: absence of adequate agricultural land for household, inappropriate land management practices, lack of cultivable land, poor quality of land, pests & insects, and lack of improved agricultural inputs like fertilizers and improved seeds are explained as major factors for food shortage. Also, few respondents mentioned the presence of too much rain and market inaccessibility as additional factors of food shortage.

As a possible solution for food shortage, the sample households suggest getting agricultural land through different forms of land access arrangement and engage in

farming, as well as engaging in different off farm activities can tackle households' food insecurity.

Apart from household food shortages, the sample landless have also faced different constraints such as lack of adequate agricultural land, lack of credit facilities, lack of farm implements, and lack of oxen.

Furthermore, during the last six years, the target households face numerous undesirable consequences. The major consequences were poverty, exploitation, insecurity, and migration. However, of these undesirable consequences, the most frequently occurring as well as the most severe of all problems that happened in the last six years was poverty followed by migration.

The coping strategies & food stress responses for the sampled households that are experienced in the last 10 years are identified and categorized in to two, which is frequently used and occasional used coping strategies. Thus, in both cases strategies that are used by the rural landless are reducing the quality of meals, eating less preferred foods, reducing the number of meals, reduce the amount of food eaten by adults so that children can eat, and borrowing grain or cash to buy food from friends/neighbors or relatives are the major strategies. However, strategies like household members seeking work outside Kebele, migration, selling productive livestock's, and using saving during times of hardship were also used in the last 10 years. Similarly most of these strategies were used during the last 12 months.



Migration as one of the coping strategy is used by a significant number of rural landless household heads. The destinations for most of these migrant households are commercial farms in Amhara and Tigray regional states. The period of absence is on average 2.8 months. These migrated peoples brought cash, food and some brought nothing to the households. Moreover, the incomes earned from migration are used for different purposes such as for the purchase of food, clothing, livestock, support to relatives and others. The interesting thing here is the migration of the majority of households by itself was funded by borrowing from relatives for transportation and other costs during the migration.

A significant proportion of the target respondents have practiced saving in different forms. The major ways of saving are therefore; Equib, saving cash at home, deposit money with a micro-finance institutes, and accumulating livestock. The main purposes why they save all the money in different ways are to use as a buffer in times of need, for investment, to improve their living conditions of the households, and as a buffer in times of disaster.

Regarding the credit service, almost half of the respondents have borrowed money from informal as well as formal/institutional sources. The major sources are borrowing from relatives or neighbors in the community, borrowing from micro-finance institutes, equib, private/informal money lenders, and rural credit and saving cooperatives. The main purposes of the borrowing are therefore; for the purchase of agricultural inputs like seeds & fertilizers; purchase of livestock; investing in off-farm activities like beekeeping, poultry, and fattening; rent in agricultural land; day to day costs; repaying another loan; and others.

About one fourth of the rural landless under consideration have got different trainings during the last 12 months. The training topics are mainly crop production, livestock development, business development, and skill trainings, which are mostly facilitated by the government extension workers. However, the frequencies of the trainings are insignificant which is in most cases around one time and in some cases two times a year. It is also reported by the majority that the trainings were very useful and applicable.

The provision of extension service for rural landless is also assessed in this study. Thus, during the last 12 months the larger proportion of the respondent have met the health extension agents, while less than a half of the total respondent also met the agricultural extension agent and representatives from micro finance institutes. However, the number of households who are visited and also the frequency of visits by these government assigned extension agents are relatively small as compared to those who met these officials except the health extension agents (who met and visited by them are equal). From the focus group discussions held with the rural landless, it is learnt that the agricultural extension agents, micro finance institutes and other personnel's met the rural community at a mass by using social gatherings like church, meetings and conferences. However, it is believed that such type of mass communications is difficult to transfer the required information and skill in an intended way. Moreover, it is impossible to train farmers on improved technological facilities, knowledge and technical skills. Moreover, none of the rural landless are trained at technical and vocational skill training centers.

Even though all the respondents are landless, the majority of them are involved in natural resource conservation activities. The types of activities were mostly terrace construction

and top hills rehabilitation. However, from the informal discussions with the study population, it is learnt that this high proportion of the participants of the terrace construction is due to the obligatory demand of the local government to participate in the campaign.

From the key informant and focus group discussions, it is also learnt that the community has less willingness to provide communal lands to the landless since they need it to keep their cattle's. Furthermore, land redistribution seems impossible since there is limited cultivable land availability in the region as well as land distribution has many undesirable consequences.

Also, there are no target group specific programs and projects that are intended to benefit the rural landless. From the KII, the researcher understands that recently the Amhara regional government is trying to address more than 600,000 unemployed and landless youths in the region through creating employment opportunities by engaging them in off farm activities and development of degraded land. However, the program is not coming in implementation since there are a lot of constraints to implement the program.

Generally based on this research finding the paper conclude that the hypothesis of the study is true that the segment of the population in Mecha district is found in extreme poverty situation, and the root causes of poverty is lack of agricultural land, absence of skill training schemes, and limited provision of services (credit, input and training).

## 5.2. Recommendations

- In Amhara region, since agricultural land becomes scarce and unable to absorb the new entrants to the farming, the government, non government organizations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBOs) and other concerned stakeholders shall work to create alternative income generating activities thereby providing technical support, financial service, skill training, business development skill and inputs.
- The rural landless shall better to engage in livelihood activities that need a relatively small area but the can generate high income to the household. In particular, activities such as beekeeping, fattening, poultry, petty trade, and other off farm and nonfarm activities require small area and can use also non arable lands like top hills and degraded lands.
- The training and supports from government, extension agents, NGOs shall be intensive enough to capacitate the rural landless with adequate skills on entrepreneurship and business development skills.
- Rural enterprises development works shall be promoted by providing leased tools & equipments, startup capital with loan and grant scheme, and creating market linkages. As a result rural landless can manufacture small agricultural equipments, and consumable goods & services.
- The government, NGO and other stakeholders shall design and develop target group specific and area specific development programs.
- The community skill training centers and/or technical and vocational skill training centers shall be organized enough so that to focus the most marginalized group of

the community, i.e., the rural landless and shall provide tailored skill trainings based on the needs of each households or individuals.

- By acquiring agricultural land through sharecropping and rent schemes, the rural landless shall engage in farming through the application of improved agricultural practices like improved seeds, irrigation facilities, and other technologies and practices that enhance productivity and products.
- In order to enhance the knowledge, attitude and skill of the landless, the government, NGOs and CBOs shall promote Saving Led Literacy that can enhance the knowledge, skill and attitude of the rural landless. This can be applied by promoting integrated functional adult literacy in combination with a regular saving.

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**Annexes:**

**Annex I: Research Proposal**

**Annex II: Survey Questionnaires**