

Determinants of Women Empowerment in Bishoftu Town; Oromia Regional State of Ethiopia

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Abstract— *The purpose of this study was to determine the status of women's empowerment and its determinants using women's asset endowment and decision-making potential as indicators. To determine representative sample size, this study used a two-stage sampling technique, and 122 sample respondents were selected at random. To analyze the data in this study, descriptive statistics and a probit model were used. The average women's empowerment index was 0.41, indicating a relatively lower status of women's empowerment in the study area. According to the study's findings, only 40.9% of women were empowered, while the remaining 59.1% were not. The probit model results show that women's access to the media, women's income, and their husbands' education status have a significant and positive impact on the status of women's empowerment, while the family size of households has a negative impact. As a result, it is important to enhance women's access to the media and income, promote family planning and contraception, and improve men's educational status in order to improve the status of women's empowerment.*

Keywords— *Women, Empowerment, Probit, Bishoftu, Ethiopia*

I. INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment is currently considered to be a crucial topic of interest around the world, as development in one country cannot be achieved without equal participation of women (Bayeh, 2016). Gender equality is a realization of women's equal rights, and women's participation in all decision-making areas is a prerequisite for sustainable development in one country. Since women play a crucial role in achieving social, political, and economic development, reducing gender inequalities and empowering women are widely regarded as central development goals around the world (UNDP, 2018). In the world, women account for 70% of the poor. This femininity of poverty has influenced policy development and the identification of practical solutions. This condition imposes real costs on society in the form of untapped potential in achieving

agricultural output, food security, and economic growth in various sectors and many developing countries (ibid).

In Ethiopia, even if women are engaged in multiple roles, their contributions often go largely unrecognized and their fathers or husbands often restrict access to resources and community participation. Worse, one in three women experiences physical, emotional, or sexual violence. Furthermore, 65% of women have experienced female genital mutilation. And only half of the girls who enroll in primary schools ever make it to grade 5. In Ethiopia, women still experience significant gender inequalities as well as economic marginalization (IDRC, 2020). They have limited or restricted access to and control over productive capital resources, such as land, as well as financial, extension, and training services that increase and improve their economic capabilities and participation (Lynch, 2020 and IDRC, 2020). In addition, women are underrepresented in the formal sector of

employment. Women routinely work for lower wages and in unsafe conditions, including the risk of sexual harassment. Even in the formal sector, women dominate labor-intensive and low-skill sub-sectors (IMF, 2018).

Generally, women's empowerment indicators have shown that the status of women in Ethiopia is very low and much more pronounced in some regions compared to others due to cultural diversity and levels of development. The outstanding common and root cause is the deep-rooted patriarchal culture that ascribes a low status to women in all dimensions. This power relationship is maintained by society and accepted even by many women. Positively contributing factors towards women's empowerment are girls' education, women's working, earning their own income, and better access to the media (ESPS, 2008). Even if a number of programs have been implemented to empower women and bridge the glaring gender disparities, increase female educational opportunities, expand economic opportunities for women, and promote the health and safety of women and girls in Ethiopia, Ethiopian society in general still remains skewed in favor of men. Given that women constitute half of the country's total population, unequitable development may be detrimental to the long-term impact and effectiveness of any development initiatives (Lynch, 2020). Therefore, it is important to identify factors that affect women's empowerment and intervene in different aspects to promote women's empowerment and contribute to the development of a country. Accordingly, this study assesses the state of women's empowerment and identifies the determinants of women's empowerment in Bishoftu Town, Oromia Regional State of Ethiopia.

II. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Empowerment can be thought of as a way to create a social context in which one can make decisions and choices, either individually or collectively, for social transformation. By absorbing knowledge, strength, and experience, enhances the intrinsic capacity (Hashemi *et al.*, 1996). The process of stimulating or permitting someone to think, act, and manage tasks independently is known as empowerment. It is the method by which one can take charge of their life's circumstances and

destiny. According to Baltiwala (1994), empowerment comprises having control over one's resources (physical, human, intellectual, and financial) as well as one's ideology (beliefs, values, and attitudes).

Women's empowerment is multidimensional (Cornwall, 2016; Eger *et al.*, 2018; Kabeer, 2011) and multidimensional (Kabeer, 1999; Agarwala and Lynch, 2006; Yount *et al.*, 2016). These components include resources for empowerment, agency, and the capacity for decision-making, including in relation to one's gendered attitudes and beliefs, successes in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres, and the generational transmission of resources and opportunities (Kabeer, 1999; Kishor, 2000; Moghadam and Senftova, 2005). Social change in these relevant areas is a prerequisite for women's empowerment (Kabeer, 2005). Empowering women involves both individual and group efforts (Eger *et al.*, 2018; Kabeer, 2011). Claims on additional resources, as well as control over beliefs, values, and attitudes, are all components of empowerment (Cornwall, 2016).

The prerequisites for empowerment include enabling resources (Kabeer, 1999). Women's ability to exert instrumental agency can be improved by favourable economic, social, and human resource conditions (Kishor, 2000). According to Kabeer (2005), education improves women's cognitive capacities, which is linked to better health for both women and children. Women's ability to exert instrumental agency is improved by having access to wage and self-employment opportunities (Head *et al.*, 2015; Kabeer, 2005; Salem *et al.*, 2017). As a means of exercising economic agency, women's engagement in credit schemes is linked to higher contraceptive use (Schuler *et al.*, 1997).

Another important concept is agency and according to Kabeer (1999, 2005), it refers to a woman's capacity to exercise decision over her life. Agency can be instrumental or intrinsic. Instrumental agency is often measured as women's ability to make household and family-level decisions (Becker *et al.*, 2006; Malhotra and Mather, 1997; Gammage *et al.*, 2016), women's control over reproductive and sexual decisions, women's political and community participation (Moghadam and Senftova, 2005); or her freedom of movement (Ghuman *et al.*, 2006; Yount *et al.*, 2016). Women's agency is largely exercised through their voice and their capacity to communicate ideas that may be in opposition to prevailing standards (Gammage *et al.*, 2016). The degree

to which women's gender attitudes mirror or defy prevailing notions is a measure of this innate agency. Women's vocalisation of non-normative gender ideas is a crucial component of validated measures of women's intrinsic agency in gender unequal settings (Yount *et al.*, 2016).

2.2. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of women's empowerment begins with its stimulating aspects, such as the level of education held by women, their age and income, the level of education held by their spouses, and their access to media and credit, among other things. By directly or indirectly enhancing women's decision-making skills and increasing their asset holding in the home, these elements boost women's empowerment.

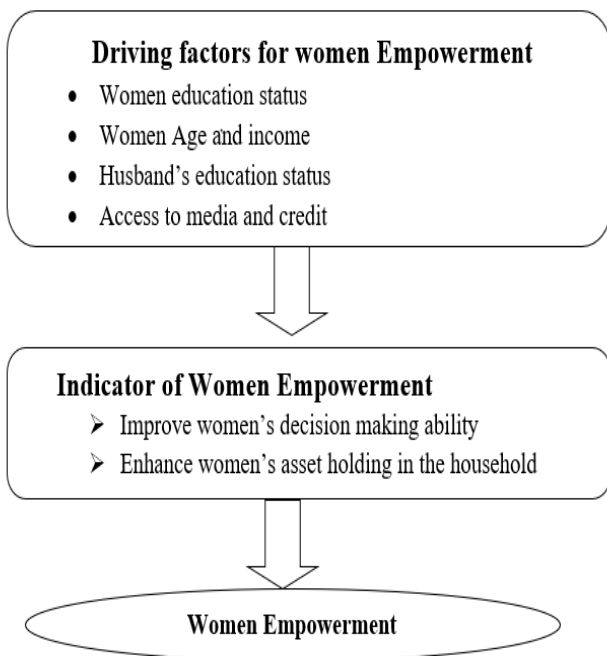


Fig.1: Conceptual Framework

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of Study Area

This research was carried out in Bishoftu Town, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. The administrative center of the city is located between latitudes 80451 and 80471 North and longitudes 380561-390 East. It is located 47 kilometers south of Addis Abeba and 52 kilometers from Adama. The town covers an area of 18,278 hectares. According to the population projections made by the Bishoftu Finance and Economic Cooperation office, the city has a total population of 201,408 by 2015/16, of

which 48.5% were male, while 51.5% were female (Bishoftu City Administration, 2020).

3.2. Description of Women Empowerment

Indicator of Women's Empowerment

Assets under the control of women in the household (Asset-Wealth Index under women's control): This variable is used to capture the asset that is under the title and control of women in the household (Kabeer 1997 and Blumberg 2005). The value of this variable ranges between 0 and 1, and the women with values closer to 1 are rich in their asset accumulation, while the ones with values closer to 0 are poor in their asset holding by following the procedure suggested by Augustine in 2008.

Women's participation in major household decisions (Decision-Index): This variable is used to capture women's participation in major household decisions. Five indicators are used to assess women's participation in household decision-making. The women were asked who makes decisions about their own health care (whether or not to use contraception), major household purchases and sales, whether or not they work outside the home, the number of children, and visits to family or relatives. For the preceding questions, binary variables were used (yes=1 if the decision was made 'women alone' or 'with her husband/parents,' and no=0 otherwise). The value of this variable ranges between 0 and 1, and households with values closer to 1 actively participate in household decisions, whereas households with values closer to 0 do not. The value of this variable ranges between 0 and 1, and households with values closer to 1 actively participate in household decisions, whereas households with values closer to 0 do not. The index was developed by following the procedure proposed by Augustine in 2008.

3.3. Method of Data Collection and Sampling Procedure

Primary and secondary sources were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. To collect primary data, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews with the sampled women were used. Secondary data was gathered by inspecting all available documents (published and unpublished) from various sources.

The target population of the study is women since the study deals with women's empowerment issues. This study employed a two-stage random sampling technique to determine representative sample

respondents. In the first stage of the total of 14 towns, only two kebele were selected randomly. Accordingly, Debaso and Biftu kebeles were selected. Then a total of 122 sample respondents were randomly selected out of 62,103 households (Bishoftu City Administration, 2020).

3.4. Method of Data Analysis

The demographic and socioeconomic conditions of the sample respondents, as well as institutional factors, were summarized using descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, and percentage. Indicators of women's empowerment were indexed using Augustine's 2008 procedure and summarized using simple descriptive statistics.

A probit model was also used to identify the determinants of women's empowerment. This study defined empowered women as those who own and control assets and actively participate in household decision-making. The dependent variable is binary in nature, with a value of "1" for those who score higher than 0.5 on the women's empowerment index and a value of "0" for those who score lower than 0.5 on the women's empowerment index.

The probit model is often used in a situation where the dependent variable has two alternatives, in this case, empowered or not-empowered. Following Koop (2003), the econometric specification of the model is given in its latent as:

$$Y_j^* = X_j\beta + e_j \tag{1}$$

Where Y_j^* is an unobserved (latent) random variable that defines women empowerment (binary), X_j a matrix of explanatory variables associated with individual j . β is a vector of coefficients associated with the explanatory variables while e_j represents the random error terms assumed to be independently and identically distributed; that is., $e_j \sim N(0, 1)$. The

relationship between the unobserved variable Y_j^* and the observed outcome Y_j can be specified as:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_j &= 1 && \text{if } Y_j^* > 0 \\ Y_j &= 0 && \text{if } Y_j^* \leq 0 \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

The probability of the event occurring is the cumulative density function of e_j evaluated at given values of the independent variables.

$$\Pr(Y_j = 1 | X) = \Phi(X_j\beta) \tag{3}$$

where Φ is the standard normal cumulative distribution function for the probit model.

3.5. Ethical, Environmental and Gender Consideration

During data collection, experts who are experienced in social life and share the common culture of the society considered moral and cultural setup in order to preserve the community's moral and folkways. The study has no negative impact on the environment in any way. In Ethiopia, since almost all households are male-dominated, asking male heads on women's empowerment issues may lead to a misconception of the finding of this study. Therefore, the elderly women in the households were interviewed or filled out questionnaires on women's empowerment.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The sample size for this study was 122 female respondents with an average age of 31.7 years. The majority (81.15%) had lower academic achievement, which was less than a diploma, while the remaining 18.85% had diplomas or higher. 77.05% of the total respondents were married, while the remaining 22.95% were classified as others who could be single or divorced (Table 1).

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

| | | Frequency | Percentage | Total |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Sex | Male | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Female | 122 | 100 | 122 |
| Marital Status | Married | 94 | 77.05 | |
| | Other | 28 | 22.95 | 122 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----|-------|-----|
| Educational Background | < Diploma | 99 | 81.15 | 122 |
| | Diploma and above | 23 | 18.85 | |

Source: Own Computation, 2022

4.2. Status of Women Empowerment

The asset-wealth index of women incorporates all assets and wealth that are under the title and control of women and was found to be 0.47, which indicates a relatively lower asset endowment for women. Likewise, the decision index of women was found to be 0.35,

which indicates the little participation of women in major household decision-making processes. Accordingly, the average women's empowerment index (WEI) was 0.41, which is the relatively lower status of women's empowerment in the study area (Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of Women Empowerment Indicator

| Indicator | Minimum Value | Maximum Value | Average Score |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Asset wealth index | 0.14 | 0.93 | 0.47 |
| Decision index | 0.02 | 0.76 | 0.35 |
| WEI | | | 0.41 |

Source: Own Computation, 2022

Based upon the above indicator of women's empowerment, women with greater than or equal to 0.5 average indexes of the two women's empowerment indicators are considered empowered, while women

with less than 0.5 indexes are considered not empowered. Accordingly, out of the total respondents, only 40.98% are empowered while the remaining 59.02% are not empowered (Table 3).

Table 3: Status of women empowerment

| State of Women Empowerment | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Empowered | 50 | 40.98 |
| Not Empowered | 72 | 59.02 |
| Total | 122 | 100 |

Source: Own Computation, 2022

4.3. Women empowerment and socioeconomic characteristics of women

The t-test and chi-square comparison of the means of selected variables by women's empowerment status are summarized in Table 4. The result indicates that of the total respondents, 77.05 were married. Of those,

the majority (89%) of them were not empowered. Regarding women's educational backgrounds, only 18.85% of them have diplomas or above. The result indicates that empowered women were better in their academic achievements.

Table 4: Summary of Variables compared between empowered and not empowered women

| Variables | Not Empowered | Empowered | t-value/ chi2 | Total |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-------|
| Married (Yes %) | 89 | 65.1 | 6.34*** | 77.05 |
| Educated (Diploma and above) (Yes %) | 14.19 | 23.51 | 1.29 | 18.85 |
| Age in year | 29.3 | 34.1 | -1.569 | 31.7 |
| Family size | 6.33 | 4.07 | 3.77** | 5.2 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Income of women in birr | 1372.7 | 4214.5 | -4.647*** | 2793.6 |
| Access to media (Yes %) | 57.01 | 82.39 | 7.09*** | 69.7 |
| Educated husband or partner (Yes %) | 40.8 | 65.3 | 3.38* | 53.03 |
| Access to credit (Yes %) | 33.2 | 38.6 | 1.21 | 35.9 |

Source: own Computation, 2022

The descriptive statistics summary indicates that the average age of respondents was 31.7 years, and empowered women were older than those who were not empowered. The average family size of respondents was 5.2, and empowered women have a relatively small (4.07) family size. The average income of respondents was 2794 birr, and empowered women received an average income of 4214 birr, which is relatively better than women who were not empowered. Around 69.7% of respondents had access to the media, and it is confirmed that empowered women had better access to the media. Only 53.03% of the total respondents have educated husbands or life partners, and women who were empowered were better at having educated husbands or life partners. In this study, only 35.9% of respondents had access to credit, and empowered women had better access to credit. Generally, empowered women are better at having a good educational background, a small family size, high income, better access to credit, and having educated husbands or life partners.

4.4. Determinants of women empowerment

An important purpose of this model is to identify the factors that determine the likelihood of women's empowerment in a given context. Identification of these factors is insufficient unless the relative influence of each factor is known in order to prioritize interventions. The econometric models used to identify determinants of women's empowerment in this study were used to examine the relative impact of various socioeconomic and institutional variables on women's empowerment. Determinants of women's empowerment were estimated by using the binary Probit model. The specification of the model was significant for the estimation of determinants of women's empowerment, implying that the null hypothesis that all slope coefficients are zero does not hold true at 1% statistical error. The estimation result indicated that women's empowerment was significantly affected by four variables out of seven hypothesized variables (See Table 5).

Family size was found to be an important determinant of women's empowerment since a larger family size incurs lots of burdens on women. The model result indicates the negative and significant effect of family size at 1% statistical error. The status of women's empowerment dwindled by 4.4% for a unit increase in family size. This relationship implies that women with a larger family size might have lots of burdens in the household, and financial dependency on their husbands increases. Therefore, as family size increases, women become less empowered. This finding is in line with Axinn and Barber, 2001, which support the negative relationship between family size and women's empowerment since fertility is negatively associated with women's education and employment, which exposes them to modern values and ideas that promote individualism and egalitarianism.

At a 5% level of statistical error, access to the media was also found to be a significant factor that positively contributes to women's empowerment. According to the model results, having access to the media increases women's empowerment by 1.5%. This finding is similar to Kishor's (2000) and UN WOMEN's (2018) research results, since the media plays an important role in empowering women and girls by connecting them to the larger world and providing easy access to information and education.

The model result confirms that the income of women positively and significantly relates to women's empowerment at a 5% level of statistical error. As women's income increases by one unit, women's empowerment also increases by 3.2% while all other factors are held constant. This finding is similar to the finding of Kishor (2000) and West (2006) since they have an income that enhances their financial independence, which increases their bargaining power in the decision-making process.

The coefficient of education status of husbands shows the positive and significant effect on women's empowerment at a 10% level of statistical error. Since education increases the capacity of human beings to

make the right decisions and respect the ideas of others, the husband's education status improves the

status of women's empowerment by 0.2%. This result was in line with the findings of Bhandari *et al.* (2016).

Table 5: Probit model estimation of likelihood of women empowerment

| Covariate | Coef. | Robust std. Err. | Marginal effect |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|
| Age | 0.049 | 0.032 | 0.012 |
| Years of schooling | 0.009 | 0.017 | 0.012 |
| Family size | -0.232*** | 0.010 | 0.0440 |
| Access to Media | 0.209** | 0.042 | .015 |
| Income | 0.126** | 0.055 | 0.032 |
| Access to credit | -0.086 | 0.137 | -0.022 |
| Education status of Husband | 0.196* | 0.052 | 0.002 |
| Constant | -2.07*** | 0.73 | |
| Observation | 122 | | |
| Wald chi ² (7) | 63.73*** | | |
| Log pseudo likelihood | -229.68 | | |
| pseudo R- square | 0.12 | | |

***, ** and * is significant at 1%, 5% and 10% level of statistical error.

Source: own computation, 2022

V. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

The finding of this study indicates that 40.9% of the total respondents were empowered, while the remaining 59.1% were not empowered. The probit model results show that access to the media, women's income, and the education status of their husbands or life partners all have a significant and positive impact on the status of women's empowerment, while family size has a negative impact. As a result, it is beneficial to increase women's media exposure, increase job opportunities for women, widespread entrepreneurship training, and provide women with access to financial resources in order to increase their income. Furthermore, the ministry of health is expected to do a lot in terms of contraception promotion and family planning integration with local and regional health centers. Finally, this study strongly suggests that future research on the determinants of women's empowerment use a larger sample size and repeated measures to account for the heterogeneities that are critical in such studies. To ensure precise and practical recommendations, both the spatial and temporal aspects of women's empowerment dynamics must be investigated.

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