

MEKELLE UNIVERSITY



COLLAGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE DEPARTMENT OF CIVICS AND ETHICAL STUDIES

Assessment of the Economic Rights of Women: Practice and challenges in Qeyih-Tekli Woreda, Central Zone, Tigray Regional State, Ethiopia

By:

Brhane Alemayehu Giday

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVICS AND ETHICAL STUDIES IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER OF ARTS IN
CIVICS AND ETHICAL STUDIES

August, 2025

Mekelle, Ethiopia

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Declaration

This is to certify that this thesis entitled “Assessment of the Economic Rights of Women: Practice and challenges in Qeyih-Tekli Woreda Central Zone, Tigray Regional State, Ethiopia” is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Civics and Ethical studies at Mekelle University, department of Civics and Ethical studies written by Brhane Alemayehu is done inline all requirements. The thesis has not been submitted earlier for an award of any degree and has also acknowledged all sources through proper citations.

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LIST of Acronyms

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

DFID Department for International Development

FDRE Federal democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GTP Growth and Transformation Plan

IMF The International Monetary Fund

MDG Millennium Development Goals

MOFEC Ministry of Finance and Economic Commission

MOFED Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

OECD Organization on Economic commission and Development

RDI Rural development Institute

SDPRP Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program

UK United Kingdom

UDHR Universal Declaration of Human Rights USA United States of America

UNESCO United Nations Economic and Socio -Cultural Organization

ABSTRACT

The study was designed to assess the Economic Rights of Women: Practice and challenges in Qeyih-Tekli Woreda, Central Zone, Tigray Regional State, Ethiopia. The study has tried to identify the level of practices of economic rights of women, the challenges that affect the economic rights of women in the study area. To achieve the objectives, the study has employed a descriptive survey design with a mixed (both quantitative and qualitative) research approach. The data for the study was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary source was gathered from household informants; while, secondary data was gathered from published and unpublished documents and office reports. The primary data for the study was gathered through questionnaire, interview and focus group discussions. In the study, both probable and purposive sampling technique was employed to select sample informants as sample size to the study. Accordingly, a total of 135 sample respondents were selected to gather reliable information to the study. After collecting and organizing the data, the result of the study was analyzed using narration and content based analysis. The study has found that there was low level of economic rights of women in the study area. Besides, the study has revealed the fact that the major challenges affecting the economic rights of women in the study area include low educational status, gender-based discrimination, and lack of inheritance and property rights as well as socio-cultural challenges. Finally, the study has cited recommendation measures including empowering women, promoting affirmative action policies, enhancing access to credit and property rights, and raising public awareness on gender equality to improve women's economic rights in the study area.

Key Words: *Economic rights, Women's Empowerment*

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Globally, even though women cover half of the world's population in the globe, they do not enjoy equality with men in political, social, and economic power (Alsharif, 2018). In this regard, no one can deny the fact that half of the world's population is composed of women. Granting socio-economic rights and empowering women thus, is indirectly to mean empowering an incredibly large number of people (UN Women, 2014). However, as is well known, gender inequality is pervasive throughout the world, although the nature and extent of this inequality varies considerably across countries and regions. In most countries of the Global South, women and men do not have equal rights and there are significant gaps in terms of legal rights, access to and control over resources, economic opportunities, power, and political voice (Meron, 2018). Women and girls therefore bear the greatest and most direct costs of gender inequalities, but there are adverse impacts that affect society as a whole, ultimately harming everyone (Tadese, 2019). Empowering women is not simply helping a woman to have a good life, but it is crucial for sustaining the development in economy, social, political, and cultural treatise. Moreover, women do not enjoy the same sort of social and economic rights regardless of their large size and their highest contribution in the developmental aspects of the nation (UN Women, 2014). Human beings are born free and equal in dignity and under the law but gender-based discrimination remains to delay women's formal participation in decision-making (Alsharif, 2018).

On a global basis, there are few numbers of women who are fronting in decision-making power with multiple roles and responsibilities at home (Meron, 2018). Research proofed that women's workforce contribution is dynamic to the individual life, in an organization, and in the society at large (Nigist, 2019) but less opportunity to grow. Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries but the fastest growing in African with a larger population of more than 100 million and of which 50 percent accounts for women (UN-Women, 2014). Achievement of women empowerment in the social, economic and political aspects will bring the utilization of half of the population which

was not considered in the past that boost the status of the individual and the society at large (Meron, 2018). Moreover, economic empowerment increases women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information. Women's economic participation and empowerment are fundamental to strengthening women's rights and enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society. Economic empowerment of women is about creating just and equitable societies. Women often face discrimination and persistent gender inequalities, with some women experiencing multiple discrimination and exclusion because of factors such as ethnicity or caste (Justice, 2019).

Continently, African women have been deprived of their social, economic and political rights due to a number of factors such as poor education, negative cultural attitudes towards the role and contribution of women to the economy as well as lack of inclusive policies that provide women with their economic, social and political opportunities at all levels. As the result, women's participation in economic, social, political, and cultural agendas remains a challenge (Befikadu & Degefa, 2015; Tadese, 2019).

In Africa, people have long held the traditional belief that women belong in the home and men belong in their fields. Moreover, women faced numerous challenges as a result of patriarchal society, old-fashioned beliefs, and male dominance. Women were only accountable for fulfilling conventional and domestic tasks such as bearing and raising children (Nigist, 2019). The society has to acknowledge that educating and empowering women has a robust potential to stimulate sustainable community development, combat poverty and improve familial living standards (Elilta, 2013). Empowered women can then fulfill her and her family needs, bring change to the society, lead a quality life, and contribute to the economy. Capability is akin to freedom that lead a particular life in a better way than another (UN Women, 2014). In the past, most parents are giving prior education opportunities for boys than girls since childhood, and women's capacity then depends on their educational background besides other challenges and household responsibilities (Elilta, 2013; Woynshet, 2014).

Ethiopia is one of Africa's fastest growing economies, and recent political and economic reforms have recognized the importance of empowering women and increasing their participation in the labor force. Yet women remain overrepresented in lower-skilled jobs while carrying out the bulk

of unpaid care work. Because gender inequality remains prevalent across the world, women's empowerment and gender inequality are frequently highlighted in development agendas of different nation states (UN Woman, 2014). In Ethiopia, women still experience significant gender inequalities as well as economic marginalization (Nigist, 2019). They have limited or restricted access to and control over productive capital resources, such as land, as well as financial, extension, and training services needed to increase and improve their economic capabilities and participation (Tadese, 2019).

In Ethiopia, most of women suffer from economic poverty, social discrimination, political disenfranchisement, and cultural subjugation. Poverty and urbanization are highly gendered, with women constituting the poorest of the poor in most developing countries. Women's participation in economic, social, political, and cultural agendas remains a challenge (Befikadu & Degefa, 2015).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Granting economic opportunity and recognition of women's contributions to the overall social, economic, cultural and political aspects are essential to women's active participation in development and the political arena. "Gender equality and women's empowerment could raise productive potential and boost the Africa's socio-economic, cultural and socio-political development" (UNESCO, 2017). To achieve gender equality in 2030, women must empower through better education opportunity and engage her career development socially, economically, culturally and even socio-politically. Women's capability enhances their economic stability, independence, and social status that will excel her power demand (Nigist, 2019). Moreover, women economic empowerment and employment secured one's family financial reliance and maintain options that provide decision making power. Practically the multiple responsibilities and the trends challenge women's career development and remain her move to the front. Traditionally most mothers have sacrificed their lives for their families without education and served their family as full-time work (Frehiwot, 2019). Besides, the tradition is also affected the women to suffer from socio-cultural and economic discrimination and have had fewer opportunities than men in terms of economic growth, education, and employment (Abate, 1991) cited by (Elilta, 2013).

Women empowerment and gender equality are one of the United Nations' key priorities of the 17th sustainable development goal (Meron, 2018). In the current political arena, the Ethiopian government has made remarkable progress in the 2018 cabinet appointment and brought women in leadership to high-level political positions. The cabinet is formed with 50% women appointment and the first Ethiopian president as well. But this leadership assignment and women empowerment practice is not seeing in different sectors of the public organizations. Actually, “the federal government has introduced national reform programs as an instrument of public sector transformation towards delivering required services for citizens effectively and efficiently” (World Bank Group, 2014). The delivery of quality service and utilization of full human potential is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its human rights and opportunities (Woinshet, 2014). To transform Ethiopia, women, and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources, and political participation as well as equal opportunities on employment, leadership, and decision-making positions at all levels. Tackling the deep-rooted women empowerment challenges will promote gender equality. So, intervention is required to give equal access and opportunity to empower this large number of less considered women employees to achieve agenda 2030 (Tadese, 2019).

Since 1991 the Ethiopian government initiates the reform programs in three phases to improve organizational service provision (Tadesse, 2019). Furthermore, the government has also prioritized the advancement of gender equality through the development and implementation of the national plans (UN Women, 2014) but still, it is a long way off attaining quality service delivery and gender equality in public organizations socially, economically and even politically (Meron, 2018). The physical burden at home, social activities, male-dominant culture, economic problem, career gaps, and gender-exclusive organizational policies affect women's confidence and affected their potential advantages socially, economically, culturally and politically as well (Bayeh, 2016). The Ethiopian government has been taking measures for ending poverty and accelerating sustainable economic growth as is stated in its agenda in the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) from 2010-2015. The plan was carried out with a clear objective focused on agro-industry, rural development, industrialization, social and human development, good governance and democratization (MoFED, 2010). It has been the major document in implementing the economic growth of the country which encompasses cross-cutting areas, such as gender equality and youth participation.

The economic empowerment of women is a prerequisite for sustainable development and pro-poor growth. Gender equality and empowered women are catalysts for multiplying development efforts. Investments in gender equality yield the highest returns of all development investments. Women usually invest a higher proportion of their earnings in their families and communities than men. Increasing the role of women in the economy is part of the solution to the financial and economic crises and critical for economic resilience and growth. However, at the same time, we need to be mindful that women are in some contexts bearing the costs of recovering from the crisis, with the loss of jobs, poor working conditions and increasing precariousness. Moreover, endeavors and efforts have been made to enhance women's socio-economic, cultural and socio-political opportunities at different levels of the society. Despite these all efforts, however, the gender gap indexes in Ethiopia both in educational and employment parameters indicate that there is much to be done yet in empowering women. Therefore, intervention of development support program in general, and on women empowering in particular will have significant contribution. In this regard, a study conducted by Elilta (2013) supported that Ethiopia is ranked 64 out of 86 countries in the 2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index that showed gender inequality gap in the country.

As far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned, an in-depth investigation and study towards the socio-economic right of women; practices and challenges that affect women's socio-economic rights in the study area is virtually lacking. Some studies have been conducted by (Ashenafi, 2016; Firesenbet, 2020; Misikir, 2021 and Netsanet, 2022) regarding the socio-economic opportunities and constraints on the practice and challenges of women empowerment in educational leadership, the challenges of women's empowerment in public service organization and women's economic empowerment intervention respectively. However, these studies tend to focus on domestic work of girls as a barrier to their education and on women's empowerment in education and educational leadership practices. Thus, in an attempt to fill the research gap, the study was intended to assess the economic rights of women, practices and the challenges that affect the economic practices of women in Qeyih-Tekli Woreda with a particular reference of Tabya Workamba.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess the current practices of the economic rights of women and the challenges that affect women's economic participation in Qeyih-Tekli Woreda, the case of Tabya Workamba.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study include,

- To assess the current level of women's economic empowerment practices in the area
- To identify the challenges that affect women's economic rights in the study area
- To identify possible measures to be taken to enhance women's economic practices

1.4. Research Questions

The basic research questions of the study include,

1. What is the current level of women's economic right empowerment practices in the study area?
2. What are the challenges affecting women's economic rights in the study area?
3. What possible measures should be taken to enhance women' economic right in the study area?

1.5. Significance of the Study

In the 21st century, empowering women is not a choice, it is a means for a better future in the world but the majority in developing countries and in the public organization has little thought yet. Women's activities are burdensome in the house that creates the gap that most women are less educated and left without a profession. Gender equality and women empowerment is a recent phenomenon that most women are inspired and engaged in the outside paid work but most of them are employed in the lower position. Considering this, the study could have the potential to inspire the concerned bodies regarding empowering women and could provide information to women advocacy groups of both Governmental and non-governmental authorities.

In addition to this, the study can clearly show the current level and status of the socio-economic rights and practices of women in the study area. Besides, it can give a reliable information to concerned bodies regarding the socio-economic practices and could enable them formulate holistic policies to enhance women's socio-economic practices. Furthermore, women must be empowered by the efforts of men, the government, law, and other concerned non-governmental authorities to sustain an all rounded developmental status of the families, communities, and nation. Moreover, the study will inspire policy makers to include gender inclusive policy in major projects related to women capacity development and empowerment and could provoke funding organization to invest on the area and to create more opportunity for the engagement of women's socio-economic practices. It can also serve as a secondary source to individuals who want to conduct a study regarding the issue being raised.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Geographically, the scope of this study was delimited to only one Tabiya, namely Tabya Workamba in Qeyih-Tekli woreda of Central zone of Tigray region. In addition, due to financial and time constraints, it would not be manageable for the researcher to include other Tabiyas in the present study. Tmajor issues that were considered in the study area, the current status or level of the women's economic participation and practices of women and major challenges affecting the economic rights of women, in relation to the overall economic impacts of the factors and the measures that should be taken to enhance the economic practices of women in the study area. Similarly, the study has only in Tabya Workamba, Qeyih-Tekli Woreda of Tigray region and does not include data from other areas in the region or outside the region. The focus was on those

sections of the population who had been deprived of their economic rights in Qeyih-Tekli Woreda of Tabya Workamba.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

Though the study has a significant role in encouraging the economic rights of women and in assessing the challenges affecting women's economic right in the study area, it has some limitations. Among these, the problem of an absence of availability of well documented and consecutive about women's economic rights The other constraint focused in this study was, reluctance of respondents to clearly show their level of annual income and in to some extent in bringing back of the questionnaires.

1.8. Operational Definition of key Terms and concepts

Agenda 2030: is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom.

Career development: is the enduring process of learning and work experience that transforms the transitions to move forward for the preferred future personality.

Economic empowerment: refers to people's ability to make a choice in developing economically and is "a process that increases people's access to and control over economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets (from which one can generate an income), skills development and market information".

Feminism: the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of sexes. The term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural, or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women.

Gender equality: refers to equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women and men and girls and boys.

Gender: refers to the social meaning given to be a woman or a man.

Quality service delivery: a process of continuous improvement through which everyone strives to create and support an environment in which people are committed to serving and meeting the needs of customers.

Women empowerment: refers to a collective and individual process designed to ensure that women have control over their lives, setting their agendas, gaining skills, building self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance.

1.9. Organization of the Study

The Thesis is organized in five chapters. The first chapter deals about background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope, limitations, operational definition of key terms and organization of the study. The second chapter discusses about the review of related literatures. The third chapter describes the general characteristics of the study area, the materials used and the methodologies followed in the study. The fourth chapter presents the results and discussion part and the last chapter comprises the conclusion and recommendation part

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Conceptual Framework

2.1.1. The concept of Empowerment

Empowerment has been defined in many different ways by a number of scholars and philosophers. It is both a very broad and contextual term and has no single definition. According to Kabeer (1999: 436), empowerment involves a change: “it refers to expansion on people’s ability to make strategic life choice in a context where this ability was previously denied to them”. One way to think about the meaning of the word ‘power’, which is the core of the word ‘empowerment’, is Foucault’s understanding of it. For him, it is a free exercise of relationships it navigates; for there is no way one can exercise power in bondage. Power is a relational entity that exists in an exercise. It is constituted in social relationships among subjects who have a minimum extent of freedom (Rowlands, 1997). Power, says Foucault “is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others” (Foucault, 1982:786). Power exists only when it is put into action: “A power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that “the other” be thoroughly recognized.” (Foucault, 1982: 787).

Foucault’s example of slavery shows in what way power can be understood with regard to recognizing the other”. As he puts it: “a slave in chains has no possibility of movement or resistance and is situated in a context of violence and domination, not power” (Deveaux, 1994). This shows that power entails freedom to be exercised. A subject who is exercising power or dominating should make the other i.e. the dominated one free, otherwise it is not considered as exercising power if the other agent is in bondage. For Foucault power exist in hierarchy and in relation, power does not exist in vacuum. “Power relations and the intransitivity of freedom is a permanent political task inherent in all social existence” (Foucault, 1982). Hierarchies in societies whether they are political, economic, or social rest in the very nature of power relation where one acts upon the other.

In his book *Questioning Empowerment* (1997), Rowland argues that to understand the notion of empowerment, we need to scrutinize, critically, the concept of power. Power for him can be understood in the light of four forms it takes: “power over”, “power to”, “power with” and “power from within”. Rowland explains each of these forms in the following way:

- ***Power over:*** is a power control where one balances the resistance or obedience of power which deteriorates the processes of oppression.
- ***Power to:*** a productive power which allows free and creative possibilities to attain things without domination.
- ***Power with:*** communal work effort to the betterment of a whole which persevere greater outcome as a group.
- ***Power from within:*** a self confidence and self-esteem that is within one’s own being which entails self-worth and respect which transcends to accept and respect others (Rowlands, 1997:13).

Rowland’s conception of power examines empowerment from power’s different forms; “power over” thus gives voice and the ability to make a decision equipping subjects with self-confidence and self-reliance. It can be related it to subjects asking for capabilities and the ensuing agency they demand. Decision-making refers both to the private and the public spheres, whether it refers to participation in a political or other structural arenas. Thus, empowerment means encompassing and involving decision makers who were outside the circle of decision making and involving them to be part of the bigger circle (Rahman, 2013).

Empowerment entails a need to have the ability to make and act through decisions and to control resources and profits. In this regard, empowerment for women means a combination of change in their aspiration and achievement (agency), which is, being able to define their own life and choose to peruse their goals. In making a choice by oneself, one needs to understand the power dynamics that exists in society. Understanding issues concerning power and gender is, therefore, a first step forward in understanding women’s empowerment. In other words: “Empowerment entails a process of change. People who exercise a great deal of choice in their lives may be very powerful, but they are not empowered” (Kabeer, 2005:13). Choices come in different ways and are constituted for men and women in different modalities; poverty and disempowerment go hand in hand and in the case where people’s situation makes it impossible for them to make a choice, because of lack of basic needs for example, the capacity of meaningful choice is absent.

By becoming aware of their interest, people, therefore, relate to the need of influencing others through their decision (Rowlands, 1997). Not being aware of the oppression of societal structures in regard to their participation in decision- making, deprives women of fully exercising their capabilities.

This is consistent with Naila Kabeer's analysis. She also captures the element of empowerment from the perspective of structural ability or disability. She claims that empowerment should be complimented with free choice and equal access to resources to exercise this choice; it needs to be entrenched in the ability to make decision by the free choice one is endowed. In the same talking, empowerment can also be understood, as Kabeer suggests, in the light of three dimensions: resource, agency and achievement:

A. Resource: It is one sort of empowerment which is a pre-condition not only material but various social and human resources that actualize the ability to exercise power. 'It's the ability to define priorities and enforce claims'; it is the element of decision making.

B. Agency: It is the process that encompasses decision-making. It has both positive and negative definitions positively it can resonate "power to" which refer to people's capacity of choice and pursue their own goals no matter objection arises from others. In the negative sense of it, "power over" agency can be overriding the choice of others sometimes resulting on violence.

C. Achievement: can be understood as the outcome of resource and agency. The outcome of both can be constituted from capabilities where people actualize their potential to live the life they want.

Kabeer identifies resources as the primary dimension of power, referring not only to material means but, the various human and social resources that serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice (Kabeer, 1999). The other two dimensions are consistent with, Alsop's and Heinsohn's views that empowerment involves "enhancing an individual's or group's capacity to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes" (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005: 5).

2.2. Women's Empowerment

Empowered women around the world are making a difference in the public sector as well as in private business but the meaning do not have consensus in literatures. It shows up that the concept of women has changed over time from financial and budgetary strengthening to a broader concept counting mental, socio-cultural, social, legitimate and political components

(Elilta, 2013). To look on the different aspects of empowerment, it is important to define related concepts like gender and gender inequality. Gender could be a social build that characterizes what it implies to be a man or a lady in a given society. Gender frequently endorses parts for men and ladies, managing with division of labor, duties and rights. These parts shift by culture and may alter over time. In societies, gender structures have the potential to produce institutionalized inequalities between men and women (i.e. gender inequality). One approach to challenge gender orientation disparity is through women picking up control through a handle of women's empowerment. Control over somebody cannot as it was happen through restraint and constrain, but it can moreover happen through assent and complicity. Therefore, in looking at women's empowerment, it is essential to look at gender relations and how power relations between the men and women are constructed and reproduced. The concept of empowerment has historical foundations in several collective struggles for social justice, such as the Protestant Reformation, Quakerism, Jeffersonian democracy, capitalism, and the black-power movement.

Their vision of women's empowerment stressed on three main fundamentals:

- It was a sociopolitical process;
- Power was the critical to empowerment; and the process promoted shifts in political, social, and economic power between and across individuals and groups (Kabeer, 2005) cited on (Elilta, 2013).

2.3. Dimensions of empowerment

2.3.1. Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment is defined by DFID as “a process that increases people's access to and control over economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets (from which one can generate an income), skills development and market information” (2012:44). Economic empowerment refers to people's ability to make a choice in developing economically, but it needs free institutions with equal access to all. It is the power of agency and accesses to use resources which benefit better livelihood and quality of life. Economic empowerment can be defined as a “multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important”

(Bayeh, 2016). It can be attained by involving the action of boosting the status of women through literacy, education, and training and rising awareness.

OECD underlines economic empowerment for women as: ... a prerequisite for sustainable development and pro poor growth. Achieving women's economic empowerment requires sound public policies, a holistic approach and long-term commitment and gender-specific perspectives must be integrated at the design stage of policy and programming. Women must have more equitable access to assets and services; infrastructure programs should be designed to benefit the poor, both men and women, and employment opportunities must be improved while increasing recognition of women's vast unpaid work. Innovative approaches and partnerships include increased dialogue among development actors, improved co-ordination amongst donors and support for women organizing at the national and global level (OECD, 2012:3).

By contextualizing the need of women and adopting a holistic approach of involving women from different categories, economic empowerment must be perceived as the liberating element of women in bondage, which gives them a human agency to make free choice to exercise power. Donor-centered empowerment must consider context in interpreting discourses of empowerment. Economic empowerment increases women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information. It is central to process of maintain benefits at all level: household, community and broader level (Bayeh, 2016). Moreover, Economic empowerment seeks to ensure that people have the appropriate skills, capabilities and resources and access to secure and sustainable incomes and livelihoods. And such kind of empowerment can be the result of literacy, improved involvement and position of a person in decision making (Justice, 2019).

2.3.2. Human and social empowerment

Empowerment as a multidimensional social process aims to help people gain control over their own lives. This is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities and their society, by being able to act on issues that they define as important (Daniel, 2019).

2.3.3. Political empowerment

The capacity to analyze, organize and mobilize. This results in the collective action that is needed for collective change. It is often related to a rights-based approach to empowerment and the empowering of citizens to claim their rights and entitlements ((Elilta, 2013).

2.3.4. Cultural empowerment

It is the redefining of rules and norms and the recreating of cultural and symbolic practices (Steffen, 2014).). This may involve focusing on minority rights by using culture as an entry point.

2.4. Theoretical frameworks

2.4.1. Feminist interpretation of Economic Empowerment

The notion of empowerment has entailed many scholarly interpretations, focusing on the question of gender rights and equality. The concept empowerment comprises a history of social change. It is linked to feminist consciousness and collective action which intertwined itself with international development around the 1970 and the emphasis on the need to transform power relations for women to gain equality and full right (Cornwall, 2014). Since the feminist discourses shifted to gender equality, two modalities have taken place in approaching the question of gender economic equality; the question of women development and women empowerment the misuse or ambiguous usage of the term “empowerment” in development researches and practice masks a problematic concept which leads to unclear actions (ibid: 3), this misusing of the term is due to the unclear definition of its root word ‘power’. Rowlands look at the concept of women empowerment from both development and gender perspective and says that both notions do not capture the total picture of what empowerment means (Rowlands, 1997). Empowerment is about changing the position of those who used to exercise little or no power over their own lives. ‘Power having two central aspects control over resources (physical, human, intellectual, financial, and the self), and control over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes), then empowerment therefore, is the process of gaining control’ (Cornwall, 2014). Feminist theorists, such as Kabeer, have suggested that resources can be a primary dimension of power from the focal point of not only material but also various human and social resources, which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice (Kabeer, 1999). The need to reciprocate the self-understanding and capacity in self-expression has to transcend in their ability to access

resources and to control over the resources they have, not just to alleviate poverty: “the kind of changes that can transform the root causes of that poverty and begin to address the deep structural basis of gender inequality. The conditions need to be fostered for shifts in consciousness so that women understand their situations and come together to bring about change that can benefit not only them, but also other women” (Cornwall, 2014).

Development studies lack the study of deprivation of capabilities from the human agency perspective when it comes to women. Kogge takes his argument and adds that the deficit of actualizing women in quality education, health, political participation and economic participation has been the main reason in the drawback of women in the decision-making arena and disempowering them in all levels (Koggel, 2013). Thus, removal of gender inequalities is a transcendental notion where not only women, but to their whole family and the society as whole, which will benefit from it.

Research showed that empowerment is perceived, for example, by South Asian feminists as an emancipatory project, where it needed to be actualized at the grassroots level, this was due to the post 1975 women’s movement, which then grew in the 1980s, when governments started to plan development as an agenda for rural development (Biewener & Bacqué, 2015).

Feminists insisted that not only communal or self-organized movements of emancipation are needed, but that it is necessary to empower women on an individual level. Thus, a feminist empowerment necessitates the four components of power within, power to, power over and power with, which were explained above. The feminist who works on empowerment dwells more on psychological assets, which go beyond material, social and financial assets, where actors or subjects need “a raised level of consciousness if they are to translate their assets into choices- that is, to become agents” (Biewener & Bacqué, 2015:64). Agency must take a central part of empowerment in recognizing the ability of free choice and equal access to power. It needs to be incorporated in the actions of economically empowered women in all its indicators like health, education, political participation, income and many more.

In her work, Butler is known to conceptualize gender performativity, where she says that performativity deals with agency where the human freedom is exercised. The performativity of gender, as she puts it, deals with which people counts as lives, as who is a person who is actualized as full subject, where her/his voice matters (Butler, 2009). Societal norms, thus, not only make us perceive whose lives matter, but they also gender us and presuppose our actions on

how we act as gendered beings. Butler points out that norms act on us before we are able to act on them (ibid).

The transformative philosophical worldview focuses on the needs of groups and individuals in our society that may be marginalized or excluded (Nigist, 2019). In the current era, gender equality and women empowerment agenda are hot issues in the world and highly introduced in the UN and International Organizations. Universally, women take fifty percent of the total population and they are involved in providing their labor in the informal and self-employment economic activities. Again, women spend two to ten times more time on unpaid care work than men (OECD, 2014). However, the formal employment sector engaged most women in a lower and middle-level position and hence women are invisible in the management positions of the government, the private as well as the civil society sectors (Meron, 2018). This unequal distribution of employment is linked to discriminatory social institutions and stereotypes on gender roles (OECD, 2014) that imbalance gender equality.

Empowerment refers to the development of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into anticipated actions and outcomes (Justice, 2019). The empowerment of women employees is about escalating women's capability to participate in decision making power and influence in organizational matters that reflect the women's contribution. Women empowerment ensures that women have the potential to control their lives and can involve actively in social, political, and economic spheres. Women are involved in the outside work for the sake of economic independence, striving professionalism, and for gaining decision making power. Steffen stated that "Economists increasingly see investing in women as the key to development" (Steffen, 2014).

2.4.2. Trends of women's Empowerment

It is a social movement, largely based in the United States that in the 1960s and '70s sought equal rights and opportunities and greater personal freedom for women. The first wave movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries focused on women's legal rights, especially the right to vote. The second-wave movement is about the women's rights movement touched on every area of women's experience including politics, work, the family, and sexuality. The second wave movement improved education for women, decrease fertility rates and increase the cost of mortgages, which in turn created an opportunity for more women included in the workforce

O’Sullivan (2012) cited by (McGrath, 2014); while, organized activism by and on behalf of women continued through the third and fourth waves of feminism from the mid-1990s and the early 2010s, respectively.

Postmodern feminist analysts argue that women need to be esteemed for having their own legitimate needs, aspirations, and desires. Trends and culture influences women outside work in the past but globalization and feminist theory reintroduced the equality and the rights of human beings. Given the importance of women's role in leadership, women's career development and capacity development require unreserved effort from the government, the employer, and the family to achieve agenda 2030 (Befikadu & Degefa, 2015).

2.5. Challenges of women’s Empowerment

2.5.1. Challenges related to Inheritance laws and customary practices: Experience from Pakistan

The lives of Pakistan's countryside women and men are based on cultivated land. Land serves as a source of safety (Mumtaz, 2007). Pakistan, with caste and familial ties playing a significant role in rural regions, on the one hand, there are the lower-income occupational groups such as potters, cobblers, and so on and on the other, there are the impoverished landless and sharecroppers (Mumtaz, 2007). Obviously, these groups rarely own property, and women, in particular, are far less likely to do so. Female’s right of access and control over property inheritance assures their socio-economic empowerment and is recognized by the Islamic law, the constitution of Pakistan, and internationally (Aisha, 2008). Legal plurality exists in Pakistan when it comes to inheritance law; customary law, civil law, and Shariah law all control inheritance affairs. The Pakistani Constitution and Shariah law give a categorical foundation for women to exercise their inheritance and ownership rights. The ground reality, however, is substantially different, owing to prevalent cultural practices, social conventions, taboos, stereotypes, and patriarchal structures (Zakria and Watto, 2005).

According to Pakistan's ancient tribal norms, males are entitled to practically all of their parents' possessions, but women are frequently denied or pressured to relinquish their lawful share of the inheritance (Rehman, 2010; Aisha, 2008). Dowry is viewed as a convenient recompense for any conceivable part in natal inheritance in Pakistan (Mehdi, 2002). A culture of cousin weddings

has developed as a result of the necessity to retain ancestral landholdings. In severe situations, honor killing and marriage to the Quran are also strategies to protect family property (Zakria and Watto, 2005). Women claim to the property they inherited may lead to their parents' abandonment.

All these acts are in violation of Islamic law and, unequivocal rules, which provide clearly defined shares for male and female descendants of a deceased person. Even though women in Pakistan have the legal right to inherit money from their families, they rarely use it. Islamic (Shariah) and Pakistani state law allow women to inherit both immovable and moveable property, women have traditionally been denied jurisdiction over their inheritance, especially immovable property such as land, and often their whole claim to it (Bishin *et al.*, 2017).

In Pakistan the status of women is very low in terms of achieving their rights to inheritance (Naznin, 2014). Women face a number of challenges, including a lack of information about their property rights and a lack of understanding of land transaction procedures, land registration systems, and other legitimate issues related to land ownership (Rubab and Usman, 2018). The traditionalism in customary practices and the overvalued of religion are making hurdles for the woman in Pakistan (Malik & Aamir, 2017 and Noreen & Khan, 2012). In inheritance cases women usually do not receive or are forced to surrender their legal share in the property (Rehman, 2010; Rubab and Usman, 2018). Women are even forced to “swap marriages” to keep away from inheritance (Aisha, 2008). Dominant cultural and customary practices, lack of awareness and lack of implementation are the main causes that result in women’s deprivation in the property (Kabeer, 1994; Ahmed, 2010).

Parental bequests of tangible wealth are an important kind of intergenerational transfer that has far-reaching effects on long-term development. The land is a valuable asset and a vital source of income at low levels of development. Moreover, constraints on women's legal rights to property are likely to be at the foundation of larger patterns of inequality, given the importance of asset ownership for women's bargaining power, opportunity to make a living, and intra-household allocation of resources toward consumption and investment. But women face inequalities to access and control over the property. Therefore it is a need to understand the social and cultural barriers that face women responsible for discrimination (Ahmed, 2010).

2.5.2. Socio-economic and Cultural factors hindering women's right to own land

One of the most important characteristics of structured human civilizations is inheritance. In a broader sense, inheritance may refer to anything from the physical transfer of property (movable and immovable), entitlements, liabilities, and obligations upon the death of an individual (Agarwal, 1988; Heger, 2012). The ability of a woman to inherit is seen to be one of the rights that will empower and safeguard women all over the world. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) expresses firmly that "each one has the right to acquire property by yourself or in partnership with others." Both spouses have equal rights to property ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment, and disposal within the family (CEDAW, 1979; Beijing Declaration, 1995). According to property theory, in a modern capitalist society, resource ownership may contribute to a sense of relative power and liberation of previously marginalized groups and people (Malik, 2017).

Throughout history, several informal norms like customs evolved into concrete laws that govern wealth transmission between generations. According to Stenzor, for children whose parents die young, inheritance might be a source of educational investment. Women having immovable property have the power to take a larger involvement in family and agricultural decision-making within marriage (Stenzor, 2003). Women's lack of access to the property leads to extreme poverty. Legal restrictions on women's property rights are believed to be at the basis of larger patterns of inequality. Such a situation increases the socio-economic dependence of the woman and consequently reduces her participation in the process of human development (Stenzor, 2003). The right of receiving an inheritance can be influenced by religious, cultural, and legal institutions (Kabeer, 1994). According to Deere and Leon (2003), the gender asset difference in land is large in Latin America and is caused by three factors: male preference in inheritance, male advantage in marriage, and male bias in both community and state land distribution systems. Interaction of cultural institutions and economic institutions is very strong in developing countries. Men are frequently favored over females in these nations, and sons, in particular, tend to gain from the right to practically all of their father's property, which is extremely unjust to women (RDI, 2009). Women have restricted access to and influence over productive resources, even when they have the legal right to own and inherit property. In the absence of protective measures, women frequently turn to their parents' home and brothers for

help (poor marriages, sickness, financial strain) and so forego their share of the property as a kind of future insurance (Sultana, 2012).

Feminists typically use the term "patriarchy" to characterize the male-female power relationship. Patriarchy refers to the representation and institutionalization of male control over women and children in the home, as well as male domination over women in society at large, in its broadest sense. It implies that males have influence in all of society's major institutions, but women are denied such access. It does not, however, imply that women are utterly powerless or without rights, influence, or resources (Lerner, 1989:239). Patriarchy, according to Walby, is a set of social institutions and behaviors in which men oppress and exploit women (Walby, 1990:20). Without the assistance of women, no nation can prosper. Women are now viewed in positions of different authority like Prime minister, queens, etc. But none of this changes the reality that the system is dominated by males, and women are just accommodated within it in various ways (Sultana, 2012). Property rights, particularly women's land rights, are determined by a complex interaction between a society's institutions and underlying power dynamics. Inheritance and property rights discriminate against women due to patriarchy (Lerner, 1989). Because of its largely patriarchal structure, inheritance, for example, tends to exclude women in many circumstances. When an inherited property is distributed unequally, the impact of this imbalance on economic inequality is of great importance (Rubab, 2018).

2.5.3. Socio-Cultural Challenges to Women's Empowerment

Society gives less attention and less credit to women who are involved in unpaid works. How the society and policymakers address issues concerning unpaid work has important implications for the achievement of gender equality: they can either enhance the capabilities and alternatives of women and men or confine women to traditional roles (Frehiwot, 2019) cited by (OECD, 2014). Usually, women are engaged in motherhood and caring roles in addition to other multiple responsibilities that create further education and career development sometimes unthinkable. While we are now in the twenty-first century, most of the decisions made on our planet continually exclude the participation of half of its population, that is, women (Alsharif, 2018). A study conducted by Alsharif showed that the share of women workforce in the Arab countries accounted for more than 40% of the total employment and here in the capital also more women are involved in formal employment but expansion remains horizontal and does not rise upward.

Again, the percentage of women holding senior positions in the United States was only 3% and not exceeding 6% in the UK (Ibid). The study above shows that there are improvements in women's paid work involvement but gaps in the decision-making role have to be addressed.

Meron in her finding states that socio-cultural attitude, gender insensitive organizational culture, lack of organizational supportive system, gender-based violence, and company recruitment and promotion practice are the major factors that challenge women in a leadership position (Meron, 2018). Society perceived women leaders lack confidence and assertiveness that discourage other women's participation in leadership. Again, the working mothers are also perceived as a bad mother when they left their children at the daycare or with the caregiver (Frehiwot, 2019). There are also common societal perceptions that women have a much higher tendency to seek out careers in caring professions such as nursing, childcare, administrative positions but make counters look for construction, Science, or IT related roles that discriminates women by profession (McGrath, 2014).

2.5.4. Challenges related to Career Gaps

Education is the basic tool to bring the anticipated societal change in politics, economy, health, equality, development. Quality education without discrimination offers an opportunity for women to contribute to the development process and boosts the movement of women in society (Nigist, 2019). As per the study made by Alsharif, there is a huge shift of women in Saudi enrolled in higher education, and an increasing number of women are involved in the labor force (Alsharif, 2018). Also, an increased number of women labor is needed in Ireland and educational qualification is prioritized (McGrath, 2014).

Again, here in the capital of the study area, 32% of female employees in woreda 01 have good academic performance who has served the organization in the top and middle-level positions. The rest are in the lower level and clerical positions that show the gap that more educated female employees are required in the public organizations (Befikadu and Degefa, 2015). However, the system in the organization, individual responsibilities, and the government shall involve to work on women's career development. It is also asserted that women empowerment cannot be achieved without the participation and involvement of men in the sense that the idea is significantly advantageous not only for women but also for men (Woynshet, 2018).

2.6. Empirical literature on Women's Economic Empowerment

2.6.1. Women's Economic Empowerment in Ethiopia: the Concept and the Practice

Economic empowerment has been defined in different ways as it is processed or carried out in different contexts and realities. Department For International Development (DFID), a UK aid agency defines economic empowerment as: “a process that increases people’s access to and control over economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets (from which one can generate an income), skills development and market information” DFID (2012). The question of this research, thus , is whether the economic empowerment of women underlines or emphasizes the discourses that are being used in the Ethiopian context and does this discourse encompasses the major indicator of economic empowerment?

The Ethiopian government has been taking measures for ending poverty and accelerating sustainable economic growth as is stated in its agenda in the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) from 2010-2015. The plan was carried out with a clear objective focused on agro-industry, rural development, industrialization, social and human development, good governance and democratization (MoFED, 2010). It has been the major document in implementing the economic growth of the country which encompasses cross-cutting areas, such as gender equality and youth participation.

A World Bank supported project assessed in 2005, concerned with the empowerment of women in Ethiopia on economic and social aspects in rural and urban areas, showed that the status of women in the development arena was minimal both in rural and urban areas (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:128). The study shed light on the fact that women face constrains in accessing economic assets, which prevents them from expressing or exercising agency or self-determination.

2.6.2. Empirical Evidence on women's Economic empowerment in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a country that is striving to elevate itself from poverty and develop its economy for a better future. The country is trying to bring women’s role in economics development to the forefront. Being one of the fastest growing countries economically (FDRE, 2011), Ethiopia

needs to include women in this growth. However, with a cultural background of gender-based discrimination and inequalities, the number of women in the work force is still insignificant. According to the World Economic Forum (2016), the economic participation ratio of female to male was 0.60 where the wage equality gap was 0.57 and gap on legislator, senior officials and managers was 0.36. Although the government is striving to alleviate the problem at hand, it is not easy to breach the gap of low empowerment and gender pay gap (Bayeh, 2016).

Ethiopia ranks 109 out of 144 countries in the world on gender gap in economic empowerment and participation, according to the data of World Economic Forum (2016). The same data shows that Ethiopia ranks number 42 in terms of the labor force participation, and 105 out of 144 on wage equality for similar work. Ethiopia ranks 45 out of 144 countries in women's political empowerment, and it is the 93 place according to women holding ministerial positions. The figures presented only show the quantity of the gap or disparities.

The government of Ethiopia has taken the economic growth in a direction of more sustainable approach with numerous indicators put into consideration. It has implemented the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), which was prepared to strategically plan the development in social and economic growth of the country. The GTP I was carried out by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) for the year 2005–2010, which was amended and carried on for the next fiscal years from 2010–2015. In the GTP I, the government was able to cover many areas of development with a special focus on meeting Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on "accelerated, sustained and broad based economic development" (MoFED, 2002).

GTP I was a more comprehensive and broadly- based and was implemented in 2002. It was known as Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP). The adoption of the SDPRP was more of a donor-mandated requirement from the international organizations, mainly World Bank and IMF. The article looked at the GTP I from two perspectives of economic growth and social development. The economic growth was dated back from 1957 in recording different growth regarding different economic sectors up to the present, where a broad-based sustainable development was introduced in 2002 (Adugna, 2015). The Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction program was officially launched in 2005 and it implemented poverty reduction with different ministries and regional state governments in the country. The growth and transformation Plan had agenda on fast growth and development to accelerate growth on

agriculture and advanced industry. Numbers and facts show the fast growth of the country, where the first recorded economic growth after the introduction of GTP was 10.1 percent (“GTP Main document - Vol 1 - Resources - MOFEC,” 2010). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has ranked Ethiopia among the five fastest growing economies in the World (Adugna, 2015). This record was achieved during the implementation of GTP I, when opportunities of new jobs’ creation and youth employment in both, private and public, sectors were achieved. Poverty reduction was high and the Human Development Index rose from 0.284 in 2000 0.435 in 2013 (ibid).

The need to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) has encouraged the government of Ethiopia to introduce different indicators of development and pressured implementers in different developmental sectors urging them to meet the target. The urgency of the MDG was highly reflected, for example, on developmental health sector on 1 Million Community Health Workers’ Campaign, providing health services where there were no or few doctors available. The campaign had both, positive and negative, aspects where extension health workers were massively trained to handle uncomplicated procedure, especially in the pre-natal and post-natal stage when the community health workers or extension health officers communicated with communities and created awareness on primary health care, which the MDG were focused on (Maes *et al.*, 2015).

With all these challenges at hand, the discourses that are circulated by the government of Ethiopia and donors at times is the valuable work that is being done in saving lives of mothers and babies and empowerment of women in the country which goes hand in hand with work ethics; serving ones country for the better good and creating model citizens for others to copy (Maes *et al.*, 2015). As such, the true connotation of empowerment needs to be re-examined and deconstructed at all levels. Development research on women and girls has shown that investing in women is more profitable in terms of money because women and girls work more efficiently than men, even though 70% of the World’s poor are women (Shain, 2013). As most of other Global South countries, Ethiopia has taken the path of neoliberal approach to economic development, which resulted in impoverishment and marginalization women of the South. Governments adapt measurements brought to them by international organizations without really examining if they work in their contexts; this and other control mind game by big international

organizations and the interest to get loans on the side of global South governments is jeopardizing the true actualization of human agency and empowerment, especially to women and girls everywhere in the developing world (Maes *et al.*, 2015).

2.7. Policy Analysis to empower the Practices of Economic right of Women

According to (Woynshet, 2018), policy measures regarding the rights of economic empowerment of women focus on ensuring equitable access to economic resources, opportunities, and rights through sound public policies, legal reforms, and social protections. These measures include removing legal and societal barriers to women's employment, improving access to financial services and markets, recognizing and reducing unpaid care work, and promoting women's participation in leadership and decision-making roles. In terms of the measures, he stated the following practical measures to enhance the economic rights of women. These include,

- ***Legal reforms*** to remove restrictions on women's employment, establish protections against workplace harassment, enforce wage protections, and expand social security coverage.
- ***Flexible work arrangements*** and digital payment systems to enhance women's labor participation and income security.
- ***Expanded access to financial services*** such as gender-responsive lending, supporting women-led MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), and connecting women enterprises to global value chains.
- ***Capacity building*** for governments to collect gender-sensitive data, implement gender-responsive budgeting, and foster gender mainstreaming policies.
- ***Supporting unpaid care work*** by providing public services, infrastructure, social protection policies, childcare services, and promoting shared family responsibilities.
- ***Promotion of women's leadership*** in unions, professional associations, and businesses to ensure women's active role in economic decision-making.

- *Social attitudes and advocacy* efforts to improve public perceptions of women's economic participation.

These policies are implemented in various contexts globally, adapted to local needs, and underpinned by international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. If more country-specific or sector-specific examples are desired, those can be provided as well.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Qeyih-Tekli woreda of Central Zone of Tigray region with a particular reference of Tabya Workamba. Qeyih-Tekli woreda is found in Central Zone of Tigray region. According to the census conducted in 2007, the total population of the area was 30,000 and previously, the Woreda was merged with Kolla_Tembien woreda as a Tabya Administration (CSA, 2007).

The people of the Woreda and the study area as well are Tigrigna speakers. Regarding the climate condition, the area has a variable climate condition that significantly varies from Temperate to Hot climate seasonally. Small scale trade, agricultural practices and animal husbandry are the types of economic activities that people use to make their livelihood.

3.2. Research Design

For the successful completion of this study, a descriptive survey design with mixed research (both quantitative and qualitative) approach was employed to assess the economic rights, practices and the challenges that affect the socio-economic rights of women in the study area. In this regard, qualitative research was typically be used to answer questions about the complex nature of a phenomenon, often with a purpose of describing and understanding the phenomenon from the participant's point of view. Besides, the researcher has also employed quantitative approach to complement the qualitative one and to better describe results through descriptive statistics.

3.3. Sources of Data

The sources of data for this study was both Primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from sample households, focus group discussion and interview with key informants; while the secondary data was gathered from several sources like Census data, published journals, annual reports and office reports.

3.4. Data Collection tools

Questionnaire

Questionnaire comprising both open and close ended questions were prepared and distributed for local households of sample respondents of the study area. This is because questionnaire is convenient to collect large amount of information from large number of respondents within a short period of time and in a relatively cost-effective way. Besides, It allows the respondents to give information with full of consent. In line with this, it makes likely an economy of time and expense and high proportion of usable response (Kothari, 2004).

The close ended items were used when the responses from the respondents are expected to be clear and easier to be analyzed. Furthermore, in close ended questions respondents select their opinion from lists of answers provided. It provides a high uniformity of responses among the same respondents and enables to make the responses easier to be proposed. The major purpose of the item was to give the respondents a chance to express their feeling, intention attitude, problems, perceptions and understanding of the issue raised. Open ended questions were also used because they are suited to give a free response in continuous text. It is also more appropriate to elicit sensitive information.

Key informant Interview

Key informant interview was conducted with 8 key informants including Tabya and Woreda Women's and youth association head officers and representatives to gather information regarding the current level of the practices of the economic rights of women and the challenges affecting them in Tabya Workamba. Besides, Qetena or Kushet representatives were also interviewed as key informants to gather information about the problem under study.

These individuals were selected purposely because the researcher deeply realized, they are small in number and are relevant bodies to provide appropriate information for the study due to their high intimacy with the issue raised in their day to day activities. Purposive sampling was preferred, since it is a good technique to choose small groups or individuals likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest being raised.

Focus Group Discussion

One focus group discussion was organized from the sample three *Kushets of Tabya Workamba*. Participants of the focus group discussion was include young, old and both males and females having a good experience and knowledge about the issues related to the economic rights of women, practices and challenges that affect the economic rights and women's empowering practices of women in the study area. In this case, one focus group discussion composed of 2 participants from each *Kushet* with a total of 6 participants was constructed purposely because the researcher believed and expected that they may have ground knowledge with the issue raised.

3.5. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

First, the study area was selected purposively based on the researcher's familiarity, accessibility to the area. Following this, one sample *Tabia* was selected purposely from 13 *Tabiyas* of the Woreda and the sample households were selected using simple random sampling technique from the total population as sample representatives. The study area has three *Kushets or Qetenas* namely, Qtena 01, 02 and 03. The formula of Kothari (2004) was employed to determine the size of the sample for finite households

$$n = \frac{Nz^2PQ}{E^2(N - 1) + z^2PQ}$$

Where:

n- Sample

N - Household unit variables

P- Expected prevalence or proportion (in proportion of one; 10%)

Q - (1-P)

E – Allowable error 0.05 significance

Z – Standardize normal variable and valued that corresponds to 95% degree of confidence, which is conventional, Z value is 1.96.

Therefore, the desired sample is

$$n = \frac{5345(1.96)^2(0.9)(0.1)}{(0.05)^2(5345-1) + (1.96)^2(0.9)(0.1)}$$

$$n = 135$$

n- Sample

N - Household unit variables

P- Expected prevalence or proportion (in proportion of one; 10%)

Q - (1-P)

E – Allowable error 0.05 significance

Z – Standardize normal variable and valued that corresponds to 95% degree of confidence, which is conventional, Z value is 1.96.

Therefore, 135 household respondents were selected from the total households using simple random sampling technique.

To select 135 predetermined households from the sample frame, simple random sampling was employed. The *Tabiya* has three *Kushets* or *Qetnas*. The desired samples (135 households) were selected from each *Kushets* or *Qetenas* of the *Tabiya* by using proportional sampling. Accordingly, 51 households out of 2000 HHS were selected from Qetena-01, 39 households out of 1560 HHS were selected from Qetena -02 and 45 HHS out of 1785 HHS from Qetena -03 were selected using simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling was used because, simple random sampling allows each member of a given population to have an equal chance of being selected and included as part of the required sample(s). Besides giving equal chance of being included as part of the sample to the respondents, simple random sampling technique is viable for manageable sample size determination.

Generally, the total respondents of this study were 135. The sample respondents and participants from each *Kushets* or *Qetenas* represented in table 3.1 as follows below.

Table 3.1: Sample Size determination

Name of Kushets(Qetena)	Total population	Sample size($n_i = \frac{n}{N} * N_i$)
Qeta-1	2000	51
Qetena-2	1560	39
Qetena-3	1785	45
Total	5345	135

Source: Own survey, 2025

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected using different instruments in survey-based approach was analyzed using both narration and content analysis method. Qualitative data(particularly in the case of key informant interview and focus group discussion was analyzed qualitatively using description method and quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency and percentage. Finally, after the collection of data from key informant through interview and focus group discussion, the results has analyzed qualitatively in textual and narration form and the data which frequently replied by most respondents, was used to analyze and summarize the data qualitatively.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

The researcher has tried to do everything to make this work professional and ethical. To this end, the researcher has tried to clearly inform to the informants about the intention of the study i.e. the study was purely for academic purpose; and that all responses to be kept confidential. While introducing the purpose of the research in the introduction part of the interview, the researcher confirmed that subjects' confidentiality was protected. Moreover, the study was based on their permission. The researcher also did not personalize any of the response of the informants during data presentations, analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, all the materials used for this research have been appropriately acknowledged.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered through questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion.

4.1. Sex of the Respondents

Table 4.1: Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Female	125	92.6
Male	10	7.4
Total	135	100

Source: Household Survey, 2025

As it is clearly shown in table 4.1, the highest (92.6%) of the sample households were female households; while, the rest 10(7.4%) of them were females. This implies that 92.6 % of the household respondents were females and this indicates that most of the respondents in the study area were female or women headed households.

4.2. Age Category of the respondents

Table 4.2: Age category of the Respondents

Age category	Frequency	Percent
15-20	46	34.1
21-30	52	38.5
31-40	25	18.5
41-50	12	8.9
Total	135	100

Source: Household Survey, 2025

Table 4.2 above shows the age distribution and category of the respondents in the study area. Accordingly, 52(38.5%) of the sample respondents were in the age ranges of 21-30 years.

Following this, 46(34.1%) of them were in the age range of 15-20 years. Similarly, 25 (18.5%) of the sample respondents were in the age range of 31-40 years; while, the rest 12(8.9%) of them were in the age ranges of 41-50 years.

4.3. Marital Status of the Respondents

Table 4.3: Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	53	39.3
Married	52	38.5
Divorced	30	22.2
Total	135	100

Source: Household Survey, 2025

Regarding the marital status of the respondents, table 4.3 clearly depicts that 53 (39.3%) of the sample respondents were single; while, 52 (38.5%) of them were married. On the contrary, 30(22.2%) of them were divorced. The result in general shows that majority of the respondents were married and single with a slight difference between the ratio of married and single that account 39.3% and 38.% respectively.

4.4. Family Size of the Respondents

Table 4.4: Household Size of the Respondents

Household Size	Frequency	Percent
1-3	33	24.4
4-6	90	66.7
7-10	12	8.9
Total	135	100

Source: Household Survey, 2025

Concerning to respondents household size, table 4.4 above clearly shows that, 90(66.7%) of the households had 4-6 family size and 33(24.4%) of them had a family size of 1-3 members as family. On the other hand, the rest 12(8.9%) of the households had a family size of 7-10 members. This shows that majority of them had a family size of 4-6 members.

4.5. Educational Status of the Respondents

Table 4.5: Educational Status of the Respondents

Educational Status	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	56	41.5
1-8	45	33.3
9-12	19	14.1
Diploma	9	6.7
Degree	6	4.4
Total	135	100

Source: Household Survey, 2025

Table 4.5 above shows the educational status of the respondents in the study area. Accordingly, majorities (41.5%) of them were illiterate households that cannot read and write; while, 45(33.3%) of the sample respondents have completed their basic and elementary education (grades 1-8). Following this, 19(14.1%) of them have completed their secondary school (grades 9-12). On the other hand, the rest 9(6.7%) and 6(4.4%) of them were Diploma and Degree holders respectively. From this it can be concluded that majority of the respondents were illiterate households that cannot read and write.

4.6. Farmland Size of the Households

Table 4.6: Farmland Size of the Households

Farmland Size in Hectare	Frequency	Percent
No possession and access to land	23	17
<0.5	58	43
0.5-2	44	32.6
2.1-3.5	8	5.9
>3.5	2	1.5
Total	135	100

Source: Household Survey, 2025

Concerning respondents' household size, table 4.6 shows that 58 (43%) of the sample households had a farmland size below or less than 0.5 hectares; while, 44(32.6%) of them had a

farmland size 0-5-2hectres. On the contrary, 23(17%) of them were households with no possession and access of land at all. 2.1-3.5 hectares. Following this, 8(5.9%) of them had a farmland size of 2.1-3.5 hectares. Finally, the rest 2(1.5%) of them were households with a farmland size greater than 3.5 hectares. The result indicates that majority of the households have had a farmland size of less than 0.5 hectare and even majority of those who have a land have had a farmland size of 2 hectares or below. On the contrary, 17% of them were also households that don not have any farm land. From this it can be concluded that the small nature of the farmland size and the absence of farm land size can reduce the likelihood of agricultural productivity to feed the households and this in turn is leading to rural- urban migration in the study area.

4.7. Livelihood of the Respondents

Table 4.7: Livelihood of the Respondents

Livelihood/Economic activity	Frequency	Percent
Agriculture and Irrigation	14	10.4
Trade and business enterprises	30	22.2
Employed	15	11.1
Daily worker	32	23.7
Waiter/Waitress	21	15.6
Beggar	23	17
Total	135	100

Source: Household Survey, 2025

As it is clearly shown in table 4.7 above, 32(23.7%) of the livelihood of the sample respondents was depend on daily work and that they were daily workers to sustain their life and to make a living. Following this, 30(22.2%) of them were engaged in trade and business related enterprises to make a living. On the other hand, 23(17%) of them were households whose life was totally depend on alms that they get from begging. On the other side, 21(15.6%) of them were engaged in waiter and bar tending activities serving as a waiter or waitress to lead their life and make a living. In this case, it was only14 (10.4%) of the house holds that depend on agriculture and irrigation activities to make a living. Finally, the rest 15(11.1%) of them were employed as government professionals serving indifferent sectors to make a living. From the result obtained, it can be concluded that majority of the livelihood and economic activity of the sample

households in the study area was depend on non-agricultural activities with majority of their livelihood depending on daily work, trade related activities, begging and on waitress activities.

4.8. Annual Income of the Respondents

Table 4.8: Annual Income of the Respondents

Annual Income	Total	Percent
<3000	44	33
3000-5000	38	28.1
5000-10,000	28	20.7
10,000-15,000	12	9
>15,000	3	2.2
Total	135	100

Source: Household Survey, 2025

Table 4.9 above shows the annual income of the sample respondents of the study area. Accordingly, majority (33%) of the annual income of the households was below 3000 birr; while, 38(28.1%) of them had an annual income 3000-5000 birr. Following this, 28(20.7%) of them had an annual income of 5000-10,000 birr. On the other hand, 9(2.2%) of them had an average income of 10,000-15,000 birr per annum. Finally, it was only 3(2.2%) of them that had an annual income exceeding 15,000 birr. This indicates that, the small size of farmland and lack of land access together with engaging in non-productive economic activities of the households such as daily working and begging have resulted in low annual income rates. This indicates that the immigrants are still living in an abject poverty due to the absence of farmland, the small size farmland that the households own and possess (ranging from 0.5-2hectars) and due to participating in non-productive economic activities such as daily labor work and begging.

4.9. The level of Economic Right of Women in the study Area

Table 4.9: The level of Economic Right of Women in the Study Area

Scale of measurements to the Economic Status of Women	Frequency	Percent
High	-	-
Medium	47	34.8
Low	88	65.2
Very Low	-	-
Total	135	100.0

Source: Household Survey, 2025

Table 4.9 shows the Likert scale levels of measurements to the perceptions and level of understanding of the respondents towards the current level of economic right of women in the study area. Accordingly, majority (65.2%) of the sample respondents have indicated as the current level of economic right of women in the study area was low. Even the rest 47(34.8%) of them have implied as the level of economic right of women in the study area was Medium. Besides, the informants from the interview and the FGD session have also informed as there was low level of economic rights of women in the study area. Moreover, the informants have informed that there was low level of economic rights of women in the study area that many women are still living in low economic condition. In this regard, the informants have revealed the fact that women have a low economic rights and most of the women in the study area live at low economic status since they have been deprived of their economic rights starting from the past systems due to socio-economic, political and due to socio-cultural challenges.

4.10. Challenges That Affect Economic Rights of Women in the Study Area

Table 4.10: Challenges that Affect Economic Rights of Women in the Study area

Challenges that Affect Economic Rights of Women	Frequency	Percent
Low educational status of women	50	37
Gender based discrimination	35	25.9
Lack of inheritance and Property rights of women	30	22.2
Socio-cultural challenges to economic rights of women	20	14.8
Total	135	100

Source: Household Survey, 2025

Table 4.10 above shows the challenges that affect the economic rights of women in the study area. Accordingly, 50(37%) of the respondents have indicated as low educational status of women is one challenge affecting the economic right of women in the study area; while, 35(25.9%) of them have indicated as gender based discrimination is the main challenge affecting the economic rights of women in the study area. Following this, 30(22.2%) of the respondents have implied that lack of inheritance and property rights of women is among one of the challenges affecting the economic rights of women in the study area. Finally, the rest 20(14.8%) of the respondents have indicated as socio-cultural challenges are also another challenges affecting the economic right of women in the study area. In addition to his, the informants from the interview and FGD section have also replied that the challenges that affect the economic rights of women are associated with low educational status of women, gender based discrimination, lack of inheritance and property rights of women and socio-cultural challenges. In this regard, the informants have revealed the fact that women have been deprived of the rights to land and other property inheritance rights and they informed that women have been discriminated to all forms of economic rights due to low educational status, socio-economic and due to socio-cultural challenges that undermine women. Moreover, the informants have replied that the major challenges affecting the economic rights of women are also associated with absence of land entitlement rights, lack of educational status, discriminatory cultural and political challenges that undermine the economic participation of women at all levels.

4.11. Measures to Enhance the Economic Rights of Women

Table 4.11: Measures to Enhance the Economic Rights of Women

Items	Frequency	Percent
Empowering the status of women	50	37
Providing Financial support and access to credit	19	14.1
Promoting gender and economic equality	26	19.3
Promoting affirmative action	40	29.6
Total	135	100

Source: Household Survey, 2025

As Table 4.11 above depicts, the respondents have replied that the measures that should be taken to enhance the economic rights of women in the study area are, measures related to empowering the status of women, promoting affirmative action, promoting gender and economic equality as well as providing financial support and access to credit services to women that account 50(37%), 40(29.6%), 26(19.3) and 19(14.1%) respectively. Besides, the informants from the interview and FGD section have replied that to enhance the economic rights of women, measures related to the provision of land ownership, provision of women access to credit, promoting gender equality, promoting affirmative action policies, empowering the status of women as well as making policy reforms and other related measures should be taken to enhance the economic rights of women in the study area. Moreover, the informants have informed that, equal access to resources and property rights should be promoted since such laws and policies can ensure and guarantee women towards the rights to own, use, and inherit land and property.

The informants have also indicated that access to financial services such as credit, savings, insurance, and bank accounts should be ensured so as to facilitate women's ability to invest, save, and grow economically. Introducing parental leave for both women and men, subsidized childcare, and workplace infrastructure to support women to ensure their sustained economic participation as well as education and capacity building were also some of the measures recommended by the informants to be taken to enhance and ensure the economic rights of women in the study area. Besides this, the informants have indicated that combating gender norms and socio-cultural challenges that affect women's economic rights should be critically evaluated and mitigated to ensure women's economic rights and to enhance their participation.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

The study was designed to assess the economic rights of women: practices and challenges in Tigray regional state Ethiopia; the case of Qeyih-Tekli Woreda. In this regard, the study has tried to identify the level of implementation and practices of economic rights of women, the challenges that affect the economic rights of women in relation to the measures to be taken to enhance the economic rights of women in the study area. It is known that the assessment of the economic rights of women reveals significant progress in legal frameworks and policy initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment and it paves the way to introduce reforms to guarantee women's access to property, credit, education, and fair labor practices. However, women have been deprived of their rights due to a complex socio-cultural norms and political challenges affecting their economic rights. In general, the following conclusion was drawn.

The study has found that the economic right of women is still at its low level in the study area. Moreover, the study has also found that the major challenges affecting the economic rights of women in the study area are low educational status of women, gender-based discrimination, lack of inheritance and property rights and socio-cultural challenges. It was also indicated that women have been excluded from land ownership and control of productive resources and this in turn affects their economic status. Finally, the study has found that affirmative action programs, financial support mechanisms, granting inheritance property rights, formulating laws that maintain gender equality are the best measures to be taken to enhance the economic rights of women in the study area.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the results and the conclusions drawn, the study has cited the following recommendations to enhance the economic rights of women in the study area.

- The government should Promote women's economic rights through an effective monitoring and enforcement systems of law to ensure that economic status of women in the study area
- Addressing cultural and social norms through creating public awareness towards gender equality and gender mainstreaming are necessary tasks to enhance the status of women and to ensure their economic rights as well
- Enhancing the right of women to financial and access to credits should be promoted in association with the inheritance rights of women so as to ensure their economic participation.
- Promoting women's education to enhance their status through expanding their opportunities and empowering them through additional trainings and skill related support to empower them economically
- Implementing a gender based social protection system is mandatory to address the socio-cultural challenges affecting the economic status of women
- Promoting and effectively implementing affirmative action policies in collaboration with governments, civil societies and private sector is crucial since it helps to enhance the economic rights of women

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APPENDIX -I

MEKELLE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

DEPARTMENT OF CIVICS AND ETHICAL STUDIES

Questionnaire to be filled by local households

General direction to Respondents

Dear respondents, the main purpose of this study was to assess the economic rights of women: practices and challenges in Qeyih-Tekli Woreda Central Zone of Tigray regional state Ethiopia for the partial fulfillments of Master of Art (M.A) degree in Civics and Ethical studies. To conduct the study, collecting data from local households is found to be crucial and relevant. Thus, as the achievement of this study depends on your truthful and real response to the questions, you are kindly requested to respond the questions. The information collected through this questionnaire is used for academic reason and responses will be used anonymously and responses will be kept confidential.

Remember that,

- You are not expected to write your name/Identity
- Be sure that the responses are used for academic purpose and will be kept confidential
- To alternative answers put mark in the box to indicate your answer
- For open- ended question items try to give precise answers
- Feel free to respond
- All questions should be filled.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Part 1: Respondents Biographic Data

General; Direction: Please fill the following information and Put a tick “√ “mark to the optional parts to indicate your response on the space provided.

- 1. Sex: Male _____ Female _____
- 2. Age (year) -----
- 3. Marital Status-----
- 4. Family Size-----
- 5. Educational level: 0 grade (illiterate) 1-4 5-8 9-12
Diploma Degree
- 6. Farmland Size in Hectare-----
- 7. Livelihood): Agriculture and irrigation Trade and business Government employee Daily worker
- 8. Annual Income _____ (in Birr)

Part 2- Questions related to economic rights of women, challenges affecting womens economic rights and measures to enhance the economic rights of Women

- 9. How do you see the level of practices of economic rights of women in your locality?
A. Very high B. High C. Medium D. Low E. Very low
- 10. What are challenges that affect the economic rights of women in your area?
A. Low educational status of women
B. Gender based discrimination
C. Lack of inheritance and Property rights of women
D. Socio-cultural challenges to economic rights of women

E. List other factors and challenges that affect the economic right of women (If any)

11. What are the measures to enhance the economic rights of Women in your area?

A. Empowering the status of women

B. Providing Financial support and access to credit

C. Promoting gender and economic equality

D. Promoting affirmative action

E. List other measures to enhance the economic rights of women (If any)

APPENDIX -II

MEKELLE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

DEPARTMENT OF CIVICS AND ETHICAL STUDIES

Interview guide for key informants (Woreda, Women's and youth's social and labor affairs, local chiefs and town administration head officers

1. What can you say about the economic rights of women in your area?
2. What are the major challenges that affect the practices of economic rights of women in your vicinity/locality?
3. How does socio-cultural and gender based discrimination affect the economic rights of women in your area?
4. What do you think are the measures to be taken to enhance the economic rights of women in your area?

APPENDIX- III

MEKELLE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

DEPARTMENT OF CIVICS AND ETHICAL STUDIES

FGD guide line for local households, Women Affairs and Kebele administration representatives

1. What are the major challenges that affect the economic rights of women in your area?
2. What are the socio-cultural and gender based discriminations that affect the economic rights of women?
3. What is the contribution of affirmative action programs in enhancing the economic rights of women?
4. How does the low economic status and rights of women affect the following aspects in your locality?

Economically: _____

Socially: _____

Politically: _____

5. What measures should be taken to enhance the economic rights of women in your area?