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DEPARTMENT OF CIVICS AND ETHICAL STUDIES

**Assessing the Causes and Impacts of Irregular Migration in Abi -
Adi Town, Tigray Region, Ethiopia**

Gebrehiwot Abraha

**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**

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Mekelle, Ethiopia

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By
Gebrehiwot Abraha

Principal Advisor: Yohannes Hailu ()

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Declaration

This is to certify that this thesis entitled “Assessing Illegal Migration: Causes and Impacts central Zone, Tigray Regional State, Ethiopia; the case of Abi-Adi Town” 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 Gebrehiwot Abraha 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.

Name of the Student: Gebrehiwot Abraha Reda

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approval of the Board of Examiners

Department head _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Internal Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

External Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Virus.

CARM Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration

CSA: Central Statistical Authority

E.C: Ethiopian Calendar

EEA: Ethiopian Expatriate Agency

ETB Ethiopian Birr

HIV Human Immune Virus

ICMPD International Centre for Migration Policy Development

ILO International Labor Organization

IOM International Organization for Migration

MoLSA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

RMMS Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat

SNNPR Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples Region

TRS Tigray Regional State

UAE United Arab Emirates

UN United Nations

UNDP United Nation Developmental Program

UNEDSA United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

UN.GIFT United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

UNICEF

UNODC United Nation Office of Drugs and Crime

WB: World Bank

ABSTRACT

The study was designed to assess the causes and impacts of irregular migration in Abi-Adi town which is found in Tigray region. The study has tried to identify the major cases of illegal migration, the overall impacts of migration in relation to the measures that should be taken to minimize the status of illegal migration in the study area. To achieve the stated objectives, the study has employed a descriptive survey design with a qualitative research approach. The data for the study was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary source was gathered from returnee informants; while, secondary data was gathered from published and unpublished documents, articles and reports. The data for the study was gathered through in-depth interview, key informant interview and focus group discussions with the informants. In the study, purposive or non-probable sampling technique was employed to select sample informants as sample size to the study. Accordingly, a total of 20 respondent informants were selected purposely so as to gather reliable information to the study. In this case, purposive or non-probable sampling was employed since it is believed that purposive sampling is viable to select few informants who are believed to have a good knowledge of the issue being raised. In this regard, snowballing was also employed to contact in touch with returnee migrants, snowball sampling was possibly proved to be the most useful sampling technique. The study has found that the major causes of illegal migration in the study area were associated with associated with economic, social and political factors. Moreover, the study has revealed that illegal migration in the study area has been largely associated with various complex phenomena working in tandem such as poverty, low standard of living, unemployment, lack of job and employment opportunities in places of origin, low economic capability to sustain food security, false promise of brokers, the perception of the community and peer pressure in an attempt to accumulate wealth. Regarding the overall impacts, the study has found that illegal migration has physical; and health related problems as well as associated socio-economic and psychological impacts that lead both the migrants and families in economic problems, separation and psychological trauma. In addition to this, the study has also found that human trafficking and smuggling as well as exploitation and sexual violence were the common aspects of illegal migration that the migrants have face during their journey. Finally, the study has cited recommendation such as raising awareness towards irregular migration, strict government control on peace and security, maintaining the peace and security of the border areas and taking corrective measures on illegal brokers to minimize the level and impacts of irregular migration in the study area.

Key Words: *Human trafficking, Illegal migration, Impacts, Smuggling, Psychological Trauma*

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Human migration is not a recent phenomenon but has occurred throughout human history. People have been moving from one place to another since ancient period and it is a continuous global phenomenon that resulted due to complex mechanism involving social, cultural, economic, psychological, political, institutional and other determinants (Singh, 1998; United Nations Population Fund, 2005).

Globally, the smuggling of migrants and the dynamics of human trafficking and illegal migration as well is a global concern with a large number of countries affected by it as origin, transit, or destination points. Profit-seeking criminals smuggle migrants across borders and between continents and it affects the overall development aspects of a given nation. Moreover, The Smuggling of Migrants from the global South to the global North is a significant phenomenon that has affected almost every country and its policymaking. For various reasons (better employment opportunities, fleeing political prosecution, war and conflict, natural disasters) people choose to move from their origin of country to another country they think will provide a better living situation for them. Furthermore, the smuggling of migrants is not only an issue of illegal activity taking place; it is also a matter of human rights as most migrants are exposed to exploitation and trafficking along the way that usually costs them their lives. Though human trafficking is a social problem worldwide, it is unevenly distributed (Busza *et al.*, 2023).

The UNODC (2022) report also discovered that, in comparison to male victims, female and child victims are more likely to be physically abused during trafficking. Trafficking in people for the purpose of sexual exploitation is also directly linked to the increasing proportion of women among the world's poor and to women's disadvantaged social, economic, and legal situations in many countries (Ollus, 2016). Female victims regardless of age are three times more likely than male victims to experience severe or physical violence including sexual violence during the trafficking process (UNODC, 2022).

However, it is very difficult to get verifiably accurate data on illegal migration since illegal migration has been occurring without the proper documentations (IMO, 2010). Consequently, existing relevant data deals with migration in general. According to the United Nations Development Program (2012) estimate, nearly 214 million people were international migrants (live outside their country of birth) and this number is forecasted to be 232 million in 2013. However, significantly larger than the previous estimate was observed in the stock of international migration. The stock of international migrants is estimated at 244 million to 247 million in 2013 (World Bank, 2015; UN, 2016). Assuming that the stock grows at an annual rate of 1.6 percent, the growth rate observed during 2010-2013, the stock of international migrants will exceed 250 million in 2015 (World Bank, 2015).

According to international organization for migration (2015), the stock of international migrants worldwide by 2050 will be estimated to be as high as 405 million. At the same time, internal migrants will account for 740 million migrants, bringing the total number of migrants to just above 1 billion worldwide.

With regards to Ethiopian experience, the situation in Ethiopia is not different from other Sub-Saharan countries. The situation of migration further perpetuated due to the prevailing poverty, unemployment, poor working conditions, less productivity, low incentives and so forth in the country. In general, various literatures have mentioned that economic and political factors were the main reason for migration in Ethiopia (Mohammed, 2006). Furthermore, social and cultural aspects like social capital play significant role in the process of Ethiopians movement to different parts of the world (Hanna, 2014; Girum, 2013). Hence, both internal and international migrations are common phenomena to this country. However, the issue of international migration of people from this country is relatively a recent phenomenon. It has been highly growing as of the late 1970's due to political instability of the country. During the military regime, Ethiopian refugees were one of the largest numbers of African refugees in the world. Many of the inhabitants escaped to abroad seeking asylum and started to live outside their country of origin (Horwood, 2009; Markos, 2001 as cited in Genene, 2013; Teshome, Ajay and Charles, 2013).

Nowadays, many Ethiopians, skilled and unskilled, cross border to different countries legally and illegally looking for mainly better economic opportunities. The main destinations for Ethiopians are North America, Europe, and the Middle East (Bisrate, 2006; Melaku 2014; Melese, 2014). By the end of 2005, more than 1 million Ethiopians migrated to the rest of the world searching

for a better education and employment opportunities (Tefere and Beruk, 2009 quoted in Emirta , 2010). Similarly, United Nation report estimated that Ethiopian international migrants reached about 1, 072,900 of which 51 percent and 49 percent were male and female respectively that makes the country with highest number of international migrants in East Africa (UN, 2015). Furthermore, the flow of Ethiopians to the Republic of South Africa became noticeable beginning in 1991 just after the fall of the Military Regime in Ethiopia (Markos, 2001). Since then, Republic of South Africa has been an important destination for illegal Ethiopian migrants, particularly young migrants between the ages of 18 and 35 (IOM, 2013). The most common countries of transit include Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (IOM, 2009).

The participants in this migration are facing both heart breaking problems and observable economic opportunities. To start with the positive side, there is inflow of remittances from the migrants that can improve their families' life at home (Habtie, 2015). However, it is very difficult to know the exact amount of remittance inflow because of the money transaction is made via illegal way (Abinet, 2011). According to reports of Messay and IMO, being smuggled, beatings by local police/officials, expose to unsafe journey like use of airless containers and overloaded boats, forced to travel on foot, rape, lack of basic needs such as food and water as well as robbery were some of such problems (Messay, 2005; IOM , 2009). Stories of death are also common problem that the migrants are facing. For instance, above 42 youths were found dead in Tanzania in June 2012 due to sealed or airless car container in their illegal journey to Republic of South Africa (IOM, 2013).

There is a widespread belief in the public that brokers and traffickers play a great role in the case of such illegal international migrations (Friebel and Guriev, 2002). This scenario of broker facilitated migration holds true in TRS. Many youth of both sex male and female have been migrating illegally via such processes, especially from Tigray region and from Abbi-Addi town and are living in different parts of the world. According to the ILO report, almost all (95 percent) of migrants from Abbi-Addi town have been travelling to the Asia and Europe in an illegal way (ILO, 2011 as cited in Habte, 2015).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

For the last few decades, no part of the world can claim to have remained untouched by the deepening and widening reach of migration processes. That is simply to mean that, migration is now a worldwide complex and a recognized social phenomenon among policy makers and academicians in the world (Alonso, 2011). As a result, the problem of international migration is also common to Ethiopia. International migrants are found distributed in different countries of the world (Berhanu and White, 1998; Gashew, 2002; Adamnesh, 2006). Moreover, different migrants from Ethiopia's Tigray region especially from Abi-Adi Town have been migrating in to Europe and Asia via different ways illegally assisted by illegal brokers or smugglers (IOM, 2009 and Habte, 2015).

Ethiopia is a source, transit, and destination country for migrants and refugees who are looking to travel through the Eastern route to the Middle East and the Gulf countries, through the Northern route to Europe, and the Southern route to South Africa. Various reasons are attributed to the surge in irregular immigration in Ethiopia including poverty, unemployment, low income, peer and family pressure, high population growth, insecurity, internal conflicts, and enticement by traffickers and smugglers (Kinfu *et al.*, 2017). Despite Ethiopia's recent economic surge and its integration into the global economy, much Ethiopian youth perceive migration as the only way to attain a better standard of living (Van *et al.*, 2019).

In recent years, the Tigray region in Ethiopia has seen an influx of smuggling of migrants in part due to the region's proximity to northern Africa, which is often regarded as the hub for migrants looking to be smuggled into Europe across the Mediterranean Sea (Weldeabrha, 2018). There is a prevalent culture of migration in the Tigray region aided by its geographical location and border towns with Sudan. Hopeful migrants hire smugglers to facilitate their journey who use deception to induce the young population to undertake migration. There is a complicated, dynamic, and well-organized network that manages and profits from the smuggling industry (Fesseha, 2013). Low income, shortage of land for farming, the desire to accumulate large sums of money in the shortest possible time, and observing the experiences of previous migrants who had been successful in securing improved livelihood are among the pushing factors for migration in Tigray (Fitsum, 2017). Brokers are also known to have distributed brochures that advertise job opportunities in the Middle East, with full address, whom to contact, and procedures on how to apply. Illegal migration and human trafficking is the fastest-growing crime and the third most

profitable and low-risk form of transnational crime after the sale of drugs and arms (Wako, 2020). Human trafficking (a modern form of slavery) is an organized crime, and gangs are interconnected throughout the world (Ravlik, 2019).

So far, different studies have been conducted by individual researchers as well as by various organizations. In this regard, it is important to consider that the issue of migration is very complex due to the fact that migration directions, its contributing factors, processes and consequences, scale and forms of migration significantly varies across time and countries , from one community, region and state to another as well (Hanna, 2014).

There are several gaps in the current body of knowledge about human trafficking, including a lack of evaluation research on the efficacy of rescue and restore programs and governmental anti-trafficking policies, as well as a lack of understanding of the characteristics of victims, their life experiences, and their trafficking trajectories as well as the life risks they encounter passing through all the hardships until they reach their area of destination. Even though Abi-Adi town has become an important transit area to illegal migrants, adequate and in-depth analysis has been lacking with regard to the basic causes of illegal migration, the actors of illegal migration, regarding the addressing the issues of illegal migration as well as evaluating the real situation and experiences of the illegal and returnee migrants, and regarding the measures being taken and to minimize illegal migration by the concerned bodies in the area. Thus, in an attempt to fill and bridge the research gap, the focus of the study was to assess the causes and current status of irregular migration as well as to analyze the overall impacts of irregular migration in Abi-Adi town.

1.3. Objective of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to assess the causes and impacts of irregular migration in Abi-Adi town.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

The Specific objectives of the study include,

- To Identify the causes of irregular migration in the study area
- To identify the main actors of irregular migration in the study area
- To assess the crimes and risks that migrants encounter during irregular migration
- To suggest possible measures to minimize irregular migration in the area

1.4. Research Questions

The basic research questions of the study include,

1. What are the basic causes of irregular migration in the study area?
2. Who are the main actors of irregular migration and human trafficking in the study area?
3. What types of risks and challenges do migrants encounter and face during migration?
4. What measures should be taken to minimize irregular migration in the area?

1.5. Significance of the Study

It is known that studies regarding irregular migration can be used as the basic sources of information that provide an ample (sufficient) and reliable information for policy makers at all local, regional, national governments as well as to the global community as well. First, the study is an important and an essential task to migration practitioners, students, scholars, and the public as they

examine the different aspects of migration. Besides, the study can shed light on the realities of the ground and can serve as a spring -board and can help policy makers to review and evaluate their policy implementation in the ways they can fight and minimize the level and status of illegal migration and human trafficking in the region in general and in the study area in particular.

In this regard, by highlighting the experiences of migrants and the exploitation and abuse that migrants are subjected to at the hands of smugglers, the study can help inform policy makers on what steps and actions to take to tackle (solve) the smuggling of migrants in the region in general and in the study area in particular so as to enable the concerned bodies to take appropriate measures against smugglers and the causes of illegal migration. Besides, the study will serve as a mile stone to policy makers and it can add value to the existing body of knowledge on the causes and impacts of illegal migration and human trafficking and smuggling of migrants in the Tigray region by providing the perspective of illegal migrants from Abi-Adi town. Moreover, the study can serve as a secondary source to individuals who want to conduct a study regarding the issue under study.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Geographically, the scope of this study was delimited only to one area namely, Abi-Adi Town which is located in the central zone of Tigray region since 2023-2025. In addition, due to financial and time constraints, it may not be manageable for the researcher to include other Tabiyas and Woredas in the present study. Conceptually, the major issues that were considered

in the study are the basic and major driving factors or causes of illegal migration, the main actors in such illegal migration, in relation to the overall challenges and life risks that that migrants encounter on their way until they reach their area of destination and the measures to be taken to halt (stop) or to minimize the current flow and status of irregular migration in the study area. Similarly, the study has focused solely (only) in Abi-Adi 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 an experience of irregular migration from Abi-Adi town that have gone to either the Middle East or Europe or to any other parts of the world via different routes .

17. Limitations of the Study

Though the study has a significant role in assessing the causes and the overall impacts of illegal migration in the study area, it had some limitations. Among these, the problem of an absence of availability of well documented and consecutive data about the number of illegally migrated and returnee individual migrants from different parts of the world such as from the Middle East, Arabia, Europe and the United states as well. The other constraint focused in this study was, reluctance of the informants to frankly tell all the tribulations and life challenges of illegal migration until they reach the place of destination.

1.8. Operational definition of Key Terms and Concepts

Brokers and smugglers: Persons who illegally take and deceive (pretend) individuals to make decisions to illegal migration.

Human Organ Trafficking: a sort human trafficking by which migrants are forcedly taken their body organs for organ in plantation of others.

Illegal Migration: A sort of migration by which individuals tend to leave their place of origin illegally to make a living and in attempt to look for better job opportunities.

Migration: The process of outgoing, departing and leaving of persons from their place of origin due to a number of factors

Pull factors: Factors that attract individuals to go to the place of destination.

Push factors: Factors that force individuals to leave their place of origin.

Smuggling: An informal trade and an illegible act or a contraband that is done hidden from the view of government and the law.

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 on the basics of Migration

Migration is a process that affects every dimension of social existence and which develops its own complex dynamics. Much more often migration and settlement are a long, drawn-out process that will be played out for the rest of the migrant's life and affect subsequent generations (Castles and Miller, 2009). There is no universally accepted single definition of migration. Based

on various issues, scholars gave various versions of definitions for migration. However, most of the researches focus on the importance of its distance and duration (Belay, 2011). Migration is usually categorized as internal and external or international migration based on the type of political boundaries crossed. Depending upon length of time, (long-term migration as well as temporary and permanent migration), distance (short distance and long distance migration), members involved (individual and mass migration), decision making (voluntary and forced migration), social organization (family, class and individual migration), causes (economic and non-economic migration) and aims (conservative and innovative migration). Moreover, depending up on rural-urban nature of the area, migration becomes rural-rural, rural to urban, urban to rural and urban to urban (Sinha, 2005 as cited in Belay, 2011). Political boundaries, decision making conditions, causes and aim of migrations and rural-urban nature are also highly applicable in this study because the study has discussed these issues in various sections (Adom *et al.*, 2018).

Irregular migration on the other hand has been defined in many ways.

(IOM) defines irregular migration as illegal entry into a country, overstaying or engaging in unauthorized work (UNODC, 2011). Furthermore, the concepts of emigration and immigration are sometimes used interchangeably even though they are quite different. Emigration is “From the perspective of the country of departure, the act of moving from one’s country of nationality or usual residence to another country...” (IOM, 2004). On the other hand; immigration is defined as “From the perspective of the country of arrival, the act of moving into a country other than one’s country of nationality or usual residence...” Emigration is a right internationally recognized as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, while immigration is not (EPC, 2008).

According to the European Parliament and Council, “illegal stay means the presence on the territory of a Member State, of a third-country national who does not fulfill, or no longer fulfills the conditions of entry as set out in Article 5 of the Schengen Borders Code or other conditions for entry, stay or a resident in that member state” (EPC, 2008).

The IOM defines migration as “the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State” and a migrant as “...a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently...” (IOM, 2019).

In this section, the common concepts used in the study of migration such as economic migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), smuggling of migrants vs. trafficking in persons, and legal vs. illegal migration are defined. International migration is hardly a simple individual action in which a person decides to move in search of better life-chances, pulls up his or her roots in the place of origin, and quickly becomes assimilated in the new country. It is an intricate process with many players which this section aims to provide a conceptual definition (Adom *et al.*, 2018).

2.1.1. Types of migrants and migration

2.1.1.1. Economic Migrants vs. Labor Migrants

The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines a migrant worker as a person “who migrates from one country to another (or who has migrated from one country to another) intending to be employed other than on his own account, and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant for employment” (ILO, 2015).

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) makes a distinction between economic migrants and labor migrants. IOM defines labor migrants as those who move for the purpose of employment (Simon *et al.*, 2015); while the Encyclopedia Britannica adds that labor migrants are unskilled workers who move from one country to another offering their services on a temporary or seasonal (Encyclopaedia, 2015). On the other hand, according to the IOM, economic migrants consist of a broader category that includes people entering another state to perform economic activities (such as investors, business travelers, project-tied workers) but can also sometimes be understood in the same sense as labor migrants (Simon *et al.*, 2015).

When we talk about migrants, particularly in this case, we are referring to economic migrants who have left their countries, whether lawfully or unlawfully, to seek better lives in another country. They are mostly motivated by better economic opportunities. The IOM defines an economic migrant as “a person leaving his/her habitual place of residence to settle outside his/her country of origin to improve his/her quality of life. This term may be used to distinguish from refugees fleeing persecution and is also used to refer to persons attempting to enter a country without legal permission” (IOM, 2004). Therefore, in this study, the term economic migrant is used to refer to those migrants who choose to leave their homes in search of better economic opportunities elsewhere.

2.1.1.2. Smuggling of Migrants vs. Trafficking in Persons

The smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons are usually used interchangeably even though they are two distinct concepts and two distinct crimes under international law. According to Article 3 of the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, smuggling of migrants means “the procurement, to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefits, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or permanent resident.” Article 3(b) of the same protocol defines illegal entry as crossing borders without complying with the necessary requirements for legal entry into the receiving State (UNHRC, 2000). Smuggling of migrants is usually a central part of illegal migration which results from the discrepancy between the need to migrate and the lack of (legal) opportunities for migration. Illegal migration can take three forms; an illegal crossing of a border, crossing of a border using falsified documents and staying after expiration of legal status (Heckmann, 2007).

On the other hand, article 3(a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime defines trafficking in persons as:

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

The above protocol’s main elements for trafficking in persons are the occurrence of exploitation and coercion. Border crossing is not a necessary ingredient as trafficking in persons can happen within the borders of a state. The protocol defines coercion as not only the presence of physical force or psychological dominance, but also includes the abuse of a position of vulnerability which can include a range of situations such as poverty, hunger, illness, lack of education, and displacement. On the other hand, the protocol’s definition of exploitative actions includes prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation as well as non-sexual labor relationships such as bonded labor and child labor. However, the distinction between the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons is rarely as clear in practice. The wide spectrum between smuggling and

trafficking consists of different levels of coercion and exploitation that it usually defies any clear categorization. Most smuggled migrants start their journey with consent to an initial proposition; however, circumstances usually change en route or on arrival in the destination country. States often choose to look at the point of departure to identify a migrant's decision to take the journey (Bhabha, 2005).

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) identifies three major differences between the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons. The first difference is the source of profit, in which smugglers receive their profit through facilitating illegal entry after which the relationship between the smuggler and the migrant ceases. In contrast, traffickers gain their profit from the exploitation of persons whose relationship extends well beyond the entry time. The second major difference between smuggling and trafficking is the transnational aspect by which the smuggling of migrants has a transnational dimension involving at least two countries and its objective is always to facilitate illegal entry or stay. Trafficking in persons, on the other hand, may not always involve the illegal entry or stay of a person and can even occur within the home country of the victim. The third difference is victimization which states the smuggling of migrants does not necessarily involve the victimization of the migrant and is often carried out with the consent of the migrant. However, trafficking in persons is a crime against a person in which victims are coerced, forced, or deceived (UNODC, 2011).

It should also be noted that not all smuggled migrants become victims of trafficking even though they are vulnerable to falling victims to trafficking. The smuggled migrant usually seeks the assistance of the smuggler for illegally sneaking out of the country in exchange for payment. Nevertheless, along the journey, the migrant might be forced to pay an additional payment to cover transportation costs and thus get forced to pay off the debt through debt bondage, extortion, or use of force. Smuggling networks are increasingly becoming more organized and profits from smuggling and trafficking have been reported to be used to finance transnational organized crimes and terrorist networks (IOM, 2015).

2.1.1.3. Legal vs. Irregular Migration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines irregular migration as illegal entry into a country, overstaying or engaging in unauthorized work (UNODC, 2011). Furthermore, the concepts of emigration and immigration are sometimes used interchangeably even though they are quite different. Emigration is "From the perspective of the country of departure, the act of

moving from one's country of nationality or usual residence to another country..." (IOM, 2004). On the other hand; immigration is defined as "From the perspective of the country of arrival, the act of moving into a country other than one's country of nationality or usual residence..." Emigration is a right internationally recognized as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, while immigration is not (EPC, 2008).

According to the European Parliament and Council, "illegal stay means the presence on the territory of a Member State, of a third-country national who does not fulfill, or no longer fulfills the conditions of entry as set out in Article 5 of the Schengen Borders Code or other conditions for entry, stay or a resident in that member state" (EPC, 2008).

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families, article 5 sub-paragraphs (a) defines regular migrants as those who are "...authorized to enter, to stay and to engage in a remunerated activity in the State of employment pursuant to the laws of that State..." On the other hand, article 5 subparagraph (b) of the same convention defines irregular migrants as those "...that do not comply with the conditions provided (above)..." Similarly, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines illegal entry as "...crossing borders without complying with the necessary requirements for legal entry into the receiving State" (UNHCR, 2000).

2.2. Theoretical Reviews on Theories of Migration

At present, there is no single and coherent theory of international migration that fully explains various aspects of migration. That is, fully understanding of contemporary migratory processes will not be achieved by relying on the tools of one discipline alone, or by focusing on a single level of analysis. Rather, their complex, multifaceted nature requires a sophisticated theory that incorporates a variety of perspectives, levels, and assumption (Massey, Joaquin, Hugo and Pellegrino, 2011). For instance, Massey, Joaquin, Hugo and Pellegrino (1998) distinguish theoretical approaches of international migration into two categories: theoretical approaches explaining the initiation of migration and theoretical approaches explaining the continuation or perpetuation factors of migration.

In general, there are various theories related with the issues of both internal and international migration theories. However, this study was explained based on New Economics Theory of migration which aimed at explaining the initiating factors responsible for the mass movement of people to Republic of South Africa and Network Theory which is very important in explaining

the continuation factors of migration in the study area. Additionally, push and pull factor theory was also used for this study so as to describe various push factors that force the migrants in the area of origin and pull factors in the area of destination.

2.2.1. New Economic Theory of Migration

The key argument is that migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors, but by larger units of related people typically families or households in which people act collectively not only to maximize expected income, but also to minimize risks and to loosen constraints associated with comprehensive set of factors which are shaped by conditions in the home country particularly failures of a variety of markets – labor market, credit market, or insurance market (Stark, 1991). Introducing these concepts, Stark largely had in mind the risk aversion of poor households in developing countries where there are rarely institutional mechanisms present, such as government programs or private insurance markets, and therefore migration provides a meaningful strategy in dealing with different market failures. Remittances can be considered as one form of investment and an integral part in the new economics of migration research as they directly support the concept of household interconnectedness and the diversification of risk while analytically connecting the empirical study of the causes and consequences of migration (Taylor, 1999).

Coming to the applicability of this theory, it is true that the new economic theory of migration can explain factors and consequences of migration to Republic of South Africa in the study area. Firstly, it is assumed that the role of family in the migration decision is very high. Family/peers or friends' decision in the issue is the basic steps so as to collect necessary financial support from other family members, relatives and friends. Secondly, it is the fact that people who migrate to Republic of South Africa send money to their families, friends and relatives for different purposes like education, holy days, funeral ceremonies, wedding ceremonies, health care expenditure, housing and others purposes that can mitigate the risks of their families. Therefore, the researcher believed that this theory is highly applicable in explaining various issue of this study.

2.2.2. Network Theory

The most important elements of networks in migration process are families and friends. The network theory holds that the existence of social networks of information and assistance

significantly increases the likelihood of continued international migration between places of origin and destination. This is because, migrant networks will minimize the risks and costs that are associated with migration such as the difficulty of integration of migrants to the labor market in the destination country. Once the network is established, it will increase in number as new migrants join the system (Zanker, 2011). In addition, the use of internet technologies in daily life has risen dramatically in recent years. Social media such as Face book and Twitter are facilitating migration in both positive (networks) and negative (human trafficking) ways. Social media are not only new communication channels in migration networks, but that they actively transform the nature of these networks and thereby facilitate migration (International Migration Institute 2012 as cited in Bisret, 2006). However, the central significance of the social context with regard to decisions by potential migrants can be expressed in different ways. These are affinity hypothesis (the existence of relatives and friends at the place of residence reduces the tendency to migrate; information hypothesis (when relatives and friends are already living in different places, the tendency to migrate increases); facilitating hypothesis (Social networks at the place of destination are a pull factor); conflict hypothesis (Intra-familial conflicts within the community also cause migration) and encouraging hypothesis that is families may encourage members of their family to migrate for work (Haug, 2013).

The concept of social network theory and most of the above hypothesis are also believed to very applicable with regards to contributing factors of migration to South Africa in the study area. It is very difficult for an individual to participate in this migration process without social networks like encouragement from family, support of brokers in the crossing countries, support of relatives or friends in the Republic South Africa, creation of communication between the migrant and families via various social media, financial assistance of relatives in the place of origin and other networks are very decisive.

2.2.3. Cumulative Causation Theory

The central arguments of theory of cumulative causation deals with the powerful role played by migration networks that link migrants in destinations and potential migrants in migrant-sending communities. The role of migration networks in the process of migration is often manifested in the form of having a family member who is a migrant and/or having a friend from the same community who is a migrant. These networks reduce the costs of migration by providing aspiring migrants with information about-migration process and about job availability and

housing in destinations. People who come from communities from which migration is widespread are more likely to migrate than people who come from places from which migration is exceptional (Fussell and Massey, 2004). In other words, this theory could be able to describe the tendency for migration to alter community structure in such ways that promotes additional migration, thus leading to the logic of cumulative causation of migration (Ferework, 2007). According to Massey, this theory also deals with the consequences of migration at both individual and community levels. Consequently, it changes the values and cultural perceptions. For instance, young people consider it as “rite of passage” and migration become a common household livelihood strategy (as cited in Ferework, 2007).

2.3. Legal Framework for Irregular Migration

2.3.1. International Legal Instruments

International law has established a number of legal instruments to deal with the smuggling of migrants as well as trafficking in persons. One of those instruments is the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against International Organized Crime (2000) (“Anti-Smuggling Protocol”). The purpose of this Protocol is to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants, to promote cooperation among State Parties, and to protect the rights of smuggled migrants. This protocol defines human smuggling in Article 3(a) as “...the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.” The protocol also requires State Parties to establish criminal liability for human smuggling and to adopt other measures to prevent it. Article 6 states, “Each State Party shall adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to establish as criminal offences, when committed intentionally and in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.” However, under this protocol, victims of human smuggling are not liable to criminal prosecution and are entitled to the protection and assistance measures (UNHCR, 2008).

Another international instrument is the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) (“Anti-Trafficking Protocol”). Article 2 of this Protocol states the purpose of the protocol is to prevent and combat trafficking, to protect and assist

victims, and to promote international cooperation. On the other hand, although Article 3 provides a definition of human trafficking which does not require cross-border activities, Article 4 limits the application of the protocol to occurrences where human trafficking is transnational and involves organized crime. Moreover, the protocol requires states to establish criminal liability for human trafficking, to adopt preventive and cooperative measures to deter it, and to provide health and social services to victims.

There are two pertinent international human rights instruments concerning the rights of women that can be used in the context of smuggled and trafficked women. The first one is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) which is dedicated to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women. While all of the provisions have relevance to female migrants and refugees, Article 6 puts specific requirements on states to address this issue, “State parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.” (CEDAW, 1998).

The other one is the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) which provides framework for the elimination of violence against women. The Declaration defines violence against women in Article 2 as, “physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.”

2.3.2. Regional Legal Instruments

Africa has also established regional instruments for the prevention of smuggling and trafficking and protection of victims. The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (1981) (“Banjul Charter”) does not explicitly prohibit trafficking in persons but most trafficking-related activities would be barred by its prohibition of the ‘slave trade.’ Article 5 states “Every individual shall have the right to the respect of the dignity inherent in a human being and to the recognition of his legal status. All forms of exploitation and degradation of man particularly slavery, slave trade, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment shall be prohibited.” (Gilmour, 2015). The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) requires State Parties to take appropriate measures to prevent

trafficking in women and protect those most at risk. Article 4 prohibits all forms of exploitation, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment while Article 4.2 (g) requires State Parties to “...take appropriate and effective measures to prevent and condemn trafficking in women, prosecute the perpetrators of such trafficking and protect those women most at risk.”(Zelalem, 2017).

2.3.3. National Legal Instruments

Ethiopia has ratified most of the key international treaties on human smuggling and human trafficking. These include the UN Anti-Smuggling Protocol (2000), the UN Anti-Trafficking Protocol (2000), UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949), the Abolition of Forced Labor Convention (No. 105, 1997), and Convention No. 182 on the Worst forms of Child Labor (ILO, 2015) .

National legal instruments have also been set up to prevent smuggling and trafficking activities and to provide protection to victims. The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995) prohibits human trafficking and considers it a form of inhuman treatment. Article 18 of the Constitution prohibits inhuman treatment and sub-article 2 specifies, “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude. Trafficking in human beings for whatever purpose is prohibited.”

Ethiopia’s Overseas Employment Proclamation (2016) focuses on the safety, rights, and dignity of Ethiopian migrant workers overseas. It also identifies three types of recruitment for overseas employment (public employment organs, agencies, and direct employment) and provides modifications to better manage the labor migration process and ensure the protection of Ethiopian migrants working overseas. This Proclamation was established with the aim to strengthen overseas employment and to establish bilateral agreements, to fight human trafficking and to clearly define and regulate the role of the private sector in overseas employment exchange service (ILO, 2017).

Ethiopia had also previously adopted Proclamation 909/2015 which focuses on the prevention, protection, support, and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking as well as criminalization and prosecution of perpetrators. The Proclamation also regulates the conduct of criminals organized for trafficking and the smuggling of workers. It criminalizes sex trafficking and labor trafficking and imposed strict penalties for offenders. Four key aspects are outlined in the

Proclamation; Criminalization and Prosecution, Prevention, Protection, Rehabilitation and Compensation, and Cooperation (ILO, 2017).

2.4. An overview of Irregular Migration in Ethiopia

According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were 260 Ethiopian asylum seekers in Italy in 2017 alone. Several young Ethiopians migrate to the Middle East and are subjected to exploitation in transit countries such as Djibouti, Egypt, Somalia, Sudan, or Kenya¹²¹. Many Ethiopians often migrate to the Middle East as domestic and manual workers and the number of young people who are deceived or forced into human trafficking to the Middle East, Sudan, and South Africa has been increasing. The routes migrants take to these countries are diverse and depend on personal circumstances subjecting migrants to abuse and exploitation (Asefa *et al.*, 2017).

In addition, up to 1,500 Ethiopians are illegally smuggled out of the country daily through Djibouti, Egypt, Somalia, Sudan, and Kenya and become subject to detention, extortion, and abuse in these transit countries. Additionally, Ethiopian women working as domestic servants in the Middle East are subjected to physical and sexual abuse, denial of salary, sleep deprivation, withholding of passports, confinement, and sometimes even murder.. On the other hand, Ethiopian men migrants are oftentimes subjected to forced labor in transit and destination countries (Gilmour, 2015).

A study conducted on irregular migration in the Eastern Zone of Tigray listed poverty, unemployment, income inequality, population density with limited agricultural land, social network, smugglers, and social and family pressure among the reasons for out-migration in the area. Whereas the pull factors include better job opportunities, perceived better life, social network, and smugglers at the destination country (Van Reisen *et al.*, 2019).

Ethiopian migrants in some circumstances are forced into prostitution, domestic servitude, and forced labor once they arrive in the destination country. Several migrants experienced exploitation in the form of non-free recruitment through deception or coercion (Assefa *et al.*, 2017).

Migrants from Ethiopia follow three migratory routes, i.e., the Northern route, the Southern route, and the Eastern route. Among the three routes mentioned above, the Northern route is the deadliest especially for migrants who get smuggled by boat from Libya to Southern Europe. Most migrants who use this route come from Oromia, Amhara, and Tigray regions.

The main hubs of all three routes usually originate firstly in Ethiopia. Hubs are defined as strategic transit places along the migration routes that provide migrants with the necessary infrastructure and services to continue their migration journey. Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, is a gathering and starting point (Asnake and Zerihun, 2015).

From 2000 to 2016 G.C. it was estimated that 878,776 Ethiopians migrated via the Eastern route to the Middle East with a total cost of 439 million U.S dollars. On the other hand, the cost estimated for the Northern route is in billions of dollars for the years 2009 - 2016. although it is unclear what percentage of this belongs to Ethiopian migrants (Van Reisen *et al.*, 2019).

Ethiopian migrants use the Eastern route to reach the Middle East by the gateway of Yemen and then onwards to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. This route is exclusively used by Ethiopians and Somalis and they use Djibouti and Somalia as transit hubs. According to Ethiopia's country profile gathered from the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), among the 813,683 youths who have migrated via the Eastern route between 2006 and 2016, 72 percent are Ethiopians (RMMS, 2017).

The Eastern route starts from Addis Ababa then moves towards Jijiga and then to Somalia. From there, migrants board a boat and cross the Red Sea to Yemen. After arriving in Yemen, they travel on land and cross the border to Saudi Arabia (Monzini, 2010). The Northern route extends through Sudan, Libya, and Egypt and across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. Migrants use Sudan and Egypt both as destinations and transit countries. Ethiopians, Eritreans, and Sudanese migrants frequent this route while in Ethiopia migrants from Tigray are the most frequent users. This route is considered the riskiest route with migrants being exposed to kidnapping, detention, and death while crossing both the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. The two main destinations in Europe for smuggled migrants are Italy and Spain. Many migrants traveling to Italy by sea depart from North African countries, especially Libya (Van Reisen, 2019).

Most migrants have a hard time accessing adequate living conditions, food, and drinking water in addition to a lack of health insurance, sick leave, and social security. Additionally, they are forced to perform activities outside their contract such as dangerous tasks and overtime work without payment. Furthermore, female migrants who worked as domestic workers reported having experienced violence at the hands of their employers (Assefa *et al.*, 2017).

Gebrehiwot and Fekadu (2012) carried out a research on causes and consequences of out migration to different African and Arab counties in Gulomekeda district, Tigray region. The

research finding indicated that poor households with weak social ties with those living abroad, low level of education, distance from market center, limited access to information, drought, landlessness and unemployment are the key factors for illegal migration in the study area. The negative consequences of the out-migration on the livelihood of the rural people include death of immigrants, losing productive labor, increases domestic dependency and opening door for the spread of HIV/AIDS. The results suggested that development strategies should be put in place in order to design integrated interventions that contribute in reducing poverty and which is the main contributing factors for migration.

Milki (2014) also examined those causal factors behind mass out migration of youths to Arab countries in Wore-Illu Woreda, South Wollo of Amhara region. Particularly, the author gave due attention on the roles of family members and friends in youth international migration decision. The author concluded that intersection of multiple stressors: poverty, harmful traditional practices, family breakdown and being a member of reconstituted family, pressure of family members and friends, feelings of inferiority and desire of independence made youth vulnerable for international migration. The finding unearths the roles of family members and friends at four operational phases of migration which are in the pre-migration phase, on the journey, at the destination country and on return. At the end, the study recommended that all concerned bodies should work cooperatively to curb the incidence of illegal migration by giving focus at micro and mezzo level intervention. With regards to migration experiences in Hadiya Zone, both internal and international migration is one of the common phenomena among Hadiya people of SNNPR. Particularly, international migration to Republic of South Africa is highly observable among youths in this zone (Solomon 2008 as cited in Melese 2014). Starting from 1990s, many boys who have potential labour force with different age and educational background migrated to Republic of South Africa. Concerning this issue, researches were conducted in Hadiya zone in general and in Hossana Town in particular. For instance, Abinet (2011) has conducted research on the role of remittances and returns on urban growth in the case of Hossana Town. Accordingly, the findings of this study indicated that remittance and return migrants were positively contributed for increase in both investment and consumption in general. On the contrary, the impact on price of products, income inequality and dependence get worse due to introduction of remittance and return migrants in to Hosanna's economy.

Moreover, there are empirical evidences directly or indirectly deal with the consequences of illegal migration to Republic of South Africa. For instance, most of the young adults who move illegally to Republic of South Africa had suffered problem of being smuggled, beatings by police/officials, expose to unsafe journey, forced to travel on foot, rape, death, lack of basic needs such as food and water as well as robbery (Messay, 2005; Habte, 2015; IOM, 2009). So as to mitigate this problem, the government of Ethiopia has made an attempt via various mechanisms. In addition to various awareness creation programs, the government has developed different legal frameworks as discussed in the following section. However, the problem is still observable and challenging issue for the zone administrative bodies in particular and the government of Ethiopia in general. Students, teachers, unemployed people and other sections of society especially male youths are migrating to Republic of South Africa illegally (IOM, 2013).

CHAPTER THEREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description of the Study area

The study was conducted in Abi-Adi town and Abi-Adi town is found in the Central Zone of the Tigray region. It is located 90 km west of Mekelle which is the capital city of Tigray. Tigrigna is spoken as a first language in Abi-Adi town and the town has Kolla climate with hot temperature. The main source of livelihood in the area is a mixed economy including agriculture, animal husbandry and trade related business (AATFEDB). According to the census conducted in 2007, the total population of the town was 86,500 (CSA, 2007). Irregular migration from Abi-Adi town and from the nearby areas such as from Kolla -Tembien to the Middle East, Europe and to the US has grown since 2023/24 G.C. According to the research conducted by the Institute of Population Studies in Mekelle University and the ZOA Relief/Hope/Recovery Office, migration in different parts of Tigray such as from Shire and Abi-Adi town has seen a rise. Eritrean refugees coming to Ethiopia usually use the region as a transit to move to Europe via Sudan and Libya. And since the Eritrean refugees use the same language as the host community, they can easily communicate with the local youth and convince them to travel together (Kinfel *et al.*, 2017).

3.2. Research Design and Approach

A descriptive survey design with qualitative research approach was employed and used to conduct the study. Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects non-numerical data and interprets meaning from these data to help us understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places. It also examines the understanding of a given problem, people's experiences, meanings and relationships, and social processes and contextual factors. It is a form of social action that stresses the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals (Creswell, 2014). Besides, qualitative research incorporates a valuable set of methodological tools used for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Moreover, qualitative research gives voice to the lived experience while at the same time allowing the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the unique experiences of individuals (Roberts, 2017).

3.3. Sources of data

The data for the study was gathered from both Primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from sample informants such as local authorities and from returnee informants; while, the secondary data was obtained from several sources such as published documents, Census data, unpublished journals and office reports.

3.4. Method of Data Collection

The most commonly used methods of data collection in qualitative research include participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The standard characteristic of both in-depth interviews and focus groups is the use of open-ended questions which are followed up with inquiries in response to participants' answers (Mohajan, 2018). Accordingly, the study employed different data collection tools and instruments to gather reliable data. Accordingly, primary data was collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and through key informant interviews. The secondary data source was gathered from articles, published documents, Census data, unpublished journals and as well as from different office reports.

In-depth interviews

In-depth interview was very important and pertinent in understanding the experiences of returnee migrants and it would help them gain a better insight and understanding \ into the workings of smugglers of illegal migrants and the process as a whole. This is mainly due to the fact that in-depth interviews help to gather ideas that are deeply and too personal information and cases that are directly associated with the informant.

The interview has followed the semi-structured guidelines. In this case, stories were collected from returnee migrants' experiences using a narrative approach. An in-depth interview with Eight (8) returnee migrants of varied age and sex was conducted. Thus, an in-depth interview was held and conducted with returnee migrants from Libya, Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Middle East, from Europe and the US as well. These were selected as a key source of informants due to their experiences of an illegal migration.

Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion was held with Eight (8) returnee migrants of both sexes with varied age groups. The interviewees were consisted of returnees from Libya, the Middle East, Europe and the US. Focus group discussion was also preferred and held so as to gather more and diversified ideas regarding the issue of irregular migration its causes and impacts. Moreover, this was preferred in order to enable the informant participants share their experiences and views regarding the issue under study.

Key informant interviews

Key informant interview was mainly focused so as to select key informants that were believed to have a good knowledge regarding the issue under study. Accordingly, key informant interview was held with 4 informants. In this regard, interview was held with relevant informants such as government agencies Abi-Adi town's Youth and Sports Affairs Office, labor and social affairs office, and Woreda social affairs head officers. In addition, employees at any humanitarian organization in Abi-Adi town head office were interviewed to get a perspective into non-governmental organizations working with (returnee) migrants in the study area.

3.5. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

In the study a total of 20 informants were selected as sample size to the study. Regarding the sampling techniques, purposive (non-probable) sampling was used in the identification of key informant individuals, institutions and persons such as relevant governmental as well as non-governmental organizations since purposive sampling is used to select few and key individuals who have a good knowledge about the issue under study. Hence, 20 informants were selected based on the availability of such key informants and purposive sampling was preferred since it helps to select small number of informants due to their knowledge of the issue. Purposive sampling is a technique in which specific persons or settings are selected to provide information that cannot otherwise be obtained from other sources (Taherdoost, 2016). In this sampling technique, the researcher determines who will provide the best information to accomplish the objectives of the study (Etikan *et al.*, 2017). On the other hand, snowball sampling was employed to identify returnee migrants for in-depth interviews. Snowball sampling is a design process that is usually done using networks when an individual or a group directs the researcher to another group. This sampling technique was selected because snowball sampling uses a few

cases to help encourage other cases to participate and is mostly used to access individuals that are otherwise difficult to get in touch with (Taherdoost, 2016). Returnee migrants who fall into this category were individuals who feel like outcasts in society and prefer not to be publicly identified as such. Thus, to gain access and get in touch with returnee migrants, snowball sampling was possibly proved to be the most useful sampling technique.

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected through key informant interview, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion was analyzed. Accordingly, the qualitative data collected using key informant interview, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion from the informants was analyzed qualitatively in which the collected data has been categorized and those, which have been frequently replied by most informants, were used to analyze the data. The main reason qualitative analysis was used is due to the fact that the nature of the study and its data collection methods were directly related with sensitive issues and with a small number of informants that is associated with the causes and impacts of irregular migration and to such topics, qualitative data analysis is an ideal method of data analysis since the data are gathered qualitatively in a narrative and discussion form.

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. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter generally presents and discusses the data gathered from the informants through in-depth interview, key informant interview and focus group discussions in the study area. In this regard, the study has tried to identify the causes, the current status of irregular migration, the actors of irregular migration as well as the major challenges that irregular migrants have faced in their journey till they reach their place of destination in relation to the measures to be taken to minimize the level of irregular migration in the study area.

4.1. The causes of Irregular Migration

As the data gathered from the informants has indicated, the major causes of irregular migration are associated with economic, social and political factors. Moreover, the result has indicated that, *“ Irregular migration in the study area has been largely associated with various complex phenomena working in tandem such as poverty, low standard of living, unemployment, lack of job and employment opportunities in places of origin, population pressure which results in low agricultural production and low economic capability to sustain food security, land scarcity, false promise of brokers, the perception of the community and peer pressure in an attempt to accumulate wealth.”*

4.1.1. Socio-Economic Factors

As the informants have indicated, socio-economic factors are among the major causes of irregular migration in the study area. The informants have revealed the fact that poverty, unemployment, economic hardship and lack of employment opportunities are among the major socio-economic factors causing irregular migration in the study area.

Regarding the socio-economic factors, a 26 years returnee from Libya (interviewed on March 5, 2025) illustrated the causes as follows by saying,

“Poverty and unemployment opportunities together with economic hardship and lack of sustainable employment opportunities are the major driving factors pushing individuals to migrate illegally in search of better livelihoods. In addition to this, lack of skills and low education status, limited access to education and job opportunities and even lack of

technological skill restricts the available opportunities locally, motivating migration. In this regard, the influence of brokers and smugglers has a great influence since illegal migration is often facilitated by brokers and smugglers who exploit migrants' desperation. Even, family and social pressure which include family expectations, peer influence, and success stories from returnees encourage risky migration. Moreover, peer pressure and success stories from returnees and the desire of accumulate wealth encourage risky migrations illegally. ”

A 31 years old woman returnee from Saudi Arabia (interviewed on March 6, 2025) has informed that low economic status, low standard of living, low economic and employment opportunities, low educational status, peer pressure, the influence of brokers and success stories from returnees were among the socio-economic factors causing irregular migration in the study area.

Another informant who has returned from Libya has narrated the situation saying like this,

“I had a close friend in our neighbor and he has two brothers in Saudi Arabia. I was a student he often told me that his brothers sent much amount of money to his parents and siblings during various occasions. Since they are our neighbors, I also practically observe some visible changes in the lives of this family. For instance, they built iron sheet houses; they bought new clothes very frequently and the way they celebrate various holidays were also very attractive than my family. In general, they lead very luxuries life in our neighbor. This motivated me to go to Saudi Arabia so as to change the life of myself and my parents as my neighbors did. Hence, I dropped my education and I started asking my parents daily to send me abroad. Then, they started to collect money and finally I migrated illegally to Libya and I have paid 1.2 million to brokers at different places till I reach in Libya and I have been in prison in Libya.”(An In-depth interview conducted with a returnee migrant from Libya).

A group of returnee informants (held on March 7, 2025) have also informed directly saying,

“We were pretended by the brokers who have a long and complicated social networks from Tigray to Libya and the Middle East and they work in smuggling of human beings and they exploited human organs. The brokers have deceived as we will have a better life and as they have promised and vowed us as if they will critically follow our safety and security until we reach the area of our intended country of destination. However, the brokers only deceive and pretend us as if they really care until they receive the money they need and after that they don't

care and bother our security. They just sold us to other brokers everywhere until we reached Libya and in Libya other strange brokers have received us and bully us to bring huge amount of money. We have been in prison in Libya sentenced for 2-3 years before we reached our dream and destination continent, Europe due to our failure to pay the amount of money they need. After that they send back us to our country via the red cross society and they said to us that "you are lucky even to return to your country, and said that not everyone is lucky to be able to his/her country in life" and thanks God that we are here as a testimony that illegal migration is totally destructive in all aspects. If we knew this before we would not think to go there and even the amount of money we have paid to the brokers was much more enough to start up a business her in our country."

4.1.2. Unemployment and Lack of Economic Opportunities

Unemployment and lack of employment alternatives and economic opportunities are forwarded by the informants as contributing factors to irregular migration in the study area. The desires to improve one's economic status, the need and desire to accumulate wealth and escape from poverty are the primary motivations of migrants who want to seek employment opportunities abroad. Before they migrated to Saudi Arabia and Europe majority of the returnee migrants in the study area were from the rural areas whose economy was primarily depend on agriculture and related activities. Moreover, the informants have replied that agriculture was the only means of employment opportunity to them that participated in the study were come from rural areas where agriculture and related activities are the only available means of employment opportunities. That is, agriculture is the dominant livelihood strategy and source of employment for limited number of individuals. Besides agriculture, there are no any industries and service sectors to attract the increasing number of unemployed youths in the area. As a result, they tend and prefer to migrate irregularly to different countries as an option for youths to get economic opportunities and improve lives of their families and themselves. In addition, problems of unemployment was also mentioned by the informants as major economic factors pushing the youth to irregular migration under the influence of brokers and illegal human smuggling workers. Be siding this, the informants have implied that unemployment and lack of job opportunities as well as factors associated with different factors like failure in education, lack of capital to start up a business and private job were among the most pushing factors affecting the level and status of irregular migration in the study area(Asefa *et al.*, 2017).

A 22 years old woman returnee from Saudi Arabia (interviewed on March 6, 2025) revealed the fact saying this:

“I have completed my preparatory education but, I failed to pass the national examination. I made an attempt to find job so as to support myself and my family in our area. However, it was very difficult to find a job. Therefore, I have decided to migrate illegally to Saudi Arabia since girls and female migrants have better opportunities as compared to boys and men in the Middle East. Though I heard that migrating to the Middle East was very difficult, it was the only option I had to me support my family and to improve my economic conditions though things were not as to my expectation. It was really difficult and I have been detained for 2 years there before I got a job”

Similarly an interview with other returnee informant from Saudi Arabia (interviewed on March 10, 2025) also confirms that lack of employment and economic opportunities motivate migrants to search for job opportunities and better life standards in Europe, the Middle East and the US. He mentioned that:

“My families were very poor. While I was in elementary school, I used to participate in petty trade so as to support my poor families. I drop out my secondary education and made an attempt to get better job, but I could not find any job. Then, I decided to migrate illegally to Europe via Libya I told my decision to my family so as to get their support. However, it was very difficult to collect sufficient money to the brokers in my journey. Despite this, I have finally decided to flee and later my family has sold the only house we had to save my life and they had borrowed money from relatives. I have been successful in transferring to Saudi Arabia via Yemen but, I was caught soon after I arrived at Saudi Arabia and I have been in Prison for two years there and I was deported to my country directly from the prison without any job.”

From the above stated precise examples of the informants, it clearly seen that there is contribution of poverty, lack of employment and economic opportunities leading migrants to search for employment and better ways of life in different countries. The stories of the informants tell us that there is a strong desire on the part of the migrants to improve their economic conditions and support their family. In other word, if they become unable to improve their life because of lack of job opportunities and other economic opportunities, they were being

forced to migrate to other countries where they perceived that there is job access and better economic opportunities as well as better living standards and best life opportunities.

4.1.3. Political and Socio-political Factors

In this regard, political instability, human rights violations, poor enforcement of laws, corruption, and social injustices in Ethiopia are underlying triggers for irregular migration. Moreover, legal barriers such as absence or difficulty of legal migration channels particularly for males, and restrictive migration policies increase the possibility of reliance of migrants on illegal routes and brokers (Zelalem, 2017).

In this regard, the data collected from the informants through in-depth and key informant interview as well as from focus group discussion indicated that, political crises, instability, conflict, and violence in origin countries push people to migrate irregularly for safety and survival needs. In this case the informants have implied that violations of democratic rights, unlawful arrests, detention, corruption, biased administration, and unfair judicial systems degrade citizens' trust and security, propelling them to seek refuge elsewhere. Moreover, the informants have indicated that, political instability exacerbates migration flows by increasing insecurity and uncertainty about the future in home countries. In addition to this, the informants have also implied economic hardship linked to governance as a major reason to irregular migration in their area stating that poor governance and lack of political will to address unemployment, poverty, and underdevelopment deepen socio-economic hardships. Moreover, high unemployment rates, lack of skills, and absence of vocational training restrict local job opportunities, pushing youth to migrate illegally as an alternative for better livelihoods. It was also informed that corruption and weak enforcement of laws further weaken economic conditions, leading to irregular migration in search of economic security (IOM, 2015).

In addition to the above mentioned causes, the informants have also indicated social pressures and social networks as major driving factors to such irregular migration stating that family and peer pressure influence decisions to migrate. The informants clarified the idea that migrants often view migration as a means of escaping poverty and attaining success, contributing to irregular migration. Besides, social networks that operate across borders facilitate irregular migration by providing information and support but also sometimes through traffickers and smugglers. The informants have indicated that in a politically weak system of governance, discriminatory service

provisions, social exclusion, and lack of institutional protections increase migrants' vulnerability and motivate illegal departures together with social injustice and unequal treatment of citizens. Moreover, insufficient legal and safe channels for migration, partly due to restrictive immigration policies from destination countries, cause many to resort to irregular migration and such legal gap contributes to the rise of human trafficking and migrant smuggling as alternative options for illegal mobility and migration and this in turn paves the way to illegal brokers and human smuggling agents (ILO, 2015).

In general, the informants have indicated that political instability and economic hardships are interrelated indicating that political instability feeds economic decline, which in turn deepens poverty and unemployment rate. Moreover, they have indicated that weak institutional frameworks and corrupted governance limit development efforts, perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability that drives irregular migration leaving the migrants in a greater risk. In this regard, social networks and pressures further motivate migration despite risks involved, driven by the hope for better socio-economic outcomes and better standard of living. From this, it can be simply understood that, irregular migration is not driven by a single cause but a complex interplay of socio-political and economic factors. Political instability, poor governance, human rights violations, lack of legal migration routes, and socio-cultural pressures are major drivers. Addressing these requires coordinated efforts to improve political stability, governance, legal frameworks, and economic opportunities in origin countries where a number of youth migrate in attempt to get better job opportunities and better living standards (IOM, 2015).

4.2. The overall Impacts of Irregular Migration

As the information gathered from the informants indicated, the impacts of irregular migration are associated with personal hardships and physical problems including violence, insecurity of basic needs, torture, and even death during the journey and at the place of destinations like Libya and Saudi Arabia, in the Middle East, Europe and even in the US. Moreover, the informants have replied that social and economic strain is also another major impact of irregular migration putting the family of the irregular migrant in serious economic and social problems. According to the informants, families left behind may suffer from hunger, social disintegration, and financial burdens due to payments made to brokers. Besides, irregular migration can lead to marriage

breakdowns, vulnerability of elders, erosion of social ties, and ethnic divisions. Moreover, irregular migrants are vulnerable to exploitation such as human trafficking, forced labor, and other forms of abuse that may range to death in conditions when they are unable to pay to brokers. The informants have indicated that many have died in Libya and in different borders of the Middle East due to lack of money to pay to the illegal brokers and this has led the families of the victims to social and economic problems they cannot relieve forever (Zelalem, 2017).

4.2.1. Economic Impacts

Most of the returnee migrants interviewed stated that their reasons for choosing irregular migration was to find better-paying jobs overseas and earn large amount of money as well as to quickly accumulate wealth so they can change their lives back home. In this regard, the informants have indicated many economic related impacts to both the victims of irregular and their families as well.

An informant from an in-depth interview (on April 8, 2025) described the economic impacts he faced as follows:

“After I contacted an illegal broker, we and some friends of mine have reached at an agreement with regards to the amount of the money we have to pay and accordingly, he told us that we had to pay 90,000 till we reach and arrive at Saudi Arabia and each of us pay 45,000 birr at first round and he made an agreement to pay the rest the 45,000 birr after we arrived at Saudi Arabia. However, we were made to pay the money when we reached Sudan and we have been transferred to another brokers that have taken us to Libya and after a week we were ordered to pay 1.2 million birr to them and they told us to kill us if we did not pay the money within a month. In this, regard, our families were in trouble and the brokers have ordered our family to pay the amount of money and ordered them to kill us if they did not pay that amount of money. My family has sold all the oxen we had to save me and my friend’s relatives have sold their home to save the life of their children and still they are living in a rent house in Abi-Adi. Besides, the economic challenges, we have faced many challenges and we have been tortured till we pay all the money and a number of illegal migrants were killed in front of us. This moment was the most terrifying incidence in our life. The brokers do not bother about the victims and they only care about their money and

even after payment is made they transfer migrants to other brokers for another agreement and this really affects the economic aspect of our families as a whole.”

In the same way, informants from group discussion have illustrated the economic impact of irregular migration in this way.

Irregular immigration has complex and multifaceted impacts on the economies, societies, and public systems of the host countries. The informants have indicated that irregular migration leads to economic crisis directly and indirectly. According to them, the country of origin loss its productive labor force in the agriculture, construction and even in the industrial sector while, it contributes to the host country in many ways. Moreover, the informants have indicated that irregular migrants are made to work in agricultural, construction and industrial sectors in the host sectors till they get the right license in the host country. Besides, the informants have indicated that even the economic impacts of irregular migration knocks the door of the transit places and countries such as Libya where, irregular migration has been linked with negative economic effects including inflation, growth of black markets, increased crime associated with underground economies, and strain on public health resources. Moreover, the informants have indicated that distance and the costs associated with irregular migration influence migration intentions and patterns, which also ties into economic conditions in source and host countries (Abinet, 2011).

In sum, it can be concluded that irregular migration has an overall negative economic impacts to countries of origin leaving them in debts and loan that cannot even be paid by the future generation of their families.

4.2.2. Physical and Health Related Impacts

Regarding the health related impacts, the informants have indicated that irregular migration has significant physical and health-related impacts on the individuals involved and on broader public health systems. The informants have informed that these health related impacts arise from the dangerous conditions migrants face during their journeys, living situations, legal and social challenges, and barriers to accessing healthcare and even from the abuses they face during their journey.

An interview conducted with a returnee migrant from Saudi Arabia (interviewed on April 10, 2025) has narrated all what he observed and faced during his journey saying like this:

“In my way to Saudi Arabia, I saw that irregular migration is associated with dangerous Journey and Physical harm. As I have seen in my real life, Illegal migration often involves perilous routes where migrants face risks of injury, violence, exploitation, and poor living conditions. Moreover, overcrowded boats, long treks through hostile environments, and exposure to elements lead to injuries, dehydration, malnutrition, hypothermia, and other acute physical health issues. Besides this, there was also the prevalence of infectious diseases since we migrants have been traveling through unofficial and unsafe routes face higher exposure to infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, scabies, HIV/AIDS, and vaccine-preventable diseases. Overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in transit and detention centers facilitate the spread of these diseases. There is also a concern about reintroduction of infectious diseases in host countries due to these migration flows. In this regard, I remember many female migrants becoming victims of sexual violence, unwanted pregnancy and infection of different diseases.”

The informants from the focus group discussion have also clarified the health related impacts of illegal migration as follows case as follows:

“Most of us have experienced and encountered many of the challenges and we have witnessed all the atrocities committed on migrants even after they pay the amount of money asked. For instance, crimes related to torture, sexual abuse and mass killings are the common forms of health related challenges and problems that illegal migrants face during their journey. Moreover, the illegal migrants are even subjected to organ trafficking such as killing and organ trafficking including kidney trafficking. We have seen that many have been killed for their kidney to be sold for the sake of organ transplantation and many have been victims of such crimes and even more have been suffered from kidney failure due to long journey, thirsty and hunger. Due to this we have suffered from a psychological disorder and trauma, trauma and anxiety.

An informant from an in-depth interview (that was conducted on April 15, 2025) has narrated the impacts of irregular migration saying:

“I have seen that a number of migrants have been sexually abused and violated during their journey and some of them have affected by HIV/AIDS and related STDS. Moreover, a number of female migrants have faced unwanted pregnancy problems during their journey. There were a number of female migrants who have born children that was resulted from sexual violence by the brokers and many of them have been made to stay in the transit countries such as Libya before they arrived at their dream country. Not only do females male migrants are also subjected to all forms of abuses including detention, physical injury and even death. Due to this, there a lot of people I know that have suffered from depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other psychological distress caused by trauma, fear of deportation, social isolation, and uncertainty. Moreover, detention in poor conditions exacerbates and aggravates these mental health outcomes, sometimes resulting in self-harm or suicidal ideation. For instance, I have tried to commit self-suicide two times with an electric shock and by drinking a chemical after I have come back to my home and I still feel ashamed since I have paid 1.3 million Birr deceived by the brokers.”

A female informant (interviewed on April 16, 2025) has narrated her idea to the health impacts of irregular migration like this:

“I have been in Saudi Arabia for two years but, I have stayed one year in Libya. I was taken to Libya via Sudan and in the Deserts of Sudan and Libya a number of female migrants including me have been sexually violated and we have been subjected to sexual exploitation and violence. Be siding this, male migrants have been also subjected to smuggling and trafficking and were forced to labor and all those lead to both physical health and psychological problems. Moreover, the migrants were not considered as humans but as subjects and since illegal migration routes and paths are often controlled by criminal networks, such illegal and criminal groups have no mercy to humanity and human rights. After passing through such difficult moments, I have been deported from Saudi Arabia two years ago. I still remember the moments we had during the journey and the criminal acts committed up on us come to me as a nightmare and this makes me to be aggressive even now.”

In general, the informants have indicated that, illegal migration results in severe physical injuries and health risks due to dangerous journeys, exposure to infectious diseases, and lack of adequate

healthcare. Psychological trauma and mental health disorders are prevalent because of socio-legal challenges and detention experiences. Labor and sexual exploitation and human trafficking are also the common health related impacts of illegal migration. Moreover, such health impacts also are common to children and even pregnant women.

4.2.3. Psychological Impacts of Irregular Migration

4.2.3.1. Psychological Impacts on the Migrants themselves

The information gathered from the returnee and key informants indicated that illegal migration has a number of complex psychological impacts that affect both the illegal migrants and the whole families at home land due to death frustrations and associated economic loss factors since they are asked huge amount of money. In this regard, the informants have revealed the fact that illegal migration with its associated risks of the journey, all forms of violations and abuses along the journey, the conditions at the destination, the social and emotional consequences of separation from family members with uncertain job opportunities filled with suspects and threats as well as other associated risks all put psychological pressure and stress on the migrant and his relatives.

An informant from an in-depth interview (conducted on April 18, 2025) clarified the psychological impacts of irregular migration like this:

“From my own experience, the psychological impacts can be purely distinguished as pre-migration stress that is associated trauma from a home or country of origin since most of us leave our country due to war, violence or, due to abject and extreme poverty. In this regard, there is fear of the journey and anticipation of danger due to the routes of illegal migration are frequently under the control of criminal network groups of trafficking and smuggling along routes and border crossings. Besides, we migrants are afraid of the journey since no one is certain about the safety and security of the whole routes and most of us live in survival mode during the journey. This fear is not only during the journey but continuous even after successfully arriving at the place of destination in Europe or the Middle East due to fear of deportation and detention in the host countries. In this regard, illegal migrants live in fear and difficulty due to both language and culture barriers. We the illegal migrants live in a growing and continuous fear. Depression and anxiety due to poor job opportunities, poor living

conditions and loss of personal dignity are the common psychological impacts of illegal migration.”

4.2.3.2. Psychological Impacts on Families and Relatives

Participants from a group discussion have informed that emotional stress and anxiety of families from the moment of departure and separation is common and family members such as spouses, children, and parents always live in stress about the safety of the journey. Moreover, the informants have indicated that families live a continual stress and fear about the death news of illegal migrants they hear and families and children all live missing and longings or yearning due to sudden separation. Moreover, the informants have indicated that the relatives in the place of origin live in a state of despair as if they hear the death of their migrated children and this leads to mental health and psychological problems. Moreover, the informants have implied that young children are forced to shoulder the burden and responsibility of their family at such an early age and this leads them to stress and associated psychological problems since there is no parental support (Habte, 2015). In this regard, the informants have added that children are also the victims of such migration patterns since they are forced to dropout and quit their education or schooling. In addition to this, the informants have indicated that spouses and couples also live under intense stress and feeling of loneliness due to extended separation. Besides, the informants have also revealed the fact that economic dependency and related financial problems associated with remittance delays may also lead families and spouses to a sort of boredom and stress. Moreover, the informants have indicated that death news from Libya and the Middle East is common today and said that burial systems of illegal migrants are becoming more frequent and typical than ever nowadays in their locality (Adom *et al.*, 2018).

From this it can be simply concluded that illegal migration puts pressure and even leads to post trauma psychological disorder and stress both on the migrants and their relatives at the place of origin or home country. Moreover, psychological impacts of irregular migration are symmetrical with the concept of “ambiguous loss”, a condition of psychological problem and stress that occurs when a loved one is physically absent but psychologically present and this actually affects the psychological aspect of the relatives and the local communities as a whole.

4.3. Measures to minimize and Control Irregular Migration

The information gathered from the participants of group discussion has implied that controlling an illegal migration should go equally responsible to all starting from an individuals at family level up to governments. Moreover, the informants have indicated that the first measure that should be taken to minimize illegal migration is to create an awareness towards the youth and the community regarding the false and unreal expectations that migrants miss to enjoy the quality of life and better life opportunities after arriving at the host countries despite the real challenges that illegal migrants face. Besides, the informants have implied that the youth should be aware of the false success stories from illegal migrants and peer pressure regarding illegal migration. Moreover, the informants have informed that the youth and the community should be well aware of the illegal brokers that deceive or pretend the youth to migrate illegally by making false vows and unfulfilled promises regarding the safety and security aspects of the whole journey up to the place of destination. In addition to this, the informants have indicated that since the brokers pretend the migrants as if illegal migration is essential, the youth should be vigilant enough about such falsehood acts of the brokers (UNHCR, 2008)

In addition to this, the informants have also indicated that the government should take a great responsibility in maintaining the security of its citizens and should keep the security of cross borders to minimize the patterns of illegal migration and to control illegal brokers. In this regard, the informants have implied that controlling illegal migration is not about building higher walls alone. It's about a comprehensive, balanced approach that includes security, law enforcement, international cooperation, and addressing root causes. Moreover, the informants' have indicated that long-term solutions lie not only in enforcement but also in providing economic opportunities for the youth and providing equal opportunities of participation in all the social, economic and political aspects maintaining peace as well as arranging legal migration pathways(ILO, 2015).

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

The study was designed to assess the causes and impacts of illegal migration in Tigray region, Ethiopia; the case of Abi-Adi town. In this regard, the study has tried to identify the major causes of illegal migration as well as to assess the overall impacts in relation to the measures to minimize and control illegal migration in the study area. It is known that illegal migration is a significant global phenomenon and socio-economic and socio-political problem driven and caused by a number of interrelated factors. It involves the migration and journey of individuals across borders without legal permission looking for better economic and job opportunities, better living standard and quality of life, security of life that the countries of origin cannot afford or provide to their citizens. The consequences and impacts of illegal migration as to the causes are also complex too affecting both the illegal migrants as well as the families of the migrants.

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

Regarding the causes of illegal migration, the study has found that the major causes of illegal migration in the study area were associated with associated with economic, social and political factors. In this regard, the result has indicated that illegal migration in the study area has been largely associated with various complex phenomena working in tandem such as poverty, low standard of living, unemployment, lack of job and employment opportunities in places of origin, population pressure which results in low agricultural production and low economic capability to sustain food security, land scarcity, false promise of brokers, the perception of the community and peer pressure in an attempt to accumulate wealth. In this regard, unemployment and lack of employment alternatives and economic opportunities were forwarded and mentioned by the informants as contributing factors to illegal migration in the study area. Moreover, the desire to improve one's economic status, the need and desire to accumulate wealth and escape from

poverty were the primary motivations of migrants who want to seek employment opportunities in different countries abroad such as Saudi-Arabia, the Middle East, Europe and the US.

The study has also found that, political instability, human rights violations, poor enforcement of laws, corruption, and social injustices in Ethiopia together with absence or difficulty of legal migration channels and restrictive migration policies increase the possibility of reliance of migrants on illegal routes and brokers in the study area were underlying factors triggering and leading for irregular migration. Besides, it was indicated that barriers such as high unemployment rates, lack of skills, and absence of vocational training restrict local job opportunities, pushing youth to migrate illegally as an alternative for better livelihoods. It was also informed that corruption and weak enforcement of laws further weaken economic conditions, leading to irregular migration in search of economic security.

Regarding the overall impacts of illegal migration, the study has found that illegal migration are associated with personal hardships and physical problems including violence, insecurity of basic needs, torture, and even death during the journey and at the place of destinations like Libya and Saudi Arabia, in the Middle East, Europe and even in the US. Moreover, the study has revealed the fact that illegal migrants were more vulnerable to exploitation such as human trafficking, forced labor, and other forms of abuse that may range to death in conditions when they are unable to pay to brokers. The informants in the study have indicated that many have died in Libya and in different borders of the Middle East due to lack of money to pay to the illegal brokers and the amount of money asked to pay to the illegal migrants ranges from 900,000 up to 1.5million birr in average and this affects the economy of the migrant's economy. The study has also revealed that illegal migration has significant physical and health-related impacts on the individuals involved and on broader public health systems associated with health impacts arise from the dangerous conditions migrants face during their journeys, living situations, legal and social challenges, and barriers to accessing healthcare and all forms of abuses that migrants face during migration their journey. It was also indicated that illegal migration has a psychological and mental health problems both in the migrants and their families including children and spouses.

Thus, considering the overall social, health and economic impacts, illegal migration calls for action and urges individuals and governments to take considerable actions to make efforts to minimize and control it.

5.2. Recommendation

Based on the results and conclusions drawn, the study has cited the following recommendations to minimize the rate of illegal migration in the study area.

- Raising awareness towards the community and the youth regarding illegal migration and its complex impacts both on the migrants and their families should be made at the first place so as to minimize the level and impacts of illegal migration
- The government should maintain the peace and security of its people since internal conflicts can exacerbate illegal migration due to security cases
- The government should provide an equal economic opportunities to all citizens so as to ensure economic equalities of citizens
- The government together its people and its organs should maintain the security of cross borders to minimize illegal flow of migration and to control illegal routes
- There should be strict control and follow up of the illegal brokers that deceive and pretend the youth migrants by making false promises and vows as if everything in the journey will be safe and certain
- The government should have a strong stance in fighting corruption and illegal migration through ensuring check and balance as well as accountability of officials and individuals who are suspected to be actors of such illegal migration
- The government should promote a youth based job creation opportunities to encourage youths create their own business and to help them become self-reliant
- The government in collaboration with the host and destination countries should arrange legal migration ways so as to minimize the risks of illegal migration
- The government should take corrective measures on individuals who recklessly participate in illegal migration and its associated aspects

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Appendix
MEKELLE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE
DEPARTMENT OF CIVICS AND ETHICAL STUDIES

Dear Informants/respondents! The purpose of the study and the interview is to assess the causes and impacts of illegal migration in Central zone of Tigray, region Ethiopia; the case of Abi-Adi town for the partial fulfillment of the Master of Art (M.A) degree in Civics and Ethical studies. The study aims to identify the causes and assess the overall impacts of illegal migration in relation to the measures to be taken to minimize illegal migration. Thus, as the achievement of this study depends on your truthful and real response, you are kindly requested to respond patiently and openly. Be sure that the study is entirely academic and all responses are kept confidential. Besides, the information collected through this interview will be used entirely for academic reason only and responses will be used anonymously and will be kept confidential.

General direction

1. You are kindly requested to give genuine responses
2. You don't need to write your identification/Name
3. Be sure that the study is entirely academic and all responses are kept confidential
4. Feel free to respond

Thank you in advance for your coordination!!

Appendix-I

In-depth Interviews held with Returnee migrants from different countries

Informant's information:

Sex: ----- **Education level:** ----- **Age:** -----

1. What are the causes of illegal migration in your town and surrounding?
2. Who are the actors of illegal migration in your area?
3. What are the overall physical, health, economic, demographic and psychological impacts of illegal migration in your area?
4. What are the major challenges and life risks that illegal migrants face during their journey till they arrive at the place off destination?
5. How does economic and political factors cause and lead to illegal migration?
6. What are the psychological impacts of illegal migration on the migrants and their relatives?
7. What measures should be taken to minimize the status of illegal migration in your area and surrounding?

Appendix-II

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DEPARTMENT OF CIVICS AND ETHICAL STUDIES

Key Informant Interview held with Women Association, Youth and labor Head office and Humanitarian Aid Head Officers

Informant's information:

Sex: -----Academic qualification: -----Position-----

1. How do you examine the extent of illegal migration in your town?
2. What are the major causes of illegal migration in your town?
3. What are the overall impacts of illegal migration in your town?
4. What types of endeavors have you made so far to minimize the status of illegal migration in your town?

Appendix-III

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Focus group Discussion held with returnee informants, Kebelle and Woreda Women association and Youth Coordinators

Participant's Information

Sex: ----- Academic qualification: ----- Position-----

1. What are the causes of illegal migration in your town?
2. What are the overall impacts of illegal migration in your town?
3. What measures should be taken to minimize the status of illegal migration in your town?