



# **Causes and Psycho-Social Effects of Child Trafficking in North Wollo Zone, Ethiopia**

**Zewdnesch Endris Hussen<sup>a</sup>**  
**and Melaku Anteneh Mekonnen<sup>a\*</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> *Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Behavioural Sciences, Woldia University, Ethiopia.*

## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is attempted to examine the causes and effects of child trafficking in North Wollo Zone. Child trafficking is a global challenge affecting every country in the world. It involves multiple forms of sexual and labor exploitation which is described as a modern slavery. Hence, it gave the researcher an inspiration to investigate the causes and effects of child trafficking in north Wollo Zone. The specific objectives of this study were; to explore the major causes of child trafficking, to identify the major actors in child trafficking, to disclose effects of trafficking on children/ especially psycho-social effects of trafficking and to describe the trend of child trafficking for the past ten years. To conduct this study embedded exploratory design was employed. In order to collect the data in-depth interview, focus group discussion and document review was used. Thematic analysis for qualitative data and means, tables, graphs and charts for quantitative data employed to analyze the data and to show the trend. Result shows that Child trafficking is a problem in most districts in the zone especially in the lowland districts. Children got vulnerable to be trafficked because of the

\*Corresponding author: Email: [antenehmekaku83@gmail.com](mailto:antenehmekaku83@gmail.com);

poverty, peer pressure, hearing about employment opportunities in towns, attraction by the better living conditions in town, community discrimination, and families interest to be benefited from children employment through trafficking. The major actors in the trafficking process were brokers; brokers cheated family members, money loaning persons /usury lenders, grievance committee and relatives in cities. The trafficked children mainly experienced the physical, psychological and emotional social and economical forms of effects during their trafficking and in the past ten years increasing trend indicates that child/human trafficking is a continual problem of the community and is a global hazard. Eventually the researcher concluded that child trafficking plays a pivotal role in deteriorating the overall development of the children in different forms. Government and non-governmental organizations are recommended to coordination projects which could alleviate the economic challenge of victims of trafficking.

*Keywords: Trafficking; effects; exploitation; trends; child; transfer; harboring; abuse.*

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CPU</i>	: <i>Child Protection Units</i>
<i>CSA</i>	: <i>Central Statistics Agency</i>
<i>ILO</i>	: <i>International Labor Organization</i>
<i>MLOSA</i>	: <i>Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs</i>
<i>NGO</i>	: <i>None Governmental Organizations</i>
<i>TVPA</i>	: <i>Trafficking Victims Protection Act</i>
<i>UNODC</i>	: <i>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</i>
<i>FGD</i>	: <i>Focus Group Discussion</i>
<i>PTSD</i>	: <i>Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</i>
<i>HIV</i>	: <i>Human Immune Virus</i>
<i>AIDS</i>	: <i>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</i>
<i>HTP</i>	: <i>Harmful Traditional Practice</i>
<i>CRC</i>	: <i>Child Right Convention</i>
<i>ANPPCAN</i>	: <i>African Network for the Prevention against Child Abuse and Neglect</i>
<i>OVC TTAC</i>	: <i>Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center</i>
<i>CCC</i>	: <i>Community Care Collation</i>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime” (also known as the Palermo Protocol) defined child trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people/ children/ /through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit. In human trafficking both the men, women and children of all ages and from all backgrounds can become victims of this crime, which occurs in every region of the world [1,2]. The traffickers often use violence or fraudulent employment agencies and fake promises of education and job opportunities to trick and coerce their victims [3].

Child trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery and millions of people around the world; including children are victims of this crime. It is the exploitation of human beings, especially the defenseless or vulnerable segment of the populations (women and children prominently), and is recognized as one of the most severe abuses of human rights today. These violations of human rights can be both the cause and the consequence of human trafficking, or it could be explained that child trafficking is both a cause and an outcome of the non-fulfillment of rights of the children to exercise their ability and to realize a wide range of rights. Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit, or destination, and commonly, as all three; since human trafficking is national and transnational crime that has become more prevalent with the globalization of society [4,5].

These days child trafficking is the fastest growing form of organized crime. The child trafficking has come to be the third largest international criminal industry by the UN [5]. It is thought to be due to its less riskiness than drug or arms trafficking, and the traffickers are mad at the ever-increasing amounts of profits they get ranging between 8.5 and 12 billion Euros per year. These things make the new slave trade more complicated and challenging, and disastrous. Obviously, trafficking in persons is connected with extreme poverty, lack of access to resources, unemployment, and poor education, and because of the marginalization of women in society and the feminization of poverty has been leading the women and children to be the first to be knocked out by this criminal activity [6].

Globalization (shrinkage of the world to form an integrated global community) has been connected with the fast growing criminal activity,

child trafficking. In the formation of global economy, which can be explained by the free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets that transcend nation-state boundaries. In such a process, the transfer of people both voluntary and coerced becomes more prevalent. This could be understood as human trafficking is part of the globalization process comprising of a functional integration of dispersed economic activities in different parts of the world [1]. There are also conditions such as gender (women), age (children), poverty, social and cultural exclusion, limited access to education, and political instability, war and conflict were the affecting the vulnerability of human trafficking. Regarding the political instability and armed conflict; women and girls are particularly more susceptible. The disruption of traditional community life, along with its protective framework, and the resulting displacement make them extremely vulnerable to exploitation, including abuse of power by relief workers, limited access to resources and sexual assault [6].

Ethiopian, being part of the global economy or the global community, is not free from these global criminal sufferings. According to the criminal records of North Wollo Zone peace and security office (2019) and the investigator's observation indicated that human trafficking, particularly child trafficking is a continual community problem and reported many times. The recent political instability and armed conflict (war) in the Northern part of Ethiopia including North Wollo zone, would increase the vulnerability of children to be trafficked for different purposes. As the war stays for months, it would create favorable conditions for traffickers. However, because this criminal activity is practiced hidden or takes place underground; the real burden of the hit is not yet clearly estimated in the Zone and in the regional large.

Trafficking in children beings is a global problem with serious consequences for individual victims as well as communities and countries. It is a hidden crime, operating in the dark corners of the internet and the underbelly of the global economy to entangle victims for sexual exploitation, forced labor, domestic servitude and other forms of exploitation [7]. The impact of trafficking reaches throughout the globe, extending far beyond the severe psycho-social, emotional and physical effects on the trafficked children, and the disruption of family bonds and

relationships. The financial cost of providing services to survivors, investigating crimes, and prosecuting traffickers is significant, as is the corresponding loss of productivity due to long lasting effects of victimization [8]. For instance, among trafficking survivors in Southeast Asia, nearly half (48%) reported physical or sexual abuse and 22% sustained severe injuries, including lost limbs, and reported symptoms indicative of depression and anxiety disorders [9]. Besides, the physical and emotional impacts' the victims of trafficking are exposed to different behavioral problems, health problems, lack of education and street life in Ethiopia [10].

## **2. THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **2.1 The General Strain Theory**

General Strain Theory to explore the factors for child trafficking, and to explain how children are pushed by socio-economic and socio-cultural factors into child trafficking activity. The general strain theory is concerned with explaining the causes of delinquency. The main reason for trafficking is stress, this stressor could invite or expose children for vulnerability of push factor to be trafficked. In Ethiopia, there are many child stressors that lead them to be trafficked such as economic stress, social stress and political stress, all could be contributing factors for the children to become involved in trafficking.

### **2.2 Shaw and Mckay's Theory of Social Disorganisation**

Shaw and McKay's Chicago-school research have introduced one of the most basic criminological theory to the study of crime. The general concept of the theory has a link with low financial status. The theory's discussed that when people are economically poor, they will try alternative means and ways to survive, that means to compromise their problem might put people in danger.

Therefore, based on this perspective, the socio-economical state of developing nations can consider like they cannot afford basic need and facilitation for children. This economic issue the main factor to push and expose children to different bad circumstances and end up with trafficking and delinquency. Research have recognized the concept that economics situations and conditions could have a significant influence

on social Contributing Push-Factors for Child Trafficking in Ethiopia

### 2.3 Statement of the Problem

Child trafficking can be considered as an emerging business. The 2002 International Labor Organization (ILO) report revealed that more than 1.2 million children were trafficked in the world (mostly from developing countries) by 2000. According to Dessy and Pallage, the author of "the economics of child trafficking" explained this figure in a numeric expression; which was equivalent to 1.5 times the population of a city like San Francisco being enslaved in a single year, 2000. This terrible problem urges many governments in the world to have common sense and tackle the challenges. Because of this intense pressure, many governments around the globe ratify the international conventions on human trafficking [11,12]. But, child trafficking continues to be a global hazard; because of the very inefficient and uncoordinated efforts to combat against this international shame [13].

The UNODC [14] global report on human trafficking has revealed that 27% of all victims of human trafficking officially detected globally between 2007 and 2010 were children. This report also has indicated that child trafficking is increasing compared to the percentage reported from the period of 2003 to 2006, which was 20% [14]. Both the women (women attributed for 55-60 % of all trafficking victims) and girls account for about 75% of all trafficking victims detected globally. Regarding the gender distribution of trafficked victims, two third of them were girls. The number of trafficked girls detected increased through the period 2007- 2010. The increased in the girls trafficking is believed to be due to the increased demand for the commercial sex industry around the world which would have multifaceted adverse or negative impacts to the economy, health, productions, and development of country at large [5]. Although child trafficking in persons has been identified as a serious threat to human security and development, many African governments acknowledged the problem recently [15]. Africa has bedeviled with a number of natural and human made crisis including the high level of unemployment, poverty, hunger, corruption, political and economic instabilities. This makes the region unique for human trafficking exacerbated by the tensions and insurrections leading to the internal displacement of people, and trafficking [16]. The high burden of child trafficking in Africa, reported by UNDOC the

2007-2010 could a good example for this case, as African and Middle East attributed for 68% of child trafficking in the world [14].

We Ethiopians are in Tier 2, which means the government of Ethiopia does not fully comply with all of Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards. The support from the US government in the combat against trafficking has encouraged African governments to examine the issue [17], and the government of Ethiopia has been acknowledged. As to [18], there are tens of thousands of poor children in Ethiopia who are trafficked each year by individuals who promise education and better life in town. The northern part of Ethiopia has experienced a series of social, political and economic instabilities for the last couple of decades that have resulted in severe poverty among its people [18]. Children are highly vulnerable to human trafficking and targeted for human trafficking or trade because of their innocence, powerlessness, and not able to protect themselves. As they are easier to manipulate and unable to claim (Aronowitz, 2009).

The recurrent drought and its result - famine, have gripped quite a great number of people and have consequently exposed them to various social failures. The recurrent drought was more severe in the eastern Amhara and Afar regions, thus trafficking would be more intense and high. Likewise, the current armed conflict in North Wollo zone and other parts of Northern part of Ethiopia is more likely to increase child trafficking in the area. Besides, the proximity of the zone to Afar region (locally known for dessert transporters and guidance's, and salt merchants), and red sea accessibility made North Wollo Zone, and eastern Amhara more vulnerable for child trafficking. Situational analysis of child trafficking in Woldia city, Ethiopia, 2016 and evidences and documents indicated that child trafficking continues increasingly.

However, as to the searches made by the researcher, there are no documented evidences as well as research works regarding the magnitude, causes and psycho-social effects of child trafficking in the study area, it can fill this gap. Therefore I was interested to investigate causes and psycho-social effects as well as trends of child trafficking in North Wollo zone. So

this research can help as reminder for the preventive and controlling activities of this crime. Ultimately, this research had attempted to address the following basic questions:

1. What are the major factors children to be trafficked in North Wollo zone?
2. Who are the major actors in the child trafficking process?
3. What are the effects of child trafficking on children?
4. What is the trend of child trafficking in North Wollo Zone for the past ten years?

### 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

#### 3.1 General Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the research is to investigate the causes and psycho-social effects of child trafficking in North Wollo Zone.

#### 3.2 Specific Objectives

More specifically the study was aspired to:

- Explore the major factors of child trafficking
- Identify the major actors in child trafficking process
- Disclose effects of trafficking on children
- Describe the trend of child trafficking for the past ten years

### 4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Child trafficking in Ethiopia is a tragic form of human rights violation. It is a tragedy, because beyond exposing the children to sexual and forced labor exploitations, the domestic traffickers inflict permanent physical and mental injuries on the children to make them permanent sources of income. There is no documented data regarding the causes, trends and effects of child trafficking in North Wollo Zone so far. Thus, the findings will provide empirical evidences to the concerned governmental, NGO. Community and other researchers about the basic causes, trends and effects of child trafficking in North Wollo Zone and its catchment area, so that context based interventions will be made. Secondly; though many causative factors are found in literatures for child trafficking, this research will provide area specific factors. Finally, the result of this study will be utilized as an input by policy makers and program implementers for designing appropriate alleviation measures. And it will also

be used as baseline information for future researches in general.

**To make it more specific this study was significant in:**

- Providing information for concerned bodies: police organizations at any level, community based organizations/ peace and security office/, women and child affair and NGOS who work in this Zone for devising preventive measures either to minimize or to do away with this ominous practice.
- Provides factual information for those who are engaged in decision making, directives preparation, laws enacting and policy making duties
- To prepare manuals and create awareness of the problem in the general public and to understand and prevent the worst aspects of illegal child trafficking and to save the children from this situation
- Provide a baseline information for interested researchers in the problem area

### 5. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 5.1 Description of the Study Area

This study was conducted at North Wollo Zone. North Wollo is found in Amhara Regional State and is having 12,172 km<sup>2</sup> area coverage. Its capital is Woldia, 521 Km away from Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. It is bordered on the south by South Wollo, on the west by South Gondar, on the north by Wag Hemra, on the northeast by Tigray Region, and on the east by Afar Region; part of its southern border is defined by the Mille River. North Wollo Zone is one of the most drought prone and food insecure zone in the Amhara Region, which makes the residents more prone to be trafficked. Regarding the demographic of the population, the 2007 census conducted by the central statistics agency of Ethiopia (CSA) shows that a total population of 1,500,303 showing an increase of 19.04% over the 1994 census; of which 752,895 were men and 747,408 were women. Its topography is mostly mountainous yet has low lands and plain lads and thus it is possible to notice the different climatic regions helping to grow variety of food crops and aromatic plants.

#### 5.2 Study Design

The researcher used embedded exploratory design as the nature of the data is more of

qualitative with little support by quantitative data. Creswell and Clark (2010) this design enabled the researcher to understand the problem as it happened on the study participant this design helps to understand investigate and describe causes and effects of child trafficking

### 5.3 Research Method

Regarding the methods mixed method /approach /was employed.

### 5.4 Data Types and Sources

The study had used both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data for the study was gathered through in-depth interview with victims of trafficking and FGD with representatives of concerned governmental /Zone Raya kobo, Meket and woldia police representatives, Women and child Affairs Zone MoyanaTechnick and non-governmental/ save the children, SOS, ANPPCAN and law enforcement officials/zone High court and Zone Justice ./ The secondary data was gathered from the reports of the zonal police stations', department of women and children affairs of North Wollo Zone and reports of Zone Moyana Technick.

### 5.5 Population and Sample Size

There is no well recorded document showing population size that trafficked as the nature of the issue is difficult to describe numerically Rule of thumb was employed for measuring group differences or for unknown population as to Van Voorhis & Morgan, [19].

#### 5.5.1 Sampling techniques

Convenience/available/ sampling technique was used to select participants of the study. Those children who are victims of child trafficking selected. Since trafficking in person is a crime, it was not easy to find the victims of trafficking and collect the primary data needed for the study. Therefore NGOS/ Save the children, SOS, ANPPCAN/ that works with children that are exposed to different problems including trafficking and one of the child protection units (CPUs) selected. In general, the NGO, police representatives, trafficked children families and persons from the women and children affairs office who were closely working with victims of trafficking selected to undertake in depth interviews and FGD.

In order to get data about child trafficking practices three Woredas were purposively sampled. Among the 13 (and more) Woredas found in the Zone, Raya Kobo is thought to represent the Kollama Woredas/ most of the victims were from this woreda especially in low land districts//, and Meket is thought to represent the Degama Woredas/ most of the victims were from this woreda / and Woldia was selected as it serves as a bridging center

### 5.6 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

The researcher used interview/ in-depth interview/, focus group discussion (FGD) and document review. The researcher employed self-prepare and related adopted items used for interview and focus group discussion. Secondary data reviewed using checklist.

#### 5.6.1 In-depth interview

Similarly, referring the review of related literature, semi-structured interview questions were prepared to collect data from, children who are trafficked and returned from different Middle East countries children in exploitative situations because of trafficking. The interviewees include street children, children who are working in other exploitive labor works, trafficked children, and children working in sexual practices (4 males and 6 females). The interview prepared with the aim of acquiring data on the causes, the actors, and forms of exploitation and the effects of trafficking Intensive and detailed interviews were also made with representatives of police (especially police working near bus stations and zone 3 males and 1 female), and representative from women and children affairs offices in the three selected Woredas of North Wollo Zone( 2 males), trafficked children families in the three selected study sites (4 males and 3 females)

### 5.7 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion, was conducted with NGO workers on child trafficking(3persons), police representatives (especially police who are focal persons working in child trafficking committee in the three Woredas 3 males and 3 females), representative from women and children affairs offices (3 females), representative from Justice (3 males and 1 female), representative from High court(2 males and 2 females) religious leaders ( 5 males), trafficked children families in the three selected study sites (9 males and 1 female).. Thus, this study

employed one FGD per selected Woreda and one additional FGD were done with trafficked children (6 males and 7 females), totally 4 FGD was employed.

### 5.8 Document Review

To support the data collected using the in-depth interview and focus group discussion, reviewing of documents of different organizations was needed, especially the documents of organizations that are closely working with children that are victims of trafficking. North Wollo Zone police administration working on child trafficking and annual reports, women and children office of North Wollo Zone and other research documents on the same topic were also been reviewed.

### 5.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected through both primary and secondary data collection instruments had been analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Specifically, thematic analysis was used for qualitative data because the data is most dominantly qualitative and, tables, graphs, cross tabulation and figures were used for the quantitative data and to show the trend so North Wollo Zone police administration 10 year's annual report was analyzed.

### 5.10 Result Dissemination Plan

The findings of this study will be presented to the office of Woldia University Postgraduate Studies, department of psychology, women and child affairs of North Wollo Zone, and NGOs working on child trafficking in North Wollo Zone. Finally the finding will be presented to peer-reviewed international journals for publications.

## 6. RESULTS AND DISSUSION

I used the above representatives from Governmental and NGOs, religious leaders, trafficked children families in the three selected study sites to FGD and interviews. Thus, this study employed one FGD per selected Woreda and one additional FGD with victims. The interviewees include street children, children who are working in other exploitive labor works, and children working in sexual practices (4 males and 6 females). The interview prepared with the aim of acquiring data on the causes, the actors, and forms of exploitation and the effects of trafficking

Intensive and detailed interviews were also made with representatives of police (especially police working near bus stations and zone 3 males and 1 female), and representative from women and children affairs offices in the three selected Woredas of North Wollo Zone (2 males), trafficked children families in the three selected study sites (4 males and 3 females) and informants from Moyana Technique (2 males).

Focus group discussion, was conducted with NGO workers on child trafficking (3 persons), police representatives (especially police who are focal persons working in child trafficking committee in the three Woredas 3 males and 3 females), representative from women and children affairs offices (3 females), representative from Justice (3 males and 1 female), representative from High court (2 males and 2 females) religious leaders (5 males), trafficked children families in the three selected study sites (9 males and 1 female). One additional FGD was done with trafficked children (6 males and 7 females). Thus, this study employed one FGD per selected Woreda; most of the informants who participate in FGD were committees of child trafficking.

### 6.1 Major Factors for Child Trafficking

Participants of the study mentioned different factors as the cause for child trafficking. The researcher organizes the factors mentioned in to different themes. The thematic analysis presented here under. The findings are themed based on the collected data from informants and research questions.

### 6.2 Socio Economic Status

Majority of the participants mentioned that socio economic status is the major causal factor for child trafficking is low economic status of the community or families. They further explaining child traffickers use the economic problem of the child as a means to easily influence the child. One participant stated the situation as follows: the orthodox religious father who participated in FGD said that

*“without knowing the greatness of the country and the deep religious ideas of the generation, understanding international civilization in a way that is not useful and that we are living in the opposite of the actions and actions that we should have thought*

*about before and this is for the illegal trafficking of children and of the illegal actions. It is the main reason. Therefore, unless we get out of our current global depression by some miracles movement, there can be no change in the situation. Not only economical historical poverty is also main factor for trafficking and other illegal activities.” (MF age 67 male)*

All participants agree by the father idea. This study is consistent with a study [1] (Wood, 2020). And most of the respondents explained that, peer pressure, challenge from the recurrent drought and unemployment, unwillingness to do some types of works associated with low social status, community attitudes, Political instability are the major factor children to be trafficked. (Gezie et al., 2021).

Most of the participants described the most common factors for child trafficking is broken families, orphans or parents’ death and disintegration of immediate as well as extended family, under poverty and despair, parents are tempted to mobilize their children as resources to access immediate cash or long-term income. Community attitudes such as having a child abroad being considered a measure of status as a matter of tradition, children are expected to contribute to the household economy., children could be provoked by pressures from families, friends, neighbors and any close person who encourage children to be trafficked and the current political instability is also main factor children to be trafficked. According to these respondents, the other factors of trafficking were Unable to fulfill basic day-to-day, peer pressure (especially from those whom were trafficked earlier and relatively safe), challenge from the recurrent drought and unemployment. Similarly

the FGD with the trafficked children from Raya Kobo (n=12), Meket (n=10) and Woldia (n=11) indicated that economic reasons/poverty, and peer pressure (from trafficked and employed in towns); hearing about employment opportunities in towns, attraction by the better living conditions in town, community discrimination, and families interest to be benefited from children employment through trafficking were the other causes that make children trafficked to different places. The unlawful payments or the promised benefits to the rural living children’s may seduce or could make vulnerable to give their consent to be trafficked by brokers and leads to such exploitations (Wood, 2020) [1].

The other point the returnees noted as a cause of trafficking was their unwillingness to do some types of works associated with low social status when at their home, and looking for Better paid jobs for better economic benefits [11]. A study in Addis Ababa identified the community attitudes such as having a child abroad being considered a measure of status, and the reluctance to do certain types of works labeled low social status were the actors identified to acts of illegal migration (Gezie et al., 2021). The FGD participants also said that the community perceptions of having a child abroad (trafficked abroad) as measure of higher status in their community. One of the FGD participants said;

*“I saw returnees who have been dressed coming from the city to visit their families and I assumed that city life. I also heard from returnees (I do not know whether it is true or false) that they have good job, attend their school at night, and gained different skills that will help their future life. This attracts me to be trafficked voluntarily” (MK age 12, female).*

**Table 1. Background of Respondents for FGD and interviews**

No	Organizations	Sex			Age	Educational status
		M	F	T		
1	Police from 3 woredas and Zone	6	4	10	28 – 52	Diploma – MSC
2	Women’s and Child affairs	2	3	5	32 – 51	Diploma –BA
3	Moyana Technique	2	-	2	37 – 42	BA degree
4	Justice	3	1	4	38 – 53	BA degree
5	High court	2	2	4	39 – 48	BA degree
6	NGO Focal person	3	-	3	34 – 41	BA degree
7	Trafficked children families	13	4	17	23 – 70	Grade4-diploma
8	Religious Leaders/2 Muslims and 3 Orthodox	5	-	5	49 – 75	Spiritual education
9	Trafficked children	10	13	23	15-18	17 dropouts and 6 active/ on learning/
Total		46	27	73		



The causes of child trafficking identified in the study setting were similar to a research report from Este woreda and Debre tabor, South Gonda [20], and Shiromeda area of Addis Ababa [18].

### 6.3 Actors in Child Trafficking Process

Both the returnees and children's trafficked at Raya Kobo, Meket and Woldia described that the major actors in the trafficking process were brokers, brokers cheated family members, money loaning persons /usury lenders, grievance committee and relatives in cities. During the FGD one interesting point this study captured is that, the involvement of family member is nearly half of the child trafficking process as revealed by children's involved in FGD as do the data brief on child trafficking indicted (IOM, 2017).

*"My mother died when I am 3, and my father could not afford for school. If you do not learn or work with me, you better go and look for jobs in Arabs. I heard that Arabs need kids for watching their camels, my father said. He go town to look for trafficker and am here trafficked with my father and the broker", said a 14 year boy, MR.*

**Families** failed in the influence of all factors and actors that mentioned above and they have no power and need to oppose the enemy of their children "child trafficking"/ they are participants of this criminal activity by knowing or not and they faced all effects with their children directly or indirectly. The Other main agents of illegal trafficking as to FGD discussants are traffickers who make their living through trafficking children. They did have extended large networks starting from low-class society to high-class society. They used powerfully persuasive means of communication to break the hearts of children and their families to accept for granted faulty promises, the community especially in low land districts failed by trafficker influence. The third parties for child trafficking are found to be since they tend to profit from the illegal people movement, lorry, bus or taxi drivers those who agreed to accompany migrants on irregular crossings and bush guides are considered as smugglers. Government bodies that are complicit in illegal activities are part of this criminal activity by giving information to the illegal's, they help the illegal's travel by vehicle, they cooperate by no holding them responsible and distorting the judgment. They also share in the illegal profit. The armed forces of the Zone and neighboring zones, which participated in

the war in the north and were recently named as informal organizations after the war, have grievances with the government bodies and because of this grievance, the government body's dears to destroy them. Transferring/child trafficking/ has become an act that seems to be happening like allowed practice in kolama districts, especially in Raya kobo Woreda.

#### 6.3.1 Effects of trafficking on children

The trafficked children mainly experienced the physical, psychological and emotional forms of effects during their trafficking the effects classified based on the collected data from the victims and the effects were explained by trafficked children who participated in FGD and interview.

#### 6.3.2 Psychological effect of child trafficking

Child Trafficking have all Psychological Effects, Children who have started their journey from usual life and home to various fears ,threats, anxiety and embracement will face situation that is completely opposite to the false deception that the brokers have told them. The children who has been arrested and returned to their place of birth through various suggestions and sudden inspections participated in interview explained that,

*"when the illegal journey fails due to varies reason, the brokers who profit from this journey and our families who do not understand the multi faceted tragedy that we face are busy and worried about how We can go again and we want to also go again to far from their influence "*

Victims experience often leads to serious mental or emotional health consequences/feelings of severe guilt, hopelessness. Post traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, substance abuse/alcohol or narcotics/and eating disorders .Gilt shame, and /or self blame: Numbness Exhaustion and constant fatigue .self harm and suicidal ideation Isolating behavior. Trauma bonds and attachment issues, Stockholm syndrome (OVC TTAC). Trafficking in persons in many cases capitalizes on international migration flows. It has an enormous impact on its victim's multi directionally, which are causing them ill health, physical and psychological harm and trauma, obviously increasing their chances of contracting grave diseases such as HIV/AIDS (Drugs, Crime et al., 2009). Moreover children

are trafficked into a variety of exploitative situations including commercial sex, domestic service, armed conflict, service industries like bars and restaurants; or into hazardous forms of work in factories, mines, agriculture and fishing, construction; also begging [13]. The psychological trauma and physical complaints presented by victims include symptoms of anxiety and depression (Jemal, 2012). Trafficking children have in abusive conditions and with short and long-term consequences. Those abuses of power have consequences with short and long term. Victims are found to fall into debt bondage and to suffer from violence, threats, forced drug use and compromised physical and mental health (Gallagher, 2001)

### 6.3.3 Psycho-social effects of trafficking

The age, sex and educational status of trafficked children who had been participated at FGD were summarized as follows Some of the female trafficked children indicated that some of their friends have been exploited for commercial sex, but the brokers seduces us to work in bars, traditionally called coffee houses. The brokers and employers do not considers as humans.

Searching of critical problems of children was the point of concern of this study. Accordingly, respondents were asked to identify and prioritize the major problems or violation of rights in their locality that requires urgent intervention. Based on the frequency of the respondents and theming, the following effects were identified as the majors to the study area.

The humiliation even arises from immediate families. Significant number of participated Arab returnees revealed that; even their immediate family members have been discriminating and

hating them as they failed to make enough money. They pressurized to go again and again regardless of their personal plans, interests as well as wastage of their productive and reproductive age. This finding consistent with Like peer and family pressure, bad attitude surrounding home life, low performance and motivation in education and networking of traffickers locally has been found as the Contributing factor for trafficking (Anteneh, 2011).

### 6.3.4 Physical effects of child trafficking

Trafficked children from Raya Kobo, Meket and Woldia indicated that, they faced the physical effects like beating, strangulation, killing, travelling at safety risk conditions, hanging out and spending the night so that the sun and then the cold exposure to various diseases, forced labor ,hunger and thirst were the common physical effects of child trafficking .This finding is in line with the study on Modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT2022) as both studies identified single or repetitive beating around the head, Violent injury to limbs (including deliberate amputations as punishment for theft), and other Physical and psychological violence including stabbing, burning, beating, drowning, hanging and mock executions which may lead to severe damage, disability or death (Wood, 2020).

### 6.3.5 Sexual exploitation

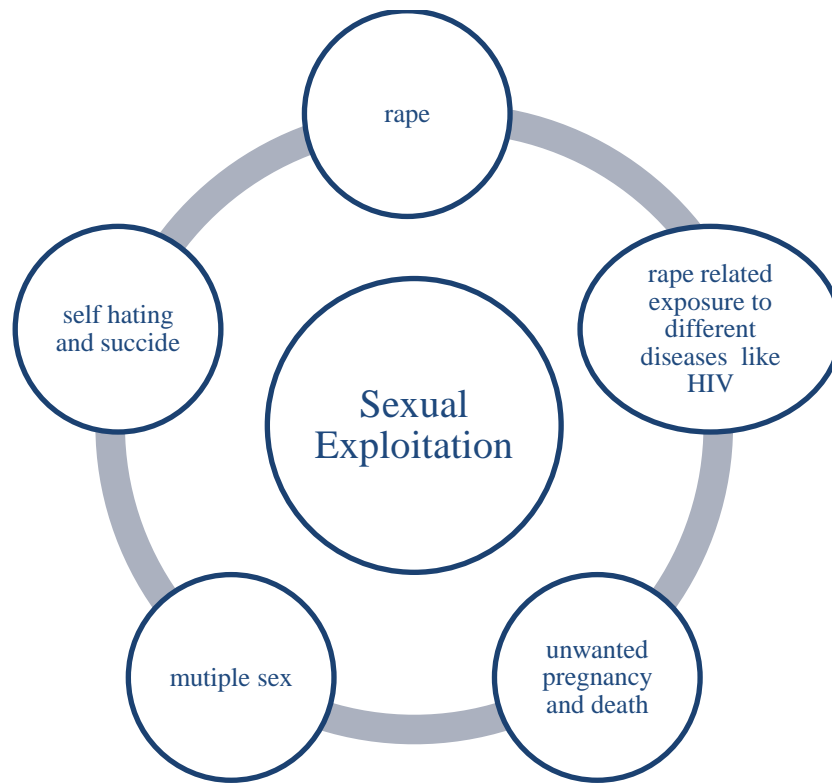
Some of those children who had history of recurrent trafficking presented that rape, exposure to various forms of sexual harassment, forced to have sex with more than one man especially those who have been working, and the street male children in Woldia city were also exposed to male to male sex/ Gibre Sedom/

**Table 2. Summary of sex, age and education status of trafficked children, North Wollo zone**

Sex		Age	Educational status	
Male	Female	15-18 years	Active	Dropouts
10	13	23	6	17

**Table 3. Major effects of trafficking to children**

Study area	Major effects of trafficking to children
North wollo (Raya Kobo, Meket and Woldia)	Embracement, and feeling something might happen in their lives feeling at risk because of brokers to their families and themselves not to speak what happens in their trafficking, fear and threats Children trafficked in early of their age feel responsible to work many years as to paying their traveling debts, and helping the families



**Fig. 1. Common sexual effects of child trafficking**

(this problem have occurred one street child at Woldia). This is due to the fact that kids were not in a position defending them. This forms of abuse or exploitations are the most horrific crime and extreme forms of child maltreatment, and major violations of children’s human rights (Rafferty, 2008).

One returnees from Arab revealed that:

*“i could not wear pants from the house where i worked; because the Arab i work with wants sex every time, and he doesn’t want to wait until I wear out my pant. I cannot defend or resist the situation, which hurts me a lot. He would have sex with me whenever he wanted and I have been suffering for a long time”.*

She also revealed that one of her friend has been doing such messy works in Saudi.

Overall, trafficked children have been exposed to different exploitations which end with different life impacts. Being the victims of child trafficking could cause for the types of physical and psychological abuse often lead to serious mental or emotional health consequences,

including feelings of severe guilt, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, substance abuse (alcohol or narcotics), and eating disorders (Fletcher, 2015; Wood, 2020).

#### **6.4 Trend of Child Trafficking**

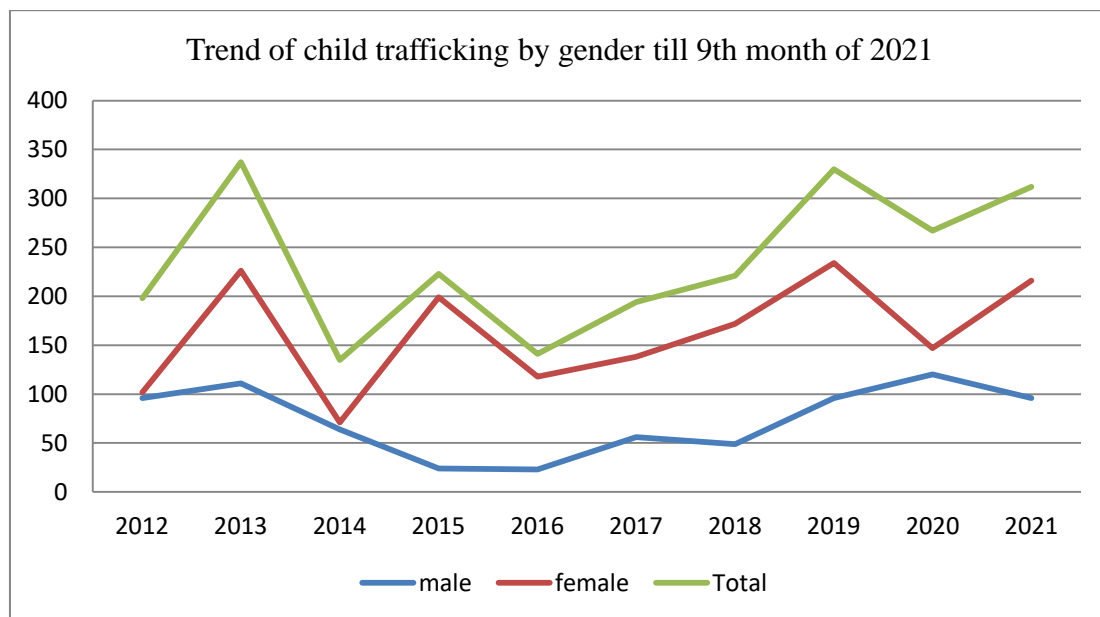
In the past ten years from 2012 to the ninth month of 2021 North Wollo Zone annual report, a total 735 males and 1623 females children were trafficked in North Wollo zone, Northeast Ethiopia. This figure only indicates, those trafficked children who has been arrested and returned to their place of birth through various suggestions and sudden inspections (Fig. 2) or Table 4. It is possible to imagine that the number of children who have been exposed to various harms including death by illegal passage to different cities and Arab countries is many times higher; because of the trafficked cases not caught by the sudden inspections and the impossible to avoid events./ The number of returns confirm this/ This increasing trend indicates that child/human trafficking remained as one of the world’s fastest growing criminal enterprises (Child10.org, 2022).

Regarding the gender distribution of trafficked victims, this finding is in line with the 2012 global

**Table 4. From 2012 - 2021 children who are found trafficking process by different controlling systems follows herein**

No	Year	Age range of trafficked children by sex						Sub-Total		Grand total
		< 9yrs		9 -15 yrs		16-18yrs		M	F	
		M	F	M	F	M	F			
1	2012			21	20	75	82	96	102	198
2	2013			56	57	55	169	111	226	337
3	2014			50	11	14	60	64	71	135
4	2015			14	10	10	189	24	199	223
5	2016			10	9	13	109	23	118	141
6	2017			12	16	44	122	56	138	194
7	2018			46	38	3	134	49	172	221
8	2019	5	18	63	64	28	152	96	234	330
9	2020		4	33	24	87	119	120	147	267
10	2021			29	19	67	197	96	216	312
	Total	5	22	334	268	396	1333	735	1623	2358

*N.B The source of this document reviewed data is North Wollo Zone Police 10 years annual report*



**Fig. 2. Trend of child trafficking by gender, nearly a 10 year analysis; North Wollo zone, 2022**

report on trafficking of persons, which depicts that three fourth of trafficking was made on women and girls [14] two third of them were girls.

the world particularly in developing countries as the study in Nigeria previously affirmed (Salihu & Chutiyami, 2016).

This study also investigated for the age at trafficking of children displayed that children age 16 to 18 were increasingly trafficked, which could be an indicator of matured worker demand and the high labor exploitations in the study area in past ten years (Fig. 3). According the simple trend graph; as the age of trafficked children increased the number of being tracked also increased since 2018. The finding in the current study indicated that the modern slavery remained a serious public health concern in many parts of

The ten years annual reports of North wollo Zone police (2012-2021) designated that the number of child trafficking increased over time; as the annual reports (2017-2022) prepared by Forum for Sustainable child empowerment (FSCE), which works in Adama, Dessie, Bahir Dar, Dire dawa, Akaki Kality and Addis Ababa gives some picture of the trend of trafficking within the past six years as the study from Adama indicated [10]. Terre Des Homes Stop Child Exploitation (2017).

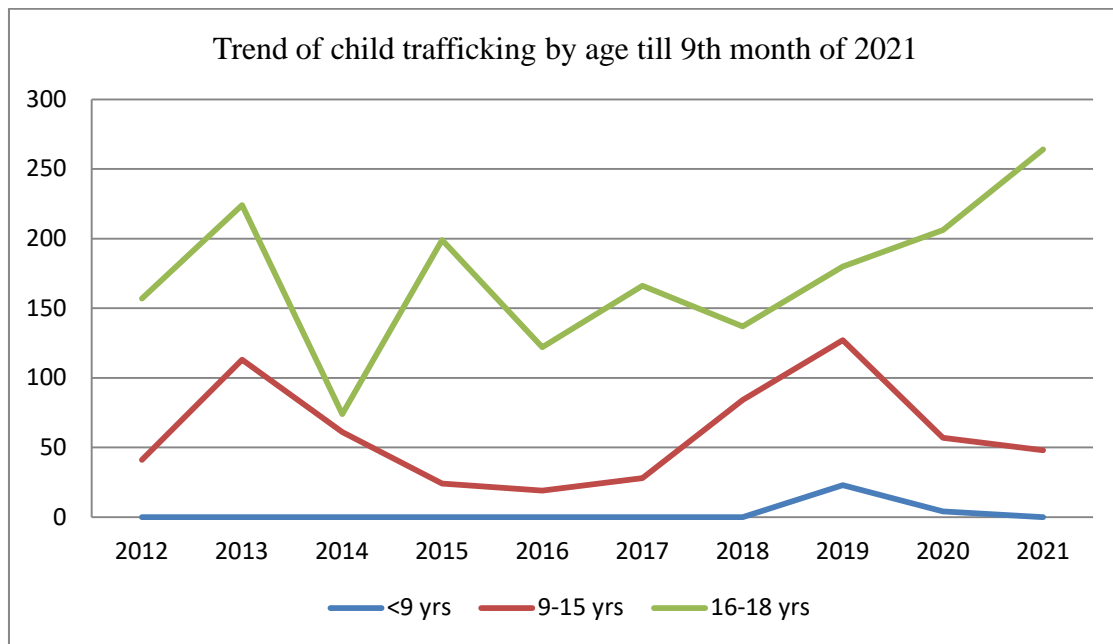


Fig. 3. Trend of child trafficked by age category till 9<sup>th</sup> month of 2021 North Wollo zone, 2022

## 7. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 7.1 Summary

The extent of child trafficking from the total result child trafficking in the study area is increased continuously. Child trafficking is a problem in most districts in the zone, especially in the lowland districts. Due to the illegal trafficking of children, it is common to find frail elderly people in their homes with children who born from their children and grand children under the age of 18. The children who hold by frail elderly people wish for the death of their grandparents, because they think that, if their grandparents died their parents who leave abroad will come to hold them. Children got vulnerable to be trafficked because of the low economic status of the society, peer pressure, hearing about employment opportunities in towns, attraction by the better living conditions in town, community discrimination, and families interest to be benefited from children employment through trafficking. It is extremely challenging to find out the extent and prevalence of this problem, because currently no preventive and controlling activities by the concerned bodies because of political and economical instabilities and other issues, but these issues are major factor children to be trafficked. Both the returnees and children's trafficked from Raya Kobo, Meket and Woldia and the informants who participated in FGD

described that the major actors in the trafficking process were brokers; brokers cheated family members, money loaning persons /usury lenders/, grievance committee and relatives in cities. During the FGD one interesting point this study captured is that, the involvement of family member is nearly half of the child trafficking process. The preventive or controlling action is difficult, because the actor's /participants/ do this criminal activity organizedly. Child trafficking have all effects the effects include physical, psycho-social, emotional and sexual exploitations. This study also investigated for the age at trafficking of children displayed that children age 16 to 18 were increasingly trafficked, regarding the gender distribution most of the victims were girls. Child trafficking destroys children's future and their lives, damages their bodies, with long-term psychological and physiological effects so the concerned bodies use efficient and coordinated efforts to combat against this criminal activity.

### 7.2 Conclusion

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusion could be drawn.

1. The major factors for child trafficking is socio- economic status of the society, peer pressure, hearing about employment opportunities in towns, attraction by the better living conditions in town, community

discrimination, and families interest to be benefited from children employment through trafficking, political and economic instabilities. The community of this Zone passed through terrible events and currently the life of the community is full of tragedy, the reason why child trafficking seems like easy.

2. The actors involved in the child trafficking process were the brokers; brokers cheated family members, money loaning persons /usury lenders, grievance committee and relatives in cities and governmental bodies that are complicit in illegal activities.
3. The effects of child trafficking include physical, psycho-social, emotional and sexual exploitations. Child trafficking is the exploitation of vulnerable segments or a Sevier abuse of human rights.
4. Trend of child trafficking is continuously increasing. Especially the an solved political and economical instabilities, increased children to be trafficked. Based on the truth on the ground and the study assessment, we can conclude that child trafficking plays a pivotal role in deteriorating the overall development of the children in different forms of life impacts. Therefore, in order to protect children from this tragic criminal activity; comprehensive, unique, continues activities and actions are required.

### 7.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations are forwarded to the concerned bodies so as to minimize or solve the effects of child trafficking on the children, their family and the society at large

- Children got vulnerable to trafficking because of economic survival and related questions and therefore, it will be wise if the Regional and Zone, and concerned NGOs create projects which could alleviate such a crucial challenge and .work in coordination and should facilitate supportive actions for victims and victims' families
- The concerned bodies should exercise entrepreneur ideas and practices using budget for the vulnerable segments , to empower them economically and the children could save from this criminal activity

- , Child trafficking is not a problem which is caused by specific, direct or single factor. Therefore, the Regional as well as local government should start the controlling and preventive activities of child trafficking and should clean the governing system, such as should listen the people's heart bit and control corruption, make sure the responsible officials are doing their job effectively and properly, because there are participants from governmental bodies
- consecutive awareness creation trainings should be offered to the society at large by the combined efforts of concerned bodies, religious and community leaders from Kebele (Amharic word) up to Zone for the community to minimize the attitudinal problem Exercise (practice) community policing /or the attitudinal problem can be solved with this community policing activity
- .The legal institutions should provide impartial and appropriate decision against all the illegal brokers and any people and organizations that help the trafficking process, and better provide exemplary and corrective evidences
- The government should provide the system for consultation of teenagers when they have problems with families and schooling problem so that they could get help easily..People also should support the government on anti-child trafficking activities
- Ensure the continuation of the Community Care Collation association/CCC/, and provide education about the purpose, and activities the CCC accomplishes.
- .There is great implementation gap/ in the present Laws so the issue needs focus and should be declared additional supportive laws.

### CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

Prior to the data collection, an ethical statement was obtained from Woldia University, department of Psychology. The respondents were also been informed as they can stop responding or escape a question whenever they do not feel comfortable to respond. The information collected from the interviewees was based on their full consent. It was also be confidential and used only for this research purpose. In this research, the real or false names of participants were not being mentioned. The pictures of the participants (interviewees) were not used in the research without their or their representatives' consent.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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