

**GENDER DIMENSION ON HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY AND COPING
STRATEGIES IN ETHIOPIA SOMALI REGIONAL STATE**

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Semere Beyene

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SEMERE BEYENE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAADP	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
CSI	Coping Strategies Index
DPPB	Disaster Prevention Preparedness Bureau
DPPC	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission
EGS	Employment Generation Schemes
FAD	Food Availability Decline
FAO	Food Agriculture Organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FED	Food Entitlement Decline
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHH	Female Headed Household
FSP	Food Security Program
GDP	Growth Domestic Production
HABP	House Hold Asset Building Program
ICESCR	International Convenient on Economic Social And Cultural Rights
IDIR	Socio Traditional Supportive Association
KM	Kilometer
LCRDB	Livestock, Crop and Rural Development Bureau
MHH	Men Headed House Hold
MM	Mille Meter
MOARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
PPS	Probability Proportional TO size
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
SCUK	Save Children United Kingdom
SSA	Sub Sahara Africa
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	United Nation Development Program

USAID United States Agency for International Development
WFP World Food Program

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ABSTRACT

Ethiopia's Somali Region is vulnerable to food insecurity that happens quite often. The objective of this report was to review the gender dimension of food insecurity and coping strategies in Somali regional State. The paper was mainly prepared by reviewing literature in related with the study topic. Somali region is one of the major food insecure areas whereby many people (65%) are feeding themselves based on the aid obtained from vario organizations. The main causes of food insecurity are high population growth rate, change on climate, inefficient agricultural extension delivery services and low and erratic rainfall. Evidences showed that households use different means to cope food crisis. They sale their assets, look for part time work, turn to their social network, venture into income generating activities, engage in food for work activities and others get food relief from NGOs and the government. Other coping mechanisms include reducing number and size of meals, and borrowing of cash and/or food from better-off neighbors and/or relatives. Though there are common food insecurity coping strategies applied by men and women, there are specific activities performed by men and women to cope up with food insecurity. from these Labor migration, movement of livestock, change of composition of diet are some of the major food insecurity coping strategies done by women's. Women migrate and search for work, carry household goods during livestock movement and they are more responsible in aspects related to change of diet of the household. It is recommended that training and providing support for the communities to practice crop production activities to supplement livestock production, developing rural infrastructures and provision of agricultural services timely, gender equality and its implementation and fight against climate change are some of the activities to prevent /fight food insecurity. Most importantly, food and nutrition insecurity is a gender justice issue. Low status and lack of access to resources mean that women and girls are the most disadvantaged by the inequitable global economic processes that govern food systems and by global trends such as climate change. Evidence shows strong correlations between gender inequality and food and nutrition insecurity. Thousands of women and girls still lack food and nutrition security as a direct result of their lower status compared with men and boys. Such inequalities are compounded by women and girls' often limited access to productive resources, education and decision-making, by the 'normalised' burden of unpaid work – including care work – and by the endemic problems of gender-based violence.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Ethiopia is one of the most food-insecure and famine affected countries. A large portion of the country's population has been affected by chronic and transitory food insecurity [African Development Bank (2014),]. The situation of chronically food insecure people is becoming more and more severe. Food security situation in Ethiopia is highly linked to recurring food shortage and famine in the country, which are associated to recurrent drought. According to (FAO _ (2010) "The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2010: Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises" more than 41 percent of the Ethiopian population lives below the poverty line and above 31 million people are undernourished. By using the threshold of 2,550 kilocalories (Kcal) per adult equivalent per day, 40 percent of Ethiopian households for whom their majority reside in rural parts of the country were food insecure and undernourished. Food insecurity is an enduring, critical challenge in Ethiopia which is Africa's second populous country after Nigeria. Over 80 percent of Ethiopian population live in rural areas and are heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture; this makes them extremely vulnerable to changes in weather conditions [WFP and CSA (2014),]. The current El Niño drought conditions led to a sharp deterioration in food security; the estimated number of food insecure people was 4.5 million due to this vulnerable shock in August, 2015 [FAO (2015),“], and by the end of the same year this figure had more than doubled. According to a Government-led multi agency assessment, 10.2 million Ethiopians are considered to be food insecure in 2015/16. With 80 percent of its population dependent on rain-fed agriculture, Ethiopia is particularly vulnerable to weather related shocks. Rain varies greatly by region and is particularly unpredictable [World Bank (2010),] Although the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts only a modest change in Ethiopia's rainfall patterns in future [Christensen, J. H., B. Hewitson, Sarr, and P. Whetton. (2007)] and [Oxfam International (2010),] findings argue that this can still adversely affect very poor small farmers – especially if such decreases are concentrated in the growing season.

In the history of Ethiopian, drought-initiated production failures occurred in the 1984/85, and 1989/90s. According to [Relief & Rehabilitation Commission (1985)] the 1984/85 drought is the most serious one by affecting over eight million people and causing the death of one million Ethiopian's. Three years of successive poor rains in pastoral areas of the country was led to 100,000 deaths in 1999-2000; crisis years were also experienced in different parts of the country in 2003, 2008, 2011 and 2013[17]. In this direction, [Catley *et al.* (2016),] reported that the 2015 El Niño drought is one of the strongest droughts that have been recorded in Ethiopian history where more than 27 million people became food insecure and total population of 18.1 million people require food assistance in 2016. Furthermore, there is evidence that climate is

already changing leading to serious drought. The drought pattern has been 10 years in case for Ethiopia, but at present time the cycle period is becoming shorter and shorter which leads to serious food security problems in every three years. Households with insufficient access to food often face other challenges related to food insecurity including poor health and a decline in productivity. These challenges can often create a *vicious circle* where households are unable to produce enough food, even in good years, because they are battling chronic health issues and are unable to work to their full potential. The gravity of food insecurity, and its many rippling effects, has led much of the development agenda to search for specific areas for intervention given limited resources and growing populations in many developing countries [IFPRI (2009),]. On 5 March 2015, the Government of Ethiopia released the 2015 Humanitarian Requirement Document (HRD). The document identifies humanitarian food and non-food requirements for vulnerable groups in the country following on the multi- spectral ground assessment conducted at the end of 2014 [UNICEF (2015),]. According to HRD an estimated 2.9 million people require relief food assistance in 2015, an increase from 2.7 million for the same period in 2014. All of the above data indicate that food security situation in Ethiopia has been a long-standing challenge to the government, donors, and other international organizations.

In Ethiopia, the dimensions, determinants and consequences of food security problems differ widely within the country. The Somali region of Ethiopia is one of the regions of the country which is mostly affected by recurrent drought and food security problems (USAID, 2011). Food insecurity in rural areas of Somali region is subject to numerous shocks and stresses, including recurrent droughts. Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists face higher risk than the urban households.

The Somali region is characterized as highly food insecure or one of the least self-sufficient regions of the country. Similarly, food demand situation analysis report indicated that the total average annual production in the area being insufficient on the base of 2200 kcal minimum recommended nutritional requirement. Large numbers of people of the area are food insecure for a number of months in a year (DPPA, 2012). Though food insecurity affects both men and women, due to their subordinate position in the pastoral societies women are more vulnerable to it. Various social, economic, political and environmental limitations influence the gender dimension of food insecurity security in pastoral areas. Many programmed fail to recognize the

diversity of women's lived experiences. Women are often targeted as a group for the needs or vulnerabilities as mothers, or as farmers... However, a holistic approach is rarely used to understand and address the many forms of discrimination and inequality that affect them in relation to food security. (Lauren Ravon, BRIDGE e-discussion, 2014) Hunger, malnutrition and poverty are intrinsically human phenomena, yet they are too often discussed in abstract, de-contextualized ways that are far removed from people's own experiences and fail to adequately understand how they engage in food systems. In particular, food security and nutrition programmes often fail to examine the different contributions made by women and men within these systems, and the specific constraints they face. There is also a failure to link experiences of food insecurity and malnutrition on the ground with the gendered inequalities that often lie at the heart of food systems at global, regional, national, local and household level.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Millions of dollars have been dispersed by governments, donors, international aid agencies, and multi-lateral development bodies in the developing countries including Ethiopia to address the problem of food insecurity and hunger. Despite the many programs and projects on food security, there are still millions of food insecure people around the world with many of them living in developing countries particularly in Africa (FAO, 2013) Food insecurity, inequality and poverty are the most recurring and persistent problems facing human beings. As the scale of human activities expand, the capacity of eco-systems to regenerate the natural resource base becomes an increasingly binding constraint to further growth and development.

The Somali Region is categorized as a chronically food deficit region of Ethiopia (DPPA, 2012). It is an area where the people do not survive without food aid. Although a substantial food aid is distributed annually and some commercial food distribution is also made during severe drought years, the food balance sheet constructed for the area showed that there was a huge annual deficit during all the years. Different development projects were implemented in Somali Regional

State (SRS). These projects aimed to improve the rural household's livelihood through provision of credit and services. Regardless of all these efforts, most rural households of the region were facing food shortage months after the harvest time. They become vulnerable to food insecurity not only because they do not produce enough, but also either they hold little land for production or they usually come across with inadequate rainfall and drought and few other possible sources of income to obtain adequate food to meet their daily subsistence food energy requirements (DPPC, 2005). The food insecurity situation and coping strategies of the region various based on the sex of household heads. Therefore, this review is based on literature in regard to gender dimensions of food insecurity and coping strategies. Women comprise the majority of the poor. They constitute the majority of unpaid productive workers, through their labor on family farms and other activities. For many women any paid work they do is often in the informal sector, such as street vending or home-based factory outsourced labor, with very low wages and no safety nets such as sick pay. Women typically earn less than men in formal sector jobs and are poorly represented at the managerial level (UN DESA 2010). Additionally, women often have the least productive, financial and strategic resources to cope with or escape from the effects of food insecurity.

1.3. Objectives

The objective of this report was to review gender dimension of household food insecurity and coping strategies in Somali regional State.

1.4. Significance of the Review

When the findings of different scholars and concerned stakeholders are put in an organized manner, it could be useful to document the existing realities. Policy makers and development partners could get organized set of evidences about the gender dimension of food insecurity, its causes, and coping strategies. This helps to easily identify the gaps so far and give recommendations so that food insecurity problems could be reduced. Furthermore, the study could also be used as a reference for further studies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this part, definitions of basic concepts and issues related to food security situations in Ethiopia, theories of famine or food shortage factors, causes and consequences of food insecurity will be presented.

2.1. Basic Concepts and Definitions

2.1.1. Definition of terms

Belg/Dayer refers to small rain season from March to April

Dabo/Gusse is a term that refers to work in group and on occasion

2.1.2. Food security

The term food security originated in international development literatures in the 1960s and 1970s. Public interest in global and domestic food security grew rapidly following the world oil

crisis and related food crisis of 1972-74 and the African famine of 1984-85. Over time a large number of different definitions have been proposed. There are approximately 200 definitions and 450 indicators of food security (Hoddinott, 1999).

Maxwell and Frankenbergers (1992) report lists 194 different studies on the concept and definition of food security and 172 studies on indicators. World Food Summit in 1974 defined food security as: availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic food stuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices. Later, World Bank (1986) defined food security as- access by all people at all times to sufficient food for an active and healthy life. The USAID (1992) defined food security as a situation achieved when all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. In contrast, food insecurity is the lack of access to sufficient food that leads to poor health, reduced energy and other physical and physiological deterioration *i.e.*, failure of livelihoods to guarantee access and entitlement to sufficient food at the household and individual levels.

FAO (2001) on its part defines food security as a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'. Food, here, is defined as any substance that people eat and drink to maintain life and growth. As a result, safe and clean water is an essential part of food commodities. Food security is defined, in its most basic form, as access by all people at all times to the food required for a healthy life. Access to the needed food is necessary, but not a sufficient condition for a healthy life. A number of other factors, such as the health and sanitation environment and household and public capacity to care for vulnerable members of society, also come in to play Von Broun *et al.* (1992). Food security has three major components: availability, access and utilization (Haddad, 1997; Kifle and Yoseph, 1999). They are presented as follows:

Food availability: The availability of sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or imports (including food aid).

Food access: Access by individuals to adequate resources (entitlements) for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. Entitlements are defined as the set of all commodity bundles over which a person can establish command given the legal, political, economic and social arrangements of the community in which they live (including traditional rights such as access to common resources).

Utilization: Utilization of food through adequate diet, clean water, sanitation and health care to reach a state of nutritional well-being where all physiological needs are met. This brings out the importance of non-food inputs in food security.

Women and girls worldwide face many inequities and constraints, often embedded in norms and practices and encoded in legal provisions. Some laws, such as those governing access to land, include inequitable and exclusionary provisions, thus institutionalizing discrimination. Where such legislative measures are not in place, customary rules and practices often have restrictive consequences for women limiting their access to key resources such as land and credit, and affecting household food security and nutrition. Not only are women and girls affected directly, but members of their households and communities are also affected inter- and intra-house hold member generationally. Women and girls are affected through two main channels. One is the limits on their access to education and employment opportunities, which curtails their economic autonomy and weakens their bargaining position within the family. Their weakened bargaining position translates into little or no voice in household decisions, differential feeding and care giving practices favoring boys and men, food and nutrition insecurity, and lower health and nutrition outcomes. Second, the discrimination they face not only exposes women to material deprivation, it also makes more difficult for them to fulfill their vital roles in food production, preparation, processing, it is inexpensive, and it can be highly effective. The cost to society of not acting urgently and more decisively will be considerable.

According to FAO (2000), food insecurity is a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. It may be chronic, seasonal or transitory. At times when an individual

household or community is unable to avail and access food for the above mentioned reasons then the situation could be described as a state of food insecurity.

Food insecurity is also an underlying cause of malnutrition and in extreme cases results in mortality. A high degree of food insecurity when compounded with other undesirable factors can threaten livelihoods. High risks of food insecurity and livelihoods can be expressed in terms of malnutrition, morbidity, and in extreme cases mortality (Beruk, 2003). Chronic 'and transitory' refer to temporal dimensions of food insecurity, where the former is long-term or persistent, while the latter is short-term and temporary. Some common definitions of chronic food insecurity include: the inability of a household or an individual to meet the minimum daily food requirements for a long period of time' (IFAD, 1997); persistent inability on the part of the household to provide itself adequately with food' (FAO, 2005) and when households are unable in normal times to meet food needs because they lack sufficient income, land or productive assets, or experience high dependency ratios, chronic sickness or social barriers' (WFP,2004).

Transitory food insecurity, on the other hand, is usually defined as: a sudden (and often precipitous) drop in the ability to purchase or grow enough food to meet physiological requirements for good health and activity' (Barrett *et al.*, 2001), the sudden reduction of a household's access to food to below the nutritionally adequate level' (IFAD, 1997); and When there is a temporary inability to meet food needs, usually associated with a specific shock or stress such as drought, floods or civil unrests' (DFID, 2002). Evidenced by these definitions, chronic food insecurity tends to be associated with structural deficiencies or vulnerability, while transitory food insecurity is generally a result of temporary shocks and fluctuations, but there are obvious linkages between the two.

Transitory food insecurity can be further divided into cyclical and temporary food insecurity (CIDA, 1989, cited in Maxwell and Frankenberger, 1992). Temporary food insecurity occurs for a limited time because of unforeseen and unpredictable circumstances; cyclical or seasonal food insecurity when there is a regular pattern in the periodicity of inadequate access to food. This may be due to logistical difficulties or prohibitive costs in storing food or borrowing instability in food prices, production, household income or combination of these factors. But, the main triggers of transitory food insecurity in Ethiopia are drought and war (Devereux, 2010). Moreover, the cyclical type of food insecurity is caused by seasonality (Osmani, 2001; FAO,

2006). Since cyclical food insecurity generally follows a sequence of known events, it can be more easily predicted than transitory food insecurity. Hence, it can be categorized as a form of 'recurrent transitory' food insecurity (Maxwell *et al.*, 2008).

In general, a household can be said to be food secure only if it has protection against all kinds of insecurity. The average access to food over the long term should be nutritionally adequate, and a household should be able to cope with short-term changes without sacrificing the nutritional needs of any of its members. Finally the concept and definition of food security were developed and clearly explained based on food insecurity situations in developing countries.

The government of Ethiopia released the 2015 humanitarian requirement (HRD).the document identifies humanitarian food and non- food requirements for vulnerable groups in the country following on the multi-spectral ground assessment conducted at the end of 2014(UNICEF(2015) According to HRD an estimated 2,9 million people require relief food assistance in 2015, an increase from 2.7 million for the same period in 2014.all of the above data indicate that food security situation in Ethiopia has been a long-standing challeng to the government, donors and other international organizations,

Many program fail to recognized the diversity of women's lived experiences. Women's are often as group for the need or vulnerabilities as mother or farmers... however a holistic approach rarely used to understand the many discrimination inequalities that affects them in related to food security (LUARENT RARON BRIDGE e-discussion (2014) HUNGER.

Malnutrition and poverty are intrinsically human phenomena, yet they are too often discussed in abstract, de-contextualized ways that are far removed form peopl's own experiences and fail to adequately understand how they engage in food systems. In particular, food security ad nutrition programs often fail to examine the different contributions made by women and men within these systems, and the specific constraints they face. There is also a failure to link experiences of food insecurity and malnutrition on the ground with the gendered inequalities that often lie at the heart of food systems at global, regional, national, local and household level.

2.2. Food insecurity Situations in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is endowed with diverse agro-ecological zones and favorable climate for the growing of a variety of crops and rearing of animals. These endowments contributed to be surplus producer in pre 1960s and it was a period of self-sufficiency in staple food crops in the history of Ethiopia (Aberra, 2002). Food insecurity in pastoralist areas can be viewed in terms of chronic and transitory food insecurity. Those vulnerable to chronic hunger are households that are either subjected to frequent or severe and regular food insecurity or households that have low resilience or both. In Contrast, households that suffer transitory food insecurity or hunger do so over a shorter but intense period, such as the life-threatening periods of drought (CAADP, 2009). In The same author also indicated that during the 1960s, annual export had reached on the average 150, 000 tons of grain per year. However, due to natural such as land degradation, human (population pressure) and institutional factors (weak policies and strategies), the agricultural sector failed to meet the food demand of the ever-growing population making food insecurity chronic and pervasive (Strintzos and Mulugeta, 2009) throughout the history of Ethiopia. Consequently, from the 1960s onwards cereal production had decreased on average 4 kg per person per year (Aberra, 2002). As indicated, the causes of the downward flight of the agricultural production are explained by physical, human, socio-economic and institutional factors (MoARD, 2009; Workneh, 2008). Alemu *et al.* (2005) for example, reported that availability could be constrained by inappropriate agricultural technologies, unpredictable rainfall and unsound government policies and strategies. Accessibility to food and its utilization on the other hand, can be constrained by lack of economic growth, too little training, lack of job opportunities, poor infrastructure, inadequate knowledge as well as poor governance (Alemu *et al.*, 2005).

Inability to acquire sufficient food, lack of reasonable income and productive assets, insufficient access to health and education services as well as poor governance at grass root levels are common indicators of poverty and chronic food insecurity in Ethiopia (Devereux, 2006; von Braun *et al.*, 1992). In particular, diminishing farmland and lack of land tenure security are singled out as serious structural constraints challenging the improvement of land management practices and hence food security (Devereux, 2006). In Ethiopia, all these indicators are prevalent and hence chronic and transitory food insecurity are the symptoms of poverty and food

insecurity in the country (von Braun *et al.*, 1992). Food insecurity may be because of unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power or inappropriate distribution or inadequate use of food at the household level. It severely affects vulnerable groups such as newly established landless households, pastoralists, female-headed households, children and the elderly people because of their poor coping strategies (Abi, 2001; Saad, 1999). According to von Braun *et al.* (1992), those who are the hardest hit by transitory food insecurity are the poorest segment of the population and the pastoralists.

Many written documents (Bogale and Shimles, 2009; Sewmehon, 2012) revealed that Ethiopia has been stricken by the continuous occurrences of drought, famine and hunger, which are the root causes of chronic and transitory food insecurity. These situations initiated the successive governments of Ethiopia to formulate rural development policies, strategies and programs. At present, the population of Ethiopia has reached more than 90 million (Svedberg, 2013) and about 12 million people are chronically or periodically food insecure (Sewmehon, 2012). Hence, ensuring household food security needs pragmatic rural policies, strategies and programs (Bogale and Shimles, 2009). Perceiving the situations, at the beginning of 2010, MoARD launched the 2010-2014 Food Security Program (FSP) with the objectives of improving food security at household level, putting them on a trajectory of asset stabilization and accumulation (FAO and WFP, 2012). The program has four pillars: i) the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) ii) the Household Asset Building Program (HABP) iii) the Complementary Community-based Infrastructure Program (CCI) and iv) the Voluntary Resettlement Program (VRP). Donor financing is allocated to PSNP and HABP capacity building activities, while Government financing to the FSP is allocated to HABP, CCI and VRP (Burns and Bogale, 2011; FAO and WFP, 2012). Launched in January 2005, the PSNP currently targets about 8 million chronically food insecure rural households. This program is expected to reach 8.3 million households in 320 districts by 2015 in eight regions including Somali region (FAO and WFP, 2012). The objectives of productive safety nets program include the reduction of household vulnerability, the improvement of household and community resilience to shocks and breaking the cycle of dependence on food aid. The key goal is to enable chronically food insecure household to acquire sufficient assets and income in order to graduate to become food secure (Gilligan *et al.*, 2008; FAO and WFP, 2012).

According to (FAO _ (2010), more than 41 percent of the Ethiopian population lives below the poverty line and above 31 million people are undernourished. In addition, an estimated 7.6 million (11% of the rural population) were considered chronically food insecure and they were relying on resource transfers to meet their minimal food requirements. However, both the number of undernourished people and the prevalence of undernourishment have declined steadily since 1990 (FAO/WFP, 2010). Another study by FAO/WFP (2012) indicated that over the past four years between 2.2 and 6.4 million additional people were food-insecure or not able to meet their food needs in the short term due to transitional factors. They were temporarily dependent on relief food assistance.

Despite significant progress in reducing undernourishment by 28 per cent in the period 1990-2005, Ethiopia is considered a least developed country and is ranked 174 out of 187 on the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2011). On the other hand, the study by Bossuyt (2014) indicated that Ethiopia has also made significant progress in reducing hunger, with a 39.24% reduction in the Global Hunger Index from 1990 to 2013. The percentage of the population below a minimum level of dietary energy consumption dropped dramatically from 74.8% in 1990 to 32% in 2015, although the total undernourished population remains high (31.6 million, down from 37.3 million in 1990). Over the same period, Ethiopia saw promising improvements in children's nutrition, with rates of under nutrition among children under five decreasing by approximately 26%. Life expectancy has increased from 52 years in 2000 to 64 years in 2013 (Buttha *et al.*, 2013).

Coping strategy could be defined as a mechanism by which households or community members meet their relief and recovery needs, and adjust to future disaster-related risks by themselves without outside support (Dagneu, 1993; as cited in Tesfaye, 2005).

In any stage of food insecurity (initial or severe), agro-pastoral households practice different coping strategies but with low frequency. The less frequently practiced coping strategies were: becoming temporary traders, by making mortar from trees and selling in main towns inside the country or outside as well, by working as daily labor in nearby towns or areas, by participating in the food for work program and by eating wild foods were found (Gulled,2006).

Coping mechanism used by agro-pastoral households in Ethiopia include; livestock sales, agriculture employment, certain type of off-farm employment and migration to other area, requesting grain loans, sales of wood or charcoal, small scale trading, selling dung and crop residues, rising of food consumption of wild plants, reliance on relief assistance, relying on remittances from relatives, selling of clothes, and dismantling of parts of their houses for sale (Yared, 2001). Inability to cope, or vulnerability, is conventionally related to assets, particularly physical assets such as land, labour and capital (Elizabeth, 2004).

Another study by Eshetu (2000) further revealed that the most common coping practice that are sequentially used during food crisis consisted of reducing number and size of meals, sale of small ruminants and draft oxen, consuming wild food, and borrowing of cash and/or food from better-off neighbors and/or relatives. Another less frequently used strategies were: postponing wedding and other ceremonies, sale of fire wood, with drawing children from school and eating toxic taboo foods.

Most importantly, food and nutrition insecurity is a gender justice issue. Low status and lack of access to resources mean that women and girls are the most disadvantaged by the inequitable global economic processes that govern food systems and by global trends such as climate change. Evidence shows strong correlations between gender inequality and food and nutrition insecurity – for example, despite rapid economic growth in India, thousands of women and girls still lack food and nutrition security as a direct result of their lower status compared with men and boys. Such inequalities are compounded by women and girls’ often limited access to productive resources, education and decision-making, by the ‘normalized’ burden of unpaid work – including care work – and by the endemic problems of gender-based violence (GBV),

At the same time, women literally ‘feed the world’. Despite often limited access to either local or global markets they constitute the majority of food producers in the world and usually manage their families’ nutritional needs. They achieve this despite entrenched gendered inequalities and increasing volatility of food prices. Yet their own food security and nutrition needs – and often those of their daughters – are being neglected at the household level, where discriminatory social and cultural norms prevail.

2.3. Theories of Famine or Food Shortage Factors

Internal factors focus on explanations of famine that are within the confines of Ethiopian. This section will not only analyze explanations of famine from different perspectives but it will also

consider some famine prevention approaches, from food availability decline to food entitlements, then to food rights, and finally ending with the role of politics. These internal factors are important in understanding both the nature of famine itself and of famine prevention policies.

There is a circular relationship between conflict and food instability. Food insecurity itself can motivate rebellions, riots and civil war, particularly when shortages are acute and food is unevenly distributed due to internal inequalities or corruption. For example, in Mali during the 1990s the minority Tuareg group staged an uprising against the government in protest over their mismanagement of international food aid in the wake of a prolonged drought (Hendrix and Brinkman 2013). Conflict is also a major contributing *cause* of food instability and, therefore, food insecurity. Children born in a fragile or conflict-affected State are twice as likely to be malnourished (World Bank 2011: 63).

2.3.1. Food availability decline

Traditionally, famine has been perceived as an act of God or nature. Leaving the first possibility aside, the explanation that famine is nature's fault merits some attention. There are two variations of this approach, also known as the Food Availability Decline (FAD) approach (Sen, 1981). The first, takes natural disasters like drought and flood as the major determinants. Such natural disasters are said to reduce food production for a particular period and in the case of Ethiopia, there is no doubt that droughts have created severe food shortages. According to the World Bank (2006), the whole Ethiopian economy is dependent on rainfall and data on rainfall variation and GDP growth from 1982 to 2000 illustrate that there is a positive correlation between the two. Thus, drought has obvious negative impacts on food production and even on the economic performance of the country.

The second version of the FAD approach focuses on population growth. Malthus(1993) was one of the most influential proponents of this idea, which purports that there is a limit to the carrying capacity of the earth at large. In his work, which dates back to1798, Malthus entertained the notion that population growth has to balance with food production; failure to do so would force nature to take measures into its own hands by wiping off the 'excess'. There have been several critics on his work; the fact that nowadays the world is over-producing food at a time when there are almost seven times more people than the 1 billion Malthusian 'limit' could be cited as an example. Malthus' analysis may have several inconsistencies, but the central theme is not so

erroneous, there is indeed a limit as to the carrying capacity of the earth, though no one knows for sure how much is 'full house'. In the case of Ethiopia, what is more relevant in this connection is the carrying capacity of land for agricultural purposes to a population that grows at a yearly rate of 2.3 per cent. It will be imprudent to ignore the difficulty of decreasing land-size holdings for agricultural purposes in the country not least because around 85 per cent of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture.

2.3.2. Food entitlements

In the last two or three decades, there has been a revolution in thinking about the explanations of famines. The entitlement's approach by Amartya Sen brought the issue of food accessibility to the forefront of the academic debate on famine. Sen noted that, often enough, there is enough food available in the country during famines but all people do not have the means to access it. More specifically, famines are explained by entitlement failures, which in turn can be understood in terms of endowments, production possibilities, and exchange conditions among others. Ethiopia is a good case in point where, for instance, food was moving out of Wolli when the people in the region were affected by the 1972-3 famine (Sen, 1981), and even today some regions in Ethiopia produce surplus, while people in other regions face famine threats. There are of course infrastructural problems in the country to link the surplus producing regions to the food-deficit ones.

2.3.3. The right to food

The right to food is embodied in article 25 (1) of the UDHR⁸, which states that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food'. The UDHR later served as the foundation to the ICESCR to which Ethiopia became a state party in 1993. The covenant is legally binding on all state parties, which includes Ethiopia. Article 11(2) of the ICESCR further elaborated on the right to food and it also set a minimum threshold below which state action/inaction becomes a violation to the right to food. The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programmes which are needed:

(a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;

(b) Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

The last section in this part will focus particularly on famine prevention in Ethiopia by looking at the overall political environment of the country. It will be argued that the fulfillment of the right to food also requires the respect of civil and political rights.

2.3.4. The Political Setting

In recent years, there have been attempts to determine if there is a link between the political system of a country and famine prevention, and if such link exists, which political system can best protect the people from famine. Sen (1999) asserts that ‘there has never been a famine in a functioning multiparty democracy’, indeed, for him, it is not at all difficult to prevent famines; in addition to economic rights like the right to food, civil and political rights are of utmost importance.

The occurrence of famines is only one example of the protective reach of democracy. The positive role of political and civil rights applies to the prevention of economic and social disasters in general. Many economic technocrats recommend the use of economic incentives (which the market system provides) while ignoring political incentives (which democratic systems could guarantee). But economic incentives, important as they are, are no substitute for political incentives, and the absence of an adequate system of political incentives is a lacuna that cannot be filled by the operation of economic inducement (Sen, 1999).

2.4. Causes and Consequences of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is largely a matter of insufficient agricultural productivity. The challenge is compounded by the huge growth of the population (more than double the global rate), and by the negative effects of HIV and AIDS, which affect the most productive segment of the population.

The farmers have also to face the impacts of climate change, natural disasters, and multiple diseases (UNECA, 2014).

As far as major causes of transitory and chronic food insecurity in Ethiopia are concerned, FSPP (2003) reported that it could be caused by various factors; including: i) Recurring Drought; ii) Limited source of alternative incomes; iii) Population pressure; iv) Limitations in technology; v) Lack of product diversification & market integration; vi) Limited capacity in planning & implementation vii) Environmental degradation and; viii) Limited access to credit.

Studies by Hussein (2006), Gilligan *et al.*(2008) indicated that the major factors that aggravate food insecurity problems include: land shortage, poor soil fertility, occasional droughts and degradation of farmlands, chronic shortage of cash income; poor farming technologies, weak extension services, high labor wastage and poor social and infrastructural situation were aggravates food insecurity problems. The combinations of these factors have resulted in serious and growing problems of household level food insecurity in Ethiopia.

Table 1. Chronology of drought-related food security crises in Ethiopia.

Year of event	Major relative incidences
1953	Food security crisis in Wollo and Tigray. Raya Azebo is the most vulnerable from Tigray.
1957-58	Food security crisis in Tigray, Wollo, and south-central Shewa. About 1 million farmers in Tigray might have been affected, with about 100,000 being displaced.
1962-66	Many parts of the northeastern Ethiopia suffered from droughts and Food security crisis. Tigray and Wollo were severely hit.
1973-74	This was one of the most significant food security crises which affected parts of eastern Harare, SNNPR and the Bale lowlands. About 100,000 to 200,000 people died as a result of this extensive crisis.
1977-78	Most parts of the Wollo were severely hit by food security crisis owing to erratic rainfall, pest damage, and frost actions. About 500,000 farmers were affected.
1984-85	This was the most serious one by affecting over eight million people and causing the death of one million Ethiopian's. Most parts of Ethiopia including relatively food secure areas like Wolayta, Kambata and Hadiya were affected by severe food insecurity. Drought and crop diseases were the main drivers of the food security crisis in this case.
1987-88	Tigray, Wollo and Gonder were severely affected due to drought and civil wars.
1990-92	Rain failure and regional conflicts resulted in approximately 4,000,000 people being affected.
1993-94	Widespread food insecurity, but few deaths or cases of displacement were reported because of early responses by the government and international aid organizations.
1999-2000	Three years of successive poor rains in Somali region was led to 100,000 deaths of citizens.
2003-04	Over 13 million people affected, but the response mitigated the worst potential outcomes.
2008-09	Almost 3 million people were affected in which majority from pastoral areas of the country.
2011-13	Severe food security crisis occurred in the south-eastern lowlands. In pastoralist area of Afar, Somali and Borana (Oromiya) the quality and quantity of livestock was decreased.
2015-16	Consecutive failure of two rainy seasons has had profound impact on the lives and livelihoods of millions. Due to El Niño drought more than 27 million people become food insecure and total population of 18.1 million people required food assistance in 2016 and totally over 40 percent of Ethiopian population have been affected. This was the strongest drought that has been faced in Ethiopian history. But numbers of deaths due this shock were not reported.

Taken from: Catleyet *al.*, (2016), DFID (2014), Webb *et al.*, (1992)

As indicated in Table 1, in every two or three years Ethiopia faces one drought year that leads to huge food crises and loss of millions of livestock numbers and human death in different drought-prone parts of the country. The drought affected the country as a whole and there were variations among regions and different places. From experience, it could be seen that the studies related to food insecurity and the effects are not all inclusive and not recorded and presented as exactly and the severity of its occurrences.

The main causes of food insecurity are high population growth rate, high reliance on small plot of land and rain-fed agricultural holdings, lack of access to input, lack of access to credit, high susceptibility to drought, limited access to basic service, lack of access to market, land

degradation and decreased productivity, lack of income generation opportunity and alternatives, lack of access to technology and lack of access to information on market, agricultural technology (FSP, 2003; WFP, 2006; EU, 2012).

Food security situation were deteriorated due to long dry season, some gaps or delay of food aid, high price of cereals, declined pasture and water availability, particular areas received below normal rains, declined livestock body condition, declined milk yield and their prices, increased malnutrition rate (children from poor households) and disease outbreak for both human and animals (SDPPB *et al.*, 2012).

The problem of food insecurity among agro-pastoralists is believed to be caused mainly by low and erratic rainfall. According to LCRDB (2009), the problem of food insecurity is mostly related to climate change which results in variation of rain-fall and then this reduces moisture situation and when the rainfall distribution varies or rainy season delays or not totally received; it is likely to face food insecurity.

Based on the study by IFPRI (2012), the main causes of rise in global and national food insecurity include trade restrictions imposed by major food exporters, biofuels policies, and increased food commodity speculation combined with poor national and local governance to cope with such shocks. Besides, longer-term dynamics such as climate change and mounting food demand through changing dietary patterns and growing populations have strained international food markets and are expected to lead to further rising food prices and increasing price volatility (Nelson *et al.*, 2010; FAO, 2011).

Prolonged drought conditions have severely affected pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods in southeastern areas of Ethiopia Somali regional state. The food security situation in the country has sharply deteriorated in recent months, with the estimated number of food insecure people increasing from 5.6 million in December 2016 to 8.5 million in early August 2017. This was as a result of the prevailing severe dry weather conditions since October 2016 that affected rangelands and crops in southeastern Ethiopia, resulting in serious deterioration of food security conditions. A major area of concern is the Somali Region, where an estimated 2.3 million people required emergency livelihood and food assistance (FOA, 2017).

In Ethiopia's Somali Region, a food security emergency is ongoing following a severe drought over the past year. This drought has resulted in very large livestock losses which have sharply reduced households' access to food and have driven large-scale displacement. Serious human disease outbreaks are also ongoing. FEWS NET rapid assessments and other field reporting indicate high levels of acute malnutrition, excess mortality among children, and a heavy reliance on emergency food aid, especially in Dollo, Korahe, Afder, and Jarar Zones, where the drought has been most severe. Field reports indicate that food assistance delivery has been interrupted in Dollo and Korahe Zones, and even in areas where assistance delivery continues, the amount of aid provided is inadequate to fully address emergency needs. This suggests that food security outcomes could deteriorate further over the coming times, to extreme levels, if additional assistance is not provided quickly (Ethiopia Food Security Alert, 2017).

In Ethiopia, in 2016, severe drought forced pastoralist families to abandon their shelters and household belongings as the result of loss of livestock. Scarce resources and lack of access had also led to inter-community tension and clashes that caused more displacements. Seasonal flooding also traditionally displaces people living in flood-prone areas for up to three months. In average, 90% of the displaced will return to their places of origin (FDRE and Humanitarian Partners, 2017).

Based on the 2016 *meher* assessment, 376,000 persons were at risk of being displaced across five regions (Afar, Amhara, Gambela, Oromia, and Somali). The majority of these (217,000 persons) were expected to be in Somali region with Afar, Gambela and Oromia projecting close to 50,000 each (FDRE and Humanitarian Partners, 2017). The possible causes of the more displaced people to be in Somali region could be nature of the pastoralists to move from place to place to search for pasture for their livestock if alive or otherwise, they lost them and go for relatives for timely survival. The other possible reason could be their dependency on livestock and livestock products. This made them not have other alternatives during risks which involve livestock

3. METHODOLOGY

This section includes the study context, sources, methods of data collection and analysis.

3.1. Study Context

Somali Region has 350,000 km² coverage in area. It is the second largest region in Ethiopia next to Oromia. It has borders with other countries in Africa: Djibouti to the north, Somalia to the east and north-east, and Kenya to the south. Somali National Regional State is divided in to 11 administrative zones and 83 districts. The climate of the region is arid/semi-arid in lowland areas whereas cooler in the higher areas (SRS BoFED, 2014). With regard to weather condition, the two main rainy seasons in Somali Region are *Gu* (main rains from February/March to June/July) and *Deyr* rains (short rains from October to November). Most part of the Region gets rains in *Gu* season and *Deyr* seasons while Shinile and highlands of Jijiga Zones receive *Gu* and *Karan rains* (rain season from mid July to mid September in Jijiga and Shinile Zones).

Climate

The main seasonal activity calendar is divided into three: mid March-May is the plowing and sowing season, the busiest months; October to November is the harvest and threshing months and December to mid March is livestock watering and feeding period .

The region receives an annual rainfall that varies from 400mm- 800mm. the mean temperature ranges from 28-34 degree centigrade. In most of the higher attitude or part of the region, the rainy season (*Gu*) in the region has three sub seasons: *Dira*(April- May), *Hagaa* (june- july) and *karan* (August- Septeber) all of which are equally important for cultivation of crop, availability of water and pasture for livestock. Furthermore, the dry season, *Jilaal* (October - March) is divided in to two sub seasons, *Deyr* (October - November) and *Kalil* (December - March).

3. 1.2 Why focus on gender and food insecurity

There is more than enough food in the world to feed everyone, but the number of people affected by hunger and malnutrition is still ‘unacceptably high’ (FAO 2014:4),¹ with disproportionate impacts on women and girls. Reversing this shocking trend must be a top priority for governments and international institutions. Responses must treat food insecurity as an equality,

rights and social justice issue. Food and nutrition insecurity is a political and economic phenomenon fuelled by inequitable global and national processes. It is also an environmental issue. Increasingly unsustainable methods of intensive agriculture, livestock farming and fishing are resulting in air pollution and food and water erosion, which are contributing to climate change and food insecurity. Most importantly, food and nutrition insecurity is a gender justice issue. Low status and lack of access to resources mean that women and girls are the most disadvantaged by the inequitable global economic processes that govern food systems and by global trends such as climate change.

At the same time, women literally ‘feed the world’. Despite often limited access to either local or global markets they constitute the majority of food producers in the world and usually manage their families’ nutritional needs. They achieve this despite entrenched gendered inequalities and increasing volatility of food prices. Yet their own food security and nutrition needs – and often those of their daughters – are being neglected at the household level, where discriminatory social and cultural norms prevail. From these point of view the Somali regional state female heads are more exclusion from their rights and responsibility of gating equal access as men house hold headed based on resource sharing and responsibility of leading the family as of men headed equally.

Policymakers are recognizing, in an instrumental way, the value of rural women producers as an ‘untapped’ resource for both guaranteeing food and nutrition in households and driving economic growth. There is a recognition of the need to redress gender imbalances in women’s access to productive resources such as land, water and credit. Yet without well-informed, properly financed efforts to address the root causes of gender inequality and empower women in ways that go beyond financial gain – including by valuing their knowledge, recognizing and reducing their often unpaid labour and addressing GBV – the cycle of gender discrimination will continue, perpetuating gender injustice, poverty and food insecurity. If responses to hunger and malnutrition are to both enable food and nutrition security and contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment, a commitment to gender transformation is non-negotiable.

From a gender, inequalities and rights perspective the **access** pillar is crucial. Tackling people’s access to food and nutrition requires more politically engaged analysis and solutions which challenge the gender dimensions of poverty and address gender-inequitable power relations and norms, including within the household. **Utilization**, the extent to which food is meeting nutritional needs, is highly important from a gender perspective,

3.2. Sources, Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

This paper was done based on review of literatures. Published and unpublished secondary sources such as academic works, governmental and non-governmental reports that deal with food security issues and coping strategies were used. Ethiopia Somali Regional State food security policy document, Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, monthly report of disaster prevention and preparedness Bureau, documents of FAO and other organizations were among

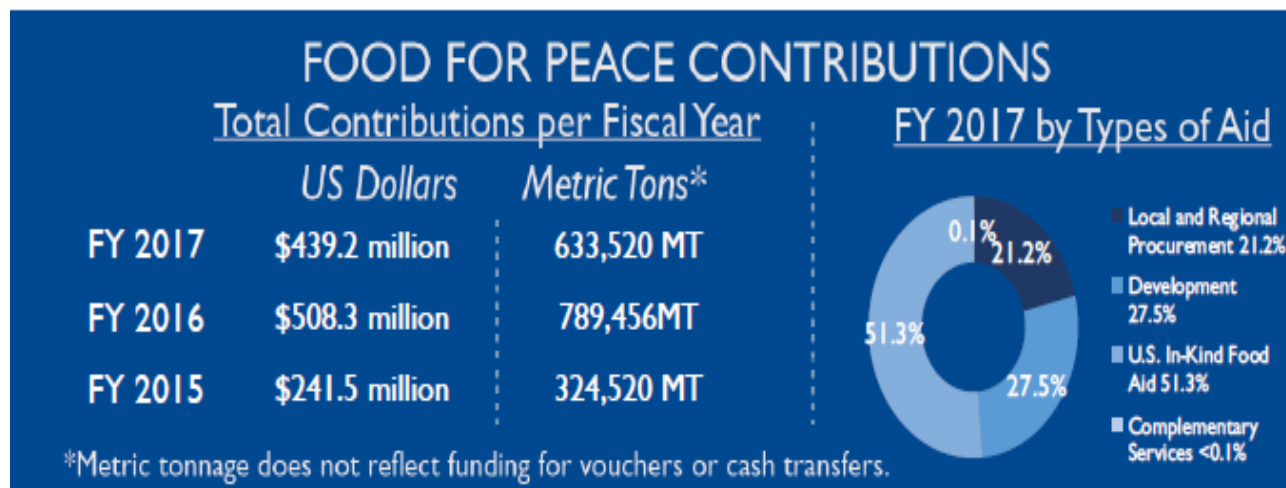
the sources used. The review deals with gender dimension of the food insecurity and coping strategies. Analysis of the evidences from various sources was considered and they were interpreted in order to give comprehensive picture of the situation under study.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The major findings of the review are presented in this part. Food insecurity

4.1. Food Insecurity in Somali Region

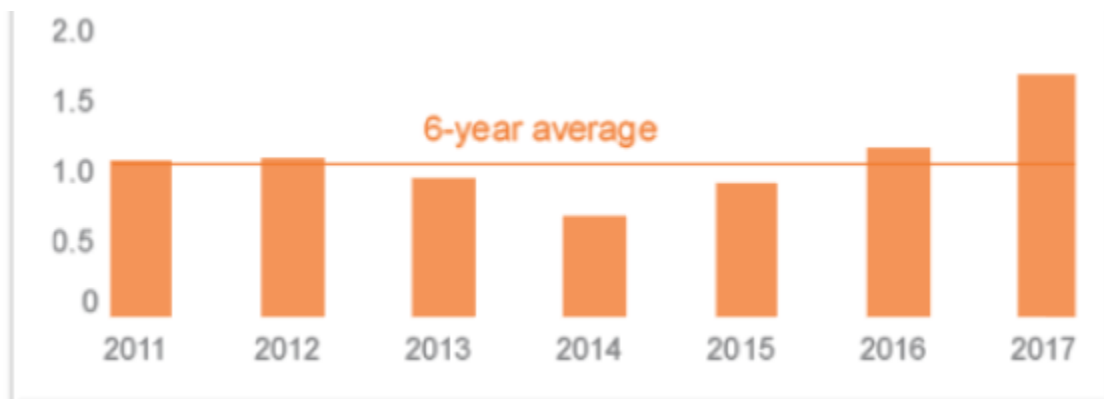
Food insecurity has been a major challenge for Ethiopia for many years. For instance, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) report, an estimated 8.5 million people in Ethiopia require emergency food assistance due to the lingering effects of the 2015-2016 El Niño-induced drought and multiple consecutive droughts. An additional 4 million chronically food-insecure people, who are supported by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE)-led Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), also require humanitarian assistance (FAO, 2018). Food for Peace (FFP) with its partners has also made the following contributions in order to assist those were food insecure.



Source: FAO, 2018

Figure 1. Food for Peace (FFP) contributions

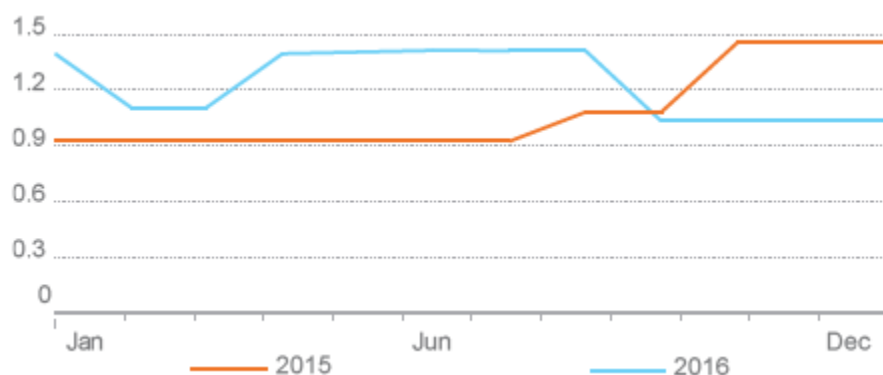
As it could be seen from the above figure 1, there was an increase of money from \$241.5 Million in the year 2015 to \$508.3 million in 2016. The increment of the money contributed for the food for peace purpose was more than double. However, the amount of money reduced from \$508.3 million in 2016 to 439.2 Million in 2017. As indicated by empirical studies, the need for humanitarian assistance increases each year. The funders explain about the limited amount of money they have and the more number and high demand of support for the needy. For example, figure 2 below indicates the food insecure population trend in Somali region which shows increment from 2015 to 2016. Similarly, the number of relief food beneficiaries per month showed increment. The report by FDRE and Humanitarian Partners (2017) indicated that in November 2016, the price of the staple food (imported) remained higher, while livestock price declined in the same month to the lowest level since 2011. This made it difficult for pastoralists to have something to take to the market and sell and then to buy something for their survival.



Source: FDRE and Humanitarian Partners, 2017

Figure 2. Food insecure population trend in Somali region *Meher* Assessment as of December 2016) (in millions)

In Somali region, in the year 2011 and 2012, the number of food insecure population was almost similar with some increment. It showed decrement from 2012 to 2013 and to 2014 as well. However, there was a gradual and rapid increment from 2014 to 2015 and then 2016 and finally to 2016 (Figure 2). It can generally be seen from the figure that an average of about 1 million pastoralists/agro-pastoralists needed food support in the seven years (2011-2017). Moreover, the number of food insecure people was the highest in the recent years (2016 and 2017). This shows how food insecurity has been becoming the major challenge of the region.



Source: FDRE and Humanitarian Partners, 2017

Figure 3. Relief food beneficiaries per month (2015 Jan. - 2016 Dec.) (in millions)

As Figure 3 shows, due to the problem of food security there were high numbers of relief food beneficiaries. In 2015 and 2016 at least about 1 million people were getting food aid.

4.2. Gender dimension of food security

Gender-based inequalities remain prevalent and persistent worldwide especially in rural areas including pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. Rural women in particular tend to be disadvantaged in relation to men in their ability to access productive resources and accumulate human capital in order to advance economically. They often lack the power and agency necessary to benefit from and have control over economic activities, as well as participate and represent in rural institutions, organizations and public life (FAO, 2016).

Women and men have different access to resources and power to make choices that affect their lives, as a consequence of the state of gender relations that exists in a given society. This is reflected in the unequal roles and responsibilities of women and men in different places. Women are a critical component of the rural economy and are engaged in agricultural production. They contribute significantly in production of crops, subsistence farming, and reproduction of male agri-labour forces (MoFED, 2002). In spite of their contribution they are mainly the victims when any problem arises including food insecurity.

Studies conducted worldwide show the prevalence of gender inequality in terms of food security. A study conducted in Oyo State, Nigeria showed that food insecurity exists between both male-headed and female-headed households but more severe with the latter (Olabisi, 2014). An assessment of gender mainstreaming into food security initiatives of West African Intergovernmental Organizations by UNECA (2014) indicated that there is a relationship between gender and food security which is utmost important to deal with. The double standard, which affects women's status and their role in agriculture, affects food security in all countries. The study indicated that gender inequity and the underestimated capacities of women are some of the most significant obstacles to social and economic development in West Africa.

A recent study in rural areas of Ethiopia found disparities in household food distribution for male and female adolescents. In times of food insecurity, parents often 'buffer' the effects for their children by reducing their own food intake. However, the study revealed that only boys were benefiting from this redistribution of scarce resources. Girls, who have historically faced discrimination in Ethiopia, were not receiving any additional food and were more likely to be

food insecure than boys. This gender difference was most evident in severely food-insecure households.

Gender discrimination is one of the major determinants of food insecurity in Ethiopia in general and Somali region in particular. Subordination of women in society, their over-burdening and the greater difficulties faced by female-headed households contribute to food insecurity (Abebaw, 2003). Culturally in Ethiopia, women are exposed to bias and their efforts are underestimated when compared with men irrespective of the benefits. This is evidenced even at home where there is bias between a girl and a boy. Mostly the boy is favored to go to school, get freedom and encouragement for his success.

People's overall access to food relies to a great extent on the work of rural women. Women comprise, in average, 43 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries. Women are involved in a variety of agricultural operations such as crops, livestock and fish farming. They produce food and cash crops at subsistence and commercial levels. At community level women undertake a range of activities that support natural resource management and agricultural development, such as soil and water conservation, afforestation and crop domestication. Gender equality is achieved when women and men, girls and boys, have equal rights, life prospects and opportunities, and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to society (SIDA, 2015). Excluding women from agricultural and other developmental activities means to lose productive labor force. This in turn, could have effect on the development of a country in general and agricultural production and food security in particular.

The report of FAO (2010) indicated that gender inequalities constrain women's roles in agriculture and food production and consequently undermine food and nutrition security. Kidist and Hirut (2013) argued that household food insecurity may not equally share among household members.. Women carry a disproportionately higher burden of household food insecurity compared to other household members (Yared 2010 cited in Kidist and Hirut, 2013)

Somali regional state is an area where food insecurity is prevalent. As to FAO (2017), 2.3 million people (42 percent of the region's population) require emergency livelihood and food

assistance. Food insecurity has different effects on male and female pastoral/ agro-pastoral residents off Somali region. In male-headed households, while women take care of household tasks, the men go out to look for work and food. This means that men may have access to food outside their homes, while women and children may not have access to food at home and may have to wait for the man to bring them something to eat (Oxfam International, 2016). This shows how women in the area are more vulnerable to food insecurity. The social norms among the pastoral communities also influence women as they are the last household member to eat. The consequence of food insecurity becomes more severe to women as lack of food affects breast-feeding and pregnant Mothers (Ankets, Terefe and Dico-Young, 2017)

Gender gaps in education and information for food production Education is a major area of discrimination against women in the rural sector. Over two thirds of the world's illiterate people are women – many living in rural areas. These low levels of literacy and numeracy compound the likelihood that women farmers will be excluded from agricultural and other training activities. Only 5 per cent of women farmers spanning 97 countries have access to extension services, and only 15 per cent of extension agents are women (FAO 2013).

4.1. Coping Strategies of Food Insecurity

The findings and views of scholars about coping strategies of food insecurity are explained as follows.

The study by Chlembo (2004) indicated that households use different means to cope when a food crisis hits them. Their coping mechanisms are adapted depending on how bad the crisis are and what is available to help them manage their situation. Some sale their assets, look for part time work, turn to their social network, venture into income generating activities, engage in food for work activities and others get food relief from NGOs and the government. The most common coping practice that are sequentially used during food crisis consisted of reducing number and size of meals, sale of small ruminants and draft oxen, consuming wild food, and borrowing of cash and/or food from better-off neighbours and/or relatives. Another less frequently used strategies were: postponing wedding and other ceremonies, sale of fire wood, withdrawing children from school and eating toxic taboo foods (Eshetu, 2000). From this, it could be

understood that coping strategies are dependent on the severity of the crisis and the available opportunities that households can access.

Although the coping strategies of food insecurity are not exactly the same majority of the findings showed similarities. In his review on food security situation in Ethiopia, Abdusalam (2016) has identified that different researches in different regional administrations of the country showed that food insecure households in Ethiopia use almost the similar food insecurity and other disasters coping mechanisms irrespective to their geographical variation and livelihood strategies.

Households actively try to protect their livelihoods, adopting several actions and mechanisms when faced with shocks and stresses that affect their livelihood or livelihood outcomes, one of which is food security. Coping mechanisms used by farm households in rural Ethiopia include livestock sales, agricultural employment, certain types of off-farm employment and migration to other areas, requesting grain loans, sale of wood or charcoal, small scale trading, selling cow dung and crop residues, reduction of food consumption, consumption of meat from their livestock, consumption of wild plants, reliance on relief assistance, relying on remittances from relatives, selling of clothes, and dismantling of parts of their houses for sale. Some of them are likely to be implemented only after the possibilities of certain other options have been pursued (Devereux, 2010). In addition, households who have diversified source of income are often able to cope with crisis than others (Bashir, 2010).

All households are not equally vulnerable to food shortages and do not respond to it in the same way. Deprived households are more vulnerable to disasters than relatively better off households. The destitute are often forced to immediately collapse and get engaged in unusual and marginal kinds of economic activities (such as sales of grass, wood, leaves, and eating wild food and at the end migration). Since the country is dependent on agriculture, crop failure usually leads to household food deficit. The absence of off farm income opportunities, and delayed food aid assistance, leads to asset depletion and increasing levels of destitution at household level.

The Somali pastoralist groups have experienced droughts and other shocks like flood since time in memorial. Recently, the severity of drought has increased its magnitude that it is now becoming difficult for the pastoralists to reconstitute sufficient herd size to help them lead a

semi-nomadic way of live; and the twin dragons, drought and famine, are given much pain to the pastoral societies as whole. Through time, Somali pastoralists have developed their own coping strategies that can greatly contribute to managing droughts. These drought coping mechanisms vary from one pastoral group to another depending on the type of drought experienced, the type of geographical location and resources available to the pastoralists (SLCRDB, 2011).

The coping strategies that the pastoral communities have accumulated and practiced through their indigenous institutions for generations (indigenous knowledge and resource management) have been eroded due to several factors such as drought, continuous relief food assistance following drought, inappropriate development interventions, thereby leaving communities to be dependent on external aid (Fassil *et al.*, 2001). Erosion of the safe coping strategies leaves only irreversible and risky survival strategies; their practice makes households even more vulnerable (Shumete, 2009).

In Somali region of Ethiopia, most common coping strategies applied by the communities in time of food insecurity were livestock migration, sale of livestock, labor migration, fire wood collection, reduction of meals frequency and quantity, and relief distribution or food aid programs (FDRE and Humanitarian Partners, 2017). According to Mohammed (2016), sale of more livestock than usual, borrowing of food or cash, reduce number of meals, reduce size of meal, sale fire wood and charcoal, rely on less preferred and less expensive food, short term/seasonal migration, seek alternative or additional jobs, seeking relief assistance, becoming temporary trader, household splitting and consume wild food were found to be the various food insecurity coping strategy among agro-pastoral households in Somali region. Moreover, a study conducted in Jigjiga district of Somali region showed that households are more likely to resort to borrowing food or relying on help from a friend or relative, to purchase food on credit, to send household members to eat elsewhere, or to prioritize the food consumption of working members over non-working members as a coping strategy of food insecurity (USAID, 2015).

Though as a household, Somali pastoralists and agro-pastoralists have common coping strategies, men and women play their role to cope up with food insecurity. Some of these strategies are explained as follows.

Labor migration

Migrating to urban centers to look for jobs has been indicated as one of coping strategies during times of food insecurity. A study conducted by OXFAM (2010 EC.) in Somali and Afar regions found that many men, adolescent boys and girls are migrating to urban centers in search of job opportunities. Men tend to look for casual labour, while boys might also continue their education.

Movement of livestock

Movement of livestock is the most common community-led strategy for coping with drought (IIRR 2010). Male members of the community, often elders, decide upon the movement of livestock and in particular large-scale movements. In severe cases the whole household will move with the livestock to find grazing and/or water. Often the women will need to rebuild the hut when they have reached their destination. The women will also be expected to carry most of the household goods (Flintan, 2011).

Herd splitting

In the Somali area, pastoralists divide their herds into two and send those matured ones and bulls to distant places herds keep and followed by man head house hold, while keeping lactating and heifers around their home performed by female head house hold . These are called herds. In some cases, animals may be herded in some other areas to reduce not only droughts but also localized raids and diseases that usually accompany droughts.(report from LCRDB 2010 EC)

Income generation from non-pastoral activities

The activities include subsidiary activities that generate money for the pastoralists as additional revenue during normal years and to purchase food grains in times of drought. Both men and women engage in income generating activities. Due to a combination of social pressure and economic stress that resulted from crisis (eg. drought, conflict), more pastoralists men are becoming involved in income generating activities that reserved for women before (Mulu 2010)

Change of composition of diet

During acute drought period, Somali pastoralists are forced to change their normal food intake and composition so that they can easily adapt to the type of vegetation available. Most of the time, they reduce the quantity and quality of food they are taking. Most of the time women are the one that cannot get enough food as they give priority to children.

Internal displaced people settlements

When all other coping strategies of food security has not been helpful, pastoralists go for the last option. They go to internal displaced people settlement camps. Among the Somali pastoralist households, it is predominantly adult women with young children who resettle in IDP camps (OXFAM 2015). The decision to move to IDP settlements is considered by most pastoralists as a last resort in the search for food, water and humanitarian assistance, after losing most of their livestock. In severe crises women may move with the children and seek refuge with relatives or in urban areas and refugee camps: men may be recruited in armed forces, left behind to look after homes and livestock or be on protracted migrations when the women decide to leave (Flintan, 2011)

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

Food insecurity has been among the major challenges of pastoralist and agro-pastoralists of Somali region for decades. High population growth rate, high reliance on small plough of land and rain-fed agricultural holdings, lack of access to inputs, market, information, technology and services (credit and advisory) were the main causes of food insecurity. Long dry season, some gaps or delay of food aid, high price of cereals, decline of (pasture and water availability, livestock body condition, milk yield and their prices) coupled with increased malnutrition rate and disease outbreak for both human and animals deteriorate food security situation.

Lack of food affects the health, psychological and social conditions of the pastoralists/agro-pastoralists in the region. This in turn have negative impact on their agricultural production activities. Different concerned stakeholders at the national, international, local, governmental, non-governmental and other levels have been working on different assistance for the food insecure people. As there are various causes of food insecurity, the effect also varies depending on the sex of the individual. Most of the time pastoral/agro-pastoral women are more vulnerable to food insecurity due to the responsibilities they shoulder and subordinate position in pastoral society. There are cultural, social and economic factors to discriminate women from men in terms of accessing food.

During food insecurity, there are number of coping strategies women and men apply. The coping strategies of food insecurity depend on the real circumstances of the place and the situation, level of the crisis and assets they have. Herd splitting, labor migration, movement of livestock, engaging in non-pastoral activities are some of the food insecurity coping strategies in Somali region. Women have their own role in the coping strategies.

5.2. Recommendations

Training and providing support for the communities in the region to practice crop production activities to supplement their livestock production and minimize their exposure to risks is important. Developing rural infrastructures and provision of agricultural services (production, market, credit and inputs etc) timely and designing alternative production schemes such as irrigation and water harvesting technologies that do not depend on rainwater could help the people to produce more and have substitutes to consume.

Designing policies that balance and give recognition to gender equality and its implementation helps to empower women and strengthen the development efforts of a country. This in turn

enables to bring development in general and agricultural production in particular. Food insecurity issues could be minimized as well.

To sustainably make the people food secure and minimize the food aid and other supports, all the concerned stakeholders need to work together and mobilize their resources (human, financial and others) in empowering people by implementing development projects in their areas is important and advisable.

Integrating with their indigenous knowledge, involving and working activities that will conserve the climate is important to minimize the effects resulted from drought and other risks. Planting trees, design and implement user friendly and carbon free agricultural production techniques is important to minimize the climate change and its effects.

During food insecurity times, it is good to the government and other humanitarian organizations to look for ways to stabilize the market or use alternatives to get the commodities from other areas where the price and supply is better. To help the people be healthy and be productive it is advisable to provide them timely and sufficient aids.

The gender mainstreaming efforts of the governments, women and youth institutions among others need to work more in avoiding the exclusion of women from different agricultural practices and development efforts. There needs to be awareness creation efforts starting from a family about the equality of a boy and a girl and it could be explained in relation to their religion and culture so that people will make it culture to see equality between a boy and a girl.

Applying coping strategies which are appropriate to the area and the available resources is important so that the lives of people and livestock could be saved from hunger and the risks could be minimized.

The researcher feels that the efforts of all concerned stakeholders, national, international, local, governmental, non-governmental and others need to be coordinated and a sustainable, long term strategies should be designed and developed to make the people food secured and enable them to feed themselves than always waiting for aid.

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