CHAPTER ONE
REVIEW LITERATURE

1.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises of reviews of all necessary secondary documents pertinent to the topic. The reviewed literatures focus on the experiences of rural women specifically female-headed households (FHHs now onwards) in connection with poverty and livelihood strategies at local, district, regional, national, and worldwide levels. The major components of the chapter include analytical concepts, empirical findings, and theoretical approaches to the study. Experiences of male-headed households (MHH now onwards) are also included for comparative understandings.

1.2 Analytical Concepts

The major concepts used in this research are: poverty, feminization of poverty, livelihood, livelihood strategy, household and headship/ FHHs. The concepts are defined and discussed below.

1.2.1 Poverty

A review of the massive literature on poverty shows that there is no standard concept or definition of poverty because of its multidimensional nature as well as its dynamic properties. Some tried to approach poverty from statistical points of view while others followed a more ambiguous definition. Most economists and social workers use a combination of both methods to define poverty. However, anthropologists define poverty based on community perception and from their setting.
1.2.1.1 Anthropological concepts of poverty

In discussions about the multi-dimensionality of poverty, it is commonplace that the ways people experience material conditions are mediated through social relations and institutions. Yet anthropological studies emphasize that well being is frequently also conceived or defined in terms of social relations and kin networks, and a person’s place in them (Booth, Leach, Tierney 1999).

Anthropological work focuses on how experiences of poverty and well being vary over the course of people’s lifetimes. The developmental cycle of domestic groups (Goody 1971) was a key concept which drew attention to how opportunities and vulnerabilities might shift through the processes of establishing marriage, having children, children growing up, and ageing. There are links here with economists’ ideas about the importance of household size, dependency ratios and so on. However anthropologists pay attention not only to changes in economic status within developmental cycles, but also to how members at different ages and life stages may be differentially linked into wider kin networks and social relations, and hence be more or less secured and ‘supported’.

Anthropologists argue that poverty is approached as contextual, situational and relational. This is because it carries multiple meanings and is not easily defined. According to this perspective poverty must be understood in specific contexts, because what is ‘wealth’ according to one person is not necessarily seen as such by someone else. Having a lot of children may indicate wealth to some and poverty to others. But, one may argue, there are also attempts to establish comparative variables, such as GDP per capita and HDI, to be applied in different contexts, regions and nation-states (Booth et al 1999).
While the scholarly and policy literature abounds with studies that focus on poverty, the anthropological literature focused on poverty in Africa is limited. Booth et al point out in anthropology the treatment of issues of poverty and well-being “is diffused across a range of specialist literatures: in early works on kinship, political and marriage systems, religion and economy; in more recent research into rural production systems, food security, gender, health, urban housing, identity and ethnicity, and so on” (Ibid:5). Anthropologists have worked with issues of poverty and prosperity in an indirect manner. They mainly pay more attention to a large extent contextual meaning to poverty. They argue that narrow poverty definition excludes many persons who are locally perceived as poor. Yet an encompassing poverty definition might encounter serious difficulties as well. If the poverty concept is variously used to include low income, deprivation, hunger, powerlessness, social isolation, illness and so on, the concept turns into an abstract concept unrelated to context.

The stance taken in the study of Poverty and Livelihood Strategies of Rural Female-headed Households in Libo Kemkem Woreda is that poverty must be treated as contextual, situational and relational. Firstly, poverty is contextually determined because poor people’s perceptions of poverty and how they cope with daily life need to be taken seriously. Secondly, poverty is situationally determined because a person who might well make ends meet under normal circumstances can be thrown into poverty in specific situations. Thirdly, poverty is relational because one is poor in relation to someone else. The relational dimension of poverty brings in the distinction between ‘the poor’ and ‘the non-poor’. Moreover, the person identified as ‘poor’ might often identify someone in the neighborhood who is poorer. Poverty is also
relational in the sense that poverty alleviation depends on one’s relations to other people, be they kinsfolk, neighbors, government agencies or NGOs.

### 1.2.1.2 Social definitions of poverty

Social meaning of poverty emerges due to the dissatisfaction of income or consumption as a sole measure of wellbeing of people. Even though monetary approach is the most commonly accepted measure of poverty, it can’t explain the nature of poverty fully since it is a multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond the economic arena to encompass factors such as the inability to participate in social and political life (Sen 1979; 1985; 1987). The limitation of the monetary perspective in defining poverty in turn helps in looking for a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Thus, social definitions of poverty are found to be suitable by most people and organizations.

World Bank (2001) is one of the organizations that defined poverty in association with deprivation in well-being having many dimensions. This includes low incomes, poor access to basic goods and services, lack of physical infrastructure (like health, education, water), lack of decision making power and insufficient capacity and opportunity to turn one’s life better.

Another meaning to poverty forwarded by UN (2009). This organization sees poverty from broad perspective. It defined as

> Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation (UN 2009:9).
At the UN’s World Summit on Social Development, the ‘Copenhagen Declaration’ in 1995 described poverty in similar way with UN (2009) but the former is broad. It defines poverty as a condition characterized by severe dispossession of basic human needs, which really depends on income but also on access to services. It includes “a lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by lack of participation in decision making and in civil, social and cultural life.” This happens in all countries regardless of depth of poverty. Developing countries are hosts of massive poverty where as small pockets of poverty exist in developed countries. Economic recession, disaster or conflict, insufficient wages and social security systems considered as causes of poverty.

The capacities approach, pioneered by Sen (1979; 1985; 1987), conceptualizes wellbeing as the freedom of individuals to a life that allows them to fulfill their perspectives. He antagonizes monetary income as the sole measure of wellbeing. Poverty is a constraint for peoples to fulfill their needs due to lack of resources. Having sufficient resources helps people to lead long and healthy life, inherits culture to new generations, enhance social interaction, builds knowledge and enjoying freedom of expression and thought. Thus, strengthening capacities of people and improving of wellbeing is, according to this approach, possible through fighting against poverty.

The multi-dimensional character of poverty in Ethiopia is reflected in many aspects, such as destitution of assets, vulnerability and human development. Therefore, the above definitions fairly describe the nature of poverty in the Ethiopian
context. As the concept of poverty reflects “socially perceived deprivation” of basic human needs, its understanding also considers the minimum living standards of the people.

1.2.1.3 Statistical definitions of poverty

While there are various numerically defined methods to measure and quantify poverty, two are simple enough that they are used to define poverty: absolute poverty measurement and relative poverty measurement. Subjective Poverty Measurements are also a newly emerging type to measure poverty. Both these measurements based on income or consumption values makes compiling of statistics on poverty much easier.

**Absolute Poverty**

The free Encyclopedia, *Wikipedia* defined absolute poverty as a situation where the income of a person or a household is insufficient to secure the minimum basic human needs required for physiological survival. Elements of these basic human needs include food, water, clothing and shelter.

Absolute poverty measure is based on a defined ‘poverty line’ at a certain income amount or consumption amount per year. Baskets of goods like food, shelter, water etc provides information about the wellbeing of people.

World Bank is one of the first organizations to set the absolute poverty line to define global poverty. This line was first drawn in 1990 when the World Bank published its World Development Report. Accordingly, poverty and extreme poverty is set an income of $2 and $1 a day or less respectively. Most developing countries set their poverty lines at $1 a day. In reality, the current ‘$1 a day’ poverty line is changed into $1.25 based on the revision of World Bank in 2008 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2009; Shah 2011).
This concept of poverty as propounded by Ravallion (1994) attracted considerable criticisms. Prominent among these is the difficulty in determining the minimum requirements of these basic needs for survival. The concept ignored the influence of socio-cultural and environmental factors.

**Relative Poverty**

The concept of relative poverty emerged in order to correct the weaknesses observed in the notion of absolute poverty. Beck (1994) defined relative poverty as a situation where individuals or families command of resources go aline with the resources commanded by the average persons or families in the community in which they live. This concept has two features. One is that the average standard of the relevant community is directly proportional to the relative poverty line. The second is that interpersonal and international comparisons are eliminated through relative poverty measure.

A major weakness of this concept of poverty, Adeyeye as quoted by Evelyn Omarioghae (2008) puts forward the apparent lack of a scientific basis for determining how far below the average a family’s resources should fall in order to become relatively poor. In other words, precisely when does a family’s resource fall seriously below the average? The difficulty in responding to this question implies that subjectivity is involved and the severity of poverty in relative terms depends on the investigator. Moreover, this concept can be fine for country-wide measurements, but it has some major drawbacks in global use. One can therefore infer that the concept of relative poverty is operationized from an arbitrary paradigm.

**Subjective Poverty Measurements**

This is a fairly new development in the area of measurement of poverty. It is based on the premise that the opinions of persons with respect to their own situation
should invariably be the key determinant in defining poverty. Some of the proponents of this poverty measurement based their methods on income evaluation questions, while others based their own questions about the necessities which a household should possess. Applying various statistical methods to each of these measurements several techniques can be used to determine the depth and severity of poverty.

**1.2.2 Feminization of Poverty**

The production of documents by United Nations about the concept of ‘feminization of poverty’ started back to the 1970s but was well-liked from the 1990s. Pearce was the first to introduce this concept through focusing on the gender patterns in the evolution of poverty rates in the United Nations between the beginning of the 1950s and the mid-1970s. The concept of ‘feminization of poverty’ was initially associated with a belief of women comprise severe proportion of the poor particularly FHHs take the lion share of the poor households. However, change of demographic composition of population and size of impoverished people like FHHs due to poverty reduction efforts devalued the effectiveness of this approach. For that reason, subsequent studies adopted an alternative approach that emphasizes on the levels of poverty within each gender group.

According to the free Encyclopedia, Wikipedia, the feminization of poverty is a change in the levels of poverty biased against women or FHHs. More specifically, it is an increase in the difference in the levels of poverty among women and men or among female versus MHHS. Gender inequalities in this case plays decisive role in the feminization of the causes of poverty.

Feminization of poverty is the outcome of a combination of two concepts: poverty and feminization. Poverty, as defined earlier by researchers, denotes a
scarcity of resources, capabilities or freedoms. In short, it is described as dimensions or spaces of poverty where as feminization indicates a gender biased change in any of this dimensions or spaces. Feminization is a process of becoming more feminine, which necessarily involves changes over time or populations. According to this concept, feminine indicates to show high or severe among women or FHHs.

There is confusion regarding feminization of poverty and the existence of higher levels of poverty among women. As mentioned before feminization is a process while higher poverty is a state. It mainly revolves around the differences of depth of poverty between women-men (female-male headed households). Due to the relative nature of the concept, feminization does not necessarily indicate sharp worsening in poverty among women. This is because if there is sharply reduction of poverty among men and slight reduction of poverty among women, there would still be a feminization of poverty.

1.2.3 Livelihoods

The elementary meaning of the word “livelihood” originates from the word “live,” which implies a “means of living”. Longman’s Contemporary English Dictionary defines livelihood a bit broader as “the way by which one earns enough to pay for what is necessary”. The concept of livelihood is relatively new but is now widely used in poverty and rural development literature. “Its meaning can often appear elusive, either due to vagueness or to different definitions being encountered in different sources” (Ellis 2000:7). According to Chambers and Conway (1992: 6), livelihood “comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living”. To Ellis (2000: 10), livelihood “comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital), the
activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that
together determine the living gained by the individual or household”.

Livelihood is, according to Chambers (1989: 7), defined as “adequate stocks
and flows of food and cash to meet basic needs”. Redclift (1990: 85) states that
security is “ownership of, or access to, resources and income earning activities,
including reserves and assets to offset risks, ease shocks and meet contingencies”, and
defines sustainable as being “the maintenance or enhancement of resource
productivity on a long-term basis”. According to Dietz (2000), a sustainable
livelihood perspective can more easily combine the improvement of a variety of
options because it does not focus solely on land. Campilan (1998: ix) cites the
definition of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) for
livelihood: “adequate reserves and supplies of food and cash to meet basic needs”. He
further states that “sustainable livelihoods can be assured through: sustainable
employment and adequate remuneration; engagement in productive activities which
are ecologically sustainable and economically sound; and ownership of or access to
resources and their management, within their capacity to recover”. Huq (2000: 177)
argues that “livelihoods encompass income, both cash and kind, as well as social
institutions relating to kinship, family, neighborhood and village, women’s groups
and property rights required to support and to sustain a given standard of living.
Livelihoods involve social and kinship networks for facilitating and sustaining diverse
income possibilities”.

1.2.4 Livelihood Strategies

The Oxford dictionary defines strategy as a “plan, method, or series of actions
designed to achieve a specific goal or effect”. Since the livelihood system is complex,
it is developed through knowledge, experience and belief. Rural people maintain their livelihood through a bundle of activities that can be regarded as a livelihood portfolio (Niehof and Price 2001). These livelihood assortments are maintained in organized ways by using assets and resources with certain skills (i.e. inputs) to generate livelihood security, referred to as livelihood strategies, which varies based on historical time, season, and situation. The households take big responsibility to decide and devise strategies, incorporating and taking lessons from past experiences, and lastly adopt new strategies as per the newly situation.

Swift and Hamilton (2001) suggest four types of livelihood strategies for the rural household. These are: a) livelihood intensification (where per hectare land or animal production is increased through more labor, capital or technology) ; b) livelihood intensification (where production is increased by bringing more land or animals into the production system keeping labor, capital or technology at the same level); c) livelihood diversification (where households diversify their economic activities through a wider range of on-farm, non-farm and off-farm income opportunities); d) migration (where people migrate temporarily or permanently to look for their livelihood.

Niehof (2004) states rich and poor people use to various kinds of livelihood strategies. For instance, landowners utilizes livelihood intensification as the most frequently used strategy, while non-farm labor activities and income sources are major means of poor people, who suffer from land shortages.

1.2.5 Household

The household is a common form of social organization and is part of the social and economic environment. It is seen as an agent in social activities and
livelihood generation. The household acts as a buffer for all the members against individual vulnerability and is a key to the security of its members when external resources deteriorate, redistribution of income and other resources (Moser 1996). The household is an arena of cooperation as well as conflict (Sen 1990). In economic research, the household tends to be treated as a black box and a unit of consumption rather than production. In sociological research the household is seen as a social unit with complex dynamics (Mogey and Bachmann 1986). In gender research the household is also seen as a context of gender inequality, especially in intrahousehold resource distribution (Sen 1990; Agarwal 1991). A household, as defined by much of the anthropological research, is the term used to refer to the basic unit of society involved in socialization, production, reproduction, and consumption. Moreover, households are important in feminist analysis because they organize a large part of women’s domestic/reproductive labor. As a result, both the composition and the organization of households have a direct impact on women’s lives, and in particular on their ability to gain access to resources, labor, and income (Moore 1988).

Households are not static entities but restructure over time due to internal and external factors. Internal factors include: birth, death, marriage, marital conflicts such as separation, divorce or abandonment, and the need for child care and care for the elderly. Pennartz and Niehof (1999) refer to this as the household life course. External factors include: housing problems, lack of income, education and health care opportunities and security. Small nuclear households can be merged into larger extended ones in times of crisis. Similarly, large extended households can break down into smaller nuclear households to avoid conflict, or when children marry out and start a household of their own. Households also restructure as a result of or in order to avert vulnerability (Moser 1996).
1.2.6 Headship

Household headship is always an issue in census and survey data on economic activities. Identification of household members through their relationship to the head of the household is important for census and survey data collection. Different household units are identified through the head of household (Adegboyega, Ntonzi, and Ssekamatte 1997). Headship helps to identify main economic activity of the household. This identification leads to finding out about the source of income for the household. The term head of household is used to cover a number of different concepts referring to the main economic provider (Hedman, Percci, and Sundstrom, 1996). It includes the main decision-maker and the person who is designated by others as the head.

Fuwa (2000) categorizes headship based on demographic, economic or self-reported factors. Demographic factors focus on the presence of husbands in the family; economic factors take into account the economic contribution of each family member, and self-reported factors are the survey respondent’s perception of who the household head is. Although a woman may in principle be the head, the husband or any other male member could have all the decision making power within the household. Buvinic and Gupta (1997) argue that in developing countries, owing to strong patriarchal values, households are more likely to be classified as male-headed when in reality they are female-headed. Such errors would make the number of FHHs from self-reported survey serve as a lower bound. In a Western context the definition of head of household reflects the stereotype of the man in the household as the person in authority and the breadwinner (Moser 1993). Chant (1997) asserts that women’s critical responsibilities in household life are under-acknowledged. She pointed out
that in many countries; household headship is often integrally bound with masculinity. Men are exerted with authority as household heads.

Within Statistics of Ethiopia, a head of household can either be male or female or the person who assumes economic responsibility for the household. The interest in household headship arises because of the perceived differences between households headed by women and those headed by men. FHHs have become a cause for concern and are perceived as a vulnerable category.

There are problems associated with the definitions and measures of FHHs, particularly in the developing countries, since the term 'head of the household' has an additional meaning when it is situated in a patriarchal set-up. The term fails to include the wide range of family structures that are economically dependent on women. Some of the additional terms which can be included are women-maintained, woman-led, mother-centered, single-parent or male-absent, rather than woman-headed to ascribe meaning to different family structures (Buvinic, Youssef, and Elm 1978; Youssef and Hetler 1983). There are many social and economic situations that predispose certain family types to poverty, and these may be highly culture-bound.

The definition adopted by the United Nations identifies FHHs as “women (who) are financially responsible for their families”, who are the “key decision makers and household managers”, who “manage household economies on behalf of an absent male head”, or who “are the main economic contributors” (UN 1995). This recognizes the heterogeneity of these households with obvious implications for pertinent policy formulation and program/project strategies targeting these particular female population groups.

Chant (1997:5) identifies seven typologies of FHHs and their characteristics in the world but the researcher adopted and used the definition of FHHs as “households
managed by a widowed, divorced, or a single woman without the mediation of a husband, father, or male relative in the routine day-to-day activities of the household” in the study.

1.3 Rural Poverty and Women

World populations are increasing through time and a majority of them are living in rural areas. These areas continue to be the host of world poverty. Rural poverty affects different segments of societies. Among these, elderly, refugee, disabled, FHHs are mentioned to some. The causes and extent of rural poverty varies from one country to country or household to household. This really depends on the social, cultural, economic and political strengths of countries or households. A review of literature on rural poverty in the world with reference to Africa, Ethiopia and in specific Amhara region including the connection of poverty and women particularly FHHs are presented under this section.

1.3.1 Overview of Rural Poverty

Despite massive progress in reducing poverty in some parts of the world over the past couple of decades—notably in East Asia, poverty remains largely a rural problem and a majority of the world’s poor will live in rural areas for many decades to come. According to the World Bank’s much cited “dollar-a-day” international poverty line, about 1.4 billion people are living in poverty and close to 1 billion people are suffering from hunger (IFAD 2010; UN 2009).

As to IFAD (2010), at least 70% of the world’s very poor people are rural of which large proportion of the poor and hungry are children and young people. South Asia is a host of the greatest number of poor rural people where as sub-Saharan Africa

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1 This was revised in 2008 to $1.25 a day in 2005 prices (UN 2009).
is the highest incidence of rural poverty. These regions are the worst affected by poverty. Levels of poverty vary not just across regions and countries but also within countries (IFAD 2010; UN 2009; Christensen, Veillerentte, Andicopulos 2007).

From 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty, there is significant proportion of people live below the standard poverty line as per World Bank data. As dipicted by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (n.d), about half a billion people were living on less than US$0.75 a day in 2004. Around 80% of these people lived in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (IFAD 2010).

UNDP (2010) finds that the regional rates of multidimensional poverty vary from around 3% in Europe and Central Asia to 65% in sub-Saharan Africa. Next to sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia is home to the largest number of people living in multidimensional poverty. A study on 37 sample African countries showed that multidimensional poverty ranges from a low of 3% in South Africa to a massive 93% in Niger. In Latin America and the Caribbean multidimensional poverty affects from 2% of the population (Uruguay) to 57% (Haiti, even before the devastating earthquake in 2010).

Due to continued efforts made by countries in the world through introduction and implementation of rural based strategies, rural poverty to some extent has declined. However, the incidence of rural poverty in South Asia is still very high. It is home of more than 45% for extreme poverty and over 80% for US$2/day poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa more than 60% and 90% of the rural population lives on less than US$1.25 a day and US$2/day respectively. On the contrary, the incidence of extreme rural poverty shows decline in Latin America and the Caribbean (less than 10%) and the Middle East and North Africa (5%) (IFAD 2010).
Lack of assets, limited economic opportunities, poor education, and social and political inequalities creates favorable conditions to the widespread of rural poverty. Households expose to poverty primarily as a result of shocks such as ill health, harvest failure, social expenditures, conflict and disasters (Ibid: 16). According to the analysis of household data and reviewing of empirical research in 20 countries by Ahmed, Ruth, Lisa and Frankenberger (2007), the poorest people, who are mostly ethnic minorities, poor educational performance, fewer assets and less access to markets, live in remote rural areas.

Marker (2002) as quoted by Evelyn Omarioghae (2008) identified the causative many factors of rural poverty in developing countries. Among these political instability and civil strife; systemic discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion or caste; lack of defined property rights; high concentration of land ownership, and irregular tenancy arrangements; corrupt politicians and rent seeking public bureaucracies; discriminatory economic policies; high population growth with high dependency ratios; market imperfections owing to the high concentration of land, other assets and distorted public policies; external shocks stemming from natural causes and changes in the international environment.

Households move out and in from poverty, which is associated with personal initiative and enterprise. These are associated with education, ownership of physical assets, health. Moreover, external factors including economic growth, opportunities, markets, infrastructure, good governance, which are unevenly distributed, influence the economic status of households (IFAD 2010).

According to the studies conducted by IFAD (2010) in various countries including Argentina, Bangladesh, Chile, China, Indonesia, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Egypt, Uganda, and Ethiopia show that there are more people who...
are sometimes poor than always poor. The speed of movement of countries in and out of poverty varies based on the aforementioned factors. Accordingly, 10% to 20% to 30% of the population from nine countries in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America may fall into or move out of poverty (as defined by national poverty lines).

1.3.2 Poverty among Rural Women and Female-Headed Households

All over the world, women are the center of poverty. According to the UNDP’s Human Development Report (1995), women are the world’s poor, who accounted for more than 70%. Women, unlike of male counterparts, find it more difficult to have access to land, labor, loans from institutions. This disturbs the global trend called the feminization of poverty as Buvinic (1997) noted. Especially, if wellbeing is a yardstick used to measure the degree of people’s poverty, women are traditionally found to be more impoverished than men. This situation is worse in developing countries like Ethiopia.

Rural women and men in the context of poverty and in the rural economy are particularly related with livelihood sources (Kabeer 1994). These are due to two propositions. The first proposition is that rural women are poorer than rural men on average for two different strands. One strand is that FHHs are poorer than MHHs for a variety of reasons. Second strand is that inequality in the distribution of consumption within the household makes women poorer than men irrespective of the headship of the household. A second proposition is that access to limited household income has quite different effects on the welfare of women and children.

One of the main reasons why FHHs, and especially lone mothers, are thought to be the ‘poorest of the poor’, is because they are deprived of one of the major routes
through which access to income is achieved, namely a male ‘provide’. As noted by Elson:

The growth of FHHs is no sign of emancipation from male power, in a society in which women as a gender are subordinate the absence of a husband leavers most women worse-off. The core of gender subordination lies in the fact that most women are unable to mobilize adequate resources (both materials and in terms of social identity, except through dependence on a man’ (Elson (1992) cited by Chant 2007: 19).

According to Lipton and Ravallion (1995), although women work longer hours to attain the same level of welfare as men do, poverty is more likely to be chronic for women and transient for men. Moreover, women bear big share of poverty in terms of health, nutrition, and education (Buvinic 1997).

According to a recent IFAD poverty assessment (1999), the assumption of greater vulnerability of FHHs is based on evaluation findings and studies that show that FHHs: have a higher dependency ratio in spite of the smaller average size of the household; have a fewer assets and less access to resources; and tend to have a greater history of disruption.

Despite FHHs possess smaller size of household members compared to MHHs, they carry a higher dependency burden and contain a higher ratio of non-workers to workers than do other households. This is true in the findings found from 15 countries, which includes Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. It displays that poor rural households generally have a greater share of dependents (non-working age) than non-poor households (IFAD 2010). The above result is confirmed by data from rural Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, Brazil and Peru. FHHs bear relatively more dependents, young and old (Quisumbing, Lawrence, and Christine 2001; Rosenhouse 1989).

The main earners of female-headed families are by definition women. They have lower incomes, assets, and remunerative jobs and productive resources (such as
land, capital and technology) compared to men. This makes FHHs more economic vulnerable. A counter factual simulation to explain the wage gap between Brazilian FHHs and MHHs reveals that FHHs have lower incomes not only because they have more children or fewer adults but also because the female head earns less than men (Barros, Louise and Rosane 1993) may.

Although rejecting the notion that female household headship should automatically be classified as the ‘poorest of the poor’, Moghadam’s (1997) extensive review of the ‘feminization of poverty’ identifies three main reasons which are likely to make women poorer than men. These include women’s disadvantage in respect of poverty-inducing entitlements and capabilities; their heavier work burdens and lower earnings, and constraints on socio-economic mobility due to cultural, legal and labor market barriers (Kabeer 2003). Furthermore, in most parts of the South there is little or no compensation for earnings shortfalls through ‘transfer payments’ from external parties such as the State, or’ absentee fathers’, which makes them the ‘poorest of the poor’ (Chant 2003: 9).

Quantitative as well as qualitative evidences show that FHHs are categorized among the poorest of the poor and poorer than MHHs. There have been several reviews of the literature on female headship and poverty, including Buvinic and Gupta (1994, 1997), Quisumbing et al (1995) and Haddad, Christine, Chizuru, Quisumbing and Slack (1996).

Buvinic and Gupta (1994) provide significant insight into this area. They conducted 65 studies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, of which 61 studies displayed there is a relationship of female headship to poverty. Self-reported female headship and variant poverty indicators are used in the studies. Total or per capita household income and consumption expenditures, mean income per adult
equivalence earnings of the head, services access and ownership of assets were major measurements of poverty used in their study. A majority of the studies clearly stated that FHHs are over-represented among the poor. There are three sets of factors that determine the greater poverty of these households: characteristics of household composition, the main earner, and the unique circumstance of being FHHs (Ibid).

Buvinic and Gupta (1997) reviewed 61 studies and find that in 38 of them FHHs are over-represented among the poor. In 15 studies, only certain groups of FHHs, such as de jure households, appear to be over-represented among the poor. In 8 studies there was no evidence of higher poverty rates among FHHs.

Quisumbing et al (1995) analyzed eleven data sets from developing countries with the objective of determining if there is a higher incidence of poverty among FHHs. Using both per capita and adult equivalent indicators and a variety of poverty measures they demonstrate that there is little evidence to suggest a statistically significant difference in the level of poverty in male-and female-headed households. They do find that FHHs are consistently worse off than MHHs over a range of poverty measures in Ghana (both rural and urban) and rural Bangladesh. However, they do not provide insights into the process of FHHs formation in these two countries.

Haddad et al (1996) reviewed approximately 10 studies of headship in developing countries and found “uneven and unpredictable” evidence that FHHs have a higher incidence of poverty than MHHs. They conclude that both household characteristics and the process of household formation are important determinants of the incidence of poverty among FHHs.

The evidence on the incidence of poverty among FHHs in these three studies
is inconclusive. Both Quisumbing et al (1995) and Haddad et al (1996) believe that the conclusion about strong relationship of poverty and FHHs found by Buviniv and Gupta is not clear. Thus, they find the evidence mixed.

As mentioned by the DPRD and MOFED (2008), the International Centre for Research on Women found from the reviewed 61 headship studies 53 of them revealed greater poverty in female-headed families. The studies conducted in developing countries over the decade.

Buvinic’s (1991) as quoted by Lampietti and Stalker (2000) review of studies in Latin America and the Caribbean suggests that FHHs are more likely to be poor than are MHHs. In 19 of 22 studies FHHs appear to have a higher incidence of poverty than MHHs. Menjivar and Trejos (1992) cited by Lampietti and Stalker (2000) analysis reveals that in only 2 of 6 Central American countries FHHs have higher incidences of poverty.

There is no evidence from the poverty assessments that FHHs have a higher incidence of poverty than MHHs in MENA. Only two of the Poverty Assessments provide information about the percentage of households with a female-head. In Jordan 8% and in Yemen 4 % of households have a female-head. In Jordan and Morocco, a lower incidence of poverty displays in FHHs than MHHs (Lampietti and Stalker 2000). Datt and McIlwaine (1997) as cited by Lampietti and Stalker (2000) find that there is no statistically supported evidence in Egypt about a higher incidence of poverty.

In the South Asia region, only 2 of the 5 Poverty Assessments address FHHs. India, Nepal and Pakistan do not address female headship. Quisumbing et al (1995) found a higher incidence of poverty among FHHs in Bangladesh. The Poverty Assessment entitled “Bangladesh: From Counting the Poor to Making the Poor
“Count” finds that after separating households into rural and urban groups this difference disappears in urban areas and is compounded in rural areas. About 20% of FHHs found in Sri Lanka in which the depth of poverty appears to have decreased more rapidly among female than MHHs from 1985 to 1991.

The Poverty Assessments in Europe and Central Asia generally include a thorough discussion of gender issues. In many of these countries a positive relationship between female-headship and poverty only begins to emerge after examining household composition. Slightly higher incidence of poverty of FHHs than MHHs found in Estonia, Hungary, urban Kyrgyz Republic, Poland, and Russia (Lampietti and Stalker 2000).

Ye (1998) analyzed nationally representative household surveys for 19 countries in sub-Saharan Africa using two thirds of mean per capita consumption expenditure as a poverty line. FHHs have a significantly higher incidence of poverty than MHHs in 7 out of 19 countries. However, the reverse (where the incidence of poverty is higher among male than FHHs) is true in 10 out of 19 countries. The incidence of poverty among FHHs increases slightly based on the economies of scale in household consumption. This is expected because FHHs are smaller than MHHs on average.

The Poverty Assessments suggest that poverty is higher among female-than male-headed households in 10 out of 21 countries, which includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Benin, Gabon, Madagascar, Malawi, rural Niger, Seychelles, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. On the contrary, higher poverty appears in MHHs than FHHs occurs in Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, and Tanzania while there is no differences between the two households found in Eritrea, Mauritania, urban Niger, and Côte d’Ivoire (Lampietti and Stalker 2000).
The IFAD (1999) carried out poverty assessment in eastern and southern Africa (1999) based on household budget surveys. It indicates that rural FHHs are not poorer and even less poor than MHHs but with some exceptions. For instance, in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia FHHs are poorer while in Rwanda the difference is small (41% FHHs and 39% MHHs). In rural Tanzania the income of FHHs was slightly higher than MHHs, but the pattern is reversed in urban Dar-es-Salaam. However, in Zanzibar and Malawi FHHs are poorer than MHHs in rural areas rather in urban ones.

The above argument is confirmed by an assessment carried ou in West and central Africa by IFAD (1999). Accordingly, findings about greater vulnerability or poverty of FHHs are found to be contradictory. For instance, about 9 out of 19 countries in sub-Saharan Africa the incidence of poverty is lower among FHHs. In Niger, from 8% of FHHs about 55% would be defined as poor whereas 64% of MHHs would be classified as poor. The poverty incidence in Ghana is 28% for FHHs and 33% for MHHs. The incidence of rural poverty in rural Nigeria shows declining. For example, among FHHs it declined from 42% in 1985 to 22% in 1992 whereas for MHHs it declined from 50% to 38%. In Uganda FHHs were no poorer than MHHs. Thus, the homogenous nature of FHHs and receiving of regular remittances mentioned as the reasons for lack of consistent result about the incidence of poverty on households. This is true with the conclusions of the assessment in eastern and southern Africa.

Babatunde, Owotoki, Heidhues and Buchenrieder (2007) employed anthropometric measurement from sample size of 60 (30 MHH and 30 FHH) households in order to determine FHHs vulnerabilities to poverty. The result shows that the FHHs were more vulnerable to food insecurity than the MHHs. There was
higher prevalence of wasting and stunted growth among the FHHs. This probably implies that FHHs had less access to and utilization of food and are, therefore, more food-insecure than their MHHs. Furthermore, the result shows that household became more vulnerable to food insecurity as the age, household size, dependency ratio and susceptibility of sickness of household heads increased.

1.4 Rural Women’s Access to Productive Resources

Access to and control over productive resources is essential to improving agricultural productivity of both men and women farmers. Women lack basic essential productive resources although they share half of the world’s population. It is very difficult to realize various development goals including poverty reduction and economic growth without improvements of women’s access to and control over economic resources (Badr 2010; UN 2009 cited by Giovarelli and Wamalwa 2011). In fact, almost all development projects aim at rural women in order to reduce, hunger, malnutrition, and poverty since they produce 60%–80% of food in the developing world. They play main role in household food security, dietary diversity, and children’s health (Ibid).

Compared to men, women have generally less access to productive agriculture resources. Women get shortages of basic resources like farmland, credit, labour, and agriculture inputs, and services (Giovarelli and Wamalwa 2011; IFAD, WB, and FAO 2009; Sachs 1996; see also Yigremew 200; Rogers 1980; Yeshi 1997). These authors point out that socio-cultural elements take into account the primary factors for women’s less access to and rights over resources. Among these socio-cultural factors, gender is a basic determinant of social relations and rights in households and rural communities. In addition to gender, other factors like class, ethnicity, and caste
decides the fate of women’s opportunities, hopes, living, self-perception and securing resources and status in the community. Having possessed full rights on access to and control over resources promotes women’s ability to produce and changes their behavior as producers.

In all societal life including in household, social, economic, and political institutions, gender inequalities raises to be a big problem. For instance, a World Bank wrote on regional patterns of gender inequalities in basic rights and in access to and control of resources. According to this study, disparities exist all over the world and no woman in the developing has equal rights with man (World Bank 2001). Legal statutes, customary laws, and community practices are sources of gender inequality, and affect the rights and privileges of men and women either positively or negatively. These gender inequalities may be reflected through in marriage, inheritance, property ownership and management, in inter-and intra-household decisions. For example, in many cases, women’s access to productive resources is withdrawn in the event of marital breakdown and other circumstances. Especially, FHHs are the most disadvantaged segments of society in this aspect. They are also resource deficient people (Giovarelli and Wamalwa 2011: 1; Badr 2010; Farnworth and Tamene 2010; Christensen et al 2007; Yigremew 2005). This section is intended to assess the situation of rural women’s access to and control over productive resources including land, labor, capital, agricultural services.

1.4.1 Land

Land has great significance in the social relations of farming. It is usually considered as a farmer’s key asset in most rural areas of developing countries. It is a particularly critical resource for a woman in the event that she becomes a de facto household head as a result of migration by men, abandonment, divorce, or death...
(IFAD et al 2009). Enhancing rural women's land ownership is crucial for many reasons. It is firstly a necessary step in the fight against hunger and poverty and an efficient tool in addressing food security problems. Women’s accesses to enough farmland imply that it has a direct impact on women's capacity to have access to financial resources. This can, in turn, reduce their vulnerability to hunger and poverty since it would entail their ownership of basic means for subsistence and market production. Insuring women's access to land and other productive assets is also a long term strategy to increase agricultural productivity and sustainability (Lemlem et al 2011; Badr 2010; Yigremew 2005).

Despite the symbolic association between women and the land and the widespread cultural perception of earth as mother, at best estimate women own only small amounts of the world’s land (Sachs 1996; Dankelman and Davidson 1988). As data shown in all countries, women suffer from owning sufficient farmlands. Even women own, it is less amounts of land (World Bank 2007a cited by Lemlem, Puskur, Renard and MacMillan 2011). In Congo and Tanzania, for example, the female share of landowners was 25% (Deere and Doss, 2006 cited by Lemlem et al 2011), and in Benin, about 11% of females are landowners but the average size of women’s men’s holdings is about 1 and 2 hectares of farmland respectively. From the limited gender-disaggregated data available in NENA regions, it is indicated that women own only around 5% from the total landholders in Egypt and Syria. However, female land ownership is around 24% in Egypt, 29% in Jordan, 14% Morocco and 4% in Syria (Christensen et al 2007).

In Pakistan, women own less than 3% of plots even though 67% of surveyed villages reported a woman’s right to inherit land (World Bank 2007a cited by Lemlem et al 2011). In Indian states, there is some progressive gender indicators particularly
related to land. However, female shares remain low. For instance, in Kerala women operated only 21% of land holdings. In Latin America, landowners’ females share about 11% in Brazil to 27% in Paraguay (Deere and Doss 2006 cited by Lemlem et al 2011).

Lack of access to rural land is, thus, an obstacle to agricultural productivity and to increase rural women’s income as they cannot access these resources without holding land and securing tenure (Lemlem et al 2011).

According to the WBI (2003) cited by Yigremew (2005), there are four criteria that access to land is determined and secured. These are: a household’s ability to produce its subsistence and generate market surplus; its socio-economic status; its incentive to exert unseen efforts, make investments, use resources sustainably; and its ability to self-insure and/or access financial markets.

Besides to the above criteria, people acquire land through different mechanisms in the world. According to De Janvry and Sadoulet (2001) as cited by Yigremew (2005), individuals’ acquire land through private transfers, community membership, direct appropriation, and market transactions. He adds that the forms of land access through either through formal or informal, or in collective or individualized possession include intra-family transfers (like inheritances, allocations), being membership, land sales and rental markets, and through non-coercive policy interventions such as collectivisation schemes, decollectivization and devolution, and land market-assisted land reform. IFAD et al (2009) identified two sets of legal framework and institutions govern access and ownership issues for community and private land: the formal and the customary systems.

It is very difficult to give a clear picture of Ethiopian women on land right issues both in terms of access and control or ownership to land. This is because there
is not the same legalized form of land rights all over the country even though formulated as articles in the constitution governing the laws of all regions (Mebrat 2005). In Ethiopia diverse mechanisms of access to land have been active. Both the formal administrative and informal and customary (land redistribution, inheritance and gifts, land markets, community membership, resettlement and squatter settlements) ways of accessing land have been practicing in Ethiopia for many years (Yigremew 2005; Yared, Yigremew, Degafa, Alfonso, Peter 2000; Addis, Teklu, Mwangi, and Verkuijl 2001; Mebrat 2005; Almaz 2007; Ogato, Boon and Subramani 2009: 91).

Access to adequate amounts of land is clearly one of the most important determinants of household productivity and food security. However, rural women in general and FHHs in particular, as shown in some studies and government data, have less access to and less control over land and other productive resources. Here are some instances: a Central Agricultural Census Study 2003 indicates that out of the total landholders, only 18.6% were women (quoted by Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA): 2006).

Harold’s (1993) study in North Shewa displays that FHHs accounted for 50% of the total landless peasant households irrespective of small proportions. Etenesh’s (1999) study at Ada Woreda in central Ethiopia shows that the average farmland size of MHHs is 2.35 where as FHHs is 1.6 hectares. Dejene (1994) conducted a study in east and west Shewa and it proves that among 1,415 rural households where 22% were women mean size of holdings was 0.7 and 0.55 hectares for male-headed and FHHs respectively. Ali (2000) finds that 51.7 % of FHHs had holdings of 0.25 to 0.5 hectares while only 10% of MHHs had this size of holdings. In the larger holding category of 1.0 to1.25 hectare, the proportion was 5% and 30% for female-headed and
MHHs respectively (Ibid).

A World Bank (1998) study mentioned that in the Amhara Region while 80% of the FHHs had less than 2 hectares of land and 5% had between 2 and 4 hectares, 57% of men had less than 2 hectares and 31% had between 2 and 4 hectares. Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2000) studying households about 1027 households (935 male and 92 female) in different regions regarding their possession of land with full use rights found that FHHs possessed nearly half of the holdings of MHHs. According to Yared et al (2000), a great number of households in particular FHHs in South Wollo and Oromiya Region did not produce sufficient food because of limitation of landholdings and unequal distribution. Average landholdings in these areas were 0.5 hectares or less in 62% of the communities. In the study of three Woredas (Lume, Ada and Gimbichu) by Addis et al (2001), MHHs had relatively larger farm sizes than FHHs. However, there was no significant difference between the two groups of households.

Stone and Mengistu (2003) states that FHHs’ rights to land got acceptable and they are really owners of land, but they had less land and less ability to maintain rights in land than male heads in Bati and Dessie Zuria Woreda. Dawit and Solomon (2004: 54) undertook a study in Kiltawlalo and Dahana Woreda of Tigray and Amhara regions and from the identified 408 households most of them said that women do not have access to land. Particularly FHHs due to various reasons do not own their own land. Howard and Erin (2006) stated FHHs held an average of 0.175 hectare whereas MHHs had an average of 0.46 hectare, for a ratio of around 3:1. Among 363 households selected in Eastern Zone (Atsibi-Womberta and Kilte Awlaelo) and Southern Zone of Tigray (Raya Azebo and HintaloWejerta), some 71%
of the FHHs owned plots of less than 0.5 hectare but close to 50% of MHHs owned land with a size greater than 0.5 hectare (Mirusete, Gebregiyorgis, and Selam 2006).

Sara (2007) indicates that out of 116 women in MHHs, about 87% of them did not have access to land of their own. The remaining 13% of women informed that they had access by default, because the MHHs was simply too old, sick, or disabled to work on and control the land. She adds about 36% of FHHs controlled 5.5 hectares while the remaining 64% owned marginal or were smallholders. Ogato et al (2009) reportes that female farmers in the three surveyed communities in Ambo District have limited access to agricultural productive assets including land in comparison to their male counterparts. Consequently, about 45% of female respondents have a farm size of less than 0.5 hectares compared to 72% by the male respondents indicated their farm size is greater than 5 hectares. Mossa (2010) finds that about 20% of FHHs had no farmlands of their own compared to 10% of MHHs. Tekalign and Gezahagn (2003) mentions that the mean holdings in FHHs of Libo Kemekem Woreda are 0.809 hectare as against 1.02 hectare in MHHs.

However, as Yuka (2006) explained in the study of Poverty Analysis of Ethiopian Females in the Amhara Region: Utilizing BMI as an indicator of Poverty, the high land ownership rate is a major feature of FHHs in the rural areas. Considering that the land ownership ratio is 69% for households of married female in rural areas, the land ownership for FHHs is still high (52%).

FHHs are the most disadvantages in access to and control over land across the country. They also lack sufficient labor, draught power and seed. The situations compel them to rent out land either to newly married couples or to land-short households (SERA 2000; Mossa 2010).
Rural women have faced a lot of constraints in accessing land. These factors include the gender division of labour, patriarchal systems, limited membership in local institutions, small household size, gender inequality, shortages of resources and services, and demographic pressure (Dawit and Solomon 2004; Yigremew 2001; SERA 2000: 48; Zenebe 2002; Yared et al 2000).

In addition to small land size, poor quality of land aggravates the problems of farmers in many developing countries. This is due to continuous monocropping, lack of soil-ameliorating practices, increasing populations of humans and livestock. Addis (2001) finds that among the study areas only Gimbichu has a degraded topography; hence a large proportion of its total area is not suitable for agricultural production. Moreover, his study shows that more MHHs had fertile soils than FHHs. Yared et al (2000) points out a substantial number of groups affected by widespread soil infertility, which estimated about 38% of both male and female groups. FHHs in general had access to poorer quality soils; over half of MHHs’ plots had “good” quality compared with less than 40% of FHH plots (Howard and Smith 2006).

However, the pervasiveness shortage of landholdings and problem of soil fertility in Ethiopia have been tried to be resolved through provision of land certificates. Ethiopian government adopts a policy for registration of landholdings and granting land use certificates to holders recently. The Ethiopian Constitution states that all land belongs to the state and peoples of Ethiopian and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange (article 40.2 Proclamation No. 1/1995). Legislation regarding land administration and land use has been (re)enacted during the last ten years both at the federal and at the regional level. According to the Federal Land Administration and Land Use Proclamation No. 456/2005 (which recently replaced by 89/1997), farmers have a perpetual use right on their agricultural
holdings. This right will be strengthened with issuing certificates and keeping registers. Land administration institutions have been established in the major regions in Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya and the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) so as to realize it (Berhanu and Fayera 2005).

Berhanu and Fayera (2005) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (2006) explains that the objectives of land administration developments is to improve tenure security through land registration and title certification. This promotes better land management and builds assets. Farmers are motivated to start using the certified land as collateral for bank loans. Certification of land title is also expected to help in reducing conflicts over land boundaries and user rights among farmers.

Most farmers particularly women believe to benefit more in the process of land registration and certification. Providing women with land titles whether individual or joint is the clearest possible way of equipping women’s access to and control over the most important productive asset in farming. However, the struggle for gender equality clearly cannot end with providing women with a piece of paper. Further development of the land-titling program in Ethiopia will require an examination of: joint titles, FHHs with land title, landless women and men (Farnworth 2010).

1.4.2 Labor and Livestock

1.4.2.1 Access to labor

In most parts of Africa, women’s labor is controlled by men household heads that plays a decisive role in the agricultural production (Boserup 1970). Thus, men benefited more in the name of household head while women’s work has defined as non-productive (Boserup 1970; Rogers 1980). None of African agriculture
development policies has recognized women’s labor contribution in production other than through their husbands. Sachs states, “African policy makers are by no means ignorance of women’s labor contribution, on the contrary they recognize women’s critical labor contribution to Africa families and economies, but they expect women to perform this work for the benefit of men (Sachs 1996).

Moreover, women’s contributions to the economy are considered under the category of “family labor that men take the advantage in development activities in the name of household head” (Rogers 1980). The representation of head as a man is the notion of Western Society and that Third World policy makers or planners including Africans have adopted it. This, in turn, according to Rogers (1980), has imposed negative consequence on the status of women.

Labor availability is an important determinant of household productivity and food security. However, access to and control over labor varies from MHHs and FHHs, which really depends on the availability of adults in the household. As some authors such as Mossa (2010); Sara (2007); Yared et al (2000) state FHHs, elderly, and the sick suffer from shortages of adult male laborers at home than MHHs. Hence, they are forced to rent out their land or give it over to sharecropping. This, however, contributes to a life of hand-to-mouth subsistence. In contrast, MHHs, with adult male laborers live a more or less better life.

Ethiopian farmers take various actions to solve labor shortages. Yared et al (2000) mentioned in South Wello and Oromyia zones reciprocal labor like wenfel and debo exchange arrangements are a widespread source of labor.
1.4.2.2 Access to livestock

The level of one's wealth is measured by the possession of large number of livestock and other assets in Ethiopia. The main indicator of wealth status is found to be the number of animals one owns. Oxen are crucial in ox-plough farming systems in most of the Ethiopian Highlands. Farmers try to avoid oxen problems through traditional mechanisms like *mekenajo*, and *limena* (Mossa 2010; Sharp, Amare and Stephen 2003).

The question of ownership of oxen is critical problem of FHHs. They need to have oxen by which they can cultivate their plots of land. However, FHHs often have either fewer oxen or none at all due to their low economic status (Sharp *et al* 2003; SERA 2000; Mossa 2010).

1.4.3 Agricultural Services

Access to agricultural credit, inputs, extension services, and rural institutions are identified as the four major services required by small-scale farmers. However, women do not benefit from agricultural services as much as men. This hampers women to improve their skills, working conditions and productivity. Men from poor households are also marginalized in this respect (Lemlem, Clare, Ranjatha and Ephrem 2010; Mossa 2010; Ogato *et al* 2009; Christensen *et al* 2007).

1.4.3.1 Access to credit and microfinance

Credit and other financial services are basic requisites for increasing agricultural production and developing profitable enterprises, but Poor rural women remain particularly disadvantaged in terms of accessing microfinance services because of lack of collateral and financial skills and institutional and cultural biases against them (Christensen *et al* 2007; Sharp *et al* 2003; Sachs 1996). Sharp *et al*
Brown (2007) elucidated limitation of credit access arose sometimes from both the demand as well as the supply side. The poorest households who wanted to take loans are afraid of debt; on the other hand, the credit packages offered by local development agents are often too large and focused on a limited menu of investment options (e.g., livestock purchase or fattening). Christensen et al. (2007) identifies that poor rural women lack access to credits due to institutional barriers, unfavorable traditional practices and higher illiteracy.

A number of institutions were found to provide agricultural credit in Ethiopia. Bekele as quoted by Sharp et al. (2003) categorized sources of rural credit in Ethiopia as formal and informal. The formal sources of credit for the communities include Woreda Agricultural Offices; the Development Bank of Ethiopia, the Amhara Credit and Saving Institution (ACSI); and the Ambasel Trading Company. The informal sources of credit were Rural Service Cooperatives, and individual money lenders. A few NGOs such as World Vision, Kale Hiwot and Concern and also provided credit to a limited number of farmers (Mossa 2010; Ogato et al. 2009; Sharp et al. 2003; Addis 2001).

Credits are provided to the needs either in cash or in kind from the above institutions. The credit is provided for petty trading, and fattening or raring of sheep and goat and for purchasing oxen. Agricultural inputs such as chemical fertilizer and improved seeds are also provided on credit (Ibid). Moreover, borrowers should present some kind of guarantee in time of taking credit from institutions.
1.4.3.2 Agricultural inputs and technologies

With the decreasing availability of arable land, increasing population pressure, environmental degradation, it becomes more and more important to increase productivity sustainably. This needs access to appropriate agricultural inputs and technologies. However, the access of women farmers to agricultural inputs and technologies is constrained by their lack of access to credit and membership in rural organizations but also by gender blind development programs and lack of attention to the needs of women in research and technology development programs (Dankelman and Davidson 1988).

*Woreda* Agricultural Office and the Ambassel Trading Company which often operated jointly take much responsibility in the dissemination of agricultural inputs in most parts of Amhara Region specifically in South Gondar (Libo Kemkem *Woreda*), South Wello and Oromiya Zones (Mossa 2010; Sharp *et al.* 2003; Stone and Mengistu 2003). The findings added that participation of female farmers relative to male counterparts in input use was found to be quite low.

Communities particularly women reason out several factors limiting increased use of modern inputs like fertilizer, better seeds. Sharp *et al.* (2003) finds that drought, high price of inputs, limited access to cash became constraints for limited use of agricultural inputs. Other communities mentioned inappropriateness of farmland for input use, crop diseases, too much rain, improved seeds scarcity and untimely distribution of seeds as additional factors restricting increased utilization of inputs. Mossa (2010) also mentioned the provision of agricultural inputs based on the quota system that does not consider the willingness and financial status of farmers, discouraged them to use inputs.
1.4.3.3 Access to agricultural training and extension

Extension provides agricultural and vocational training, which includes fertilizer use, insecticides, improved seed, land use practices, animal husbandry, and home economics. One of the major constraints of women access to training and extension is lack of access to membership in rural organizations. Others include gender neutral or gender blind agricultural research, lack of gender roles and needs in the curricula and extension trainings, and unbeneftited from extension services (Sachs 1996). Male bias is reflected during the distribution of costs and benefits of development processes and that men would have access to agricultural technologies and inputs under the implicit assumption of farmers as men (Elson 1995). Women’s lack of agricultural services, according to Koopman, is mentioned as follows,

It is the patriarchal relations that govern the economic behavior of the rural household, where men control and manage agricultural resources like land, livestock, export crops, tools, means of transport, purchased inputs, credit and so on. It is only men as heads of the households who are accepted as members of producers cooperatives and this excludes most women from access to the improved seeds, agricultural advice, fertilizers, pesticides, tools, credit and crop payments that are commonly dispensed only through cooperatives (Koopman 1995:21).

Therefore, the combined factors of cultures, government policies and male bias in development planning, discriminatory legislations traditions, attitudes, lack of access to decision-making absence of protection against risks of loss of income and ensuing indebtedness are the cumulative effects that restricted women’s access to key factors of production and agricultural services.

Rural communities in Ethiopia obtain extension services mainly from governments though not all people. However, the degree of accessing extension services varies from male to female farmers. Mostly male farmers are more beneficial than their counterparts. According to Agricultural Census Survey data 2001 cited by
Mowa (2006) shows that women who had access to agricultural extension services was only 9%.

1.4.3.4 Access to rural institutions

Like other agricultural services, access to rural institutions are affected by different factors, which include male bias, gender differences, culture and traditions. These institutions are mainly channeled by males (Ogato et al 2009).

1.4.4 Women’s Role in Agriculture

Women comprise half of the total population in the world of which most of them are living in the rural areas. They play a greater role in agriculture throughout the world than is generally imagined. Indeed, they constitute a big percentage of the labor force, with 428 million women working in the agricultural sector around the world according to the International Labor Organization (ILO), compared to 608 million men in 2009. However, many authors such as Rogers (1980), Sachs (1996), Ostergaard (1992), Momsen (2004) argue that cultural ideology about men’s and women’s role is a critical factor in determining the way gender relations of production are ordered in a given society. Moreover, the unreliability of statistical evidence on gender roles in agriculture particularly in African countries hinders to know precise number of women participants in agriculture. In many societies in the world particularly in Africa, it is culturally unacceptable both for a woman to say that she does agricultural work and for the census taker to consider that she might have an economic role. Thus, women’s work in agriculture is largely unremunerated and is so undervalued and often unrecorded (Ibid).

According to Odame et al quoted by Momsen (2004), twice as many women as men work in an agriculture-related activity in developing countries. The
importance of women in the agricultural workforce is increasing in developing countries. The proportion of women workers has steadily increased from 38.59% in 1950 to 43.83% in 2000 and is predicted to rise to 44.44% by 2010, whereas in developed countries the proportion of female agricultural workers has declined and was 36.13% in 2000 compared to 43.77% in 1970 (FAOSTAT cited by Momsen 2004). In short, women suffer from the hard work of what in gender studies is called ‘triple roles’ including in production, reproduction and community works. Recently, however, the situation has begun to change for the better (Momsen 2004: 157).

Boserup wrote a book entitled *Women’s Role in Economic Development* in 1970. It is the first scholar book that deals about gender issues. She provided a comparative analysis of women’s work based on data from a wide range of societies. According to Boserup, women’s work varies from society to society, which really depends on sex-role stereotyping and cross-cultural regularities in the sexual division of labor.

Women play big role in the agriculture sector particularly in the poorest countries of the world. Their contributions differ slightly from place to place at the continental level. For instance, female participation rate in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Caribbean regions in the agricultural labor force is highest while it is lowest in Latin America (FAO cited by Momsen 2004). Female participation in agriculture really depends on the nature of the farming system of the regions as Boserup (1970) categorized ‘male farming system’ and ‘female farming system’.

Boserup (1970) described the ‘male farming system’ was characterized by high occurrence of landlessness, high levels of agriculture wage labor, inheritance through male lines and a low presence of women in the fields due to strict norms of female seclusion resulting in women concentrating mainly on tasks within the
homestead. On the other hand, the ‘female farming system’ was characterized by family farming, low levels of wage labor, bilateral inheritance practices, communal ownership of land with usufruct rights for female members and high percentages of agricultural female family laborers. Women in this latter system played a major role in food production, had greater freedom of movement and were active in trade and commerce.

Boserup clearly reveals women’s significance contribution in agricultural production in developing countries in her study. She classifies three major farming systems of women's engagement in farm work. This classification includes: high female participation combined with low technology (like sub-Saharan Africa); low female participation associated with animal draft technology, hired labor, and cultural proscriptions on women's work outside the home; and combining women and men farm work in intensive cultivation in land scarcity and small farm size (Boserup 1970).

However, Boserup’s view is criticized for taking a fixed evolutionary perspective based on a Western Modernization Model. Even though Boserup has mentioned the significance of female labor in Africa agricultural system, the formulated theory is challenged due to the analogues of Africa female farming systems and evolutionary perspectives (Bennette as quoted by Tiruwork 1998). Many of the criticisms of Boserup are related to the observation that the transition from hoe to plough agriculture has not alleviated women’s agriculture workload.

Many studies on woman’s role in rural areas, especially in agricultural economic systems, have associated it with planting, weeding, harvesting and food processing (Boserup 1970). However, women’s role in weeding is insignificant in case of extensive plough cultivation since unlike shifting cultivation, there may be
little need for weeding. Animal power may substitute women’s role in weeding. As a result, women may not have agriculture to do (Boserup 1970). Contrary to Boserup’s argument, Bennette states that women are mainly responsible for weeding in many African farming systems. The reason is that ox ploughing facilitates the farming of larger acreage’s per household unit, which, in turn, gives rise to more weeding-contrary. New agricultural technologies favor high crop production and demand more total annual labor. Ox-drawn plough may decrease men’s workload than men’s workload in hoe cultivation area. However, women’s labor increases because of the amount of land to weed and the crop to be processed have increased (Bennette quoted by Tiruwork 1998).

According to Boserup (1970:32), technological progress in agriculture (itself resulting mainly from growing population pressure over land) is accompanied by changes in the status of women. The lower stage of agricultural development (shifting cultivation) is designated as ‘female farming system’ on the basis of the preponderance of women in food production. The net higher stage of agricultural development (extensive plough-cultivation), in which women are supposed to be progressively confined to the house, is referred to as “male farming system.” However, this form of classification is no longer accepted as an accurate presentation of the diversity of women’s engagement in cultivation worldwide (Ellis as quoted by Dejene1995:4).

Although Boserup’s thesis has some shortcomings, women’s contribution in the agricultural sector still considered to be very high, and, according to FAO data, women play a particularly important role in Africa. For every 100 men working in agriculture in Mozambique, there are 150 women; in Zimbabwe, the comparable number of women is almost 130, and in Bangladesh more than 100. According to data
from one research institute, in Africa as a whole, about 70% of the female labor force is engaged in agriculture, while in East Africa, the figure is close to 90%. This phenomenon is called ‘the feminization of agriculture’ (Kano 2005: 88).

Agriculture is female-intensive in both Mozambique (60% of the agricultural labor force is female) and Tanzania (54%) but not in South Africa (34%) (FAO, IFAD and ILO 2010). Mijindadi (1993) projected that women are responsible for 70% of actual farm work and constitute up to 60% of the farming population in Nigeria. The high percentage of women working in agriculture in the MENA is up to 60% in Morocco and 50% in Egypt for example (Badr 2010).

In Asia, women contribute to about one half of food production in the region as a whole though the figures vary from country to country. In Indonesia, the figure is 54% and in the Philippines, 46%. Sixty percent of agricultural workers in Japan are women, the highest figure among industrialized countries (Kano 2005).

The success of agriculture sector in Ethiopia is realized through strong participation of rural women. Since the agriculture sector absorbs high human labor, rural women contributions in labor force take place either as family members or in their own right as women heading households. Government tries to incorporate the issues of rural women in various policies to strengthen the position of women in the agricultural sector; however, many factors such as economic constraints, cultural norms and practices impede the effectiveness of household food security and the sector (Lemlem et al 2010).

Agriculture is a dominant sector in Ethiopia. It contributes 40% to the GDP, employs nearly 85% of the total labor force and generates the bulk of foreign exchange, which accounts for 90% of exports. Smallholder farms are predominant and account for more than 90% of agricultural production and over 95% of the total area is
under cultivation. The need of intensification of agriculture is unquestionable for two reasons. The first is that it enhances the poor performance of the agriculture sector, and the second is to equate the growing population of the country, which estimated at over 78 million and growing at a rate of 2.6% per annum. Thus, efforts to augment agricultural productivity in order to meet the growing food demand have to be continued (Diao and IFPRI 2010; IFAD 2009).

Various studies in Ethiopia have revealed that the women contribution in agriculture is very significant. However, the studies reached at inconsistent results. Frank claims that women are responsible for about 40% of all agricultural labor in Ethiopia while Addis argues that it is 50 to 60% (Frank 1999; Addis 2000 cited by Yigremew 2001). On the other hand, Wudnesh (1999) as quoted by Yigremew (2000) points out that about 50 to 80% of agricultural works is performed by women. The Ethiopian Agriculture Research Institute (EARI) cited by Yigremew (2000), female farmers provide more than 54% of the total labor and time required for crop production and they also cover up to 77% of the labor and time inputs required in livestock sector. Furthermore, Hirut (2000) states that women labor has a significant contribution in the sector of agricultural production beyond the domestic roles they have in the household in Ethiopia though her argument is not supported by figures.

As mentioned before, women shoulder triple responsibilities: productive, domestic, and community related activities. Especially, women’s role in agricultural sector is very critical. Although cultural embargo forbids women’s ploughing, they carry out several responsibilities in farming spheres and housing garden including land preparation, weeding, harvesting, threshing and storing. Women are also responsible in livestock production like herding, attending sick animals, watering, barn cleaning, milking and milk processing. In spite of women’s participation in all of
these agricultural tasks, their roles in agricultural production have not been got recognition by many agricultural extension agents (Frank 1999; Mossa 2010; Lemlem et al. 2010: 15; Lemlem et al. 2011). Moreover, the farming system particularly the technology is female unfriendly even if, women opt to challenge the cultural taboo (Almaz 2007).

In an article on rural women in Ethiopia, Dessalegn (1991) refutes Boserup’s Schema. He argues that in Wollo, where plough agriculture predominates, women’s participation in agriculture was found to be good. In Wolayta, where hoe-based cultivation prevails, women’s contribution to agriculture production was very low. In addition, he contended that among the Bejja or Gumuz of Metekel in Western Ethiopia, where hoe-based farming is the most common practice, both sexes with the exception of women in sowing contribute equally in agricultural labor.

In the same manner, Dejene (1995) in a study of two villages in Hararghe and Gojjam concluded, “Boserup’s Thesis has weak relation to Ethiopia agriculture which has its own specific features compared to agriculture in sub-Saharan African and Asian countries.” The mixed farming of the Ethiopian highlands is dominated by widespread plough-culture. Moreover, the rain-fed Ethiopian agriculture, unlike South-eastern Asia where irrigation and landless rural laborers are important, is based upon large-scale use of household labor for food and fiber production. Besides, teff, a crop which requires usually high labor input, is extensively cultivated in the Ethiopian highlands. Women are also very demandable due to the complex food and drinks consumption patterns of many parts of Ethiopia. Likewise, Pankhrust (1992:5) in her study of Women in Menz challenged Boserup’s Schema in that, “despite being part of Africa, plough agriculture is practiced, as in many parts of the rest of Ethiopia, and women are not the dominant force in crop cultivation. Much of Ethiopia, including
Menz, thus, seems to accord with the Asian rather than the African patterns.” Even though Dejene and Pankhurst have come up with different results in various study areas, they have attempted to generalize about Ethiopia in their study.

In Ethiopia, women are busy to carry out not only farming activities but also they are responsible for taking caring of children, the sick and the elderly. They invest most of their time in performing these activities. They work from dawn to dusk. Unlike men, they have little time for leisure or socializing. The overall length of the working day for women remains to be almost similar regardless of seasonal variation. It is possible to say that women work for between 10–12 hours per day. Half of their time spends to carry out household chores (Lemlem et al 2010).

Like other regions mentioned above, the major problems faced by female farmers in Ethiopia including at Libo Kemkem Woreda were: insufficient land; shortage of family labor; high price of fertilizer and agro-chemical supplies; lack of loans from formal and informal sources; distance from market centers; the shortage of appropriate storage facilities; and poor extension services. The biggest constraints that farmers face were the shortage of land and labor, the high cost of labor, and poor soils (Lemlem et al 2011; Addis et al 2001; Mossa 2010). As a result, to avoid women’s constraints in the agriculture sector gender-aware interventions in design and implementation of development projects in each specific socio-economic setting are very crucial (FAO, IFAD and ILO 2010).

1.5 Gender Rural Livelihoods and Coping Mechanisms

Gender inequality remains to be a big issue for the prevalence of poverty across the rural world. This emanated from lack of sufficient livelihoods in rural places, which exposes women and men to poverty differently. The situation forces
particularly rural women to look for various ways to sustain their life for long. This section tries to see the linkages of gender and livelihoods in the rural context.

1.5.1 Gender and Rural Livelihoods

Gender and rural livelihoods have many things in common. Gender is a combination of men and women, who rarely have equal assets, access to resources, and opportunities. Women own small size of land, lower education, less access to productive resources, and low decision making power, which is mediated by men. This is due to discriminatory access as children do (Ellis 1999). Thus, their different livelihood strategies and activities depend on availability and access to basic productive resources and social assets.

Livelihood assets can be grouped into natural, physical, human, economic/financial and social capitals (Ellis 2000; Carney 1998; Scoones 1998). The overall livelihood strategies of communities depend on access to these assets, and the environment such as political, organizational and institutional infrastructures in which these assets are combined for production and consumption purposes (Ellis 2000).

Rural households strive to survive through deriving their incomes from a range of sources including own on-farm production (crops and livestock), employment (agricultural and non-agricultural), self-employment and transfers like remittances and social transfers (IFAD 2010).

IFAD (2010) points out that about 30% to 60% of rural households in sample countries of the Rural Income Generating Activities (RIGA) including in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean depended on at least two sources of income, which makes up three-quarters of their total income. Sources of income are; however, varied from one country to another.
On-farm production is a particularly important income source in sub-Saharan Africa: at the national level, between 40% and 70% of rural households earn more than three-quarters of their income from on-farm. In other regions like Asia and Latin America livelihoods are more diversified. About 10% to 50% of Asian people earn more than three-quarters of their income from on-farm sources while in Latin America only 10% to 20% do. Thus, agriculture continues to play a key role in the economic portfolios of rural households. About 80% of rural households in 11 of the 15 sample countries continue to engage in farm activities although it is only part-time and to grow some of their own food requirements (Ibid).

In many rural areas, agriculture alone cannot provide sufficient livelihood sources. Migration is also rarely chosen as an option for everyone due to the worst excesses of urbanization with its associated social and environmental problems. Rural non-farm employment can play a potentially significant role in reducing rural poverty and numerous studies indicated the importance of non-farm enterprise to rural incomes. Where the rural poor are landless, non-farm income can be particularly important (Gordon and Craig 2001).

Empirical evidence from a variety of different locations suggests that rural households do indeed engage in multiple activities and rely on diversified income portfolios. Ellis (1998: 9–10) remarked a greater reliance on non-farm income in Asia (around 60%) as compared with sub-Saharan Africa (where 30%–50% reliance is common place). In Southern Africa it may attain 80%-90%. But this proportion, as noted by Ellis (1999), varies widely between landless households and those with access to land for farming. Reardon (1997) documented small enterprise studies, which shows that the typical rural household in Africa has more than one member employed in a non-farm enterprise. As to Islam (1997) reports, the share of the non-
The farm sector in rural employment in developing countries varied from 20% to 50%. Reardon (1997) finds rural non-farm (RNF) income shares in Africa ranging from 22% to 93%. In Africa, the average share of RNF incomes as a proportion of total rural incomes, at 42%, is higher than in Latin America and higher still than in Asia (Reardon, Stamoulis, Balisacan, Berdegué, and Banks 1998).

Agriculture is the mainstay livelihood of rural households in Ethiopia. However, most rural households are food insecure and vulnerable. In order to subsidize this sector, Ethiopia rural households as part of sub-Saharan Africa, engage intensively in off-farm and non-farm activities.

A study undertaken in Boloso Sore of Wolaita Zone by Adugna et al (2008) supported the above idea. Adugna states that the share of agriculture accounts for about 64.1%, nonfarm for 22.8% and off farm accounts for 13.1%. Sara (2007) finds that out of the 150 sample households in the two kebeles, the predominant form of activity, accounting for about 69% of activities, was on-farm employment (crop production). The remaining households, whose main activities were off-farm and non-farm, accounted for 30% and about 1%, respectively.

1.5.2 Rural Women Coping and Adaptive Mechanisms

Rural women devise different mechanisms to enable them to cope with adverse livelihood conditions. Food availability can be affected by climatic fluctuations, depletion of soil fertility, or the loss of household productive assets or some other related problems. In that case farmers’ try to reduce this problem by taking actions that result in trade-offs between current and future consumption. The range of coping and adaptive strategies is large and differs according to the particular conditions. It includes improving productivity, food grain purchase, sales livestock,
societal income transfer systems such as gift and relief food distribution (Frehiwot 2007).

Labonne and Gilman, 1999 cited by Tihut (2009: 59) defined coping strategies “are often short-term responses to a specific shock such as drought” (For example, sharing, rationing of food and mobility have been the most commonly used coping strategies among rural communities in Ethiopia. Adaptive strategies, conversely, “involve long-term change in behavior patterns as a result of shock or stress” (Ibid).

Bevan (2000) tried to analyze coping strategies at three levels. These are community-level strategies, household-level strategies and individual-level strategies. Community-level coping strategies include selling of fuel wood and dung cakes, male migration for labor, production of chat, grain-selling and diversification, planting eucalyptus for sale, and food aid. In addition, communities have developed a series of community-level institutions that help households to cope with poverty and with risk (Dercon 1999). Household level strategies comprises of child labor, early marriage for girls, abduction of girls (to avoid the costs of marriage). Households that are prone to food crises adopt a variety of strategies to cope including diversification, inter-cropping, and flexible production schedules. Many individual-level coping strategies are part of a process of ‘adverse incorporation’, which includes eating wild foods, resorting to prostitution, and not having time or resources to invest in their own skills (Bevan 2000:18).

The coping strategies of women household heads can comprise any or all of the following actions: collecting and selling firewood; collecting and selling crop residues or cow dung; mowing green grass to sell in the nearest market center; selling areke or tela; undertaking casual labor for others; sharecropping; offering children for casual labor; begging for food at threshing fields; borrowing from relatives or
neighbors, engaging in public works, food aid (Ellis and Tassew 2005; Yared 1999; Dessalegn 1991; Shumet 2009; Dawit and Solomon 2004; Tihut 2009; Sachs 1996; see also Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Momsen 1991).

Women principally earn income by using their domestic skills and capital through home-garden production, food and drink preparation. Ayalneh, Konrad and Benedict (2003) mentions that charcoal making and fuel-wood selling subsidize farming households in all the three districts, at varying degree 18.6 %, 12.4% and 23.2% of sample households in Alemaya, Hitosa and Merhabete, respectively. He found also distilling local alcoholic drinks (areki) and brewing tella for sale constitute the main income generating activities mainly for FHHs in Merhabete, in which one of the sample households reported to generate up to 63% of the total household income from these activities.

As to Ellis (1999), livelihood diversification is an important adaptive strategy to raise incomes and reduce the impact of environmental risk. Female heads involve in various sources of income generating activities than male headships. They diversify out from farming into petty trading like food and local drink selling. Female heads are constrained to engage in migration due to child and elder care responsibilities (Stone and Mengistu 2003: 12).

Food-for-work becomes nowadays an option for income source of FHHs. Howard (2006) points out 20% women heads in Tigray reported food-for-work as main constituent of their income. Sharp et al (2003:95) states over 60% of households across the study area had received some food-for-work payment, and as expected, other types of transfer (such as agricultural input distributions) were much less common.
Food aid, today, is mainly considered as an instrument in addressing for both transitory and chronic types of food insecurity in low-income country. Sharp et al (2003) mentioned nearly 37% of households in the study area had received free food aid.

Another mechanism to cope with food insecurity is credit. Credit can be formal and informal type. However, formal credit from bank is very rare with the exception of agricultural inputs like fertilizer. Most credit transactions carry out within the villages, which mainly between friends and relatives. These loans are usually used for current household expenditures (Dercon 1999).

Women also used other methods of coping mechanisms like participating in traditional saving institution and the informal economy including marketing activities (Dessalegn 1991; Dejene 1994).

Despite the fact that off-farm income provides a very important source of income for rural women particularly FHHs, it didn’t escape from challenges. According to Dercon (1999), off-farm activities are various in kind and it is striking that the type of activities the poor are involved in are often very low return activities. Tihut (2009) argues that strategies employed by FHHs to meet the demand for agricultural labor and other forms of livelihood insecurity have not been successful.

In many parts of rural Ethiopia, for example, due to lack of agricultural productive resources, women farmers tend to adapt sharecropping when a male peasant farmer uses women’s farmland in exchange for a share of food output that he grows (Tiruwork 1998). Yigremew (2001: 3) points out that because of “giving low status, as well as dependence on male labor and guardianship, women couldn’t have effective bargaining power and control in their relations with sharecroppers.
Dercon (1999) states that exchange rates between livestock with grain were extremely low during the famine of the mid 1980s. Work situation is harsh during the crisis because of more flooding of casual labor markets which undermine its demand. Dawit and Solomon (2004) add that the price of livestock during drought seasons drops because of their physical weakness and the demand is very low at market centers.

In spite of the establishment of constitution and land tenure policies, women are often unable to benefit from these policies. Women lack awareness about the policies and absence of mechanisms or normative support, which impedes to exercise basic rights. Moreover, dependence on customary systems for land-related transactions, bureaucratic court procedures and lack of attention or sensitivity toward the challenges results many women especially FHHs to give up their rights to land and property (Tihut 2009). As Tihut (2009) explained, unequal power and gender inequality puts pressure on women to cope with labor uncertainties including sharecropping, marriage, and manipulation of inheritance opportunities.

1.6 Typology and Incidence of Female-Headed Households

It is true that the frequency of FHHs in the world is becoming increasing through time. The existing political, economic, social, and cultural situations both in developed and developing countries take into account for the formation of FHHs. However, the type, incidence and magnitude of FHHs vary from country to country, region to region, and Woreda to Woreda as discussed below.
1.6.1 Typology of Female-Headed Households

The analysis of female headship typology goes a line with the nature of households in a given community or society. Since the definition of households are a source of debates for scholars, it becomes very difficult to approach FHHs. FHHs, as explained by Chant (1997a: 15), as ‘female maintained’, mother-centered’, ‘single parent’ or ‘male absent’ are divergent groups. She believes that types of FHHs can be separated into five categories such aswidowed, single, separated, divorced and *de facto*. The four categories (widowed, single, separated, and divorced) are further grouped as *de jure* FHHs.

Chant (1997) has expressed further groupings for FHHs such as lone FHHs, single sex female only FHHs, female dominated (in that the only males are children) FHHs grandmother headed FHHs, embedded FHHs or extended FHHs.

The definition of female headship becomes complicated like meaning of a household. As Chant (1997:3/B) states, since “households are usually defined on the basis of their pragmatic/functional and residential/morphological characteristics, it is important to stress that they are also conduits for familial and gender ideologies”. Thus, the organization and membership of households vary through time. This complicates the analysis of female headships so that the issue of female headships should be treated with some caution.

1.6.2 Incidence of Female-Headed Households

Throughout the world, the numbers of FHHs are on the increase. Woman’s life style in many countries is undergoing a subtle but significant change due to the rapid increase in the industrialization, poverty and unemployment. Women all over the world in terms of family life are slowly and steadily changing in to singleness due to early marriage, child bearing and joint families. A study by ILO has emphasized that
in the wake of socio-economic changes that are sweeping through Third World countries, women-divorced, abandoned, widowed, unmarried are struggling against overwhelming odds to earn a decent living and to bring up their children.

The prevalence of FHHs varies greatly among countries, particularly the developing regions. A great diversity in the prevalence of female headship exists both in Latin America and Africa, where the proportion of FHHs ranges from a low of about 10% to a high of 40%. In Africa, Mali and Tunisia had a level of about 10% at the times of DHS i.e., the 1980s. Asian households are generally less likely to have a female as a head of household compared with those in Africa and Latin America and the range for Asian countries is narrower. No Asian country, except Thailand, reports more than 20% of households as headed by women. The lowest incidence of FHHs is found among Asian Islamic countries where Muslims constitute a substantial proportion of the national population-Iran, Kuwait, Pakistan and Indonesia-while Tunisia and Mali in Africa have a relatively low prevalence of female headship. Households headed by females account for more than one-fourth of total households among countries in South-eastern Africa as well as the Caribbean (Ono-Osaki 1991; UN 1995).

The traditional pattern of the MHH is more intact in North Africa and South America and to some extent in Asia, with the exception of Thailand. For all countries in these regions, the percentage of FHHs is less than 20%. However, among the 9 African countries considered in the DHS study, 6 have more than 20% of all households headed by females with the highest proportion found in Botswana (46%), Zimbabwe (33%) and Ghana (32%). These figures suggest that the traditional image of the household headed by a man is progressively losing ground in the region with the exception of Mali in Western Africa, which has the lowest percentage of FHHs
(10%) among the countries considered (Erouevi and Ayad 1991). When one compares the DHS data with those of the 1980 round of censuses, recent trends in the prevalence of female headship can be ascertained for several countries. For example, in Brazil, Thailand, and Trinidad and Tobago, the proportion of FHHs increased during the early 1980s. The 1980 census of Trinidad and Tobago found out 25% of all households to be female headed, compared with 29% in the 1987 DHS while Mali showed a decline in the prevalence of FHHs, from 15% in the 1976 census to fewer than 10% in the 1987 survey. Countries showing little change in the recent past include Botswana, Guatemala, Indonesia, and Mexico (UN 1995).

In general, regarding headship, the results suggest a significant and growing percentage of FHHs in many countries (Erouevi and Ayad 1991; Ono-Osaki 1991; UN 1995).

Although Ethiopia was not part of either the WFS or DHS programs which could have produced ample and reliable data on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of FHHs comparable with other countries covered by these surveys, there has been much written about the comparatively high FHHs in Ethiopia, specifically in rural areas (Ali Hassen 2000; Dejene Aredo 1994; 1999; Fafchamps and Quisumbing 2000a, 2000b; Yared Amare 1995; Yigremew Adal 2000; to name only a few).
Table 1.1: The ratio of female household heads (over 15 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tigray</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afar</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amhara</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oromiya</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benishangul-Gumuz</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNNP</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambela</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harari</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dire Dawa</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addis Ababa</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia total</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CSA [1998a~e][1999a~h]

As shown in CSA [1998a~e][1999a~h], the ratio of FHHs is 22% in Ethiopia overall and 35% in urban districts and 20% in rural. According to the data from the World Bank (2004), Ethiopia carries a relatively higher proportion of FHHs among African countries. The World Bank (2004) states FHHs in Ethiopia account for 18% of the total Ethiopian households (from available data for 1991-1999). Ethiopia is placed fifth among the 22 African countries with available data, with a simple mean value of 13% and a median of 13.5%. Moreover, as a study conducted by OECD (2010), about 20% of households in Ethiopia are currently female-headed families, of which many are headed by widows.

Dejene, in his ‘Anatomy of the Household Economy: The case of a Village in Northern Shewa, Ethiopia’ shows that as much as 53% of the sample households in the low income group were female-headed. He further says that:

A comparative study of the top 'richest' and the bottom poorest household in Debre Sina has tentatively suggested that the latter has a higher proportion of women as household heads, adopts a farming strategy that focuses on the production of a fewer number of crops, manages the time budget less efficiently than the former. Poverty can thus be explained not only in terms of differential access to productive resources but also in terms of difference in how the available
resources are used. However, the disadvantaged groups, such as female farmers, need more attention from policy-makers and donors' (Dejene 1993: 45).

Dejene (1994) has carried out another study in North Shewa and East Shewa, which displayed female farmers are 25% less productive than male farmers in the production of field crops. In this study the ratio of FHHs to MHHs was 34% in North Shewa and 24% in East Shewa (Dejene 1994).

Another study related to FHHs is the one done by Harold Aspen in North Ethiopian Peasant Households. He finds that from the total of 110 households 74 were headed by men while 36 were headed by women showing that 32.7% of total households sampled were women headed. Divorce, according to this result, was more commonly reported as the reason for breach of previous marriages. Widows constitute about 43.5% of the FHHs of the sample, which indicated they are less frequently remarried after the death of their husbands. Divorced women, especially if they did not bring own land into the marriage, have little chances of getting a part of the land which was owned by their husbands, if they divorce (Harold 1993). Aspen says that such divorced women with no access to land consequently have two options: either to remarry a new man (who will be the household head), or to join a household of her consanguine relatives (parents, siblings, or children). The households is headed by divorced women may thus be more unstable and less viable compared to other households.

A small study conducted in 1994 by a team of development workers for the Netherlands Development Agency (SNV) in rural Lalibela, North Wello, has found out that fanning is the common means of subsistence for the majority of the FHHs with more than half of them renting out their land and hence obtaining only one-half or one-third of the produce. This same study identified the major factors contributing
to the poverty of FHHs. Lack of representation of the women in social organizations like Peasant Associations (PAs) lack of resources, multiple responsibilities and renting out land were indicated as major factors contributing to the poverty situation of FHHs (Hirut and Rahel 1995).

Pankhurst Helen has carried out a research in Menze, North Shewa, which is entitled Gender, Development and Identity. She has studied single women in Gragn, research Woreda. Spinsters are an abnormality and women are expected to marry in the research area as she stated. Widows who do not remarry are more common though remarriage is still the rule (Pankhurst 1992). She categorizes single women into two categories-the majority comprising a transitory group of divorcees or widows between marriage and the minority who are disillusioned with marriage and seek an alternative career.

Many of the single women who migrate to urban area, according to Pankhurst, worked their way up to a relatively comfortable urban life. Even those whose lives seemed insecure and marked by endless toil did not, in most cases, regret their move away from rural married life. In Gragn the figure of single women who were registered as heads of households was, according to Helen, nearer to 15%. Regarding the situation and status of single women, Pankhurst (1992) says the following:

The single status, the absence of a man in the household, was not desired since it resulted in vulnerability and the likelihood of a greater burden associated with household maintenance and marginalized social status. However, the economic position of the single women was highly dependent on whether or not she was a head of household. In general, those women with independent incomes but in a stable marriage were considered to be in the best position. Marriage provided an element of security whilst independent wealth provided security against the husband. In addition to this distinction, there was a difference between female headed households that contained an adult male, usually a son or a husband figure, and those that did not. The first had more secure access to necessary male labor (Pankhurst 1992: 12).
A study conducted in South Wello and Oromiya Zones of Amhara Region by Yared et al. (2000) indicates that the number of FHHs in their study areas varied from 29% to 33.6%. This may be due to factors such as greater marital instability in such a food-insecure area and a high percentage of males involved in labor migration (many of whom have stayed for several years leaving women as ‘de facto’ heads of households).

As Stone Priscilla presented on “Report of a Research Trip to Explore Gender and Intrahousehold Dynamics in South Wello and Oromiya Zones of Amhara Region, Ethiopia” in 2001, the size of FHHs in sampled households is ranging from 12-39%, which has 24% overall rate. High rates of male out-migration, military conscription, high rates of divorce and overall gender imbalance in the rural areas contributed for the high frequency of FHHs in South Wello and Oromiya Zone of Ethiopia.

Another comparative study on FHHs and MHHs in Wollo is carried out by Stone and Mengistu in 2003. Accordingly, the proportion of FHHs in Bati and Legambo is 14% and 33% respectively. They also mentioned the rates of FHHs in certain kebele administrations of these Woreds such as 16% in Chachato, 12.5% in Kamme, 12.5% in Tebasit, and 23% in Gerado. Among these 8.3% are single, 8% are divorced, and 12.3% are widowed. Even though there is a surprisingly high number of unmarried male heads, they were virtually impossible to run a household by themselves whereas it is possible for unmarried females. The majority households are nuclear family (85) whereas the remaining 15% are extended kin and non-relatives (grandchildren, parents, nephews and nieces).

The percentage of FHHs in Zeghie was estimated close to 50% (EPLAUA quoted by Tihut 2009), which is much higher than estimates in other parts of the same region (Amhara) within Ethiopia where 20-25% is more common. Tihut’s study on
Gender, Justice and Livelihoods in the Creation and Demise of Forests in North Western Ethiopia’s Zeghie Peninsula indicated a similar pattern of FHHs incidence but a bit lower than documented average, where women headed 44% of the sampled households, while men headed 56%. Among these FHHs, 38% were widowed while 6% were divorced. Increased male migration to urban and semi-urban areas, including cotton-growing areas like Humera, where employment as daily laborers is more readily available attributed to high number of FHHs in the area (Tihut 2009). She adds that the current high number of FHHs in the area is directly or indirectly associated with the increasing level of women’s sense of independence resulting from women’s empowerment programs over the years (Ibid).

Different study documents have indicated the composition of household headships to be on average about 30% women headed as opposed to 70% men headed in the Tigray region (Meehan 2004) with a range of variations from Woreda to Woreda. Meehan points out several reasons for the high prevalence rate of de facto FHHs in Tigray. The 1991 civil war, the Ethio-Eritean war, a traditionally high age gap between wife and husbands resulted higher number of widows compared to widowers. Widowed men had higher chance of remarrying than widowed women. Meehan also adds the existing traditional migration patterns in the region aggravated the number of de facto FHHs.

In a recent study on socioeconomic situation of women in the region conducted in 12 sample Woredas with 1500 sample households, the share of FHHs is found to be 40% (Hagos et al 2005 cited by Miruste et al 2006). An attempt has been made to collect the composition of household heads in the sample Woredas by Miruste et al in 2006. The main source of the finding is emanated from the knowledge and experiences of the people. Although reliable data is lacking in the two Woredas,
the portion of FHHs is found to be about 32% in Hintalo-Wejerat Woreda and 33% in Kilte-Awlaelo Woreda. Death of husbands next to divorce became the major reasons for the formation of FHHs in their study of four selected Woredas (Ibid). This study is confirmed by a study carried out by Howard and Smith (2006) on “Leaving two thirds out of development: Female Headed Households and Common Property Resources in the Highlands of Tigray, Ethiopia.” The composition of female headships, according to this study, is 28.9%.

Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2000b) find that 22 % of their sample was of single women (particularly widows and divorced women) and that 35 % of those living in monogamous marriages were previously married. One third of the marriages had ended in the death of one of the spouses whereas the remainder ended in divorce or separation. The high male mortality associated with civil war in Tigray has contributed the highest proportion of single women. These data demonstrate the degree to which divorce is prevalent.

A study on opportunities for promoting gender equality in rural Ethiopia through the commercialization of agriculture by Lemlem et al (2010) finds that on average women head were in between 15% to 30% of households in the 10 pilot learning Woredas (PLWs) located in four regions of the country. FHHs are very vulnerable and they are typically found among the poorer households among the community; however, some are also found in the rich or middle wealth groups. Frehiwot (2007) found among the sample size of 361, FHHs accounts for 20.7%.

A lot has been said by researchers about the causes and incidence of FHHs both in developed and developing countries. However, as Chant points out (2003:31) in respect of routes into female household headships, it is fair to say that these are more usually ‘involuntary’ than by choice. The process which women to head
households are many like divorce, separation, widowed, migration which represent
the major reasons for the universal increase in the number and percentage of FHHs in
the world. In some cases being a household head becomes the choice of women.
FHHs are also among the most poverty stricken households which alarms the fact
across the world. In short, the reasons why FHHs emerged are summarized in the
following way.
Table 1.2: Reasons for the formation of female-headed households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for the formation of female headed households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy of women is greater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage breakdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single motherhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escaping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Husband present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changing family structure</td>
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</tbody>
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1.7 Theoretical Approaches to Poverty and Gender/ Women

The theoretical underpinning of this study is a blend of Feminist Anthropology, Sustainable Livelihood Approach, and Empowerment Approach for obvious reasons. Poverty, livelihood and gender are the core concepts of this study. In order to address these issues, using either of the theories cannot make the study full-
fledged because of the fact that theories have naturally their own limitations. Although they have many common shared dispositions, they also differ in many aspects. Moreover, the nature of the topic is broad and multidimensional and hence there is a need to scrutinize it broadly. Thus, an attempt is made to address this issue through Feminist Anthropology, Sustainable Livelihood Approach and Empowerment Approach.

1.7.1 An Anthropological View of Poverty

The field of anthropology holds a unique position in the social sciences based on its methodology of participant observation, cross-cultural comparison, and ethnographic research. Anthropology depicts human experiences from the point of view of its subjects. Using anthropological concepts, this study often focus on human behaviour in the context of the social environment. It is also an important perspective when it comes to increasing our understanding of poverty. Topics related to poverty like inequality, social justice, and socio-economic status may have generated many resources that would have enriched this literature review. The Culture of Poverty and Critical Theories which include globalization, materialism and feminism hold special places in anthropological view of poverty.

1.7.1.1 The culture of poverty

Culture of poverty, as one of an Anthropological View of Poverty of the major theories, is developed in the 1960s. Oscar Lewis was the main proponent of this theory, which developed along with the emergence of alternative theories. This is the period in which several anthropologists sought to investigate and define poverty as a distinct and separate entity. Theorists attempted to explain the poverty construct as an adaptive, self-sustaining system with a unique language and organization that sustains and perpetuates the condition.
In his seminal book *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*, Oscar Lewis (1959) presents vivid images of poor Mexican families using ethnographic methods. The term “culture of poverty” was first coined in this study. Lewis suggests that behaviours and beliefs are learned in early childhood and can contribute to multigenerational poverty. Some of the behaviours included sexual promiscuity resulting in out-of-wedlock births, strong feelings of marginality, helplessness, and dependency, a lack of clear judgment, and experiences. This reflects due to limited knowledge of personal troubles, local conditions, and their own way of life (Lewis 1959).

Many of those living within a culture of poverty can also feel marginalized by the provision of services that are perceived to be extraneous to their interests and needs. As stated by Lewis, the culture of poverty was so ingrained in children whose ages were six or seven. Children poverty levels were almost similar to their parents. Although Lewis used five Mexican families as examples, he theorizes that the culture of poverty is not just limited to Mexicans. The attitudes and beliefs underlying the culture of poverty transcend both ethnicity and geography (Lewis 1959).

Lewis’s findings and interpretations sparked considerable controversy among scholars about the distinction between the culture of poverty and socio-economic poverty rooted in social class hierarchies. The culture of poverty school of thought argued that personal characteristics or behaviours like deviating from the social norm can be a potential cause of poverty. These behaviours are unique to the lower classes and are passed down from generation to generation, which inturn perpetuating the culture of poverty. According to the scholars who supported this theory, these undesirable behaviours can only be changed by modifying individual behaviours. In contrast, the class poverty school of thought argued that the behaviours exhibited by
the poor are adaptations to their impoverished environments. This is due to the social, political, and economic crisis of society. These scholars proposed that environmental factors cause adaptive behaviours can form a subculture of poverty. Subculture of poverty is to mean the poor hold values similar to those held by other segments of society.

The advocates for the culture of poverty theory argued that poor people have values unique to themselves that differ from middle class. Therefore, the only way to change both values and behaviours is to change the poor person (James 1972). In contrast, the class poverty school of thought suggested that the behaviours of poor people are the result of social class. Because people’s behaviours are adaptations to the environment in which they live rather than a set of distinct values and attitudes. From this point of view, behaviours could be altered by policies that are designed to remove obstacles faced by the poor.

Whether one agrees with the culture of poverty or class poverty theories, it is obvious that the culture of poverty proposed by Lewis had a significant impact on anthropological views of poverty. Moving from a study of isolated cultures to global culture is considered as the new challenge for anthropological research on poverty in the 21st century.

1.7.1.2 Critical theory

Critical theory integrates the major social science theories explaining social phenomena including sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, history, and political science. Anthropologists in particular have used critical theory to focus on globalization, materialism and feminism to explore the concept of poverty that includes economic inequality, social suffering, and homelessness. Even though many
of these issues can overlap into different domains, they provide evidence of the pervasive extent to which poverty touches the many aspects of human life.

Current anthropological research incorporates a blending of cultural and critical theories in a global perspective to address the concept of poverty. According to Benton and Craib (2001), the focus of critical theory is to critique and change society by investigating human capacity in relationship to oppression and emancipation. Since contextual and structural factors are potential causes for distortion of reality, the distortion needs to be eliminated by considering broader historical, political, cultural and structural factors in order to lessen and end human oppression. Critical theories challenge assumptions about society and place explanations in a context that encourages practical actions and emancipation.

1.7.1.2.1 Globalization

Contemporary anthropologists have combined cultural theories with critical theories, such as globalization, in an effort to identify the forces and effects of the global economy on the urban poor. While theorists are in disagreement about the precise nature of the causal forces (one group favours a Marxist view and the other questions the predominantly economic viewpoint), Scheuerman (2006) contends that four core assumptions need to be stipulated. First, the concept of de-territorialization refers to the assumption that territory (a traditional geographically location) no longer constitutes the whole of ‘social space’ in which human activity takes place. Due to enhanced telecommunication access, events occur concurrently around the world. Thus, globalization encourages the spread of new forms of social activity without limitations of territories. Second, the concept of interconnectedness of social activity might influence events across the world. Even though some activities seem connected, others may solely be isolated in regional or local phenomena. Third, de-
territorialisation and interconnectedness are intimately tied to the acceleration of the pace of social life across geographical areas. Finally, although each facet of globalization is linked to the above three assumptions, each process is different and needs to be examined separately.

Anthropologists use ethnographies, narrative analysis and participant observations as principal research tools in order to understand globalization. This makes the anthropological perspective different from other social science disciplines. Anthropologists describe the complex bonds of human culture and social relations within a society through descriptive studies, which helps to interpret the effects of globalization on a given culture or community. Anthropologists are able to link individual experiences to larger local and global processes to describe the many facets of poverty.

1.7.1.2.2 Materialism

The concepts of inequality and risk have become a major part of the general poverty discussion. Anthropological perspective argues that societies are structured in hierarchically ranked social groups. The social groups have various amounts of political power and control over resources (Winthrop 1991). Theories of materialism include cultural as well as Marxist perspectives. It views the material constraints of the environment as central to the process of adaptation. The concept of materialism encompasses material as well as non-material factors. Material factors include environment, technology and the economy where as non-material factors include belief or custom (Winthrop 1991). Social inequality is a concept prevalent to the discussion of the poor. It is seen as a reflection of the differences between groups in the organization of production and the ownership of property. Social groups categorized as a different hierarchy of wealth, power and prestige due to social
inequality (Winthrop 1991; Keesing 1974). The social groups are separated by distances based on culture in which inequality is used to describe the distance between the social groups or the ‘haves’ and have-nots.’

Keesing (1974) describes cultural materialism as a theoretical approach to explain the effects of material conditions on the non-material dimensions of culture ideology. Cultural materialism is similar to the Marxist theory. However, due to an over emphasize of diet, technology, population and environment, cultural makes different from Marxist theory. According to Winthrop (1991), the Marxist theory of culture stresses on the role of culture in reconciling contradictions inherent in a society’s connection with economic production and the culture to ideology. Karl Marx based his concepts on class struggle and believed that material conditions shape the other domains of social life (e.g. politics, law and ideology). His theoretical approach assumes that there is conflict between social groups that can explain the long term transformation of societies.

1.7.1.2.3 Feminism

The concept of the feminization of poverty emerged in the 1980s. Previous anthropological theory neglected the role of gender, especially in relationship to inequality and poverty. Winthrop (1991) speculates that the field of anthropology may have displayed its own cultural bias by treating women as invisible when focusing on issues that related predominantly to men. Anthropological theory and research have yet to determine the extent to which sex roles are moulded by culture rather than biologically inherited or how the interaction between biology and culture shape gender in a given society (Withrop 1991). Current anthropological research makes more of an attempt to incorporate cultural, feminist and globalization theory when exploring the effects of poverty on women.
The tenets of feminist theory are also embedded within the critical theory perspective. Feminist theory posited that women have rare opportunities to understand truth due to the distortion or creation of women places as home in society’s division of social labour (Benton and Craib 2001). This truth may not be widespread because of the dominance of male truths. Recent research focuses on the ways in which females understand reality as opposed to the views of historically dominant male groups. One of the purposes of critical theory is to expose the nature of a patriarchal social order and to make sure that women are recognized for their diversity and not from a single or representative point of view. A core element of critical theory is that all claims about knowledge are grounded in the particular social groups’ interests and values. Critical theorists, thus, rely on history, sexuality and gender so as to establish a foundation to understand feminist approaches.

Gunewardena (2002) contends that poverty of women could be more related to gender discrimination than economics if and only if there is no macro-economic and market regulation problems. Besides low economic status of women, a combined effect of race, gender, and class trigger the vulnerability of women to poverty. Most research on women in poverty fails to assess the root causes related to power and gender. Anthropologists focus more on cultural ideologies relate to gender and how women’s decision making power are affected by gender discrimination and in turn influenced their life course.

Mills (2003) explains that gender and labour inequalities could able to shape the global economy. The values of labourers particularly children, women, migrant farm workers, and domestic workers are underestimated by hierarchical gender ideologies. Patriarchal ideologies and related gender inequalities are significant features of the global economy as they support and perpetuate a segmented and
flexible global labour force. Mills identifies that inequality is more likely to maintain or reproduce structures of power as well as gender hierarchies. She contends that the challenge falls on the inter-connection of global and local processes and vice versa.

### 1.7.2 Sustainable Livelihood Approaches (SLA) to Rural Poverty

Poverty is mostly measured from consumption or income points of view. Big international organization like the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have set a standard poverty line to designate individuals or communities or countries poor or not poor. For example, if an individual’s income is below the defined poverty line or if consumption falls below a stipulated minimum, she/he is automatically is a poor. But income is not the exclusive measurement of poverty rather it is one aspect of poverty (Chambers 1987). Insecurity or vulnerability; voiceless among household, community or government; levels of health, education, and access to assets can be mentioned as ranges of aspects of poverty. These all differ in scope and quality of service. However, as Farrington, Carney, Ashley and Turton (1999: 55) point out:

Dissatisfaction with the income/consumption model gave rise to basic needs perspectives which go far beyond income, and include the need for basic health and education, clean water and other services which are required to prevent people from falling into poverty. More recently, poverty has been defined in terms of the absence of basic capabilities to meet these physical needs, but also to achieve goals of participating in the life of the community and influencing decision-taking. A Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) approach draws on this improved understanding of poverty, but also on other streams of analysis, relating for instance to households, gender, governance and farming systems, bringing together relevant concepts to allow poverty to be understood more holistically.

Sustainable Livelihoods Approach is an analytical device for improved understanding of livelihoods and poverty as identified by Scoones (1998) and Ellis (2000). This approach is, therefore, a foundation for the analysis of poverty of rural women in general and FHHs in particular in Libo Kemekem Woreda. This framework
argued that poverty eradication is realized through augmenting of livelihoods of poor people like FHHs. In this context, a livelihood ‘... comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base’ (Scoones 1998:5).

Ellis (2000: 9) emphasizes that access of productive assets with existence of conducive social relations and institutions could contribute for building of individual or family’s capacity so as to secure their means of living: “A livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household.” (Ibid: 10).

Carney (1998:4), Chambers and Conway (1992), and Scoones (1998:5) identified the following main features of a livelihood approach. It includes a focus on resources (or ‘capitals’), and on factors mediating access (institutions, organizations and social relations) to the resources needed to construct viable livelihood strategies. The relative success of these strategies will also be influenced by contextual variables (trends, shocks, the broader economic and political context) over which the individual or household has very little control. The product of all these variables operating in combination will be a unique livelihood outcome that can be characterized as ‘sustainable’, ‘vulnerable’ or ‘poverty.

The framework identifies five types of capital asset which people can build up and/or draw upon: human, physical, social, financial, and natural though some variations of this framework also add political capital. These assets, which can be substituted for each other in a limited extent, make up livelihood frameworks. For
instance, the poor can easily replace with shortages of financial capital by drawing on social capital such as family or neighborhood (Carney 1998).

**Human capital (H):** the skills, knowledge, ability to labor and good health important to the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies. Low human capital is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, and it interacts with other categories—for instance, the poor often cannot afford to send their children to school or clinics, thereby reinforcing low productivity and perpetuating dependence on ‘low input, low output’ agriculture.

**Physical capital (P):** the basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, water, energy and communications) and the production equipment and means that enable people to pursue livelihoods;

**Social capital (S):** the social resources (networks, membership of groups, relationships of trust, access to wider institutions of society) upon which people draw in pursuit of livelihoods;

**Financial capital (F):** the financial resources which are available to people (whether savings, supplies of credit or regular remittances or pensions) and which provide them with different livelihood options.

**Natural capital (N):** the natural resource stocks from which resource flows useful for livelihoods are derived (e.g. land, water, wildlife, biodiversity, environmental resources).

Finally, it is important to consider trends in the political capital of local communities—in other words, the extent to which they receive and support from central government and can exert influence over local political processes to access public resources. Poverty is a multi-faceted process. Poverty arises not only from low
level of income but also from low and deteriorating stocks of and access to all types of assets and resources, at the community as well as the household level.

Institutions, organizations and social relations found in the second column of the figure. Individualized ownership, which is the strongest form of access, is a means to acquire productive assets. Households that do not own key productive assets can also access them through informal local sharing arrangements and markets (e.g. land leasing, agricultural labor). In fact, institutions and social relations are constraints to resource access of which inflexible land tenure systems and patriarchal norms can be mentioned examples. Rigid land tenure systems, for instance, may prevent people from settling and farming while patriarchal norms may exclude women from lucrative income-earning opportunities.

The forces resulting in poverty operate at the micro (individual and household), meso (community and zonal) and macro (national and international) levels. Access to and control over productive resources is main determinants of relative wealth at individual and household levels. However, access to and utilizations of these resources are mediated by environmental conditions and institutional constraints and opportunities that impinge on individuals at higher-community, regional and national–levels. Relevant shocks and trends in Libo Kemkem Woreda include recurrent droughts, population pressure and soil fertility decline. An analysis of poverty must take into account trends and processes over time, including the broader socio-economic and political contexts that impinge upon livelihood potentials and outcomes.
Livelihood strategies are ways to control livelihood crisis. Although livelihood strategies differ from household to another, people try to choose the best livelihood strategies. ‘Livelihood strategies are composed of activities that generate the means of household survival’ (Ellis 2000:40). Livelihood strategies can be affected by many factors. It depends on skill, knowledge, and experiences of individuals. However, people have little control over changes occurred by external environment. Moreover, traditions and habits can sometimes make livelihood strategies unsustainable and unproductive (Perez and Cahn 2000) at other times livelihood activities are introduced as coping strategies in difficult times.
There are three kinds of rural livelihood strategies developed by Scoones (1998). These include agricultural intensification or extensification, livelihood diversification (including both paid employment and rural enterprises), and migration (including income generation and remittances). Carney (1998) and Eliss (2000) come up with slight differences of categories of livelihood strategies. Carney (1998) classifies livelihood strategies as natural resource based, non-natural resource based and migration while Ellis (2000) classifies livelihood strategies as natural resource based activities or non-natural resource based activities (including remittances and other transfers). Interventions on livelihood strategies could be fruitful during understanding the diverse and dynamic livelihood strategies. A new type of livelihood strategy brings rural development; however, people are not in favour of accepting new livelihood strategies. Hence, they want to stick on tradition and security over higher but more risky income (Perez and Cahn 2000; Farrington et al 1999).

People’s livelihoods and their access and control of resources can be affected by events largely beyond their control. This may be because of institutional barriers and unviable livelihood strategies. Households obtain insufficient productive resources to induce subsistence production or income or consumption, which follows vulnerability of households. At last, the domination of poverty over a household becomes inevitable.

1.7.3 Theoretical Approaches to Gender/ Women

Women and men live in very different worlds. In fact, most societies have the common problem of female subordination. This makes gender a very important development issue. As a development planner and policy maker you have at times to consider the needs of females and males separately in order to cater for them in
development activities. But at other times, the needs of men and women in a community must be understood in relative terms.

Feminists have always stressed that the development process affects women and men differently, and feminists generally agree that women have not benefited sufficiently from development. This has led theorists to try to establish ways in which the disadvantaged position of women can be improved. Since 1970, a number of strategies and approaches have been devised to address this problem of women's disadvantage. We will examine three of them.

1.7.3.1 Women in Development (WID)

Women in Development (WID) are an approach, which originated in the early 1970s and developed throughout the United Nations Decade for women (1975-1985). Some related the introduction of WID with the publication of a book entitled Woman's Role in Economic Development by Boserup (1970). In that book, Boserup analyzed the division of labor in agrarian (farming) societies. She demonstrates that women and men were differently placed socially in agricultural work and played different roles. She also points out that development policies did not target women's work as separate from men's, presumably because these differences were invisible.

WID recognizes that women are active contributor to economic growth although they are unacknowledged participants in the development process. Women are an unused resource according to this approach and as a result they must be integrated into the development process (Moser1993). However, many feminists disliked integration of women in the development process. This is because it brings negative impacts on women. Thus, women should strive to reduce the existed system (ICIMOD 1997 cited by Gurung 2004).
According to Moser (1993), women in development aimed at creating conducive environment for women through formulating positive economic and social policies. This enabled women to realize their full capacity, enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with men in political, economic, social, cultural and civil spheres. Moreover, the WID goals made efforts that women to own decision-making power, health care, quality education, career and vocational guidance, employment, remuneration, social security, public office and so on (Parpart 1989). It also aimed at strengthening legal systems, changing societal attitudes and community practices through the active participation and involvement of both men and women.

The WID perspective was closely linked with the modernization paradigm which dominated mainstream thinking on international development during the 1960s and into the 1970s. The standards of living of the developing countries, as to modernization theory argument, could be improved through massive expansion of education systems. The growth of the economies of developing countries in the form of benefits like better living conditions, wages, education, health services, etc., would finally "trickle down" to all segments of the society (Rathgeber 1989: 4).

WID and broader theoretical arguments concerning women’s participation in development brought a strong positive impact on planning. Various development agencies have started to incorporate women’s interest in their programs since the mid 1970s. They established five major approaches to address women problems: welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment approaches.

- **Welfare Approach:** The welfare approach, which is introduced in the 1950s and 1960s, is the oldest and still the most popular social development policy in Third
World concerning to women. It is named as a pre-WID approach. This approach emphasizes about social welfare to women, which is first fabricated by colonial authorities in many Third World countries prior to independence (Moser 1993).

Particular attention was also paid to women. There was concern about meeting the practical needs of women especially in relation to their reproductive roles (Moser 1989). Thus, the 1960s saw the introduction of basic health education programs for women and nutritional supplements, explicitly targeting pregnant women. The 1960s also saw the rise of the mother-child health care mandate, with a direct focus on family planning and population control (Jackson 1977). In essence, the approach was resolute on improving “women’s primary role as mothers” (Moser 1989; 1993).

Welfarism focused on and reinforced women’s reproductive role, placing them in the private sphere (Bulbeck 1998; Chowdhry 1995). It argues that Third World women did not care about controlling their fertility and the overall wellbeing of their children. The reason was that there was little consideration regarding to establishing structures and systems that helped women to manage their own wellbeing and that of their families for centuries. Parpart (1995) argues that ideas of representation fascinated deep within colonial discourse had followed effortlessly into development discourse of post-World War II development discourse. “Where women were seen’ at all, they were simply one more obstacle to modernization and progress” (Ibid: 257).

Subsequently, this welfare phase and approach to Third World women received much criticism (Buvinic 1983; Moser 1989). It was argued that welfarism perpetuated paternalism and existing gender roles. Anti-welfare advocates also discredited the approach as fostering dependency on the state and the family,
rather than seeking to develop individual autonomy (Buvinic 1983, Moser 1989). While critics argued welfarism represented Third World women as ‘victims’ and ‘passive beneficiaries’ (Kabeer 1994; Moser 1989; Rathgeber 1990; Tinker 1997), they also failed to understand their argument for the development of individual autonomy was also misguided.

They had just assumed individual autonomy to be a universally applicable concept. However, because the welfare approach was non-threatening it was widely accepted by governments and by traditional non-government organizations (NGOs) (Moser 1989), and it did achieve some benefits. Some welfare organizations have been credited with performing valuable functions in the areas of education and health, as well as providing a means for women to come together collectively, forge solidarity, share information and develop networks (Sen and Grown 1987).

- **Equity Approach:** Equity approach is identified as the original WID approach. This approach recognizes both the reproductive and productive role played by women although their contributions are unacknowledged. The approach believed that economic strategies have frequently had negative impacts on women. Women should, thus, be involved into the development process through employment and the market place. So, it accepts women’s practical gender need to earn a livelihood (Moser 1993).

The equity approach tries to meet an important strategic gender need through focusing particularly on reducing inequality between men and women in the gender division of labor. Equity programs are identified as uniting notions of development and equality. Unlike men, women have lost ground in the development process.
Therefore, men ought to share socio-economic benefits to women in order to apply positive discriminatory policies (Ibid).

However, equity programs encountered problems from the outset from methodological and political perspectives. Methodologically, equity approach lacks a single unified indicator of social status or progress of women and of baseline information about women’s status. Politically, the majority of development agencies were hostile to equity programs precisely because of their intention to meet not only practical gender needs but also strategic gender needs. The success of this approach depended on an implicit redistribution of power (USAID 1978 cited by Moser 1993).

➤ **Efficiency Approach:** Efficiency approach is the third WID approach since 1980s. The main target of the approach is to realize development through women’s economic contribution. Women participation brings equity for women. Women’s needs are achieved through depending on triple role of women and increasing working time. An argument supported by this approach is that women can enhance advantages of social services by extending their working day. It is very popular as an approach (Moser 1993).

The efficiency approach is criticized for three basic reasons. First, it relies heavily on the elasticity of women’s labor in both their reproductive and community managing roles. Second, it only meets practical gender needs at the cost of longer working hours and increased unpaid work. Third, in most cases this approach fails to reach any strategic gender needs. In reductions in resource allocations also leads to a serious reduction in the practical gender needs met (Ibid).
Anti-poverty Approach: The anti-poverty approach is the second WID approach. It argues that economic inequality between women and men is linked not to subordination but to poverty. This approach shifted its focus from reducing inequality to reducing income inequality between men and women. The main issue of women, as stated by this approach, is not equity rather poverty. The majority of Third World women are considered as the ‘poorest of the poor’ (Ibid).

Moser (1993) says that this approach focuses mainly on productive role of women. As a result, poverty alleviation and the promotion of balanced economic growth become successful through the increased productivity of women in low-income households. The origin of women’s poverty and inequality arose from lack of access to private ownership of land and capital, and sexual discrimination in the labor market. Thus, the approach tried to solve this problem by creating employment and income-generating options of low-income women. This provides women to have better access to productive resources and improve their economic status through reducing fertility (Ibid).

Anti-poverty, as to Moser (1993), has three main shortcomings. First, the attempt to augment women’s income through income-generating activities may not strategic gender needs unless employment leads to greater autonomy. Second, this approach gives less attention to reproductive due to overemphasize on productive role. At last, it increases women’s triple role by extending their working day so as to achieve practical gender needs (Ibid).

Empowerment Approach: The concept of empowerment is not a new one. Paolo Freire’s theory based on the development of a critical conscience and the feminist movements are the two main alternative roots of influence to the empowerment ‘philosophy’ in 1960. From 1980s on, the notion of empowerment is
widespread across the world, for instance, in Latin America and the Caribbean. The major issues raised were to bring gender transformation in relation with the social, economic, political, cultural and legal spheres (Luttrell and Sitna 2009).

There is no common definition of empowerment in the world. Various scholars and agencies conceptualize it in many ways. Empowerment has been defined as, “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable the institutions that affect their lives” (Narayan 2001: 55).

In the broadest and most simple sense, empowerment is equated with the ability to make choices and to act on those choices – to exercise ‘agency’. Alsop, Bertelesen and Holland (2006), authors of, empowerment in practice: from analysis to implementation defines empowerment as “the process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes”. People can make and exercise choices only when the social and institutional environment or “opportunity structure” is conducive for the fulfillment of those choices. Individuals or community assets and access to resources–material, psychological and social–also influence the degree to which they can exercise their agency and make use of opportunities.

Rowlands (1997) defines empowerment as the multidimensional and interlinked process through which people work towards a society where all people are able to make and realize free life choices. As a matter of fact free and informed life choices are only ultimately possible within an environment of equal opportunities, resources and power. Empowerment requires both bottom-up empowerment of those owning least power, and also top-down changes in the attitudes, behavior and position of the currently powerful.
Empowerment approach is derived from the experiences of Third World women. It acknowledges inequalities between men and women, and the origins of women’s subordination in the family. Because of the potential understanding of women’s various backgrounds, empowerment approach incorporates different strategies according to the level of men’s domination (Moser 1993).

The empowerment approach wants women to empower greater self-reliance and to maintain internal strength to decide their own fate. This enables women, as Moser (1993) argued, to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change through the ability to gain control over crucial material and non-material resources. What makes the empowerment approach, as Moser claimed, interesting is that unlike the equity approach, it hardly wants to increase women’s status relative to men rather it needs women to equip with redistribution of power within, as well as between, societies (Ibid).

Moreover, empowerment approach sees women’s oppression as stemming not only from male patriarchal attitudes but also from colonial and neo-colonial oppression. It recognizes women’s triple role, and seek to meet strategic gender needs indirectly through bottom-up mobilization around practical gender needs (Moser 1993; Momsen 1991).

‘Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era’ (DAWN) was a group of politically activists, academics, researchers, and planners, dispute that a gendered approach was the answer. They argue that Third World women were oppressed by a number of agents, for example, colonialism and neo-colonialism, not just men. Therefore oppressive structures and situations needed to be challenged simultaneously, at differing levels (Sen and Grown 1987). DAWN also disputed the idea that feminism belonged to the West. With their own identity, they
therefore had the answers to their self-determined issues.

The empowerment approach was initially unpopular with governments and mainstream development agencies. Many argue that empowering women inside the oppressive systems could not bring change of culture rather to understand culture to be a dynamic entity. Indeed, many opposed the empowerment approach arguing that women were happy with the status quo (Scheyvens 1998).

Empowerment is realized into practice if and only if it works against the challenging of oppression and exploitation between all realms of society such as gender, class, race and nations (Lycklama and Nijeholt 1991). Development agencies also supported empowerment approach through challenging and transforming their own power structures and elitism.

The concept of empowerment was adopted by development agencies after the Beijing Conference (1995). The Beijing Declaration states about women’s empowerment a key strategy for development as: “Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace” (1995: 13).

In 1990, the United Nations declared the need to ‘empower’ women for development, if high returns were to be achieved (Kabeer 1994). Empowerment was linked to economic development rather than improving women’s wellbeing. This would make women’s lives better. The concept of empowerment was applied in varying ways in Gender and Development (GAD) practice, dependent on how the

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2 The empowerment approach to development and planning provides a useful framework to understand issues relating to women’s micro-enterprise credit programs. This approach utilizes the experiences of women in grassroots level and raises consciences about their subordination and the need to challenge it (Kabeer 1994). It also critiques the way power and development are interlinked (Wieringa 1994) and
power component in empowerment was interpreted.

Any attempt to understand the meaning of the word empowerment requires us to consider the notion of power. Foucault’s (1980) work has helped us to see the notion of power in plural form, as “powers”. He works from the observation that there is not just one dominant power but multiple “powers”, as diffuse as a “constellation of stars”. Acquiring power either individually or collectively as a process is done through empowerment. Individuals or a community are free to act and make one’s own decisions regarding life and society. Empowerment is, thus, seen as a process, which relied on both individual and collective. Feminists and development agencies/NGOs have linked this approach as a process of acquiring power into four levels:

a) “Power over”: this power involves a mutually exclusive relationship of domination or subordination. It assumes that power exists only in limited quantity. This power is exerted over someone or, less negatively, allows “someone to be guided”. It triggers either passive or active resistance;

b) “Power to”: a power which includes the ability to make decisions, have authority, and find solutions to problems, and which can be creative and enabling. The notion, therefore, refers to intellectual abilities (knowledge and know-how) as well as economic means, i.e. to the ability to access and control means of production and benefit (the notion of assets);

c) “Power with”: social or political power which highlights the notion of common purpose or understanding, as well as the ability to get together to negotiate and defend a common goal (individual and collective rights, political seeks way to empower women to take their own choices, speak on their own behalf and to control their own lives.

3 These four types of power are inspired notably by documents from Oxaal and Baden (1997), Jo Rowlands (1997)
ideas such as lobbying, etc.). Collectively, people feel they have power when they can get together and unite in search of a common objective, or when they share the same vision;

d) “Power within”: this notion of power refers to self-awareness, self-esteem, identity and assertiveness (knowing how to be). It refers to how individuals, through self-analysis and internal power, can influence their lives and make changes.

The notion of empowerment wants individuals to have power, control one’s life and make choices. Next to Sen (2000), Kabeer (2001) is one of the researchers, who supported the notion of “making choices.” This notion empowers people’s ability to have access to things and to make choices. Furthermore, institutions and laws as tools lead to the strengthening of the capacity for empowerment. Empowerment is also associated with the cultural aspects of the society. The notion of empowerment has often been used as “power over”, “power within”, “power to” and “power with”. The empowerment approach therefore focuses on two levels: personal, political and social change.

Like poverty, empowerment is seen as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Empowerment strives against structural inequalities and unfair resource allocation through promoting individual choice, capacities and collective action. Poverty is also related with lack of structural equality and resource distribution. Targeting women is justified because of higher levels of female poverty and women’s prime responsibility for household well-being. The empowerment approach’s sensitivity to and focus on women’s needs in developing societies is, thus, the basis for the conceptual framework of this dissertation.
1.7.3.2 Women and Development (WAD)

There is no clear cut demarcation between the WID and the WAD approaches. The WAD approach, which draws its theoretical base from dependency theory, emerged in the second half of the 1970s. However, dependency theory like Marxist analysis has given little attention to issues of gender subordination. The limitations of modernization theory and exclusion of women from earlier development agencies gave rise to the WAD approach. WAD has emphasized on the involvement of women in development processes. It did not begin suddenly like insights and intervention strategies made by few scholars and agency personnel as early as 1970s (Rathgeber 1989).

WAD approach pays attention on inter-household and intra-household roles, activities, rights and responsibilities of women. Household, survival and income generating tasks are some of the activities performed by women. Most of these activities are time consuming. The WAD approach argues that women’s needs are rarely entertained in development projects due to controlling of planning by men. Women are homogenous according to this approach. The approach proposes to avoid men domination through the participation of women in non-commercial (small-scale) projects. This is believed to be make women self-reliant. WAD approach is advocated by the non-governmental organizations due to the belief of developing Third World women (Parpart 1989).

The planners have tried to resolve women’s problem through provision of productive resources and basic rights such as credit, access to land, legal reform and the involvement of women in development planning. However, the approach could not achieve its set objectives because "It fails to undertake a full-scale analysis of the
relationship between patriarchy, differing modes of production, and women's subordination and oppression” (Rathgeber 1990:493).

Like WID, WAD has received a lot of criticism from other scholars. African Women's Communication and Development Network (FEMNET 1994) criticizes WAD in the following terms: It does not address class differences which exist even among women themselves. As in the WID approach, women are grouped together as a category. No clear distinction is made between the unique problems of women and the problems they have in common with men. It does not address the question of patriarchy as the greatest source of gender inequality, nor does it look at issues of subordination and related oppression.

1.7.3.3 Gender and Development (GAD)

The GAD approach, which came to use gender as opposed to women, emerged in the 1980s. Its main focus is on the role of patriarchy in women’s underdevelopment in the Third World. GAD discourse is wider than WID and GAD in scope (Cornwall 2000; Leslie 1999). GAD, which is based on socialist feminism, addresses women’s subordination by laying bare historically and socially constructed relations between men and women (Cornwall 2000; Kabeer 1994; Moser 1993 Rathgeber 1990; Young, Wolkowitz and McCullagh 1981). GAD saw themselves as an approach to women’s development which sought to understand the social relationships and power relations between men and women which maintained women’s subordinate position (Moser 1989; Young 1997). Therefore, GADs’ primary focus is the study of power relations, that is, how gender roles and patterns of exploitation are constructed (Kabeer 1994).

GAD was purported as being distinctly different to WID for a number of reasons. To begin with, GAD was bottom-up and people-centered, as opposed to top-
down. Women were no longer represented as passive beneficiaries of development; rather they were portrayed as active agents of change (Young 1992). Ultimately, GAD represented women in a way that acknowledged their capacity for identifying their own needs and priorities (Bulbeck 1993). Because GAD represented women as having more than economic needs or playing more than just an economic role, for the first time, women were seen for their triple roles, referring to their productive (income-generating), reproductive (unpaid domestic) and community management roles. Women’s strategic and practical gender interests/needs were accorded priority, and the public/private dichotomy that had previously been applied to women’s work was rejected (Rathgeber 1990).

Molyneux’s (1985) work about practical and strategic gender interests was supported by Moser (1989). She sought to provide a guide for gender planning which would meet women’s practical and strategic gender needs (Pearson 2005). ‘Practical Gender Needs’ (PGNs) were defined as a response to an immediate need that women identify within their socially defined roles, which did not challenge the status quo. This includes, for example, water supplies, health care, or the need to generate income as noted in WID discourse. ‘Strategic Gender Needs’ (SGNs), by contrast were defined as an attempt to challenge the status quo because they focused on the needs that women identified related to their subordinate position in society. SGNs attempted to address issues of power, control, and decision-making; including the issues of legal and human rights or domestic violence (Moser 1993). GAD believed women would indirectly meet their SGNs in terms of their triple role, through bottom-up mobilization while meeting their PGNs (Kabeer 1994).

GAD advocates thought that women would achieve greater equality by challenging and changing their engendered positions; women would be
emancipated and become ‘empowered’. Under GAD, collective organization was encouraged with GAD stating “the need for women to organize themselves for a more effective political voice” (Rathgeber 1990: 494). GAD situated development in social transformation (Porter and Vesghese 1999), from a theoretical perspective that women built their own system. In practical terms, there was a focus on the implementation of projects that would: “bring into question traditional views of gender roles and responsibilities and point toward a more equitable definition of the very concept of development and of contributions made by women and men to the attainment of societal goals” (Rathgeber 1990:499).

Just as WID and WAD did, initial models of GAD have also drawn a number of critiques. Major critiques came from Southern feminists who drew on post-modern, post-structural and post-colonial thinking and argued for the need to understand and accept difference, as well as the need to expose various power relations that rendered Third World women to the position of ‘other’. The concept of development was also brought into question. Arising from these critiques the empowerment approach came to the fore, deriving primarily from grassroots development and writings from Third World feminists (Moser 1993:74).

To sum up these different views: WID sees the exclusion of women from the development process as the problem. WAD sees inequitable international structures as the problem. GAD sees unequal power relations as the problem.

1.8 Summary

Under the literature review, analytical concepts, empirical studies, and theoretical approaches pertinent to the topic have been discussed briefly. Analytical concepts include poverty, feminization of poverty, livelihood, livelihood strategy,
household and headship. One of the concepts which is so dynamic and multidimensional to define is poverty. There is no single definition of poverty. However, anthropologists define poverty from the context of the community. Some define poverty from social aspect while others depend on statistical definition of poverty. Some also use subjective meaning of poverty. This study adopted poverty from contextual definition of the society i.e., anthropological definition. Feminization of poverty is a concept which tries to explain that women are victims of poverty due to lack of access to productive agricultural resources, education, health facilities, basic infrastructures and cultural impediments. Households’ livelihood fragility forces women to shoulder disproportionate burden of poverty. Livelihood is defined simply as means of living where as livelihood strategy is series of actions designed to achieve a specific goal or effect. A household entails various definitions which really depend on the nature of the discipline. For instance, sociologists define a household as a social unit where as economists define it as a unit of consumption. However, anthropologists come up with a broad definition of a household as a unit of society involved in production, reproduction, consumption, and socialization. A headship can be either a man or a woman even though most countries hold notion of headship as a man traditionally. FHHs, which are main targets of the topic, are defined as a household led by a widowed, divorced, separated or never-married woman without the intervention of a man or male relative in the day-to-day routine life of members of the household. This definition is adopted by the study.

The situation of rural women particularly FHHs have been assessed through reviewing of different empirical literatures at local, regional, national, continental and worldwide level. The points discussed related with the topic include rural poverty and women/FHHs; rural women’s access to productive resources; gender, rural
livelihoods and coping strategies; rural women’s based development, interventions, women’s role in agriculture and typology and incidence of FHHs at local, regional, national and worldwide.

The situation of women particularly FHHs found to be worse in the rural areas of the world. For instance, women in rural areas face many challenges respect to cultural, social, political, technological, and economic constraints. They are leading poverty life. As a result, they involve in different livelihood activities and strategies to cope up with the problems. Ethiopia’s gender development policy and development interventions undertaken by government organizations (GOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in poverty reduction efforts also included in the literature review.

FHH as part of household is the outcome of a combination of widowed, divorced, separated/deserted and never-married women. These are designated as typology of FHHs. Now days, the frequency of FHHs are increasing through time in various regions of the world including Ethiopia. Women’s contribution in economic development of any country is very significant. They engage in different sectors of economic activities although they do not have equal status as of MHHs.

Anthropological view of poverty, Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) and gender approaches to women are theoretical approaches to gender/women and poverty discussed as part of this section. While the anthropological view of poverty originated primarily with Lewis’s (1959) concept of the culture of poverty, critical theorists have widespread this idea broadly including the global challenges emerging in the 21st century discourse on poverty. Lewis’s culture of poverty theory stimulated considerable debate within the anthropological community as well as in other social science disciplines. However, the contemporary anthropology has moved the debate
away from investigating the poor in isolation to the exploration and integration of individual communities within a global perspective. By fusing cultural and critical theories with globalization theories, anthropologists have begun to document the way in which local processes are linked and integrated with global changes. Global and national structures and forces are investigated to determine their effects on local environments, and how these processes interact with individual experiences.

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) is an analytical device for improved understanding of livelihoods and poverty. It aims at supporting poverty eradication by making empowerment of poor people’s like FHHs, livelihoods a central goal of development efforts.

Theoretical approaches to gender include Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD). WID developed throughout the United Nations Decade for women (1975-1985) and some related the introduction of WID with the publication of a book entitled Woman's Role in Economic Development by Boserup (1970). It argues the exclusion of women from the development process as the problem. WID and broader theoretical arguments concerning women’s participation in development had a strong influence on planning in this area. Different approaches used by development agencies in their programming for women since the mid-1970s have been the welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment approaches. The empowerment approach wants women to empower greater self-reliance and to maintain internal strength to decide their own fate. This enables women to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change through the ability to gain control over crucial material and non-material resources. It is a recent developed approach which tries to address women’s problem from the root causes.
WAD draws some of its theoretical base from dependency theory in 1970s; however, like Marxist analysis, dependency theory has given remarkably little specific attention to issues of gender subordination. It sees inequitable international structures as the problem. The GAD approach emerged in the 1980s. GAD approach, which is its roots in socialist feminism, sought to address women’s subordination. It sees unequal power relations between men and women as the problem. These approaches did not escape from criticism.

Therefore, this study took a combination of three approaches: Empowerment Approach, Sustainable Livelihood Approach and Feminist Anthropology to understand the situation of rural women/ FHHs in the study area.