The Situation of Household Poverty in Mettu Town: It's Contributing Factors and Manifestations

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Abstract: Poverty is urbanizing rapidly and becoming urban problem in the world. In developing countries know urban poverty brings about severe challenges for assuring urban household food security and access to basic services such as adequate housing, water, sanitation, and education and health care facilities. The aim of this study is to assess factors and manifestations of poverty situation in Mettu town by taking a randomly selected sample of 224 households from three sub-zones (gottes). Mixed research approach was employed in order to triangulate the result. The researcher used wealthy index approach to identify households as poor and non-poor. The study findings show that; in the study area from total sample households 59.8% are poor and 40.2% of them are non-poor. In this study, the variables that are positively associated with the probability of being poor are: educational status, marital status, household size place of birth and health status of the household; while, age, employment, housing tenure and water source variables was negatively associated with probability of being poor in the study area. The research findings indicated that, in the study area there is lack of adequate shelter or house, poor sanitation, lack of access to safe drinking water, and absence of proper toilet facilities. Generally, the study finding shows the incidence of poverty is high in the study area. Thus, the study results recommend the need for urgent intervention *measures to be taken by the stakeholders aimed at curbing the fate of the poor in Mettu town.*

Key words: Household poverty, Urbanization, Livelihood portfolios, Manifestations

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is one of the major worldwide problems that are facing urban areas. As reported that by (World Bank 2016), a quarter of the world's urban population is currently estimated to live in absolute poverty, with many more living under substandard conditions. Local governments in many of the world's poorest cities are unable to provide even the most basic needs to their citizens. At least an estimated to 61 million urban dwellers are currently estimated to lack access to clean drinking water, and more than 722 million do not have access to the simplest latrines (World Bank 2016). Poverty, which was considered as a rural problem in the past, has become one of the serious problems of urban areas today (UNDP

2012). The uncontrolled and rapid urban growth resulted in unplanned and underserved city slums in many parts of the world. This in turn, made many urban unable to cope with ever increasing added demands. The pace of urbanization far exceeds the rate at which basic infrastructure and services can be provided and the consequences for the urban poor have been terrible. Failure to prepare for this unprecedented and inevitable urban explosion carries serious implications for global security and environmental sustainability (WB, 2011).

Even though urban populations in Africa are growing rapidly, urban poverty or food insecurity problems gets relatively little attention from the national food or nutritional policy planners. Urban poverty problems in Africa receive little attention partly because it tends not to be linked to seasonal or community-wide process and partly because of a long-held belief that urban populations are better off but urban food insecurity is directly linked to urban poverty (Michael and Haider 2008). However, efforts to address the unique problems of urban poverty lag far behind the growth of the problems themselves. Antipoverty initiatives have traditionally targeted rural areas, which were presumed to have been worse off than urban areas. But the problems of poor city dwellers have become more pressing including the issues of how the urban poor earn their livelihood and the ways in which this affects key indicators of human welfare, such as food security and nutrition (Ahimed, 2008).

Like other developing cities, Ethiopian cities have been experiencing urban poverty. In Ethiopia, the majority of the population lives in rural areas, even then, with natural population growth, high rural-urban migration and numerous other reasons, urbanization is taking place at a higher rate than ever before. The size of the poor has been increasing from time to time due to high population growth beyond what the urban economy can support. Of the estimated total urban population of about 21.2 million, nearly 7.9 million live in a state of poverty in Ethiopia. In Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, the poverty level is estimated at 60%, which implies that 2.5 million out of the 4 million people residing in Addis Ababa are living earning income below the poverty line. In recent years, urban poverty in Ethiopia has been growing at a faster rate than rural poverty. The main factors for this are unplanned expansion of cities, high unemployment and rural urban migration (UN 2016).

Like in other parts of Ethiopian urban centers, the situation of poverty in Mettu town sharing similar vein with other urban centers of Ethiopia. Thus, there is need for more place based studies to show clear pictures about urban poverty in Mettu town. Moreover, most of the previous study attempted to examine urban poverty employing quantitative research approach, household's income level. The current study was used wealthy index approach since it was valuable in less developed countries that lack reliable data on income and expenditures, which are the traditional indicators used to measures household economic

status. Above all, as far as the researcher literature review was concerned, there is no previous study conducted in the study area. Different to this, the present study was endeavored to investigate factors behind urban poverty and its major manifestations in Mettu town taking account the issue of socioeconomic and demographic variations in different population categories by using mixed research approach.

Specifically it Aimed

- ❖ To describe the livelihood portfolios of urban households in Mettu town.
- ❖ To analyze the poverty variations among households by socio-economic and demographic characteristics in the study area.
- ❖ To examine the manifestation of urban household poverty in line with the basic accessibility of social services in Mettu town.
- ❖ To identify the determinant factors for urban poverty in the study area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: in terms of time dimension, this study was employed cross-sectional research design i.e., one point at a time collection of data from target group. However, based on its relevance, this design was supplemented with approximation of longitudinal study design where by respondents were asked to furnish data relevant to the past with the aim of collecting relevant retrospective data concerning the contributing factors of household poverty and its manifestations. On the other hands, in terms of research approach, this study employed both qualitative and quantitative research approach to substantiate and cross-check data obtained in one method to that of the other.

Map of Study Area
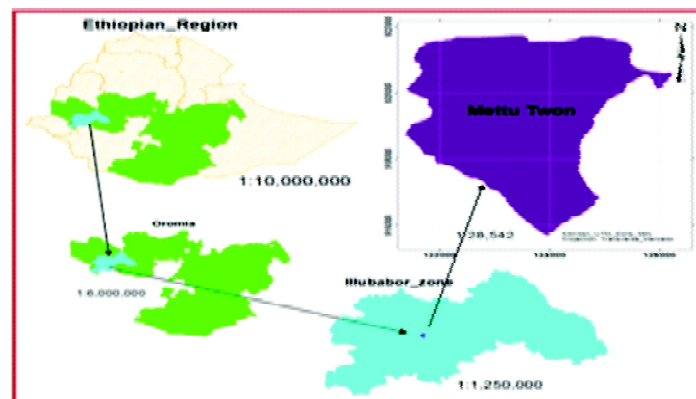
Study Population: For this study, the researcher selected 224 households for survey questionnaire and 4 heads of households from each *gottes,* 1 expert in planning and economic development office of Mettu town, one (1) with experts from Mettu town Social Affairs Office were interviewed to get more detail and complex information about the issue under investigation. **Sampling Technique:** Both probability and nonprobability sampling technique were used to draw the required number of sample. Thus, 224 household head were selected using systematic sampling technique for household survey sample and respondents for in-depth interview and key informants were selected using purposive sampling technique.

Data Collection Instruments: three main data collection instruments such as, questionnaires, in-depth interview and key informant interview were used to obtained the required information from respondents.

Questionnaire: Both close ended and open ended question was prepared and administered through translating to local language of the community (Afaan Oromo), as the sample respondents cannot read and write.

In-depth Interview: The researcher employed semi-structured interview which also used to supplement the ideas and question designed in the household survey. Informants for in-depth interview were selected from the member of the local community and other administrative member based of the purposive selection of the researcher.

Key Informant Interview: the key informants of this study were selected purposively on the base of their specialized knowledge of the issue under investigation. Interview guides were used for the key informant interviews.

Methods of Data Analysis: in this study both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the linkage between demographic and socio-economic variables and the poverty status of households. Chi-square and a logistic regression model were employed and estimated based on the primary data. Qualitative data which was collected through in-depth interview and key informant interview were analyzed through thematic analysis method.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this chapter of the study, the result, analysis and interpretation of primary data collected through a survey, in-depth interview, and key informant interview are presented. The findings of the study are discussed alongside the specific objectives stated under the first section of this study. Consequently, various sections and sub-sections were produced to incorporate all the relevant reviewed literatures and information collected from the field through the

aforementioned methods. In general, the results of both qualitative and quantitative data were interpreted and presented concurrently.

Asset Ownership of Households in Mettu Town

This section presents households access to assets of both material and its conditions. The researcher tried to probe and identify the condition of households in owning assets, by taking common and permanently usable (exploitable) assets as the base of reference for comparison. House ownership, car, telephone line/both fixed and cell telephone/, refrigerator, television, stove, Bajaj, bicycle, and milk cow/oxen; are the main household assets which were assessed by the researcher.

Table 1
Asset possession of households in Mettu town

Type of Fixed Assets Owned	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
House	90	40.2	134	59.8
Television	156	69.6	68	30.4
Dish	67	29.9	157	70.1
Car	22	9.8	202	90.2
Stove	91	40.6	133	59.4
Butagas	90	40.2	134	59.8
Refrigerator	91	40.6	134	59.4
Radio	156	69.6	68	30.4
Telephone	68	30.4	156	69.6
Bajaj	45	20.1	179	79.9
Cell phone	224	100.0	0	0
Bicycle	23	10.3	201	89.7
Cow milk/oxen	0	0	224	100.0
Horse cart	0	0	224	100

Source: Researcher field level survey of 2019

The resident of the town lives in private, kebele or rental houses from private lords. Thus, residents access the house through private ownership or rental. Table 1 indicated that, of the total sample respondents, 40.2% of them replied that, they own a house and from 224 sample households 63.7% of them are from the non-poor households. From the total sample household respondents, 91 (40.6%) have their own refrigerators. Of

these sample respondents (57.9%) are poor and (43.1%) are non-poor. car is not found to be a commonly owned asset of households. Table 1 indicated that, 22 (9.8%) of the households has their own car, of which all is from a non-poor household. Unlike refrigerator and car, television is found to be a commonly used asset in many households of the poor and the non-poor in the study area. From the total sample household respondents, 156 (69.6%) have their own television.

Table 2
Poverty and livelihood sources of respondents in Mettu town

Livelihood sources of households		*wealth status*				*p-value*
		Poor		*Non-poor*		
		Fr	*%*	*Fr*	*%*	
Type of institution employed in	Public sector	9	20.0	35	80.0	0.001
	Self-employed	89	66.4	43	33.6	
	private organization	6	27.3	16	72.7	
	Daily labourer	17	85.0	3	15.0	
	Non-governmental	-	-	4	100	
Self-Employment Types						
Petty trading	Yes	75	72.8	28	27.2	0.001
	No	80	66.1	41	33.9	
Unskilled wage	Yes	55	83.3	11	16.7	0.001
	No	90	57.0	68	43.0	
Renting properties	Yes	45	66.2	23	33.8	0.001
	No	45	28.8	111	71.2	
Local drinking service	Yes	16	69.7	7	30.4	0.001
	No	89	44.3	112	55.7	
Skilled work woodwork, metalwork and other	Yes	24	21.2	89	78.8	0.001
	No	43	38.7	68	61.3	

Source: Researcher field level survey of 2019

In the study area from the total sample household respondents, 132 (58.9%) are self-employed; while 44 (19.6%) is a civil servant/government employees. About 24 (10.7%) and 4 (1.9%) of the sample respondents are employed in the private sector and non-governmental organizations, respectively; while about 20 (8.9%) of the total respondents are daily laborers.

Looking at the results from the above table, we can understand the highest percentage of the poor, 85%, are daily laborers or causal employees and 66.4% of poor are self-

employed. The size of private sector and the public sector employed sample households account for 27% and 20% of the total poor sample households, respectively. The poor are forced to engage in low paying activities due to low education and absence of employment opportunity attributed to absence of industries and service sector that creates employment opportunity.

Analysis of poverty variations with respect to household's socioeconomic and demographic characteristics

Sex of Household Heads and Their Poverty Status

Household demographic composition like household sex, educational status, household size, income and age of the head are important covariates of poverty. There is a limited consideration of gender issues with respect to measuring urban poverty, and in identifying the urban poor. This has implications for the formation of policy and in the design of anti-poverty programs (Getachew, 2009).

Table 3
Samples showing the sex of household heads and poverty status in Mettu town

*Sex of the respondent * wealthy status Cross tabulation*

Characteristics		Wealthy status						p-value
		Poor	%	Non-poor	%	Total	100(%)	
sex of the respondent	Male	74	41.1	106	58.9	180	80.4	0.001
	Female	33	75.0	11	25.0	44	19.6	
Total		107	48	117	52.2	224	100	

Source: Researcher field level survey of 2019

Table 4 shows that female household heads are poorer than their male counterparts. In the study area, from a total of 224 sample households interviewed, 19.6% are female household heads, and 80.4% are male household heads. Of the total female-headed households, 75% of them are found to be poor; and 25% are non-poor. Of the total male-headed households, only 41.1% of them are poor, and the rest (58.9%) are non-poor. This implies that female-headed households are more vulnerable to the poverty in Mettu town than those of male-headed households.

Chi-square test conducted portrayed that, $x^2(3) = 73.05$) there was a significant relationship at 95 confidence interval between poverty and sex of the household heads *($x^2 = 36.776$, df = 3, p = 0.001).*

Marital Status of Household Heads and Poverty

In poverty correlation analysis, marital status of the household head is an important constituent of the demographic variables.

Table 4
Sample distribution of marital status, age and poverty level in Mettu town

Characteristics		*Wealthy status*						
		Poor	*%*	*Non-poor*	*%*	*Total*	*100(%)*	*p-value*
Marital status of	Never married	22	95.7	1	4.3	23	10.3	0.001
respondents	Married	89	66.4	45	33.6	134	59.8	
	Divorced	44	97.8	1	2.2	45	20.1	
	Widowed	21	95.5	1	4.5	22	9.8	

Source: Researcher field level survey of 2019

Of the total sample household respondents, 134 (59.8%) are married; 45 (20.1%) are never married (single), and the remaining 23 (10.3%); and 22 (9.8%) of sample household respondents are divorced and widowed ones, respectively. As shown in table 4 above, from the total of 176 poor sample household respondents, unmarried sample households account 22 (95.7%); while married poor sample households account 89 (66.4 %) followed by divorced 44 (97.8), and widowed 21 (95.5%).

A result from Table 4 shows that; the poverty incidences are higher among divorced households (97.8). Moreover, this assumption was also confirmed by the qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interview participants. An informant, divorced women aged 41 years old and mother of three children in Mettu town stated how her poor financial state and divorce impacted on her family as follows:

> I am the only one who feeds and manages the whole family. Then I began working as a peddler and daily laborer. The income I get such activities does not cover more than the cost of house rent and food. Even there are times that I may not have work for a week and cannot afford to buy food. My daughter has dropped her education from grade nine to help me. Now, she engaged in selling Jebbena buna (coffee and tea) to support our family. I am expected be on job always to sustain my family life.

This indicates that Poverty is acute among divorced female-headed households.

Educational Level of the Household Head and Poverty

An assessment of the education level of sample households as it relates to poverty is indicated in Table 5. As shown, of the total illiterate sample respondents, 88.1% of them

Table 5
The Distribution of some socio-economic and demographic characteristics and poverty level in Mettu town

Educational level		*wealth status*				
		Poor	*%*	*Non-poor*	*%*	*P-Value*
Educational status	unable to write and read	41	91	4	8.99	0.001
	Write and read only	11	78.6	3	21.4	
	Primary school	60	74.2	21	25.9	
	High school	15	65.2	8	34.8	
	Certificate/ vocational	11	57.9	8	42.1	
	College diploma	8	42.1	11	57.9	
	First degree and above	2	9.1	20	90.9	
place of birth	Urban	111	70.7	46	29.3	0.001
	Rural	51	76.1	16	23.9	
Family size	1-3	66			45.9	0.001
	4-6	52	69.3	23	30.7	
	above 6	19	73.4	8	29.6	
Saving	Yes	22	32.3	46	67.7	0.001
	No	134	85.9	22	14.1	

Source: Researcher field level survey of 2019

are poor and the largest share of the poor come from such household base. From the total sample households, the percentage share of the poor for each primary, secondary, certificate/vocational, college diploma and first degree and above educational levels are 74.2%, 65.2%, 57.9%, 42.1%and 9.1%, respectively. Thus, with an increasing educational level of households, the numbers of households getting into poverty tend to decrease. The results of Chi-square test x2(7) = 115,070) there was a significant relationship at 95 confidence interval between poverty and educational status of the respondent $(x^2 = 115.070, df = 3, p = 0.001)$.

Poverty and Household Size

In the analysis of $x^2(2) = 73.05$ there was a significant relationship at 95 confidence interval between poverty and educational status of the respondent $(x^2 = 27.603.05, df = 3, p = 0.001)$. This implies that there was differences exist between poor and non-poor households based on their family size. The result of the study shows that as household size increases, the probability of the household to fall in poverty trap increases.

Poverty and Previous Residential Area

Certainly, the qualitative data which obtained from one of the study key informants from planning and economic development office of Mettu town has also confirmed this argument. An informant stated the situation as follows:

> Rural-urban migration aggravates urban poverty. Obviously, the migrants need various services such as water, electricity house and housing amenities. It increases burden on city residents in service provision and employment creation. The poor migrate from rural to urban in search of job, better services and better opportunity. Poverty and lack of opportunity in rural areas, therefore, are the key drivers of rural residents seeking better opportunities in the cities. This type of migration creates concerns among urban residents about the demands on services available in the cities.

The manifestation of Urban Household Poverty in Line with Accessibility of Basic Social Services

Urban poverty in Ethiopia is particularly manifested by the lack of basic facilities in and around the house. The finding of current study also shows, there are lack of adequate shelter

Table 6
Poverty and accessibility of basic social services in Mettu town

Variables		Wealth status			
		poor	*%*	*Non-poor*	*%*
House ownership situations	Own house	55	50.7	54	49.3
	Private house rented	78	85.7	13	14.3
	Kebeles house rented	14	58.3	10	41.7
Building Materialcomposition of houses	Wood with mud	134	66.7	67	33.3
	Concrete blocks	23	100.0	0.0	0.0
Types of cooking facilities	Kitchen	48	52.7	43	47.3
	Using living room	54	48.6	57	51.4
	Using open space	22	100.0	0	0.0
Availability of electrometer	Yes	68	43.0	90	57.0
	No	60	90.9	6	8.1
Types of cooking fuel used	Buta Gas and electricity	17	73.9	6	26.1
	Charcoal and wood	111	83.5	22	16.5
	Charcoal	23	51.1	22	48.9
	Electricity	16	69.6	7	30.4
Water supply	Private tap inside the house	61	69.3	27	30.7
	Public Tap /Bonno	114	83.8	22	16.2
Types of toilet	Flush	0	0.0	23	100.0
	Pit	87	70.7	36	29.3
	Shared pit	64	82.1	14	17.9

Source: Researcher field level survey of 2019

or house, poor sanitation, lack of access to safe drinking water, and absence of proper toilet facilities in Mettu town. The results obtained are discussed in the below subsections.

Poverty and Housing Conditions in Mettu town

Lack of access to secure and safe housing is a central feature of urban poverty. (Rajal Masika,1997).

Poor and non-poor compared, 49.3% poor live in their own houses and 41.7% are living in rented kebele houses followed by 14.3% living in rented private houses. Ownership of houses is one way to differentiate the poor from the non-poor households because the non-poor households mainly have their own houses compared to their poor counterparts.

In the analysis of $x^2(2) = 73.05$ there was a significant relationship at 95 confidence interval between poverty and housing condition of the respondent *(x^2= 38.163, df = 1, p = 0.001).* The chi-square test shows the presence of relations between poverty and types of living houses. The study results also indicate that many of the households whose living houses are built by concrete blocks are from non-poor social groups.

The Analysis of the Determinant Factors which Dominantly Affect Urban Poverty in Mettu Town

Odds to be poor among illiterate respondents were 10 times higher compared to those who attend college and above (OR, 10, 95% CI, 7.31-15.82). This implies that lack of education is a factor that pushes households to fall into poverty trap. The analysis results are found to be conformity with the study of Mekonnen and Abebe (2002) that assured the remarkable relationship between poverty and the level of education on their studies. The outcome of the researcher's survey also asserted that the size of the non-poor household's level of income increases relatively as the household educational attainment increases.

Marital status of household also shows statistically negative significant result, implying that as the households gets married, odds ratio of being poor decrease by factors of 0.08 and 0.02, respectively. Rural migrant respondents were 6% less likelihood exposed to poverty when compared to respondents of urban dwellers. The odds of having poverty of rural migrant respondents were reduced when compared to respondents of urban dwellers (OR, 0.06, 95% CI, 0.01-0.02). Similarly, those migrants from rural areas have a higher chance of being poor. On the other hand, if the number of family size of the household increases by a unit, the odds and the odds ratio keeping all other variables constant decrease by a factor of 0.06 and 0.01, respectively. This indicates the positive relationship between household size and poverty. Larger household family size is associated with a higher chance of being poor.

Table 7
The association between poverty and socio-economic and demographic variables

Variables		Odds ratio	95% C.I.		p-value
			Lower	Upper	
Educational status	Illiterate	10.0	7.31	15.82	0.001
	Primary	1.14	0.17	7.73	0.890
	Secondary	14.02	3.87	17.82	0.001
	college and above	Reference			
Age of respondents	18-33	0.53	0.09	3.19	0.492
	34-49	1.41	0.33	5.96	0.644
	50	Reference			
Marital status	Never married	Reference			
	Married	0.08	0.02	0.25	0.001
	Others	0.02	0.01	0.10	0.001
Place of birth	Urban	Reference			
	Rural	0.06	0.01	0.11	0.001
Family size	1-6	0.06	0.01	1.16	0.063
	6 and above	Reference			

Source: Researcher field level survey of 2019

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

Sample respondent households in Mettu town peruse occupation (employment type) was found to be having a significant relationship with the probability of being poor. The finding of this study shows that, the majority of the respondents are self-employed. Due to job insecurity and other factors informal and casual workers earn less and the probability of being poor was found to be high by the study; while people employed in the formal sector are found to be less vulnerable to poverty. In the study analysis, the majority of the poor are found to be female-headed households. This is significant at 95%confidence intervals, implying that poverty more affects female-headed households than their male counterparts. On the other hand, the study findings show that widowed and divorced households are found poorer than the married ones. Analysis results of the study also claimed that, in Mettu town incidence poverty is more widespread among those migrants from the nearby rural areas.

Education attainment of the household head is found to be the most important variable to be related to urban poverty. Poverty showed a decreasing trend at different educational levels (from illiterate to degree and above educational levels). Although the finding shows that, variable household size is positive and significantly correlated with poverty. This has a clear consequence for the residents of Mettu town that, large household size tends to derive

the family to fall into poverty trap easily than those who have an average and small family sizes.

Results of this study also show that, house ownership significantly correlates with the probability of households to be poor. Therefore, encouraging and supporting households to have their own houses would be crucially important to minimize and alleviate urban household poverty. The study results also showed that the health of households is found to be having a significant correlation with poverty status of households. Households that have family members that frequently get sick are more likely to be poorer than others. Moreover, due to income shortfalls and high cost of health services, some household members use self-treatment using traditional medicines and practices for a cure from recurring diseases.

Finally, on the basis of the study results, the incidence of poverty is rampant among the surveyed households. In another way, there is deprivation of basic social services, like housing, electricity, water supply, toilet facilities and health services in the study area.

Recommendation and Policy Implications

Poverty can be addressed in different ways. In the study area, the following are the main intervention areas that should be considered/given proper attention by the concerned bodies during policy formulation, and implementation processes.

➢ Education is seen as key to eradicating high incidence of poverty in Mettu town. Initially, there is need to give attention on the households' education by the concerned bodies.

➢ To reduce poverty in the area, awareness creation on family size control and the causes and effects of poverty should a priority action of the city administration.

➢ Government should give subsidies and credit facilities to poor households through cooperative organizations, specialized agencies and micro finance houses in order to step up their incomes.

➢ Finally, the poverty incidents and other socioeconomic and demographic variables of Mettu town have shown the difficulties of households to break the vicious circle of poverty. Unless integrated efforts have been brought to fight against poverty, the condition of the poor households will be continuing more than what has been experienced (the existing situation). Therefore, joint efforts should be undertaken at all levels, including the coordinated efforts of the government, community-based organizations, researchers, non-government organizations, the poor themselves and other stakeholders.

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