

## **Begging among Physically Healthy Adults in Addis Ababa: Reasons and Strategies**

Abduselam Kemal<sup>1</sup> and Belay Tefera<sup>2</sup>

### ***Abstract***

*Currently, in Addis Ababa, several people including physically healthy are leading their life through begging. The present study sought to examine the reasons that led physically healthy adults engage in beginning to make a living. The strategies they employed while begging were also assessed. A total of 33 physically healthy beggars from different begging spots found in four sub-cities of Addis Ababa were selected through purposive, availability and convenience sampling techniques. In addition, three officials from the Labor and Social Affairs Bureau of Addis Ababa city administration were drawn purposely. Physical Health Screening Tool, developed by the researcher, was used to identify physically healthy participants. Data were collected using interviews and FGDs and analyzed thematically using a deductive approach. Findings reveal that poverty, unemployment, and invitations by other beggars were among the major reasons for begging. The researchers recommend that to decrease or ultimately eliminate begging, reasons accounting for begging need to be given attention by City Government Administration, Labor and Social Affairs Bureau and all concerned government and non-government organizations. Furthermore, serious regulations need to be put in place by the House of People's Representatives to discourage begging by physically healthy individuals.*

**Key Words:** *begging, physical health, physically healthy beggars, reason*

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Behavioral Studies, Woldia University. E-mail: [abduselammuk@gmail.com](mailto:abduselammuk@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Professor of Psychology, School of Psychology, CEBS, AAU. Email: [belaytefera@yahoo.com](mailto:belaytefera@yahoo.com)

## **Introduction**

Depending on the type of people engaged in begging behavior and on the purpose of begging, the term begging is defined in several ways. Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Ethiopia defined begging as "...A method of earning one's living from the income obtained by other sectors of the society using age, health, and economic conditions" (MOLSA, 1992, p. 2). The following definitions were also included in the document:

*Begging is an activity emanating from poverty and destitution where the person tries to feed him/herself. It is a behavior practiced to obtain from others what one is unable to get by oneself. Begging is a request directed to the rest of society to bring oneself out of misery and poverty. Begging is an act of asking for alms that is essential for survival, for solving temporary problems, or for fulfilling some cultural and religious commitments.*

Groce and his associates defined begging as:

An activity which allows an individual to call upon people with whom he or she has no close ties for small donations to meet his/her basic needs. It is a mechanism through which the community ensures that its very poor members will not starve (Groce et al., 2014, p. 9).

Developing nations, especially those in Africa, suffer from inadequate health infrastructure, scarce education opportunities, internal conflict, poverty, and the like (Sireen, 2017). Ethiopia has been characterized as one of the developing countries stricken by as high unemployment and displacement because of war. Abebaw (2003)

affirms Ethiopia is entangled with several challenging conditions, including famine, political instability, unemployment, underemployment, ethnic conflict, and so forth. Researchers (for instance Güneralp et al. 2017 and Sireen (2017) have found urbanization to be among the precursors of some social problems in developing nations. Citizens' vulnerability to such dire conditions has exacerbated problems such as begging in Ethiopian cities particularly in Addis Ababa (Abdusalam & Belay, 2021; Jelili, 2006).

Begging is a global issue (Ahamdi, 2010; Groce et al., 2013; Jelili, 2006; MoLSA, 1992; Woubishet, 2005) with its being more conspicuous in developing countries (Abebaw, 2003; Ebenezer et al., 2018; Woubishet, 2005). These research works of Abebaw, Ebenezer et al., and Woubishet 2005 have revealed high prevalence of begging in several African countries. Research also indicates that the practice of earning a living is on begging is widespread in Ethiopia (Antehunegn & Abdusalam, 2019; Abdusalam & Belay, 2021).

In Ethiopia the genesis of begging is linked to religious practices and the wanting of the tradition of support (Negese, 2008). In the olden times, the needy used to satisfy their basic necessities mainly with the help from kins, cultural and religious institutions, and clans. However, the collapse of such a support system, coupled with the booming individualistic culture, paved the way for begging in the country (MoLSA, 1992; Negese, 2008).

Addis Ababa, a fast-developing city, hosts apparently all Ethiopian ethnic groups (PEFA, 2008). The city has a size of 527 square kilometers. The population density is estimated to be around 5,165 persons per a square kilometer available. The

estimates of the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia show that the population of the city is more than 4.5 million (CSA, 2020). Its better facilities, infrastructure, and industries has made the city to be the preferred destination for people migrating from rural locations. The internal migration has been identified to be among the factors leading the city to suffer from high population density, disintegration of social fabric, crime, violence and eventually poverty (MoFED, 2006; Netsanet, 2009).

The rate of poverty in Addis Ababa is worsening and a substantial portion of its inhabitants are presumed to lead a dire life. Netsanet (2009) asserted that poverty is more severe in the city's center than its outskirts.

Researchers have identified several factors that predispose people to resort to begging. The major factors include poverty (Fireyihun, 2011; Teweldebrhan, 2011; Woubishet, 2005), family breakdown (Fireyihun, 2011), societal crumbling and illiteracy, (Teweldebrhan, 2011), rural-urban migration and drought, famine and war induced displacement (Tatek, 2009), religious obligation (Kerebih, et al., 2007), peer pressure and illness (Lucas, 2007), political challenges, unemployment and underemployment (MOLSA, 1992), and urbanization (Woubishet, 2005). As the local studies focused on physically unhealthy people making a living on begging there is the need to uncover factors that push or pull physically healthy people to engage in begging. In this study, therefore, an attempt was done to examine if there are any different factors, other than those found amongst physically unhealthy beggars, that pushed the participants of the study to earn a living from begging.

It has become a common place to see physically healthy adults begging in the streets of Addis Ababa (Abduselam & Belay, 2021; Groce et al., 2014; Negese,

2008; Samuel, 2017). Albeit social bans, overwhelming evidence exist in written documents, videos, and television programs that Addis Ababa has become a house of healthy adults who make a living by begging (Negese, 2008; Tatek, 2009). In Ethiopia, the practice of begging among physically healthy is unwelcome. Even though beggary is not encouraged by several religions (Jelili, 2010; Negese, 2008) it is drawing a substantial number of physically healthy people (Abduselam & Belay, 2021; Antehunegn & Abduselam, 2019).

Therefore, the objective of this study was to identify the reasons that push physically healthy adults to earn a living from an activity that is socially and culturally prohibited in Ethiopia. It was also attempted to identify the strategies they used to get pity of others so as to earn alms for a living. In the context of this study, begging refers to asking people with whom one has no close ties for a non-reciprocated charity, such as money and food, as can be seen when individuals beg in public spaces. Similarly, physical health refers to a state of external physical well-being enabling an individual to perform his/her daily activities without restrictions as measured by physical health screening tools and confirmed by observation. Physical health was also considered as being free from major diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, inhibiting the person from engaging in various formal businesses.

## **Methods**

### **Research Design**

To attain the objectives of the study, primary qualitative data collection tools were employed. Since data were gathered by employing interviews and FGDs, thematic analysis was conducted to make meaning out of the data. In addition, demographic characteristics such as sex and age were tapped and analyzed quantitatively.

### **Research Setting**

Addis Ababa is the capital city of Ethiopia and is found 7,726 feet above sea level. The foundation, growth, and development of Addis Ababa are not linked to colonization (Bahru, 2001). Nearly every ethnic group in Ethiopia is represented in this city (PEFA, 2008). The capital city is 527 square kms. It is estimated that about 5,165 people live in a square km area (CSA, 2020).

The population of Addis Ababa is growing at a faster rate mainly due to the influx of people from rural areas pushed by drought, political instability, regional wars, government compulsion, depletion of natural resources, pursuit of better job opportunities, and lack of basic services (Abduselam & Belay, 2021; Woubshet, 2005). A substantial proportion of the migrants usually are confronted with dire socio-economic conditions upon their arrival to the city. Many of them are forced to join various types of jobs to lead their lives without having the opportunity to choose among the available jobs due to the prevailing soaring unemployment rate in Ethiopia (CSA, 2020).

Among the ten sub-cities of Addis Ababa, four sub cities namely. Addis Ketema, Arada, Lideta, and Kirkos were selected for the present study Begging is more commonly practiced in these sub-cities than in other sub-cities. Additional reasons for selection of these sub cities as study sites are:

- 1) These sub-cities host more than 40 % of the capital's population (Netsanet, 2009).
- 2) With their locations being at the center they are easily accessible.
- 3) These places are observed to have high business activities attracting people who lead their lives by begging.
- 4) These sub cities have places including bridges, worshipping areas and marketplaces where beggars can spend their nights.
- 5) In these places there are popular churches and mosques wherein beggars can easily find almsgivers.

#### **Population and Participants:**

The study's participants were physically healthy adults in Addis Ababa, ranging in age from 18 to 40, who made their living by begging. The people in this age range are thought to be the backbone of the nation and are productive. This segment of the population could have contributed to the economic prosperity of their nation, since nations primarily depend on this demographic for economic growth.

In an interview with representatives of the Addis Ababa city government's Labour and Social Affairs Bureau, it was learned that it was unclear how many physically healthy adults in the city were making a living by begging. However, the agency has pinpointed the sub-cities where the majority of physically fit adult

beggars reside. Additionally, the agency has pinpointed particular locations where beggars frequently engage in this activity. While there are beggars in every sub-city, the study's target group was often seen in particular sections of several sub-cities. The target groups' densely inhabited areas are indicated in Table 1

**Table 1:**

*Specific Areas Where the Target Groups are Highly Populated*

Awutobustera	Ras Mekonnen Bridge	Biherawi	Mexico square
Merkato	Arat Kilo	Sengatera	Legehar
Gojam Berenda	Megenagna	Tikuranbessa	Urael church
Teklehaimanot	Filwuha	Kazanchis	Kality

Following the identification of the precise locations where the target population can be available, four sub-cities and certain areas within them were selected to choose the participants.

### **Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

Using purposive and convenience sampling procedures, twenty-three physically healthy beggars—ten of whom were female and the remaining thirteen of whom were male—from specific regions of Addis Ketema, Arada, Lideta, and Kirkos sub-cities were chosen for the interviews. Because the research's target population consisted of beggars in good physical health, the purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that the sample was physically normal. Convenience sampling was also employed since it makes individuals conveniently accessible. Regarding the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) samples, six male beggars and four female beggars were chosen through availability and purposive sampling procedures.



Because it was so difficult to gather beggars who through other means availability sampling was used. This was because of making a living by begging required them to move from one place to another and from one street to another. If beggars were discovered to be physically healthy and in close proximity to one another, they were invited to take part in the focus group discussions.

As a result, 33 beggars in all (19 men and 14 women) took part in the research. The data saturation approach was used to determine this sample size. Through the use of a purposive sample technique, three officials from the Labour and Social Affairs Bureau (LSAB) of the Addis Ababa City Government—two men and one woman—were also included in the study. The Addis Ababa city government's LSAB executives were invited because their organization was one of the ones that worked directly with the impoverished and vulnerable populations.

**Table 2:**

*Sub-Cities and Specific Areas from which Samples Were Selected*

Addis Ketema	Arada	Lideta	Kirkos
Sub-City	Sub-City	Sub-City	Sub-City
Awutobus Tera	Piassa	Teklehaimanot	Filwuha
GojamBerenda	RasMekonnin Bridge	TikurAnbessa	Biherawi
		Megenagna	Mexico
			Legehar

**Data Gathering Tools:** In the present study two types of tools were used. The first was used to distinguish obviously physically healthy beggars from other categories of beggars (such as children, elderly, disabled, etc.). The tools were observation and

screening tools. The second type of tools were interview and FGD designed to get firsthand information from participants. A close ended questionnaire was used to tap data on demographic factors including sex, age and educational level.

**Observation:** The purpose of the observation checklist was to assess the physical health of beggars. As the target participants were physically healthy adult beggars, first beggars were evaluated using an observation checklist. The checklist included measures evaluating physical conditions such hearing and vision impairments, as well as the state of hands, legs, and mobility. The screening tool was administered if the beggar satisfied the requirements listed in the primary observation checklist. Items on this checklist included "Are the beggar's hands normal?" "How are his/her legs?" "Can she/he hear a sound at a volume others find audible?" and "Can she/he see and recognize objects at a distance others can detect?"

**Screening Tool:** The screening instrument, like the observation checklist, sought to distinguish between physically healthy and the unhealthy adult beggars. The researcher created tools to help distinguish physically healthy beggars from unhealthy ones because the study's participants were beggars who could participate in other legal businesses requiring physical health and strength and who were physically fit enough during the data collection period. The tool was created by contacting medical experts and drawing on medical research studies. The screening tool's components primarily addressed serious health issues that prevent people from participating in activities that demand physical fitness and how participants perceive their level of physical strength.

The screening tool comprised of 11 items. Major illnesses including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and the like were the emphasis of the instrument. (e.g.). It

was also focused on the condition of eyes, legs and hands (.”). On top of these, the screening test asked participants if they believed their physical health was sufficient to do any tasks requiring strength. (e

Each item was answered “YES” or “NO.” The beggar was regarded as a study participant if they provided a “YES” response for each question. The beggar was deemed physically unhealthy and was removed from the study if they answered “NO” to any of the questions.

**Interview Guide:** Following the determination of a beggar as a study participant the interview guide was administered with the help of an observation checklist and screening tool. The guide consisted of two parts. The first part evaluated demographic factors such as age, sex, birth place and higher educational level attained (e.g., “Your Sex”, “Age in Years”, “Level of Education / 1. Unable to read and write, 2. Elementary, 3. High School, 4. Certificate and above”). The second part assessed causes for begging (e.g., “Select the reason/s that forced you to begin begging in the street”). This part also was set to solicit information regarding strategies participants employed to draw almsgivers’ attention (e.g., “What kind of strategy/strategies you employ to easily solicit money or other alms from people you beg”).

**Focus Group Discussion:** The FGD guide comprised of two questions inquiring participants on the causes for begging and strategies they employ in begging (e.g., “Tell me the reason/s that forced you to lead your life through begging”, “What kind of strategy/strategies do you employ to easily get the sympathy of people you beg?”).

The location of the first FGD was Piazza, Jegole Square. The conversation took place with four female participants. Six male beggars participated in the second FGD, which was conducted in the Filwuha neighborhood. The researcher created the FGD items in English, and he and a language specialist from Addis Ababa University translated them into Amharic. The duration of each FGD was between 18 to 22 minutes. The participants were unhappy with the length of time they spent on the discussions because they took place during their begging hours albeit their consent to participate in the FGD. It was deemed impossible to conduct the FGDs at other times for it would have necessitated sufficient compensation.

### **Data Analysis**

In the present study thematic analyses was employed to make meaning of the qualitative data gathered. A deductive method was used for doing thematic analysis. Prior to going over the data, the researcher had certain themes ready that he anticipated might appear in the data. Then, a detailed review of all the data was conducted in order to become acquainted with the data.

Sentences, phrases, and idioms that were pertinent to the themes were shaded different colors to generate codes. Each code was designed to represent the concepts that the participants had mentioned. Codes such as "Undeserving Beggars," "Strong Beggars," "Healthy Beggars," "Street Dwellers," "Being Uncertain," "24-hour Incidence," "Profitable Business," "Well-Known Job," "Qifela," "Yegile," "Derash," "Teqetari," etc. were developed. Upon closely examining the codes, the researcher was able to identify the patterns that led to the themes. Unusual Amharic phrases used by the participants were replaced with more widely understood terms, and irrelevant codes

were removed (for example, "Qifela" was changed to "begging" and "Teqetari" to "full-time beggar"). Every theme was identified and given a name based on the codes. (e.g. 'Undeserving Beggar' is termed as 'Physically Healthy Beggar'). At last, the developed themes included Physically Healthy Beggars, Commonness, Incidence, Full Time Beggar, Attractive Daily Income, Profitable Job and Yegile (to mean 'My Own'). All the above themes were summarized to two broad themes, namely Reasons and begging Strategies.

Some interviews were audio recorded with the consent of interviewees. The researcher first took notes while listening to the recorded audio in order to find pertinent phrases, statements, and expressions and phrases. The materials were then finally transcribed and organized by theme. Furthermore, percentages were used to analyses data regarding demographic factors.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

While ethical considerations remain important in all types of research, their significance is more pronounced in studies involving populations such as beggars. As a result, basic ethical principles were closely adhered to.

The data gathering tools, including the audio recorder, were accompanied by an informed consent form, and participants were made aware that their participation in the study is entirely voluntary. In order to ensure their anonymity and data confidentiality, the respondents were identified by letters and numbers they generated

When respondents received the informed consent form, they expressed that they were deceived on many occasions by many previous researchers. In the present study utmost effort was exerted to control and eliminate any attempt of deception.

## **Findings**

### **Characteristics of Respondents**

The study involved 33 physically healthy beggars (14 females and 19 males). 23 participants (10 female and 13 male) took part in interviews, and 10 (4 female and 6 male) participated in the FGD. In addition, 3 other participants (1 female and two male officials) from LSAB of Addis Ababa City administration participated in an interview. Thus, a total of 36 people (15 female and 21 male) were participants of the qualitative section of this study.

**Table 3**

*Summary of the Participants Involved in the Study*

	Beggars			Officials	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Interview	13	10	23	2	1
FGD	6	4	10	–	–
			33	3	

The 33 beggars were asked about their place of birth. The data revealed that 10 (30.3%) of the total number of beggars were born in Addis Ababa, the capital city. The remaining (n= 23, i.e. 69.6%) stated that they were originally from different regions

outside the capital city. Table 4 presents the overall characteristics of the participants of the study.

**Table 4**  
*Characteristics of Beggar Respondents*

Age in Years	Level of Education		Number of Children					
	F	%	f	%				
< 20	7	21.2	Don't read and Write	2	6	No children	22	66.6
20-30	16	48.4	Elementary	20	60.6	One child	4	12.1
31-40	10	30.3	High school Certificate and above	9	27.2	Two children	7	21.2
				2	6	> two children	0	
Total	33			33			33	

*Note:* f = frequency; % = percent

One can learn the following points from the data in Table 4:

- 1) There existed people who made beginning their source of living, even after having graduated from higher education institutions.
- 2) Over a third of the beggars had children who were dependents.

### **Reasons Accounting for Begging**

It has been noted that physically healthy adults turned their lives into begging as a means of survival. This section further explored why these individuals were driven to begging. Prior to that the researchers attempted to understand the pushing factors for deserving beggars (disabled beggars, child beggars, old-age beggars, etc.). It was thought that there could be potential reasons why the physically healthy individuals were driven to make begging their life choice. The findings have indicated some new perspectives about why the healthy people were pushed to begging (see Table 5). The reasons accountable for begging to both physically healthy and unhealthy groups to practice begging were found to be similar.

Results in Table 5 show the factors involved in compelling the participants to do begging for their survival. Participants were given the chance to select more than one reasons from the list.



**Table 5**

*Reasons Accounting for Beginning Life in Streets.*

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
* Recommended by others	6	2
Unable to find job	5	11
Poverty	10	14
Family problems	5	11
Political reason (war, displacement, etc)	2	
Profitable job	3	4
* Other jobs are physically too demanding	4	2
I have no one to take charge of me	3	

One can see from the characteristics of the respondents section that the majority of the respondents came to the capital city from regions for various reasons. Eight of them migrated to the city to make money from begging. In other words, they came to the capital with the aim of earning a living from begging.

Previous research studies conducted on begging among disabled beggars, old age beggars and child beggars revealed the reasons such as inability to find job,

profitability of begging and political reasons as some of the causes forcing individuals to begin to earn a living through begging; in addition to being disabled and aged (Ahamdi, 2010; Groce, et al., 2014; Negese, 2008). Although these research works focused on begging, the nature and characteristics of this study was totally different from participants of earlier studies. As mentioned frequently in previous sections, the current study focused on beggars who were physically healthy so that able to do formal jobs. Nevertheless, the reasons accounting for begging, in previous research findings, were also found to be identified as reasons pushing participants of this study to earn a living through begging.

Furthermore, some participants of this study reported that they began to beg in streets because begging do not require unique knowledge and skill. They did not try to look for other legal or formal jobs since they are too demanding when compared to begging. Similarly, some of the participants began to earn a living from begging just by receiving requests from other beggars who previously joined the activity of begging.

An official working at LSAB of the Addis Ababa City indicated that the factors that pushed out to streets for begging included religious beliefs, work habits of the community, profitability of begging, and the culture of the society associated with almsgiving. One of the participants stated:

*Many of the healthy beggars observed in streets are not actually poor. They are not the right person to beg. They beg because they know that begging is currently a profitable job. As I heard the healthy beggars are fighting with disabled beggars in streets. Disabled beggars are complaining to our office that the healthy ones did not allow them to beg in areas where they are available.*

*The reason is clear that if both able bodied and disabled beggars beg together, obviously people prefer to give to the disabled ones (LSAB, 14).*

Another official in the same bureau further explained why people opted to beg, instead of work.

*It is agreed that we, Ethiopians, are lazy people. We want to be rich as fast as possible. I think religion played its own role on us to develop poor work habit. We collected beggars and other street dwellers from streets and gave them training on various professions. After completing the training, we provided them 12,000.00 birr believing that they can begin their own business. Some of them were found while begging in streets. Mindless, it is after taking the training and the money that they were found in streets. This is simply because they don't want to exert maximum effort to get money from other jobs. You know, begging is so simple that everybody can do it (LSAB, 15).*

### **Strategies Used by Physically Healthy Adult Beggars**

Begging by physically healthy people is conceptualized as asking others for money, food, and clothing. The data reveals that strategies the healthy and physically normal beggars employed to ask for money from almsgivers were more or less the same as those used by beggars with non-healthy ones including people with disability, old-age beggars, child beggars, and other types of beggars in previous research findings. The only strategy, especially used by the physically healthy beggars, was to walk alongside the almsgivers, trying to explain their problems by way of appealing to their pity.

Data from the focus group discussion has shown that beggars employed several techniques to draw the attention of the almsgivers. *“In most cases, I show respect for people I beg by using words of respect such as ‘Yene Geta’ (My Lord), ‘Yemesafint zer’ (Royal Family Member), ‘Yelij Habtam’ (Deep Pocketed Young), etc.”* (Discussant Number 2, Filwuha).

The other participant said:

*Although I have to frequently change techniques, I often appear as if I ate nothing for hours. I sometimes go certain distances with the person I beg so that I will get room to get sympathy of the person* (Discussant Number 1, Piassa).

A beggar who was 28-year old revealed that she used religious words, dressed down with older clothes, and occasionally new clothes. She also expressed that she would show a sign of starvation, telling almsgivers that she had dependent children to take care of.

In general, the strategies physically healthy beggars employed included:

- Acting as sick
- Wearing worn-out clothes and occasionally new clothes
- Using religious words and pretending to be a religious person or leader
- Making use of words that demonstrate respect to almsgivers
- Looking starved
- Mentioning that they have several responsibilities, such as upbringing children, educating children, taking care of older parents, etc.
- Going some distance with the person they beg

As already mentioned in this section, many of the strategies employed by the participants of the current study to meet their goal (to get money and food) were found to be similar to strategies previously identified by other researchers. For instance, Abebaw (2003) and Fireyihun (2011) found that beggars look starved and sick and wear worn-out and dirty clothes while begging.

## **Discussion**

***Reasons for Begging:*** People who are physically fit to do any type of work opted to make begging as a means of their survival in the city of Addis Ababa. The reason is perhaps there is a tradition by the people to help others who are in need, so the beggars used this as a loophole. According to Groce and his colleagues, the disappearance of the traditional support systems among the members of societies has been a major factor for many individuals to get themselves in streets to beg (Groce et al., 2014).

Previous research works on begging mainly focused on beggars who had culturally accepted reasons (e.g., disability, being old enough) to beg. In doing so, some of these researchers tried to mention that physically healthy people are being observed while begging in the streets of Addis Ababa (Elshaday Relief and Development Association, 2007; Negese, 2008; Ogunkan, 2009). However, this research exclusively focused on individuals who had no culturally accepted reasons to lead life through begging.

Among the commonest reasons that pushed people to the practice of begging were poverty, family problems, and lack of a job or unemployment. These reasons or factors appeared to have been in congruence with the findings of the previous studies

(e.g., Abebaw, 2003; Fireyihun, 2011; Groce et al., 2014; Samuel, 2017). Many reported also that the physically healthy beggars went out to the streets because they were solicited by others who had formerly become beggars themselves, as they observed begging as a better source of income. Begging is something that is done without any knowledge or skill unlike what professional careers demand. On the contrary, professional jobs require one to pass through formal education, preferably higher level learning.

***Strategies Physically Healthy Adult Beggars Used:*** The initial assumption by the researchers was that the physically healthy beggars would use begging strategies that were not previously used by others such as physically disabled, and old-age beggars. However, the data has shown that there existed no major difference between strategies used by physically healthy beggars and the others beggars who had some form of disability in their ways of approaching almsgivers. As indicated earlier, one exception is a strategy the physically healthy beggars used walking alongside the almsgivers, panhandling them. This tactic was found very helpful because it allowed them extend their begging in extra time, the time they try to solicit the almsgivers.

Physically healthy beggars who participated in this study were found engaging themselves in begging activity without any culturally and legally accepted reasons. Though some reasons seem justifiable (for instance, war and displacement), physically healthy beggars should have engaged in culturally acceptable formal businesses.

In general, it was learnt from the findings that physically healthy beggars were earning a living from begging due to the fact that begging has become a profitable activity.

## **Conclusion**

This study has identified the factors that are associated to begging among physically healthy people. The central reason why people came out to the streets for begging was poverty. Other reasons included unemployment and family-related problems. Some beggars were also invited to beg by their other beggar fellows. Friends, relatives, and former neighbors were among those who invited many to come to the 'business' of begging which was considered to be an important source of income. Begging was considered to be a profitable 'business'. This study observed that beginning helped the participants make better income than other professional jobs could do. Among other responsible factors that contributed for such people to come out for begging were religion, poor work habit, and the community's almsgiving tradition showing compassion and empathy.

Political instability, inter-ethnic conflict and internal war need to be given attention by future researchers as these factors are believed to play significant roles in forcing people to resort to socially unaccepted ways of earning a living in the Ethiopian context.

## **Recommendations**

A very good lesson one may deduce is that no country can prosper in a situation where a significant number of people are increasingly flooded to the streets with the aim of making a living from begging. Even though begging may be considered a righteous practice for those who are physically disabled and hardly find jobs, the potential risk of begging outweighs. Accordingly, the following recommendations are forwarded.

- Poverty, unemployment and political instability were among the major reasons that forced participants of this study to lead life through begging in the streets. The researchers of the study believed that these reasons could be improved by government organizations such as the Labor and Social Affairs Bureau, the Addis Ababa City Administration and the office of the Prime Minister. If these and other concerned organizations work on improving poverty, unemployment and political instability, the number of physically healthy beggars will reduce.
- Government and non-government actors who are concerned about the social and economic affairs ought to aim to develop strategies that could reduce the rate of unemployment through targeting poverty eradication.
- The participants of the study did not have any logically acceptable reason to practice begging as a means to live their lives. Almsgivers therefore need to discourage the physically healthy beggars by discriminating them from the needy ones.
- Beggars employed various techniques to get the attention of almsgivers. Those who give money to beggars and those who regularly support beggars need not be deceived by mere strategies beggars employ. They have to be able to differentiate between those who require genuine support from others.



## **Declarations**

### ***Ethics Approval and consent to participate***

The data gathering tools as well as the audio recorder, were used upon consent of participants was secured through an informed consent form. Participants were made aware that their participation in the study is voluntary.

The interview and FGD guides, including the methods in the present study, were approved by the School of Psychology of Addis Ababa University.

### ***Availability of Data and Materials***

Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

### ***Competing Interests***

The authors of this article declare that there is no competing interest.

### ***Funding***

This study was conducted with a forty thousand birr financial grant from Addis Ababa University. This fund was expended on data collectors and was audited by the university's finance department.

## References

- Abdusalam Kemal and Belay Tefera (2021). Begging among physically healthy adults in Addis Ababa: Commonness and Daily Income. *Ethiopian Journal of Behavioral Studies*, 4, (1). 1-21
- Abebaw Minaye (2003). *A special form of child abuse: using children for begging and its psychosocial effects on the behavior of children*. (Masters thesis, Addis Ababa University). Addis Ababa University, School of Graduate Studies, Addis Ababa.
- Ahamdi, H. (2010). A study of beggars' characteristics and attitude of people towards the phenomenon of begging in the city of Shiraz. *Journal of Applied Sociology*, 39, (3) 135-148.
- Antehunegn Birhanu and Abdusalam Kemal (2019). *Begging practice among productive age beggars: Incidence, causes and lived experience in case of North Wollo and Wag-Hemra zones*. (Thesis, Woldia University), Woldia University, Ethiopia.
- Bahru Zewde (2001). *A history of modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991*. Oxford, England: James Curry.
- Central Statistical Agency /CSA/ (2020, July). *Statistical report on the 2020 urban employment- unemployment survey*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Ebenezer Owusu-Sekyere, Enock Jengre, and Eliasu Alhassan (2018). Begging in the city: Complexities, degree of organization, and embedded risks. *Hindawi Child Development Research*, 25, 1-9,
- Elshaday Relief and Development Association (2007). Progress Report, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Fireyihun Fikru (2011). *Experiences of mother beggars: The case in Urael church and the nearby traffic light in Addis Ababa*. (Unpublished Masters thesis, Addis Ababa University), Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work, Addis Ababa.
- Gebre Yntiso (2008). Urban development and displacement in Addis Ababa: The impact of resettlement projects on low-income households: *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review*, 24 (2), 53-78.
- Groce, N., Murray, B., & Kealy, A. (2014). *Disabled beggars in Addis Ababa: Current situation and prospects for change*. Geneva, ILO, Irish Aid.
- Groce, N., Murray, B., Loeb, M., Tramontano, C., Trani, J. F., Mekonnen, Asfaw (2013). *Disabled beggars in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*. Geneva, ILO.

- Güneralp et al (2017). *Urbanization in Africa: Challenges and opportunities for conservation*. Environmental Research Letters, 13 015002.
- Jelili M. O. (2006). Environmental and Socio-Economic Dimensions of Begging in Ilorin and Ogbomoso. Unpublished dissertation, Department of Urban Regional Planning, Ladoke Akintola, University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria.
- Kerebih Asrese, Tizita Tilahun & Alemtsehay Mekonnen (2007). Demographic and socioeconomic determinants of women begging in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 75-80.
- Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) (1992). *A Study on Begging in Addis Ababa: Action Oriented*. Addis Ababa.
- MoFED (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development) (2006). Ethiopia: Building on progress: A plan for accelerated and sustained development to end poverty (PASDEP). Addis Ababa.
- Negese Belay (2008) በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ የለምኖ አዳሪነት መንስኤና ውጤት: በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር የሠራተኛና ማህበራዊ ጉዳይ ቢሮ: አዲስ አበባ (Reasons and impacts of begging in Addis Ababa. Labor and Social Affairs Bureau of Addis Ababa city administration).
- Netsanet Teklehaymanot (2009). Dynamics of poverty in Addis Ababa: The Case of Arada, Addis Ketema and Lideta Sub-cities, *Forum for Social Studies Research Report* 2(3), 28-50.
- Ogunkan D. V. (2009). Socio-Economic implication of begging in Ogbomoso, Nigeria. Unpublished dissertation, department of Sociology, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.
- PEFA (2008). Guidelines for application of the PEFA performance measurement framework at sub national government level. PEFA Secretariat, Washington DC, USA.
- Samuel Getachew (2017, January 10). የለምኖ አዳሪነት ገፅታ (Nature of begging). Addis Fortune newsletter. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Sireen Khemesh (2017). Politics in developing countries/ basic concepts and approaches. Retrieved from <http://www.poliot.cv> on May 2020.
- Tatek Abebe, (2009). *Šik'älla: The survival strategies of Ethiopian child beggars*, In: proceedings of the 16th international conference of Ethiopian studies, ed. by Svein Ege,

Harald Aspen, BirhanuTeferra and Shiferaw Bekele, Trondheim, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway.

.Teweldebrhan Abraha (2011).*The causes, prevalence and psychosocial consequences of begging in Addis Ababa among beggars coming from Tigray regional state*. (Masters thesis, Addis Ababa University).. Addis Ababa University, School of Graduate Studies, Addis Ababa.

Woubshet Demewozu (2005). Begging as a means of livelihood: Conferring with the poor at the orthodox religious ceremonial days in Addis Ababa, African study monographs,” *Supplementary Issue, 29*, 185–191.

Van Dijk, M. P. and Fransen, J. (2008).*Managing Ethiopian cities in an era of rapid urbanization*. The Netherlands: Eburon Academic Publishers.