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The Lived Experience of Female Buskers (Azmaris): A Phenomenology Study from Bahir Dar City Administration, Ethiopia

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Bahir Dar University
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Phenomenology Study from Bahir Dar City Administration,
Ethiopia**

By
Etienat Walleign

Advisor: Yohannes Mersha (Asso. Prof)

June, 2021

Bahir Dar

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Ethiopia**

**By
Etienat Walleign**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Gender
and Development Study**

Advisor: Yohannes Mersha (Asso. Prof)

**Bahir Dar University
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June, 2021

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Bahir Dar University

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Approval of Thesis for Defense

I hereby certify that I have supervised, read, and evaluated this thesis titled “The Lived Experience of Female Buskers /Azmaris/: A phenomenological Study from Bahir Dar City Administration” by Etienat Wallelign prepared under my guidance. I recommend the thesis be submitted for oral defense.

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As members of the board of examiners, we examined this dissertation/thesis entitled “The Lived Experience of Female Buskers /Azmaris/: A phenomenological Study from Bahir Dar City Administration” by Etienat Walleign. We hereby certify that the thesis is accepted for fulfilling the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters of Arts.

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Acronyms

ILOInternational Labour Association

COVID 19.....Corona virus disease of 2019 (The CO, VI, and D within that phrase were brought together to create COVID)

Glossary

Azmari.....A traditional Ethiopian musician who usually sing by accompanying with the instrument which is dubbed as *Masinko* (One stringed fiddle).

Masinqo..... A traditional musical instrument with one stringed fiddle which is often used by Azmari/busker.

Yebahil Mishet Bet.....A traditional culture bar houses where traditional dancers and musicians including Azmari/busker perform and display their art for the audience.

Abstract

Azmari has been a long presented tradition throughout the history of Ethiopia. However, little attention has been given about their lived experiences though their poems are widely circulated in the society. To fill this gap, this study is attempted to uncover the lived experiences of female Azamris (buskers) in Bahir dar City Administration. To meet the objective of the study, qualitative approach with phenomenology design was employed. The data was extracted from 10 purposively selected participants through in-depth interview data collection tool. The data was analyzed via thematic analysis technique. The study result indicated that women Azmaries have enjoyed varieties opportunities which include salary, reward/gift, access to visit other place within or outside Ethiopia, access to meet influential people and music producers, getting social respect and access to release music album. The result also shows that female Azmaris have confronted different saddles. The main challenge is associated with the current political instability and COVID-19 pandemic. Due to such incidents, the income of the female Azmaris has sharply been decreased. Apart from economic problem, female Azmari are exposed for various health problems that arise due to night work and continues vocal performance. Physical pain and throat infections are common health problems for the Azmaris. The female Azmaris have also faced various gender based violence. To cope with all these challenges, they have used various mechanisms which include being patient, praying, developing resilience behavior, establishing marriage life and being transparent to convince others. It can be concluded that female Azmaris' life can be seen from two polarized perspectives— on the one hand they get advantages and on the other hand they face various challenges. It is, therefore, suggested that various governmental organizations like labor and social affairs office, saving and credit institutions, women focused organizations particularly women youth and child affairs office, women federation , women league and also non-governmental organizations should have to support them to mitigate the problems of the Azmaris whereby they able to improve the life of female Azmaris.

Key words: Female, Azmari/Busker, Bahir Dar City Administration and Ethiopia

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and operational definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background of the study

Ever since the beginning of man kindness till the present day, musical issue has been a major and recurring matter in the global discourse. New ideas, unpredictable message, fantasy and imagination, and show bases and tabloids are the center of music, musicians and music industry (Martin, 1995). Though music itself is neither masculine nor feminine, those who create music are of predominately one sex. Never waning in their presence throughout rock history, men are more likely than women to become musicians, producers, composers, or record label owners (Frith, 1978; Weinstein 1993).

The traditional scenario is even worse compared with ‘modern’ world. In traditional patriarchal third world countries like Ethiopia, the role of woman was/is limited and mostly related to the house and household work. Therefore, musical practice of women in the framework of musical tradition can be perceived as a reflection of their life flows. Strict moral and religious standards, as well as isolation and inferiority implied through tradition, did not question her musical creativity, nor the value of her creations (Martin, 1995).

The impact of traditional music on African culture is obvious. Before, during and after colonialism Africans use their traditional music in different aspects. Beyond continental influence, African traditional music became centre of excellence abroad. It is not surprise to see Music and Musicians from Mali, Senegal and Morocco etc. on world stage (Weinstein 1993).

Although African music role in culture has been rarely documented, it is difficult to imagine the role of women in traditional musical practice beyond singing and dancing. In Ghana some scholars have documented contributions of females to the sustenance of traditional music. Acheampong (1996) highlights the monopoly of women in performing music during *bragoro* (Female initiation rite of the Akan people of Ghana). He reports that “there were no men. Women played the *dondo*, only women drummed, sang and danced.” This was a report of

an event that occurred in the 1910s. Ampene (2005) has also devoted several pages to the role of women in the perpetuation of *nwomkor* (A type of female musical genre among the Akan people of Ghana) in Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions of Ghana, giving credence to prominent personalities who deserve publicity.

In east African case, the indigenous communities of the region used abundant types of music instruments better played on different occasions such as for entertainment, funerals, wedding, rituals, public holidays and other occasions closely linked with everyday life of community and their culture. The role of woman here also is specified well. Girls and women play their music and dance, with men or boys and or with their own circle (R.N. Pati et al. 2015).

Ethiopia is not only treated as cradle of mankind but also as motherland of music, songs, art and culture. The western world has borrowed many components from traditional music of Ethiopia which has been exposed to threats of music piracy in this globalization era. Ethiopia, located in Horn of Africa, upholds unique multiethnic population speaking not less than two hundred dialects. The folklore of Ethiopia has been enriched with customs, beliefs, tradition, songs, music, magical practices, proverbs, saying, spells treasure house of homogenous unsophisticated people (Finnegan, 1984).

Like other traditional practices, the *Azmari* (a person or a busker who entertain people for donation by presenting traditional music) tradition has also passed through different historical developments. According to kimberlin (1976) and Bolay (1999) the word *Azmari* is derived from the Geez word *Zammara* ,which means “he sang” ,or ‘ one who praises God’. The concept mainly applies to professional *masinqo* players and the female singers accompanying them.

An *Azmari* is an instrumentalist whose job is to entertain others by playing *masinqo*, especially found in entertainment venues, traditional hotels in Ethiopian community. It is comparable to the European bard or the West African griot. *Azmari* who may be either male or female ,are skilled at singing extemporized verses ,accompanying themselves on either a *masenqo* (one stringed fiddle) or *krar* (lyre).*Azmari* often perform in drinking establishments called *tejbeit*,which specialize in the serving of *tejbeit* ,which specialize in the serving of *tej*(mead).The *Azmari* introduced the popular *Tizita* ballad form.

Concerning the origin of *Azmari*, stories have been told from different perspectives and in varied forms. However, the oral narrations revolve around the following four myths that are discussed under this section. Tigist (2010) summarized four major myth stories and the first narrates:

Once upon a time, God decides his beloved mother Virgin Marry to die. However, she explained that death is so fearful. Her son did not leave his mother being frightened; rather, he invited Ezra with his 'Masinko' and David with 'Begena' (Harp) and made her go without feeling death's cruel pain.

In relation to the above mythology, *Azmaris* believe that during that time, virgin Marry blessed Ezra saying “May all the people listen to you with a greatest pleasure where ever you go!” As a result, *Azmaris* explain, that they are allowed to get anywhere they like and perform the art. Based on the above reasoning, *Azmaris* believe that they are the children or descendants of Ezra. Mulaw (2002), sums up, during the ancient time, *Azmaris* were only limited on praising God. However, as time passes on, the trend changed and they began to use their art for the sake of worldly use.

Another myth states that during the reign of King Solomon in Jerusalem, the people of Israel refused to see his two sons who were born from the Ethiopian queen, in their province. The reason was that the sons resemble their father and it was difficult for the public to know the real king. Accordingly, the two sons of the king and many other elder sons of the Israelis were sent to Ethiopia through Eritrea and settled in the area of Lasta-North Wollo province. Among those settlers, Ezra's elder son was found. The consequence was, thus, the children and grandchildren of this man have been distributed everywhere in the country and became to be known as *Azmaris*. The third myth explains *Azmaris* were part of Negede Gafat whom migrated from Eskindiria to Ethiopia. The fourth and the last narrative assert that *Azmaris* were Artists who gave up church education because of different reasons during the time of St. Yared.

In conclusion, almost all oral narratives approve that during the time church and government were the two sides of a coin, the art of *Azmari* shifted from church usage to the palace. Mulaw (2002) gives good example of this. As he explains, king Lalibela of Lasta was known for appreciating other worldly wisdoms including *Azmari* art beyond the religious activities of the time. As a result, *Azmaris* got chance to develop the art.

Though it seems difficult to provide direct and evident explanations about the origin of *Azmari* tradition, it seems possible to conclude that the art of *Azmari* began long ago in Ethiopia and still exists. *Azmari* is hugely popular throughout Ethiopia. The term refers to a wondering minstrel (the *Azmari*) who plays a *Masinko* (a type of musical instrument) , sings and interacts with the audience .the songs are about life in general, with impromptu poems and witty wordplay which bets (bars where *azmari* regularly performs) in Addis Ababa , Bahirdar ,Gondar and Lalibela. The female *Azmari* has often accompanied the male *Azarmaris* and they perform sings and interact with audience just like the male *Azmaris* but they do not play *Masinko* unlike their male counterpart.

In big cities like Bahir Dar, there is a growing number of western – style bars, pubs and nightclubs. Likewise, traditional music bars where the *Azmaris* present their art has also been growing in major cities. ‘*Yebahil Mishit*’, meaning cultural night, is a vibrant mixture of singing and dancing performed by men and women who often dresses in traditional costumes to a roaring crowd. The singers in this ‘*Yebahil Mishit*’ are dubbed as the *Azmaris* who are previous singing in door to door bases or at local drinking houses. Hence, this study is attempted to uncover the lived experience of the female *Azmaris* who are working in Cultural Night Club which is a recent development in the context of Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The research on female musicians is important for musicians, the music industry, and any workplace where women have low participation. Female musicians operate in an openly sexist environment that socially controls their every movement. Nevertheless, women’s mere presence is a direct confrontation to the ideology of music. This study contributes to understand how women interpret their difference under a blanket of structural disempowerment. One can increase the chances for success by changing numbers and attitudes on two levels: within bands and within organizations. Megan (2006) feels, as soon as female musicians feel uninhibited by age, beauty, sexuality, identity, or image, and then know that difference is no longer an issue. Indeed, the road is long and difficult, but the changes will come in the future.

As far as the researcher’s assessment there is rare research works on related area. But here some statements are presented. Megan (2006), on her study deals with how female

musicians are treated differently in music industry, marked how talented females in music industry are lost their credit.

On his masterpiece work “The sociology of rock” Simon Frith (1981), insisted how patriarchy ruined females’ talent in music. He claimed the maleness of the world of rock is reflected in its lyrics, with their assertions of male supremacy, narcissism, and self-pity; but, for musicians, what is most significant is women’s exclusion from the heart of their lives: exclusion from their friendships and work together as comrade craftsmen in the studio, on the road, in performance. Women’s job in rock is still to service their creative men”.

Pecen et al (2014), tried to see the psychological circumstances of music and female in their study. They found out that female musicians need to deal with a range of challenges during their performance career and in response to these have reported a number of conditions that impact on their performance. Although social support from peers and teachers has been identified as part of the process of dealing with these challenges, little is understood about musicians’ coping methods, beliefs and their attitudes toward support.

Willrodt (2016) studied the gender and labour view of the music industry. She attempted to establish a close understanding of the mechanisms and structures that lead to the disparity of gender representation in the music industry. The music industry is deeply rooted in structures of labour even in developed countries. Willrodt’s research showed the music industry is gender-imbalanced in Norway, one of the most gender-equal countries worldwide

In African context research works have cover the area of music and female. Agnella Viriri (2014) studied the post-independence Zimbabwean music industry. Angela noted that women constitute a hidden yet sizeable force in the music industry. The current study examines the socio-political, cultural and economic factors that have led to the significant increase in the number of female musicians in the post-independence Zimbabwean popular music industry. She also tried to bring to the fore the longstanding issue of the dynamics in the relationship between male and female musicians in the industry. She concluded that resiliency embodied in each of the women as they had chosen what seemed to be a difficult path in order to make themselves known and accepted in the popular music industry.

Angela Scharfenberger's study on West African women in music and analysis of scholarship reflected how female African musicians are incapable of developing their skill in academic way. She affirmed that there are gaps in the scholarship that addresses women's participation in music in west Africa, for social, political, and geographical reasons.

From the above empirical studies done abroad, we can recognize that much attention has so far been given to modern music and the traditional music has not received much attention. Hence, this scenario calls for the need to study on traditional music by considering its social issues.

Come to Ethiopia, the country upholds unique cultural heritage and diverse music history in entire African continent. The traditional music heritage of Ethiopia has been globally recognized with its distinct music culture and symbolic manifestation. The traditional songs and music of the country revolves around core chord of their life and culture. The music arena of Ethiopia has been invaded by multiple western influences through pathways of globalization and market liberation. The globalization has promoted complicated dynamics of cultural borrowing and lending among different countries of the world since last couple of decades.

R.N. Pati et al (2015) suggested that globalization could ruin the cultural music of the country. The modern music of Ethiopia has been blended with combination of elements from traditional Ethiopian music and western music which has created a new trend in the music world. The music tradition of the country not only maintains the cultural identity but also maintains social cohesion through cultural expression at different social occasions and resists cultural changes infused through globalization. The globalization has brought a series of transformation and changes in the world of Ethiopian music through commercialization and digitalization of cultural expressions apart from hijacking the cultural rights of traditional musicians. They claimed the younger generations have been attracted towards western music undermining the aesthetic and cultural value of music tradition of the country.

One of Ethiopia's traditional music's big instances is *Azamari* performance. Azmari and other folklore forms of traditions incorporate all the social, material and oral culture of a society that are passed from generation to generation. According to Melakneh (2005), folklore involves the dances, songs, tales, legends, proverbs customs, beliefs, ritualistic behavior and other non-

literary manifestations. “These are often considered as part of the larger study of ethnology, but they are also the business of the folklorist”. (Ibid: 14)

Azmari tradition is popular at many places of north Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, and in some other parts of Ethiopia too. Especially the area of Gondar, which is believed to be the origin of many Azmaris, has rich *Azmari* tradition. Some researchers studied *the performance, linguistic and social aspects of Azmari* in different parts of Ethiopia especially in Amhara and Tigray region. Few research done and studies on *Azmari* resembled on its folkloric values. ‘What the *Azmari* want to portray in his verse?’ is the major themes of academic study works. Tigist (2010) studied on the major themes and performance styles of *Azmari* lyrics in Gondar. She concluded that, though there are several myth stories, which are told by *Azmari* community concerning their origin, it remains difficult to provide direct and evident explanation about the origin of *Azmari* tradition. However, based on their historical development, it is possible to conclude that *Azmari* tradition has existed for a long time in the history of Ethiopia.

In an ancient setting, Azmaris used to praise God using the art. As time passes on, however, they have begun to use the art for the sake of worldly purpose. Azmaris had been performing almost in all places where the public gathers. Moreover, they had strong relationships with the then kings and authorities of the Fasiledes castle and used to perform the art at the battle fields too. During those times, when the history of the country was dominated by war, Azmaris have contributed a lot towards appreciating the warriors through producing lyrics that praise heroism. More importantly, during the times where there was no press, they have served the role of the media. Currently, Azmaris who perform in Gondar nightclubs raise almost every possible issue through their lyrics. The major themes which are raised by the lyrics are the themes of praise, criticism, love versus departure, hospitality, and lyrics with theme of opposite sex relationship and erotic lyrics.

Abreha (2011) studied the linguistic and social aspects of the (*Azmari*) argot in Tigray found out that *Azmari* traditions are different through semantic process. In form change, the argot uses phonological deformations such as addition, metathesis, reduplication, substitution, deletion, vowel deformation and degemination as well as free variation and depalatalization of the sounds. In addition, suffixes and some prefixes of Tigrinya and Amharic, onomatopoeic words and

changed terms from compound verbs to single words have been used in the formation of the argot.

When we evaluate the above local studies, we can claim that the major themes of research works on the area sticks on the folkloristic point of view of *Azmaris*. Little study is done on the lived experience of *Azmaris* of both sexes. Due to these reason the researcher inspires to conduct this study concerning the lived experience of female *Azmaris* separately since their gender might bring unique and additional problem on them. Given this rationale, this study is attempted to explore the lived experiences of female *Azmaris* by taking those *Azmaris* working in traditional bar houses as a case in point.

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The overarching objective of this study was to explore the lived experiences of female *Azamris* (buskers) in Bahir dar City Administration.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To explore the potential opportunities that female *Azmaris* enjoy.
- To identify challenges facing female *Azmaris*.
- To scrutinize how they cope up the challenges that they encounter.

1.4 Research Questions

This research tried to answer the following research questions;

1. What are the potential opportunities that female *Azmaris* enjoy?
2. What are the challenges that female *Azmaris* face?
3. What are the coping mechanisms used by female *Azmaries* to deal with their problems.

1.5 Significance of the Study

It is believed that this research had the various significances. First, this study had importance to understand the lived experience of female Azmari. Other researchers may use this study as a stepping stone to make further investigations on the topic under the study. At last but not least, this study provides important information for government and non-government organizations for taking intervention measures to improve female Azmari's life and promote the local art.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Due to budget and time constraints, the scope of this study was Bahirdar city Gishabay sub city , and the topic focused on opportunities, challenges and coping mechanisms to deal with challenges were included for this topic. The reason for why the researcher select this site is most of *Azmaris* in Bahirdar city live in this sub city. The study is also delimited to look at female *Azmaris* since they may encounter various challenges due to their gender. The study is only focused on those female *Azmaris* who are working in cultural night clubs since the context or the setting of this bars are quite different from the traditional places of the *Azmaris*.

1.7 Operational Definition of Key Terms

Azmari (busker):- a person who perform music or other entertainment in the traditional bar houses, ceremonies, street or another public place for monetary donations by using *masinqo* (*Amsalu Aklilu's Amharic-English dictionary*)

Female *Azmari*: - she perform music or entertaining people in the traditional bar houses or another public places. (*Amsalu Aklilu's Amharic-English dictionary*)

Masinqo: - It is musical instrument commonly used by Ethiopian buskers (referred as *Azmaris*) (*Amsalu Aklilu's Amharic-English dictionary*). It is the square or diamond –shaped resonator covered is made of four small wooden boards glued together, then covered with a stretched parchment or raw hide. The single string is typically made of horse hair and passes over a bridge. The instrument is turned by means of a large tuning peg to fit the range of the singer's voice .it may be bowed by either the right or left hand , and the non-bow hand sits lightly on top of the upper part of the string

1.8 Organization of the study

This paper is organized into five chapters. The first chapter covers about the background of the study that deals with the origin and current settings of *Azmari*. This chapter also includes statement of the problem which shows the gaps of the previous empirical works. The general and specific objectives, research questions significance of this study, scope of the study, operational definition, and organization of the study are also under chapter one. The second chapter reviewed some related literatures. It assesses what other scholars say concerning *Azmari*, opportunities for them, challenges they face and coping mechanism they take. The third chapter deals with research methodology in which the design, sampling, data gathering instruments, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical consideration of the study are presented. Result and discussion are laid on chapter four. In this part the research participants' sayings are categorically presented. And finally, the fifth chapter deals with the conclusion and possible implications depending on the result presented.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze literatures which are related with the topic under study. To this effect, literatures from several different disciplines have been reviewed under this chapter.

2.1 An Overview of Traditional Music in Ethiopia

Ethiopian traditional music is best expressed with its musical instruments, besides the contribution of the renowned vocalists. The most characteristic and widely used instruments are the *masinko*, the *krar*, the *washint*, the *begen*, the *kebero*, and the *tom-tom* (Girmaw, 2020).

Traditional music is still alive and well in Ethiopia. There are many stages for traditional music in various cities, but the main ones are to be found in the capital the tourist towns of Bahir Dar and Gondar and elsewhere in the north of the country. In Addis you have Yod Abyssinia, 2000 Habesha and Fendika among the most renowned venues, while in Bahir Dar and Gondar, as well as Enfranz area outside Gondar itself, there are a plethora of houses where both tourists as well as locals who are on vacation can enjoy traditional Ethiopian music (Ibid 2020).

Ethiopia contains many distinct cultures. The most populous is that of the Christian Amhara around the capital plateau, but there are other Christian, Jewish and Muslim people, some of them remote and virtually unknown. Sung verses of poetry are a common feature in Amhara. The poetry's basic formats together with the ambiguities in phrasing have something in common with poetic forms in Yemen and serve principally to attract interest. The words they use may often have a double meaning - perhaps one that is stated overtly, the other a hidden meaning (Ibid 2020).

While more modern or westernized Ethiopian music has drawn international attention, partly on account of its clear link with American jazz traditions, there have only been a handful of recordings illustrating Ethiopian traditional music over the years. These have not done enough to give a full representation of the depth and variety of traditional music in Ethiopia (Ibid 2020).

2.2 Azmari in an Ancient Setting

Azmari tradition has its root in ancient history of Ethiopia. For this reason, it is wise to deal with the ancient practices of *Azmari* and the social functions of their lyrics in order to have a clear picture of this tradition. For Tigist (2010), during the ancient time, *Azmaris* used to perform the

art on occasions like wedding ceremonies, funerals, get-togethers of the common people and the higher class and at the war fields. Concerning the occasions where *Azmaris* have been performing, Getu (1998) states that *Azmaris* who were living in ancient *Burbuax* were performing the art in the palace of *Guzara* which was found nearby. Later on, when the centre of government shifted from *Guzara* to Gondar, many *Azmaris* moved to Gondar in order to perform the art in the castle of *Fasiledes*. In relation to the above point, the role of *Azmari* in influencing the activities of the rulers and the authorities was so significant. The then government officials including the king were also known to have private *Azmaris* whom move to the battle fields with them (Tigist, 2010).

Through their lyrics, *Azmaris* used to provoke fun and praise their audience. Because of this, people wanted them to take part in every occasion they prepare. In this respect, it is possible to say that the role played by *Azmaris* has been equivalent with that of cassette and DVD players .in our home. It is believed that *Azmaris* are found in different parts of Ethiopia with varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds. However, North Gondar and North Wollo (Lasta area) and Bahirdar are mentioned to be the origins of *Azmaris* (Ibid, 2010).

The economic base of *Azmari* community is agriculture especially in rural areas. Another source of money for *Azmari* community is performing folksong at the night clubs, wedding ceremonies, funerals, get-togethers and Baptism etc.... In spite of the payment that they gain by performing at their villages, many *Azmaris* move from villages to towns in order to get better payment.

Ethiopia has a long and at times tormented history. With that it has an equally long and fascinating history of arts and culture. To write about Ethiopia's traditional music in one article such as this may not do justice to everyone nor reveal the complete and true picture of the situation. This text should thus simply serve as a launch pad for further study for anyone who would like to venture deeper into the country's traditional music.

The music of Ethiopia is a reflection of all the historical and social episodes, such as the military campaigns that various warlords or chiefs had to launch. The music is about war as well as patriotism, songs of victory, songs that incite support for a certain crusade. The music is also about love, with wonderful melodies and poetic lyrics. The spirituality of Ethiopians is expressed

in the form of music. All these types of tunes and melodies are prepared and performed using various traditional instruments.

2.3 Economic, Social and Cultural Status of *Azmari*

Basically, like other societies in their surroundings, the economic base of *Azmari* community is agriculture. Another source of money for *Azmari* community is performing folk song. In spite of the payment that they gain by performing at their villages, many *Azmaris* move from villages to towns (especially to Gondar town and Bahir Dar city) in order to get better payment. As a result, they perform the art at the night clubs established for this purpose (Getu, 1998).

Concerning the social features of *Azmari*, they usually live gathering at one area of villages. As it has been mentioned in the previous sections, they perform the art where the rest community gathers for various ceremonies and happenings. Apart from singing in such occasions, they perform the art in a daily bases when they gather to drink coffee or get around fire in the evening. (Getu: 1998) Furthermore, as Engidaw says, they make trainings beginning from the mid night. With respect to marriage relationship, *Azmaris* establish the relationship within their community.

The reason is that when they move from villages to towns they need a partner who supports them in performing and getting better payment. In terms of culture, there is no visible difference with the culture of the rest society living around. The way they explain their feelings, their clothing, their language and other cultural features remain the same with that of the non-*Azmari* society. However, there are some differences in terms of work culture. They are not fully engaged in cultivating their land. They rather rent it or leave it not ploughed. This is because of their focus on moving to the towns and getting a better payment.

As a result of their movement from their villages to Gondar town and later to Addis Ababa, they have a chance to be exposed to new technologies and current happenings. Not only this *Azmaris* also have produced their work of art in the form of record and are known to be famous singers of the country. Unlike the rest society of their surrounding they have a chance to promote themselves going to abroad. However, the major issue which was underlined by all informants is that the *Azmari* tradition may not have descendants in the long run, because of the social and cultural changes occurring.

2.4 Challenges and Opportunities of women participating in informal sector

Although researches and documents about women who participated in informal sector are very limited in Ethiopia, women who participated in informal sectors generally and street vending particularly, have live for a long period of time as one group of the society. Street vending continues to offer economic opportunities, and remains a source of livelihood for many Ethiopian (Ramasamy 2017).

There is no common or single definition of the informal sector. Economic theorists differ in their views of how the informal economy comes in to being, what functions it serves and who participates in it (Ibid, 2017). International Labor Organization (2002) found that the informal economy is that part of an economy that is unknown to the tax authorities, not supervised by any hierarchies in the government as opposed to the formal economy. Informal sector is generally a bigger source of employment for women than for men.

More than 60 per cent of the world's employed population earns their livelihood working in the informal economy. Informal work exists in all countries, irrespective of the individual country's level of socio-economic development, but it is far more prevalent in developing countries. Globally, informal work is a greater source of employment for men (63 per cent) than for women (58 per cent). Despite this, women are more often to be found in the more vulnerable categories of work, for instance as domestic workers or self-employed home-based workers. In a majority of countries, women in the informal economy tend to live in households that are poor. The literature shows that empowering women workers in the informal economy are keys to expanding their choices, improving their livelihoods and advancing gender equality (ILO, 2002)

In general terms, the informal economy is the unregulated non- formal portion of the market economy that produces goods and services for sale or for other forms of remuneration. The term "informal economy" thus refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements (Kristina, 2004). In developing countries, the term informal sector has broadly been associated with unregistered and unregulated small-scale activities that generate income and employment for the urban poor dwellers. Over the past 30 years, the term has been used in developing; western industrialized, centrally planned and transition countries to analyze a

wide spectrum of activities that escape taxation, measurement and regulation (Ebisaa, 2012).

Informal sector has not only persisted on an international scale since the 1970s, but has also expanded and appeared in new guises in the context of globalization, neo-liberalism and cross-border and rural urban migration, all of which are highly gendered processes (Sylvia and Carolyn, 2008). Mainly because of the lack of appropriate mechanisms that would have contributed to the absorption of the labor force into the national economy, the bulk of new employment in recent years in many of the developing countries has taken place in the informal economy (Kristina, 2004).

Like any developing countries, in Ethiopia, the major factor that contributed for the expansion of the informal economy is the reaction against government's regulation of the economy. The taxation systems, social legislation, health and environmental controls that are imposed on the activities of the business community and the economic hardship during periods of economic recession forced business people to go informal to operate outside of the regulatory framework (Portes, 1994).

Some scholars have examined whether men or women are more likely to work in the informal economy. In line to this, Losby and Kingslow (2002) investigated that women are more likely to work in the informal sector than men as of their household responsibilities, particularly their responsibilities for the care of children. The types of informal work women do as market or street vendors or hawkers or home workers, expose them to risks to their physical safety and health than men. In addition, women's participation within the informal economy tends to be even higher when the access and the right to control and own property or land are denied to them. Women remain concentrated in "invisible" areas of informal work, such as domestic labor piece-rate homework, and assistance in small family enterprises, which offer precarious employment status, low, irregular or no remuneration, little or no access to social security or protection, and limited ability to organize and to ensure the enforcement of international labor standards and human rights (Abramo, 2006).

As ILO (2008) indicated that the majority of women in the informal sector such as petty trading joined the sector as a means of survival. They turn to the informal business due to low level of economic support from husbands/partners, which force them to find a means of supplementing their low income in order to support the family. Around the world, a large and, perhaps, growing share of the informal workforce operates on streets, sidewalks, and public parks, outside any enclosed premise or covered work space. Among the many manifestations of informal economy, street vending is one of its major. Street vending is a global phenomenon. In cities, towns, and villages throughout the world, millions of people earn their living wholly or partly by selling a wide range of goods on the streets, sidewalks, and other public spaces. Yet today, in most countries of the world, street vending persists – and probably has expanded –even where local regulations seek to ban or restrict it ILO (2002).

2.4 Feminist Perspective

This study was viewed through the lens of liberal feminist perspective. Liberal feminist perspective emphasizes equal individual rights and liberties for women and men and downplaying sexual differences, liberal feminism is the most widely accepted social and political philosophy among feminists. Liberal feminists defend the equal rationality of the sexes and emphasize the importance of structuring social, familial, and sexual roles in ways that promote women's autonomous self-fulfillment. They emphasize the similarities between men and women rather than the average differences between them, attribute most of the personality and character differences between the sexes to the social construction of gender, and tend to promote a single set of androgynous virtues for both women and men (Ofodum and Ozeh 2016).

Liberal Feminism has propagated different thoughts and actions at different times. For instance, equal education was the 18th c thought; Equal liberty was the 19th c thought; suffrage was the 19th c action; Equal rights (eg. Work place rights) was the 20th c action; and Sameness vs difference was the 20th c thought.

Eighteenth century thought- Equal Education. Wollstonecraft (1759-99) wrote that while industrial capitalism began to draw labor (women) out of the private sphere to the public work place, married bourgeois women. This shows how affluence worked against 18th c married bourgeois women (birds in cages) who are not allowed to exercise outdoors. Because they are

not allowed to make their own decisions, they lacked liberty; because they were discouraged from developing their powers of reason, they lacked virtue (Grant, 2006).

Tong, (2009) summarizes the thoughts of liberal feminism as:

Nineteenth Century Thought – Equal Liberty: Mill and Taylor favored Wollstonecraft in celebrating rationality, but unlike Wollstonecraft, the former two claimed the ordinary way to maximize aggregate utility /pleasure is permitting individuals to pursue their desires, provided that they do not obstruct each other.

Nineteenth century Action: Women needed suffrage in order to become men's equals. During the suffrage movement women have struggle a lot to get a right to vote. They achieve their suffrage right in the beginning of the twenty century. (Taylor and Mill cited in Tong,2009).

The twentieth century Action – Equal Rights to be fully liberated, women need economic opportunities and sexual freedoms as well as civil liberties. Liberal feminists enable many of the civil, educational, occupational, and reproductive rights women that currently enjoy. They also created the ability to walk increasingly at ease in the public domain, claiming it as no less their territory than men's.

Twentieth Century Thought: Sameness versus Difference. This focuses on addressing the forgotten groups of women such as women of color, lower class women, uneducated women etc. Here, due attention would be given to reverse the practice of putting all women in one pot; rather women with different backgrounds are entertained. The main focus of liberal feminism is to change the legal constraints and the false beliefs in the society that consider the gender differences are biological/natural and inevitable. The false assumption that claims women by nature are intellectually and physically less capable than men (WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health 2007)

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND MATERIAL

3.1 Description of the Study Area

Bahir Dar is a city is the capital of Amhara Regional State in Ethiopia. With an area of 1443.37 square kilometers, the city is located at the exit of the Blue Nile from Lake Tana at an altitude of 1,820 meters above sea level. Bahir Dar is one of the leading tourist destinations in Ethiopia, with a variety of tourist attraction places. For its efforts in addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization, the city was awarded the UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize in 2002 (13). In terms of area coverage, the city is divided into 6 administrative sub-cities: Tana, Tewodros, Gishabay, Fasil, Dagmawi Minilik and Belay Zeleke. The sub cities are also divided into 26 kebeles (17 urban and 9 rural kebeles), which are the smallest administrative units in the city (Amhara Tourism and Culture bureau broacher, 2017).

Bahir Dar ,on the southern shore of lake Tana, the biggest lake in Ethiopia, is the third largest city in the nation, after Addis Abeba and Dire dawa, with a population of a quarter of million . It's the capital of the Amhara region, dominated by the Amhara people, the Ethiopia's second largest grouping: the Ethiopian official language is Amharic. Bahirdar is a clean and well – maintained city by African standards. Even the cheaper accommodation has neat, but basic services. It is popular with national tourists for its lake and comfortable climate. It has become part of the northern tourist loop for its access to historic monasteries and as a jumping off point for Blue Nile falls and Gondar. Due to the bustling tourism industry the city has numerous pool halls, bars, fresh juice shops and restaurants. Bahirdar is the leading tourist destination in Ethiopia, with a variety of attractions in the nearby Lake Tana and Blue Nile River. In Bahirdar there are lots of traditional hotels and *Azmaris* perform these traditional hotels like *tejibet*. Most of the tourists are enjoyed these house (Ibid, 2017).In Gish abay sub city there are 64(34 female and 30 male)Azmaries live. Alots of Azmaris lived in this sub city because there are many bar houses found.

3.2 Research Approach

In this study the researcher used qualitative research method. Qualitative research approach aims to hit the study's target of investigating the lived experience of Female *Azmari*. And a postmodernism paradigm was employed for this study. This research paradigm aims to explain

multiple realities vary from individual to individual. According to Natasha et al (2005) qualitative research offers complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. He depicted as it provides information about the “human” side of an issue that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals. According to Bryman (2004) qualitative research is devoted to view events, actions, norms, values, etc. from the perspectives of the people who are being studied. Similarly, Flick (2005) said qualitative study provides detailed information of people's points of view and the meaning they attribute to their experiences. Given the aforementioned rationale, qualitative approach was used in this study to capture and understand the lived experience female *Azmaris* from their own voice of experience.

3.3 Research Design

Phenomenological design was employed to explore the different challenges that female *Azmaris* experience at their working place or outside. Not only their challenges, it also investigated the coping mechanisms that they used to overcome the challenges. It also deals opportunities that they enjoy from this profession. The researcher applied this design for the purpose of uncovering the lived experience of female *Azmaris* since phenomenology is best suited design to explore individuals' experience.

3.4 Data source

Primary data source used in order to get accurate and first-hand information for this study. The primary data was collected from female *Azmaris* through interview.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique

For this study sampling selection process non probability sampling technique and Purposive sampling technique was the major sampling technique which was utilized in this study .Non probability sampling is defined as a sampling technique in which the researcher selects samples based on the subjective judgment of the researcher. From Bahir Dar city administration specifically Gish abay sub city was selected purposively because this Kebele has a large number of *Azmari* residents. This place is also the location where many traditional nightclubs exist.

To select the participant, purposive sampling technique was used by taking certain inclusion criteria. The criteria include having more than five years' experience, working in traditional bar

houses in permanent bases and having an age greater than 18. It was tentatively planned to conduct interview with 8 to 12 participants. When conducting the interview around eight and nine participants the data was saturated .Due to this the actual sample size was ten since data became redundant at this number of participant or saturation point.

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

As a data collection instrument, the researcher used in depth interview as a major data collection instrument in order to get detail information from the participants. In applying this tool, an in-depth interview guideline was initially prepared in English but it was then translated to the local language, Amharic.

Female *Azmaris* were selected based on the above stated inclusion criteria. Written consent was gained from each participant. Prior to the interview session, some arrangements were also made to find a convenient time for each interviewee. As far as my prior information and observation, female *Azmaris* were potential busy at night time and sleeping at day time due to the nature of the job: Hence, I was carefully find a convenient interview time with each participant. The issues that covered in the in-depth interview session included opportunities, challenges and coping mechanisms. The interview was done by the researcher; and their reflections were captured via audio recorder..

3.7 Data Analysis Technique

The phenomenological research's data analysis is relayed on information collected from interviewees. Though this method is lengthy and time consuming, its data was organized categorically and analyzed thematically. Thus, in accordance with phenomenological research data analysis process, the researcher followed thematic analysis technique and use the following major steps.

First, the voices and responses of the participant recorded during the interview were transcribed to text form. While performing this, attentive listening and careful note taking was employed for valid documentation. The noted data was translated from Amharic into English. After the transcription and translation processes, coding procedure was followed by giving a false name (participant 1, participant 2, and participant 3...etc) to address participants. The coding helps to minimize the researcher bias in the analysis of cases. Then, the researcher was read the coded

text data thoroughly so as to be familiar with the information. Afterward, the coded data was categorized into similar or related categories. The categorized data was then converted into themes. Finally, interpretation and analysis was made on each theme. During analysis, the redundant information obtained from the data was eliminated.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

This study was conducted by taking all necessary considerations and through logical procedures. I tried to minimize any harm on participant and all ethical principles of research were implemented. Accordingly, I provided study participants honest information about the aim, objective, risk and benefits of the study to let them make an informed decision whether to participate in this study without any pressure or not. After that, informed consent was obtained with signature.

Anonymity of study participants was safeguarded by giving them participant code instead of using their direct name to protect identities. Rights of study participants was protected by respecting the self determination of study participants for any decision they had to refuse to respond some questions or to withdraw totally out of the study. Confidentiality of data was also maintained. The COVID-19 prevention rules and guidelines were applied during interview period.

3.9 Trustworthiness

As the phenomenology study focuses on the lived experience of individuals, the data has been merely collected through in-depth interview method. Hence, the very nature of this study has a limitation to cross check information by using different qualitative data collection instruments. However, to minimize this limitation, member checking system was utilized. To this effect, the researcher met the participants again and briefs them about the result of study and then asks them to confirm whether their real voices are properly captured or not. The trustworthiness of this study was also maintained by making inductive reasoning meaning that the result of the study was related or triangulated with the existing feminist theories.

3.10 Limitation of the Study

This study project is not free from any limitation rather it has some limitations. To begin with, there was lack of empirical research work conducted in the area of my particular study; Absence

of related document source from the internet and library was a big challenge. It was difficult to find the recent secondary sources of the study because of this gap some of the review literatures were backed with past researches and the discussion part of the study became loose and shallow due to absence of related empirical studies.

Moreover, due to the nature of the *Azamaris*' job, there was a problem of accessing the required participants in the time that the researcher wants. The researcher got difficulty to get interview time with them as they sleep in the data time and work at night time. So the researcher waited them until they got free time for interview and in most case interview was conducted during the afternoon. As some of the interview issues are very sensitive, some of the participants were inclined to hide certain issue that related to sexual violence. But, the researcher invested a great effort to investigate their hidden or sensitive experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Result

This chapter presents the major findings of the study based on the data collected through in-depth interview. The data is organized in sequential order by main themes and sub-themes which are derived from the result of the study.

4.1.1 Background Information of the study participants

The demographic information of the participants consists of different consideration to describe their socio-cultural status. As described in table 1 below, the participants of the study are female who worked in traditional night club as *Azmari* . One of the ten women working as *Azmari* is in the youth group, and rest of study participants are in the adult age group. The participants have ten to thirteen years of experience. In addition, their educational background is not further than primary school first cycle or not educated at all.

Regarding their marital status nine study participants are married while one study participant is widow and still single. Their age is ranges from 26 to 52. The participant's family size ranges from two to eight in number. They have at least one and at most five children in their family size.

Table -1Socio-cultural status of the individual participants

Code	Age	Marital status	Number of children	Family size	Year of work experience
Participant 1	32	Married	5	7	24 Years
Participant 2	31	Married	3	5	17 Years
Participant 3	52	Widow	5	6	25 Years
Participant 4	26	Married	2	4	10 Years
Participant 5	34	Married	4	6	14 Years
Participant 6	40	Married	2	4	24 Years
Participant 7	38	Married	2	5	16 Years
Participant 8	35	Married	3	5	16 years
Participant 9	27	Married	1	4	11 Years
Participant 10	47	Married	4	8	30 years

Once we see the demographical background of the study participants, let us see the result of their saying depending on the thematic objective of the study. We start with opportunity then with the challenges, and finally about the coping mechanisms.

4.1.2. Opportunities for Female Azmaries

In this section, the study identified the major opportunities that female *Azmaries* enjoy by *working in* cultural night clubs. For some females it is a means of their livelihood, while others used it for getting entertained. Some of them gained fame and other opportunities like enabling to meet and contact musical producers who may support them to produce their music album. The opportunities are thematically presented as follows.

4.1.2.1 Economic Opportunities

Based on the result of the study, female *Azmaris* had enjoyed economic opportunities. The economic advantages available for female *Azmaris* are again classified into sub-categories as it is discussed below.

Means of livelihood or source of family income

According to response from the study participants they are able to lead themselves and their family's life properly. Some of them indicated that they are able to cover children's school fee, basic food goods. They also notify that they can buy better clothing for themselves and for their children. The following participant verbal account shows how she was drifted into this profession and how she used to it for means of livelihood.

From my child hood, since 8, I am Azmari. I lost my father with sudden death. Then I had to find work to live. My sister dragged me here to work as maiden. My sister dead while I was second grade student. Before her death she doesn't want to me to sing, rather to learn academic education. But I used to attend some musical performances without her will. After her death, I married my current husband who is also an Azmari in his profession. Then after, we together start our Azmari performance. We are performing for 24 years. I am the luckiest one to be

an Azmari. I didn't use it because of my sisters, but I had a chance to go abroad to America. I earn money to spend for food, for my children's school fee, and for any custom. It may be insufficient to cover all my interest due to inflations. But it is good for daily bases. I and my children are not starved (Participant 1).

Similarly, another participant feels being *Azmari* is the best thing that she can do to raise her children and to cover home expenses.

It's been ten years since I started singing. I was married when I was a child. My husband is Azmari. I became a singer when he taught me. Then I went into cultural evenings and started singing. I quit school and started living in my favorite profession. I really like singing. As a singer, I have gained many good things. When the time is a wedding season, I do singing there. If the wedding I am invited to is a rich family, the reward will be higher, and I will take care of my family with it (Participant 4).

As of the verbal narration stated on the above direct quotations, *Azmari* can be regarded as a job opportunity that helps female *Azmaris* to able to manage house, raise children and spend for their consumption. Therefore, the female *Azmaris* used their profession as a source of family income or means of livelihood.

Getting salary and reward

As a full time job, cultural night clubs pay their employees (*Azmaris*) salary. It could be per day, per week or per month. According to study participants, the cultural night club pays with range of 1500 to 3000 birr per month for female *Azmaris*. Comparing with other professions the payment looks low. But club owners imagine it is compensated by reward money, which is given by the will of customer. *Azmaris* feel the salary they are paid may not be enough, but it can cover their daily expense. This scenario is well expressed by the verbal account of the following participant;

We can get up to 5,000 or 6,000 birr from a wedding according to our profession. A good singer is paid more than that. We work in the cultural night clubs and earn for up to 2,000 for men and 1,500 birr for women for month. The

money may not enough to make a living. But nothing can be done. Our work is seasonal, because once it is found, another time is lost. Overall, our work is timely. It depends on the situation on the country. Peace and healthy community is the base for the success of our work (Participant 9).

In recent time some of *Azmaris* change their life. This is true for those who work hard, save the money they get from reward and open their their own cultural night clubs. The reflections of the following participants show how they establish their own business institution venture;

I get better income in this profession. For example, I used to work at someone's house, but now I open my own cultural nightclub and hire others (Participant 8).

All in all, from the above reflection we can comprehend that female *Azmaris* have gotten salary and reward. Such economic opportunities would in turn help them to open their own cultural night club whereby they able to get more income.

Access to travel

As per the result of this study, *Azmaris'* work is not limited to cultural night clubs. There are some occasions in which the *Azmaris* present their work by traveling to other cities or towns. During the concert tour for modern musicians, *Azmaries* also accompanied the concert team for performing their own art at the different parts of the country for performance.

The cost of living and the state of national peace are constraints for my job. But I love what I do. It gives us the opportunity to visit parts of my country. The visit and work earns money for me. I will never forget the time I spent in Wolkait because of my work. It was when I found the love of the countryside. Not only the mental satisfaction from my visiting, but also I earn money that I used it for opening my own cultural nightclub (Participant, 7).

Still some of the participant had the opportunity to go abroad from Ethiopia for the same work. In this regard, one of the participants of the study shared her experience as follows;

I divorced my first husband, married my current husband, and had another son. When I went to work, it was difficult to find a babysitter. So to find another life we

moved to Sudan, where some of his family lived. It was a bit good there. We perform for Sudanese and Ethiopians. I loved my travel there. Then I returned to my homeland because it was hard to work in Sudan. I returned home after 10 months to regain my singing career. Since then I have been working on this profession. I really like my work. I entered in to Azmari in love of it from the beginning (Participant, 8).

From the above verbal account, one can understand that some *female Azmaris* have enjoyed the opportunity to travel to other places where they earn much more money than they are paid in night clubs. Such opportunity would help them to maximize their wealth and lead them to open their own business activity.

4.1.2.2 Social Benefit

Beyond economical outcome, the job gives female *Azmaris* to get social benefit. As they sometimes perform with great musicians on big occasions, they are able to create strong social bonds with people such as musical producers, rich people, and notable persons etc. In addition, their musical performances have brought them some social respect from the community.

Contact with music producers

Based on the finding of the study, some Ethiopian musical producers want to study cultural music so as to produce it. When they get the right musician with that studied culture, they give the *Azmaris* the chance to perform it. In connection to this idea, one of the participants of the study put the following remark;

Singing has many benefits. You will be able to support yourself and your family. You meet great people, like producers album arrangers. Your level of communication and capability singing matters. But the producers themselves come to you to work together if your performance convinces him/her (Participant, 5)

As it is reflected on the above direct quotation, the contact made between the *Azmaris* and music producers would help female *Azmaris* to release their musical album. The participants disclosed that prominent cultural song queens like Asres Gonebe, Asefu Debalkie and others were once

working in cultural night club as Azmaries. By now, they have at least more than two musical albums and many single songs with clip. Study participants feel being *Azmari* has a chance to release music album since they have a chance to meet music produces. In this regard, one of the participants of the study said:

I have an opportunity of releasing a single song or album if I want. I know some music producers who want to support me in doing so. I know these people while I was working in the cultural night club (Participant 4).

Generally, the female *Azmaries* could have a chance to meet music producers who are supposed to be played key roles in enabling people to release their own music album. This indicates that female *Azmaris* have a chance to release their own music album through the help of music producers.

Contact with notable individuals

As it was reflected by the participants, when popular people like politicians, investors, and other high level people come to Amhara region especially in Bahir Dar, they would enjoy themselves by visiting cultural night clubs. This scenario would help the *Azmaris* to create social linkage with these notable people. For instance, one of the participants shared her experience as follows;

It's a job that connects me from an educated person to great people. Even I had opportunities to meet the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi when he came here in Bahir Dar. I had a chance to perform together with famous musicians of the country. He shared me his experience (Participant 9).

From the above quotation, we can note that the female *Azmaris* got the opportunity to meet popular people. Hence, getting access of contact with popular people can be taken as a social opportunity that female *Azmaris* enjoy.

Getting Social respect

As it was mentioned by the participants of the study, people love entertainment. To be entertained one must respect those who entertain him/her. Study participants feel people respect

their work. They love their job because of the respect they get from the society. In light of this idea, one of the participants narrated her experience as follows;

I love my job. There is no better than ours. I might be mistaken, but it is the best profession in the universe. I better choose a bad Azmari than a so called good modern music band. Where ever you go, America or anywhere, everyone prefers Azmari for weddings, peace or war.... Even when people want to mourn their beloved ones, they need Azmari. Because it the best thing that God give the world. I want my children to learn, but they don't want. All these desires are come from the respect some people gave me (Participant 1).

In the same token, another participant said:

The work introduces to professionals. If you have a good career, then you have the opportunity to go abroad. When we go to a wedding, we are treated with dignity. They take care of us just as much as brides. When we release album, we get more respect (Participated 8).

The above information entails us that *Azmaris* gained social respect from apart from economic benefit. Moreover, few female *Azmaris* who able to release album or sing music in electronic format can get more respect from the society

4.1.2.3 Psychological Benefit

Based on the result of the study, female *Azmaris* got psychologically benefits like freedom, self-esteem, and happiness. These benefits are well presented in the next section.

Freedom and self esteem

According to the expression of the participants, freedom comes from self-reliance. As the work earns money for expense, one must feel free on his work. All participants of the study stated that their work provides them with the greatest degree of independence from other people and partners. All of the study participants described clearly that they develop self-confident. Freedom and independence gained by doing their *Azmari* work. For instance, one of the participants of the study expressed these things as follows;

I feel free. We raise our children with the money we earn. If you strength yourself, you will have the opportunity to travel abroad. You will find it very popular. There is also the possibility of making an album. It also protects you from being harmed. So I feel free when things go bad. I can cover bad things by my own profession (Participant 10).

The above reflection informs us that *female Azmaris* would develop good self-esteem and get independence or freedom because of their job. Hence, freedom and self-esteem are considered to be psychological benefits that the female *Azamris* enjoy.

Entertaining others and getting happiness

The study participants divulged that it is not easy to make people to get pleased. Several of bad things are happening in Ethiopian and in the world at large. In this context, it is hard for professionals to entertain others. One should psychologically ready to perform in front of depressed audience. So, when they create some pleasure on customers, the *Azmaris* happiness emerges there. Such feeling is well expressed in the verbal account of the following participant;

Singing introduces you to those who are greats. You will meet safe people. You make people happy and you become happy. I can easily enter a place where no one is allowed to enter. It is a great pleasure when you see customers smile by your performance. That makes me feel good (Participant, 5).

As discerned from the above reflection, the *Azmaris* get happiness when they entertain others. This can be, therefore, considered as an additional psychological benefit that the female *Azmaris* get.

4.1.3 Challenges of Female Azmaris

In the previous section we see the advantages and opportunities that female *Azmaries* gain from being *Azmaris*. Study Participants ,concluded that although being *Azmaris* is a good opportunity for many women to manage themselves and their families by earning money, the women involved in this career have been dealing with many problems and challenges. Moreover it is identified that women involved in traditional nightclubs have multiple challenges

which are related to economic, psychology, and health. These challenges are clearly presented below.

4.1.3.1 Economical related Challenges

Although female Azmaris considered their profession as if it has economic advantage, most female *Azmaris* had recently encountered finance problems due to COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis that the nation face. The participants stated that market value inflation creates expensiveness of basic needs. When cultural nightclubs closed due to the pandemic and some political turmoil, the daily income was reduced. Even after, the opening of the nightclubs, the income of the *Azmaris* is not just like the older days since there are clients or customers dwindle. The economic related challenges of female *Azmaris* are precisely presented below.

Reduction of salary and reward due to Shutdown of cultural night clubs

According to the participants, due to the political upheaval and the Covid-19 pandemic cultural night clubs were shutdown. Those times were very hard according to study participants. The problem is more severe for female *Azmari*. For example, the following participant recalled the situation as follows;

One day when the work may be good, but you lose on the other day. It's not about changing; it's about relaxing that day. Sometimes it is difficult to make a daily living. Things get tough, especially when you have political upheaval. Cultural night clubs are closed during these upheaval days. We don't even have an alternative job to do when it is closed. Still, we are grateful by God (Participant, 1).

The same thing rose from another participant and she expressed the situation as:

I use all the money I earn for my daily consumption. When Corona virus was appeared and the city was closed, we faced serious economic constraint. It was a difficult time, especially for us as women. During some political killing happened in the city, the cultural night clubs closed for some days. Even after that incident, the customers are sharply decreased (Participant, 7).

The above stories inform us that the shutdown of cultural night clubs due to political unrest and COVID-19 pandemic had inflicted financial burden on female *Azmaris*. Hence, it can be concluded that COVID-19 and political instability had financially impacted female *Azmaris*.

Reduction of reward money due to expensiveness of beverages

According to the expression of the participants, the big means of earning money beyond permanent salary for *Azmaris* is reward money. That reward is collected during performance. When the audience gets pleased with their performance, he/she gives reward money as a prize. But recently, this kind of earning money is reduced and that makes their life difficult. For instance, one of the participants said:

Despite the income is too small, I live and raise children. My salary is one thousand birr a month. This does not improve life. It was compensated by rewarded money. It has decreased since the onset of Corona virus. Not only Corona disease but also high cost of living goods makes it difficult to reward us. In the past, however, it was more than just food. I made a living by saving money. But now it is difficult to save and pay child school fee and to fill their stomach (Participant, 2)

Study participant 1 feels the same indeed:

The payment was good before. I was paid professionally well. Now the customer pays 25 birr for a beer and finds it difficult to reward me. Nowadays, it has become increasingly difficult to get rewards. We work in cultural night club every 40 minutes shift. We work with up to 20 people in one house. And it's hard to be rewarded for all that. Instead, we love it more than money. The money we earn from singing is not enough to cover our daily needs. It is only for the day. I live in a kebele house. If I would pay house rent, it could have been difficult for a female.

The above case stories indicate that the income of the *Azmaris* that is given in a form of reward has sharply been decreased in recent times because of political instability and the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic. This further indicates that female *Azmaris* have recently faced financial shortcoming to run their normal life.

Expensive of living goods

Recently, it is difficult to get things with the same price as yesterday, participants said. Living things' cost maximizes as on other day come. This is difficult for those who run their family life by earning small money. Study participants revealed that they don't have alternative options of earning money except the money they get from performing music. That makes their life even harder because of expensiveness of living goods. This situation is well demonstrated by the verbal expression of the following participant;

The money we make is good, but it is expensive to buy goods. We get good things in business and in rewards before. Even if you can't do anything out of the ordinary, at least you can still get what you want. But by now it is hard to cover your daily expense because of the inflation (Participant, 5).

In the same veil, another participant said:

The problem is that the money we are getting now is not enough for rent, for children's schooling and for daily biases. The problem is worse when goods for living get much expensive. It is especially difficult for us as women. Although it is not difficult to make a living, it is not easy to live lavish life and to buy a home. But for the day, we are relaxed (Participant, 2).

From the above verbatim, one can deduce that the impact of the pandemic and political instability was severe since the female *Azmaris* would not get similar amount of reward that they get in older days. The reduction of reward can be therefore considered as one type of economic related challenges that female *Azmaris* face.

4.1.3.2 Health Related Challenges

As per the result of the study, female *Azmaries* who make performances in and out of cultural nightclubs are more likely to be exposed to a variety of health problems. The reasons for this include un-comfortable workplace, having to stand for long hours, much time without sleep, loud louder than *Masilko* (musical instrument). The health problems of female *Azmaris* are presented as follows;

Sore throat (respiratory and throat pain)

The participants stated that the possibility of contracting respiratory and throat pain for a woman *Azmari* is high due to the untied workplace environment. Working on these sites has made the women vulnerable for another health crisis. For example, if the working location is an open area for wedding, these women *Azmari* are exposed to dust, and other unhygienic conditions which can cause health hazards. In night clubs they should play louder than *Masinko* and drum. That makes *Azmari* to feel sick on respiratory system health problems. Among these health hazards throat disorders and respiratory infections are the main problems. One of the study participants shared her experience as follows;

Our work needs much louder speak, during performance and training. There is much loud so as to reach audience's hearing. We don't have microphones when we perform. That makes us feel bad on our throat. After performance it night, we can't speak the next day (Participant, 10).

The above case story entail us that female *Azmaris* have faced health problem on their throat since they used their vocal for long period of time. Hence, the female *Azmaris* are at high risk to experience throat related health problems.

Insomnia and sleep deprivation

As a matter of fact insomnia is a sleeping disorder which is known for its symptoms of unrest and inability to sleep. *Azmaries* who work at cultural night clubs are exposed for such kind of health hazard due to the time they spent at work. For instance, one of the study participants shared her observation as follows;

As long as the customers in the club do not out, we ought to stay up until 8 o'clock. Sometimes we can get up in the morning. It can also lead to severe insomnia and depression. If no one is there, we go to work until six o'clock in the morning and go to bed.

The problem gets even harder for those *Azmaries* who has responsibility as family managers. If they don't have a home assistance to care her children, she has responsible to do so. That responsibility comes together with *Azmari* work. That busy feature leads her to sleep deprivation. In this regard one participant noted:

There is sleep deprivation. I get into home from work at 7 o'clock in the evening. I wake up at 1 o'clock in the morning. I have to send my children to school. I make breakfast for them. I don't sleep during the day. I have to take care of the children and I feel very sick. As a result, I get tired at work (Participant, 3).

As can be seen from the above narration, the female *Azmaris* encountered sleep disorder since they work at night time and have a responsibility to balance their household and family care burden.

Knee and back bone pain

Customers sit on chair when *Azmaris* perform at night clubs. The one who is responsible to entertain stand much time on the podium. Due to the much time they stand on the podium, female *Azmaries* are experiencing bone related health problems. Two of ten study participants claimed they are experiencing such health problem. One of the participants of the study explained this problem as:

My leg hurts a lot during my workouts. When I go to the hospital, I have been told that I need a bone marrow transplant, but even if it hurts, I have to be able to work (Participant 2).

Another participant said:

In the last six years I have a back and leg pain because I am standing a lot for club performance. I have been walking for a long time. Long ago, I used to walk a lot and I never feel sick. But now I feel very sick. Now I can't walk long distances because of my illness. All that comes from the time I spent stand during performance (Participant 8).

All in all, female *Azmaris* had encountered the above health challenges. Despite it needs prove by further study, women *Azmaries* claimed they are more vulnerable compared with male counterparts. That is because of their double challenge of working as an *Azmari* and managing home, keeping children, cooking and the like.

Not only the above health problems, but also other health related hazards are experienced by female *Azmaris*. They told the researcher that variety and high reflection of light in the night club damages their eyes. They said that there is a sense of scorching their eyes; some of them could not easily watch on screens of cell phone and televisions. The unlimited high volume of sound of nightclub speaker (amplifier) makes their ear unable to hear properly and creates mental instability.

4.1.3.3 Psychological challenges

Study participant's interview indicates, female *Azmaries* are facing verities of psychological challenges including discrimination, lack of respect and the like. All these psychological problems are discussed hereunder.

Feel discriminated and stigmatized

Most of the respondents claimed that the communities give uncommon names and low acceptability for female *Azmaries*. The community viewed the female *Azmaries* as prostitute and sex workers. Moreover there are community members that challenge female as they are the one who insults others. Female *Azmaries* are also marginalized when clients make wedding and call male *Azmaries*, as respondents' response. And even the payment clients pay for female *Azmaries* is much less than male counterparts. In connection to this idea, one of the participants said:

Men are often sought after for a wedding. Customers don't call women often. In cultural halls, male singers are pay more than we do. We are not paid well as we tiered. We spend the night together; male Azmaris earn much; which is not fair
(Participant 9)

Likewise, another participant said:

I think society has not equal respect for male and female Azmaris. But when we work at a cultural nightclub, there is a difference of at least 500 birr. Men are superior. I don't know why it's different. I don't think society perceive female Azmaris equal with men Azmaris , they bias to men Azmaris ,female Azmaris are dominated by men Azmaris in some circumstances. A woman may not be able to sing with a harp, so she may have different thoughts and fees. But if she get used

to it, she will not give up. But because men are usually the ones who play the harp, they are given special consideration (Participant 4).

All in all, the above reflections show us that female *Azmaris* feel a sense of discrimination and stigmatization. As to them, the discrimination and stigmatization is inflicted against them because of their gender and nature of their profession.

Verbal harassment

In the previous section that deals on the opportunity that female *Azmaries* get, we discussed about how they are respected by the society. But parts of the society lost the dignity and honour of female *Azmaries* in and out of their workplace. The most frequent violation happened on female *Azmari* is slander. Slander destroys the dignity of a human being. Participants in this study did not spend a single day without abusive language from either the customer in the night club, club owner or even parts of the society in neighbourhood. Most of the customers insult them when they don't receive political satire lyric at cultural nightclubs. Most abusive words affect their family honour. One participant expressed this matter as follows;

The community often views Azmari as an insult. When they want to insult slanders, they call 'you Azmari'. But I respect and love my job, because it has come down from our ancestors. I explain it to the abusers. I make it clear to them that singing is not an insult but an honourable profession. But when I leave home and go to work, I have to be happy or I have to look happy, because, my job is to entertain other people. So I have to forget what happened to and start entertaining others (Participant 10).

In a same token, another participant said:

They try to insult me recalling my femininity and being Azmari. The community views us as beggars. Once, I got into a fight with a neighbour because of my children, and she told me 'I do not eat by begging'. She is saying that I am a beggar. I can't stand when Azmari is being used as an insult. Our identity is our profession. I don't like when someone uses it as insult since it is my name (Participant, 5).

Similarly, participant 9 said:

The community loves our profession. Many respect the profession more than its owner. But some consider it an insult. They call us Azmari. When we walk down the street, they call us Azmari. They also say Azmari when they want to insult their children or someone else. For example, when a person who talks too much is insulted as Azmari. Sometimes I feel angry for that (Participant, 9).

Based on the above reflections, there is verbal harassment and disrespect that perpetrated by the customer in particular and the society in general. The nature of their job exposes them for such kind of verbal harassment since insult and mudslinging seemed too common at cultural nightclubs.

4.1.3.4 Other challenges

It is not easy to list and typify the challenges that female *Azmaris* faced in such kind of paper. The problems are deep and multihued. Hereunder the paper grouped some challenges like sexual harassment, busy schedule, holding heavy family life, conflict, societal challenges and problems related to maternity and pregnancy.

Sexual abuse

Based on the result of the study, female Azmaari had sometimes sexually harassed or exposed to an act that is not based on their wishes. Usually it is reflected more on women who are involved in night clubs, especially female *Azmaries*. The society considers them having sex with various men behind *Azmari* work to maximize their income. By using the fact that the work place is unsuitable for women, they face sexual exploitation by customers, like most men use deceptive promises such as if she had sexual favour with someone, then providing them with enough money for another better job, and facilitating a better work place. Even some of men costumers tried to rape female *Azmari*, as study participant shared the incident here bellow.

In the past, when I was beautiful, I did not look married, and I had many temptations. Some investors in the area of Finote Selam took me on a contract with my husband. When we finished our work and returned to Bahir Dar, as we reached the forest, they stopped their car and tried to rape me. My husband came

and saved me. I have experienced such things many times. But my husband lives with me everywhere, and he saves me. He protects me. I am not afraid of him (Participant, 7).

Another participant added that;

When we work at night, men try to assault us. They invite us to sit down with them. But they do not force me to do so because I tell them not to. When they see us, they do not think that we have children. Some people try to force us to give in to temptation despite knowing we are married (Participant 2).

Moreover, participant 8 also said that;

Men sexually abuse us at work. He seems to be doing prostitution just because he met me on a cultural night club. He says 'Let me invite you out'. In particular, a drunken customer is trying to seduce us. I have a client who seems to be deliberately trying to ruin my career (Participant 8).

As can be seen from the above case stories, Female *Azmaries* are sexually abused by their customers. They have experienced sexual violence in a day to day base since they meet people who drink more alcohol. In addition, the location of cultural night clubs would expose them to be easily raped without getting proper protection from officers. Instead, they used their husband as guard to protect themselves from sexual abuse.

Busy schedule

According to the reflection of the participants, female *Azmaris* spent the night with work at cultural night clubs. Early in the morning, home works wait for them. As study participants claim their husbands did not help at least at house hold chores. They have to feed her children, cook for her husband and other family members and other home chores. This problem is well consolidated by the verbal account of the following participant.

Being Azmari is hard for a woman. Baptism and wedding works are duties we work at day light. But our night work at cultural night club is so hard. I have 3 children; I wash them, feed them and take them to bed. Besides, I do the

housework. My husband does not help me with any household chores. The children don't help me because they are still young. So the whole responsibility for the home is with me. But for someone who has a housekeeper, they may even have time in their spare time to study music to release album or single song. But I don't have time. I sing at night, and during the day I do not sleep at home. Night club work time arrives before I finish the housework. There is another problem if you are ten minutes late. (Participant, 4)

As it was narrated on the above quotation household chores and other roles played by Female Azmaris would make them too busy. Hence, it can be concluded that the female Azmaris are working under hectic schedule.

Household chores and Caring

The result indicated that all family caring activity seems given for only women. When husband is unemployed the challenge gets worsen. Study participant 2, holds most of home managing chores because of the unemployment of her spouse. She explained her situation as follows;

My husband is unemployed now. He lost his job because of a conflict from his workplace. He only works when there is a wedding. Now, when I return home from work, I return with my brother; He also works with me. Even without him, someone I knew would take me home (Participant 2).

Study participant 9 also claimed how Azmaris life is difficult with home management role. She said:

Being Azmari is more difficult for women. Administering home, managing a family, caring for a child, preparing meals for the family must go hand in hand. On top of that, my husband would get angry if he did not get the right food at a right time. When I finish one, the other comes. In addition, severe sleep deprivation occurs. Being Azmari is generally difficult for women (Participant, 9).

From the above direct quotation, we can deduce that female Azamris have faced double burden. In the one hand, they have the responsibility to earn money and on the other hand they have responsibility to manage her domestic and caring roles.

Conflict

Most of the participants in the study stated that conflict is one of the major problems that the female *Azmaries* face. Mostly the conflict aroused from customers of cultural nightclubs, especially drunken clients. The common conflict between female *Azmaries* and customers come from give and refusal of unethical song lyric and sexual asking. In connection to this idea, one of the participants of the study said:

Singing has many challenges. For example, customers want to give you a poem that you do not want to perform. When you say no, there is an insult. When you are ready to talk back, you will be confronted by the owner of night club (Participant, 6).

Similarly, another participant shared her experience by saying:

At times, the lyrics of a joke can be annoying your customer. Once I came across a bald poem with a bold man. My client was invited to confront with kick. Sometimes they want to give you political poems that understate the current political systems, and it comes with another twist. There are so many things which are hard to say. There would be person who says he is coming there in love of you. They force me to take my phone number. They want to force me (Participant, 8).

Another participant noted:

When a customer wants me to receive lyrics they compose, and if there could insulting lyrics, I don't want to take it. He wants to give you a poem to insult other customer next table. There are many who want me to sing lyrics that denigrate politics. They become arrogance and intimidation when we say no to that kind of poetry is another tragedy. I don't want that to happen, because it's not my job to fight and make politics. They throw bottles at me, saying that if you do not comply. Sometimes I was forced to accept and confront myself unwillingly. But I know it's not good. But I have no choice (Participant, 9).

As per the reflection of the above participants, conflict is common in cultural night clubs and this scenario creates unpleasant working environment for female *Azmaris* and they sometime get injured when the conflict become serious.

Societal problems

As part of a society, female *Azmaries* have responsibility to participate in social activities like mourning, Baptism, wedding and others. Due to the characteristics of their work they may have no time to do so. During these times the society doesn't understand them. This problem is further elaborated by participant 5 as:

Sometimes we are influenced by society. There may be time shortage to practice mourning, baptism and other social ceremonies. We donate the money. But we can't attend and the community does not understand our problem. We may delay social interaction to take a child to school and to work (Participant, 5).

From the above information, we can understand that female *Azmaris* get difficult to properly play their community role. When they fail to play such role, they would lead them to be disrespected by the community.

Maternity and pregnancy

The participants disclosed that female *Azmaris* gave birth like other women's, have menstruation period and other kind of maternity deeds. At this moments who should cover their regular expense? They, themselves should. During these times, they have to be back to work as early as possible so as to get her home and family feed. In light of this idea, one participant said:

Housing management is a problem at night. As a mother, I have to give my children to others, so as I can work out there. Because working hard saves your life. It is especially difficult when it comes to childbirth. I have to go work on the next day of my son's baptism day. I had to work until the last weeks of my pregnancy. If I don't work, life would be difficult. Especially for women who run a household (Participant, 7).

From the above quotation, we can learn that the reproductive role of women including health related to pregnancy and menstruation is a big concern for them and it would have its own challenge on their work and earning.

Lack of national peace and emergence pandemic

Based on the result, national peace and security is the most important thing for those who depends their life on informal business. As *Azmari* atmosphere, their work is dependant with national peace. When it is lost there is no cultural night clubs. There may be weeding or baptism, but *Azmaries* may not be invited. In these challenging times female *Azmaris* get themselves with many problems, due to the reduction of their income. In this regard, one participant said:

Cultural nightclubs are often closed when the peace of the country is destroyed. It closes when disease occurs. The fee has been reduced. We earn just only 150 to 200 birr. It is not enough to live. Living is difficult because of expensiveness of goods. The work is for daily consumption only. My life is not still changed (Participant, 10).

In the time of violence, young people' emotion is the challenge, too. This is well explained by the verbal account of the following participant.

During civil violence, young people come and ask to sing political related song, especially about the then politics. When we refused, they threw bottles of beer at us. Most of the time, the police are reaching out to us, but some of the customers are very naughty (Participant, 9).

The emergence of Covid-19 in Ethiopia leads some places to be closed. On March 2019 Bahir Dar is one of the Ethiopian cities that proclaim lockdown of movements. Places like avenues, meeting halls, markets and other mass people gathering places were strongly commanded no to open. Cultural night clubs were also the places that the command post of Amhara regional state corona prevention had to close. During these days, life was not easy as usual for women *Azmaries*. Study participant 9 recalled what was happening as follows;

Nowadays, not many people come to the cultural nightclub because of Corona. So there is no work. Our income has cooled and reduced. We had a difficult time in

Corona. The important thing is we are still alive. Even if our work is closed for a long time and even one day is over, it is very difficult. It was difficult for them to work as singers, except for the traditional cultural night (Participant, 9).

In general from participants' explanation and things the researcher observes, life is difficult for *Azamri* beyond its advantageous feature. They are being challenging by economic challenges due to reduction of income and increment of cost of basic needs. Psychologically, female *Azmaries* are harmed by the lack of respect the face and the insult. They are sexually abused by customers. The problem is worsening when cultural night clubs had to be closed by force, due to national peace instability and corona virus pandemic. Comparing with male counterparts, female *Azmaries* are challenged more in the problems discussed above, because their role in the case is double. They have to earn money and manage all home needs.

4.1.4 Coping Mechanisms for Challenges

This section deals with a part of a solution that addresses the challenges and problems female *Azmaries*. Most participants in the study stated that there are many problems that female *Azmaries* are facing during at work and at home. But they are working to overcome the problems they face and to work on strategies that address their problems. They call a solution to their problems by accepting it and not counting it as a problem, and through patience, protecting themselves as much as possible. The coping mechanisms are presented one by one as follows.

4.1.4.1 Coping mechanisms for sexual and other related challenges

Based on the finding of the study, female *Azmaris* applied various coping mechanisms to overcome sexual and other related challenges. The various forms of coping mechanisms are presented as follows.

Tell the truth in artistic way

The participants disclosed that during their performance, customers may take unnecessary body contact which is beyond the limit. In such occasion, they song a lyrics that indicates they are married women and not need unwelcome body contact. With this way of artistic performance, they can sometimes protect themselves from sexual harassment. For example, one of the participants of the study shared the following story;

Men want to hug and kiss us while we sing. When something like this happens, we make fun of them and explain that we are married. When they ask us for a phone call, we say, 'No, we don't need that.' (Participant 8).

The above narration tells us that female *Azmaris* used their artistic skill to defend themselves from potential harassment by disclosing their existing marital status. Even in the formal communication, they directly told the customers about their marital status for the sake of protecting themselves from any potential violence that may be perpetrated by their customers.

Patience

The participants revealed that things would have been got worsen if they confront problems that arose with drunk or intoxicated customers. At this time, female *Azmaris* became more patience. Study participant 6 said that there must be patience when problems emerge. She used the following lyrics to explain it.

ሁለት ጸባይ አሉኝ ጸምኮ ራባችኋል (I have two behaviors that I proud of it)

አይቶ ማለፍና ሰምቶ መቻልናችኋል (Seeing but ignoring and hearing but holding it)

From the above information, we can understand that female *Azmaris* have developed patience to avoid unnecessary conflict with those customers who are intoxicated with alcoholic drink. Hence, patience can be regarded as one means of coping strategy that used by female *Azmaris*.

Marriage

According to the study participants, most of female *Azmaris* had fortunately married with the same profession. Their marriages save them from different abuses, like sexual harassment, emotional /psychological abuse and physical abuse. During their work at night club and return home that evening, their husbands are with them. And mostly when the work obliged them to go out of the town, the journey is with their husbands. Participant 5 shared the role of her husband in difficult circumstances by saying:

Because of the nature of the work, people forced me to drink alcohol at work. I am a brave woman. I can resist what I don't want. But it has been easier for me

because my husband always works with me. I face the problems as male co-workers. But being with my husband eases things (Participant 7).

Based on the above reflections, we can note that marriage with the same profession is a means for female *Azmaris* to protect themselves from potential challenge. This would also help them to have smooth matrimonial life since her husband knows what she does at workplace.

Refuse invitations

The participants disclosed that most of the problems come from the invitations that customers offer for female *Azmaris*. Frequently drunken customers want female *Azmaris* share tables to drink. If she does so, the next question is to share bed. To escape from such kind of questions should refuse the invitations from the beginning. Study participant 1 pointed out that female *Azmari* should avoid such offers to reduce the problems resulted from that offer. She said:

I don't permit people to invite me. Because I think a lot of problems come from being intimate like that. Many come to kiss me when I sing on stage. Later, I told them that I am married and a mother of children. I don't want to mislead them (Participant 1).

As discerned from the above story, female *Azmaris* can protect or decrease any potential problems by refusing any invitation that presented by their audience or customers. They also convinced their customers by telling them as if they get married.

4.1.4.2 Coping mechanisms for Economic Challenge

The main coping mechanism utilized by female *Azmaris* to overcome their economic challenges is accepting the reality as it is.

Live with what you have

Study participants claimed expensiveness of living materials hardens their life. Salary money is not as earlier. Reward money reduced from the previous times. Cultural nightclubs are not as usual. Because of those things the income that female *Azmari* earn is reduced, while the cost of basic needs is maximized. To cop up this hazard study participant suggested that female *Azmaris*

should live what they have. Minimizing expense is the default solution and it is well explained by account following participant;

When I run out of money, things come hard. But I back things as they come. If I eat meat, I will eat Shiro and borrow from others. Thank God my husband is not addicted. He does not drink; he brings what he has earned and pays for my house needs.

As it is portrayed from the above quotation, they female *Azmaris* are accepting their existing situation and do not make them to be worried. By adopting such life skill, they are able to ease the devastating impact of the economic challenge that they face.

4.1.4.3 Coping mechanisms for health and psychological challenges

Based on the result of the study, female *Azmaris* have used praying and relaxing as a means to overcome the health and psychological challenges that they face.

Praying

The participants reported that religion gives hope for them. As to them, having tear is not the only way to pass challenges. Pray to God is the option to get rest when things are complicated. Next to God hope is the way to be out of bad environment. Study participant 5 commented that female *Azmari* should pass the challenges with the will of God and confidence. She said:

I go through problems with the God. Problems are overcome, not by tears. Problems can be overcome by not underestimating work. I deal problems with older people than with young people. You have to be confident. I glorify myself because I have confidence. My husband is a national defence colonel. But I don't want to get rid of them by talking him to them about small problems, but in my own way. One night I had a fight with a client in my house, and when someone tried to help me, I beat him up. If my older brother or, the eldest son, would have heard of the incidence, there would be a worse hard time. But I spent it mature. And it takes maturity and self-confidence. In my own way, I will meet the challenges of my femininity and singing (Participant, 5).

Praying or believing in religion is a remedy for female *Azmaris* to solve and coup up various kinds of problems. Henceforward, being religious person is one coping strategy used by female *Azmaris*.

Feel relax at work

All bad happenings out of work place should be stay there out. Coming with that mood to work place worsen the problem. There may be conflicts at home with children, husband and neighbourhood. This conflict and creates bad mood. That bad mood should not follow female *Azmaris* to work. So, female *Azmaris* should relax themselves at work in order to have perfect performance. In light of this idea, one of the participants of the study said:

When I fought with my family at home, I will be happy to go out and work. This is a pleasant feature. I can't open my heart and sing, so I have to relax. For the time my performance, I forget about the problem and the frustration (Participant 8).

Moreover, for health problems they told to the researcher, they are conducting follow-ups with doctors. Bone and knee problems are treated by modern and cultural follow-ups. Throat problems temporarily treated by drinking hot drinks like coffee and tea. Health problems like insomnia and deprivation are fixed by taking long and short term rests permitted by their employers.

According to study participants' response, all the day to day problems are copped up by the default mechanisms and techniques they create. But some are very serious and out of their capability to hand them and sometimes the challenges became life threatening. It was suggested that some organizations should help them, in which we will see in the implication part of this study report.

4.2 Discussion

The discussion was made by relating the findings of the present study with available feminist theory and empirical findings. This section deals with the discussion of findings in accordance with the related literature or studies.

4.2.1. Opportunities of Female *Azmaris*

The economic base of *Azmari* community is agriculture. Another source of money for *Azmari* community is performing folk song. In spite of the payment that they gain by performing at their villages, many *Azmaris* move from villages to towns (especially to Gondar town and Bahir Dar city) in order to get better payment. As a result, they perform the art at the night clubs established for this purpose (Getu, 1998). And As ILO (2008) indicated that the majority of women in the informal sector such as petty trading joined the sector as a means of survival. They turn to the informal business due to low level of economic support from husbands/partners, which force them to find a means of supplementing their low income in order to support the family. Similarly the result of this study shows that they get money for their job they support their families, rise and educate their children and the like. In addition to their economic benefits, the popularity and prestige they earn from the society is considered as emotional benefit. Their work connects them with great music producers and concert organizers.

4.2.2. Challenges of Female *Azmaris*

Concerning to theoretical discussion, liberal feminism asserts that the equality of men and women can be achieved through political and legal reform (Brake, 2004). This insight can well explain the condition of female *Azmaris* since the owner of the cultural night clubs didn't consider the difference between male and female *Azmaris*, they didn't understand the house hold work burdens of female *Azmaris*, due to this reason female *Azmaris* always feel busy and stressed to attend their work place on time.

If society is to achieve gender justice, we must provide women with the same political rights, economic opportunities and same education (UN 2010). Study participant's interview indicates, female *Azmaris* are facing verities of psychological challenges including discrimination, lack of respect by the community, insulting degrading their personal rights, undermining their performances etc.

In her Vindication of the Rights of Women, Wollstonecraft urged women to become autonomous decision makers, but the path to autonomy goes through academy. For Wollstonecraft, the ideal woman is one who liberated herself from the oppressive roles of emotional cripple, narcissistic sex objects, but obeying the commands of reason. She wanted women to grow to personhood,

not reduced to the toy of men (Botting 2016). But the results of this study shows that female *Azmaris* are not well educated because of many reasons and they are not enough matured to make decision inside and outside the home , they are not develop their self- esteem ,confidence ,lack independence ,they are always under the control of their husbands.

Staton and Anthony cited in Reva B. Siegel (2013) argue that women should get economic opportunities, sexual freedom, civil liberties and abolishing gender roles. They are considered moderate feminist. Most female *Azmaries* responded finance problems as the biggest challenge that they had faced. The participants were shared about the economic challenges that they face in their career. Most of them highlighted that financial problem was the most challenging part in their part. Market value inflation creates expensiveness of basic needs. When cultural nightclubs had been shut down due to the pandemic and lack of national peace, the money that *Azmaries* get would be reduced.

Liberal feminist argued that women roles in the society are disregarded and their professions are not properly respected (Gillespie 2000). Likewise, Most of the respondents claimed that the communities give uncommon names and low acceptability for female *Azmaries*. The community viewed the female *Azmaries* as prostitute and sex workers. Moreover there are community members that challenge female as they are the one who insults others. Female *Azmaries* are also marginalized when clients make weeding and call male *Azmaries*, as respondents' response. And even the payment clients pay for female *Azmaries* is much less than male counterparts.

To relate the findings of this study with empirical study is a very tiresome activity since there is no available study that directly related with the study topic. To overcome this challenge, the researcher attempted to discuss the findings with related topic or by taking the studies done on informal sector as major source for discussion.

The present study found out that there is a significant gender gap between Women and Men like the division of labor at home, the workload of women, the existence of pay gaps in the workplace, the lack of equal opportunities for male and female singers in the community, health related challenges and the harassment of women. Similarly Losby and Kingslow (2002) investigated that women are more likely to work in the informal sector than men as of their

household responsibilities, particularly their responsibilities for the care of children. The types of informal work women do as market or street vendors or hawkers or home workers, expose them to risks to their physical safety and health than men. Globally, informal work is a greater source of employment for men (63 per cent) than for women (58 per cent). Despite this, women are more often to be found in the more vulnerable categories of work, for instance as domestic workers or self-employed home-based workers. In a majority of countries, women in the informal economy tend to live in households that are poor (ILO, 2017).

The results of this study show that female singers are subjected to various forms of abuse, threats, intimidation and harassment in the workplace, as well as loss of respect in the community. Similarly Recent evidence shows that about 55 per cent of the world's population are not covered by social protection, and the coverage of informal workers is particularly inadequate (ILO, 2017). Contributory social security schemes usually benefit women in the informal economy less, as these schemes are linked to formal employment. As women tend to be over-represented in self-employment and toil as contributing family workers, they are less likely to contribute to social insurance schemes – and even if they do, the contributions are low and the benefits derived are minimal (Tessier et al., 2013).

Women face other structural setbacks when participating in music life. Bayton's study (1998) of female musicians in the UK found that the primary reason why women forgo joining a band is the combination of constraints on equipment, space, and training. First, women's deflated pay compared to men's affords little extra money to save up for expensive equipment. Similarly the results of this study reveals that even the payment that female *Azmaris* get is much less than male counterparts.

4.2.3. Coping Mechanisms by Female *Azmaris*

This study indicates that female *Azmaris* were experienced different challenges that include economic, health related and social challenges. Female singers come up with their own unique coping mechanisms to overcome their challenges. Depending on the problem, they may have different moral and psychological arrangements. They practice praying to the God and thinking about the future, patience, and relaxation at work. They practice negotiation as much as possible. They try to solve problems with their clients by convincing them that they are married. They

focus on reducing the cost of luxury to alleviate their economic woes. A study conducted by Deborah *et al* (2015:42) stated that, *women* were often uncertain whether they are in compliance with regulations .This may be a significant barrier to successful of women in business .

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that most female *Azmaries* are family managers. Their children and sometimes siblings are living with them. The benefit of female *Azmaris* is that they support their families, rise and educate their children, and at least become unemployed. In addition to their economic benefits, the popularity and prestige they earn from the society is considered as emotional benefit. Their work connects them with great music producers and concert organizers. That will help them to release a music album or a single song. But it needs personal strength and others' help. It connects with other great contemporary musicians and singers at concerts. They would share experiences about music and other matters. They also have the opportunity to meet politicians and wealthy people. Psychologically, they gain the freedom of work, good self-esteem and better self-confidence. The result demonstrates that female *Azmaries* get satisfaction in their efforts to please others. In addition to satisfaction, the issue involves self-management.

Although being *Azmari* has many advantages, it also has many challenges. Female *Azmaries* face many challenges in their femininity, work place and of being *Azmari*. Although economic self-sufficiency is a virtue, the results of the study show that there are different pressures. Economic problems are exacerbated when cultural nightclubs are closed for various reasons. Cultural nightclubs are closed in the event of epidemics such as Covid 19 and national instability. This reduces the amount of money that female *Azmaries* receive in terms of rewards and salaries. That makes it difficult for them to make money. The expensive cost of living results difficulty not only in what they buy but also in the amount they earn from reward. For example, a customer who enters a cultural night club for entertainment may find it difficult to award money for the *Azmari*, because the price of a drink is expensive in itself.

In addition to the economic crisis, there are many health problems. They make loud noises in order to make the sound louder than the loudspeaker and the *Masinko*. Then sore throat emerges. Headaches and other ailments follow. They do not get enough sleep during the day and at night because of the nature of work. That leads them to insomnia, sleep disorders, and depression.

They stand for long hours for performance. That are prone to back and knee pain and disc herniation.

Psychologically, the results also tell us that female *Azmaries* are highly respected and loved by society. But there is still the community wrongly perceive and understand the work of *Azmari*. Many use *Azmari* as an insult. Not only that, but there are people who confuse the difference between singing and prostitution. Their nightly work as singers made them feel like prostitutes. This is a matter of social analysis. Taking full responsibility for the family and working tirelessly day and night can lead to depression and anxiety. This can lead to conflicts with their spouses, families, neighbours, co-workers, and others.

Female singers come up with their own unique coping mechanisms to overcome their challenges. Depending on the problem, they may have different moral and psychological arrangements. They practice praying to the God and thinking about the future, patience, and relaxation at work. They practice negotiation as much as possible. They try to solve problems with their clients by convincing them that they are married. They focus on reducing the cost of luxury to alleviate their economic woes.

It can be generally concluded that the life of female *Azmaris* have double face—they get certain advantages and face many problems. The problems of Female *Azmaris* are diversified in nature of which some problems are associated with their gender. Hence, it can be predicted that female *Azmaris* would face more challenges than male *Azmaris*.

5.2 Implication

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the researcher sets out the following implications.

- Female *Azmaries* are more likely to be poor. In particular, the focus of the young generation on the modern music of the city where they work has reduced the earnings of female *Azmaries* and their cultural nightclubs. Therefore, it is important to encourage female *Azmaries* to look at other career options. It is important if the bureau of the Labor and Social Affairs and Job Creation Commission take responsibility for this.

- The area where the female *Azmaries* came to Bahir Dar is different. It is advisable If the Bureau of Micro and Small Enterprises Development works to organize them to show other work sites.
- Since their work exposes the female *Azmaries* to sexual harassment, the authorities (Women's Association, Women's Federation, Women's League, Labor and Social Affairs Bureau, Health Bureau, etc.) should create awareness on the issue.
- It is good ideas for female singers who suffer from health related challenges have access to free medical care from private and public health facilities through health insurance.
- Saving and credit institutions should also encourage *Azmaris* particularly female *Azmaris* to improve their saving cultures.
- Technical, vocational and enterprise office and labor and social affairs office should create job opportunity to minimize unemployment and female *Azmaris* rural to urban migration.
- And finally female *Azmaries* promote their country's culture through music. Their attire at work is also traditional. This has a huge potential to attract tourists. So, the culture and tourism offices at all levels support female *Azmaries*.

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Appendix one: Research interview Consent Statement (English)

Bahir Dar University

Faculty of Social Science

Department of Gender and Development studies

Research interview Consent Statement

My name is Etienat Wallelign. I am a Master's Degree student at Bahir Dar University Faculty of Social Science, Department of Gender and Development studies. Currently I am working my thesis entitled as "**The Lived Experience of Female Busker /Azmari/: A Phenomenology Study From Bahirdar City Administration**" Therefore, it is your cooperation that helps me to accomplish the research objectives. So, I am kindly requesting you to share your experience and knowledge, and perception.

In the course of our discussion I want to assured you that, the information you will share, will be kept confidential and will be used only for educational purpose. Nothing has the objective beyond this and the data is fully confidential for the purpose of this thesis only. You have also the right to refuse no to answer, and also quit; if you feel discomfort with the questions. You are not forced to make any kind of contractual agreement that will abide you to stay till the end of the research. If you are voluntary to participate in this research, the information you will provide will be recorded by code with.

The finding of this study will be presented and reported to Department of Gender and Development studies, Bahir Dar University Faculty of Social Science.

So, are you voluntary to participate in this study?

Yes _____ NO _____

Participants code _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Name Etienat Wallelign Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you very much for your participation!!

Appendix Two: Research interview Consent Statement (Amharic)

ባህርዳርዩኒቨርሲቲ

ማህበራዊሳይንስፋኩሊቲ

የስርአተ-ጾታናልማትጥምህርትክፍል

የጥናት ቃለምልልስ ስምምነት

ስሜ እቴናት ዋልለኝ ይባላል። በባህርዳር ዩኒቨርሲቲ የሶሻል ሳይንስ ፋኩልቲ፣ በስርአተ-ጾታ እና ልማት ትምህርት ክፍል የማስተርስ ድግሪ ተማሪ ነኝ። በአሁኑ ወቅት “The Lived Experience of Female Busker /Azmari/ , The case of Bahirdar City Administration Gishabay sub city ” በሚል ርዕስ ጥናት እየሰራሁ ነው። ስለሆነም የምርምር ዓላማዎቼን ለማሳካት የእርስዎን ትብብር ያስፈልገኛል። ስለዚህ ተሞክሮዎን እና እውቀትዎን እንዲሁም ግንዛቤዎን እንዲያጋሩ በትህትና እጠይቃለሁ።

በውይይታችን ሂደት ውስጥ የሚያካፍሉት መረጃ በምስጢር የሚጠበቅ እና ለትምህርታዊ ዓላማ ብቻ የሚውል መሆኑን ላረጋግጥልዎ እፈልጋለሁ። ከዚህ ውጭ ሌላ ዓላማ የለውም። በጥያቄዎቹ ላይ ምቹት የማይሰማዎት ከሆነ መልስ ያለመስጠት እና ቃለ ምልልሱን የማቆም መብት አለዎት። እስከ ምርምሩ መጨረሻ ድረስ ለመቆየት የሚያገዝዎ ማንኛውንም ዓይነት የውል ስምምነት እንዲያደርጉ አይገደዱም ። በዚህ ምርምር ውስጥ ለመሳተፍ ፈቃደኛ ከሆኑ የሚያቀርቡት መረጃ በኮድ ይመዘገባል ።

የዚህ ጥናት ግኝት ለባህር ዳር ዩኒቨርሲቲ ማህበራዊ ሳይንስ ፋኩልቲ ለምርምርና ለትምህርት ክፍል ሪፖርት ይደረጋል ።

ስለዚህ ፣ በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ ለመሳተፍ ፈቃደኛ ነዎት?

አዎ አይ

የተሳታፊው ኮድ _____ ፊርማ _____ ቀን _____

የጥናቱ ሰሪ ስም እቴናት ዋልለኝ ፊርማ _____ ቀን _____

ስለትብብርዎ በጣም አመሰግናለሁ !!

Appendix Three: Interview Guide English Version

Bahir Dar University

Faculty of Social Science

Department of Gender and Development studies

Interview Guide

Interview with Female *Azmari*

Code

Date of Interview

Time _____

Background Information

Sex _____

Age _____

Marital status _____

Number of children _____

Total Family Size _____

Note: The basic questions in the interview guide bellow are based on the specific objectives /research questions/ of the study.

➤ Introduction Questions

- 1.How do you become *Azmari*?
- 2.How much do you love your job?
- 3.For how many years do you perform?

- **Objective One:** Opportunities that female *Azmaris* enjoy
 1. What are the potential opportunities that you get in this profession?
 2. What makes you feel good of being *Azmari*?
 3. What kind of gains do you earn of being *Azmari*?
 4. Does the earning you gain cover your family interest? How?

- **Objective Two:** The challenges that female *Azmaris* face
 1. What are the challenges that you face in this profession? like
 - ❖ Work place challenges
 - ❖ Out of work challenges
 - ❖ Social challenges
 - ❖ Economical challenges
 - ❖ Psychological challenges
 2. Have you ever being the victim violence like?
 - ❖ Physical violence
 - ❖ Sexual violence
 - ❖ Emotional violence
 3. Most of the time *Azmaris* perform during the night time, due to this what are the main challenges during night performance?
 4. How do you perform with male counterparts?
 5. Do you think the society treats female and male *Azmaris* equally? If no, how it should be managed?

- **Objective Three:** Coping mechanisms
 1. How do you manage the above challenges that you face?
 2. What kinds of coping mechanisms did you use to deal with problems?

Appendix Four: Interview Guide Amharic Version

ባህርዳር ዩኒቨርሲቲ

ማህበራዊ ሳይንስ ፋኩሊቲ

የስርዓተ ሥነ ልቦና ልማት ጥምህርት ክፍል

የጥናት ቃለምልልስ መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

ኮድ

ቃለ ምልልሱ የተካሄደበት ቀን

ስኬት _____

የመረጃ ዳራ

ጾታ _____

እድሜ _____

የትምህርት ደረጃ _____

የልጆች ብዛት _____

አጠቃላይ የቤተሰብ ብዛት _____

ማሳሰቢያ:- የጥናት ቃለምልልስ መነሻ ጥያቄዎች በጥናቱ ዝርዝር አላማዎች መሰረት የተሰናዱ ናቸው።

መግቢያ ጥያቄዎች

- እንዴት አዝማራ ሆንን?
- ስራ ሽንገያ ሆኖ ለሌሎች ይሰጣል?
- ለምን ሆኖ ለሌሎች ይሰጣል?

አላማ አንድ፡ በአዝማሪነት የሚገኙ እድሎች

- አዝማሪበመሆን ስያገኘሽው ጥሩ ነገር ምን ድንገት ነው?
- የአዝማሪነት የሚያስደስተው ማንን ተምን ድንገት ነው?
- ምን አይነት ሽልማቶችን እና ገቢዎችን ታገኛለሽ?
- የምታገኝው ገንዘብ ወይም ሽንጭት ምን ዓይነት ነው?

አላማ ሁለት፡- በአዝማሪነት ውስጥ ያሉ ፈተናዎች

በዋናነት በአዝማሪነት ስራሽ ውስጥ የሚገጥሙሽ ፈተናዎች ምን ምን ናቸው?

- በስራ ቦታ ፈተናዎች
- ከስራ ቦታ ውጭ ያሉ ፈተናዎች
- ማህበራዊ ጥያቄዎች
- ኢኮኖሚያዊ ጥያቄዎች
- ስነ ልቦናዊ ጉዳዮች

የተለያዩ ጥያቄዎች ደርሰውብሽ ያውቃሉ?

- አካላዊ ጥያቄ
- ጾታዊ ጥያቄ
- ስሜታዊ ጥያቄ

ብዙ ጊዜ የአንድ ስራ በሌሊት የሚሰራ ነው። በሌሊት በመስራትሽ ምን ምን ችግሮች ደርሰውብሽ?

ከወንድ አዝማሪዎች ጋር እንዴት ነው የምትሰራው?

ማህበረሰቡ ወንድና ሴት አዝማሪዎችን እኩል እድል ይሰጣል ብለሽ ታስቢያለሽ?

አላማ ሶስት፡ መቋቋሚያ መንገዶች

እነዚህ ሁሉ ፈተናዎች ሲገጥሙሽ እንዴት አድርገሽ ታልፊያቸዋለሽ?

ፈተናዎቹን የምታለፈባቸው መንገዶች ምን ምን ናቸው?

Appendix Five: Themes

No	Objective (section)	Themes	Sub-Themes
1	Opportunity	Economical advantage	Means of family life leading
			Salary
			Travel fee
			Reward
		Fame	Finding music producers
			Release musical album or single
			Introduce higher level people
			Respect
		Psychological advantage	Freedom
			Self esteem
			Entertain others and entertained
		2	Challenges
Reduction of reward money			
Health Related Challenges	Throat pain		
	Insomnia		
	Knee bone pain		
Psychological challenges	Feel discriminated		
	Depression		
	Lack of respect		
Other challenges	Sexual Harassment		
	Conflict		
3	Cop-up mechanism	Acquiesce	Keep Silent
			Prying and Hopping the future
		Negotiation	
		Patient	Tolerate
		Marriage	

Declaration

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “The Lived Experience of Female Busker /Az mari/: A phenomenological Study from Bahir Dar City Administration” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in gender from Department of Gender and development study, Bahir Dar University, is a record of original work carried out by me and has never been submitted to this or any other institution to get any other degree or certificates. The assistance and help I received during the course of this investigation have been duly acknowledged.

Etienat Wallelign Jember _____

Name

Signature

Date