



Unemployment Experience of Youth in Addis Ababa

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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List of Acronyms

BoFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
BoLSA	Bureaus of Labor and Social Affairs
CSA	Central Statistical Authority
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
ILO	International Labor Organization
ICLS	International Conference of Labor Statisticians
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MoYSC	Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprise
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Abstract

Ethiopia witnessed progressive achievement in education through the adoption of education for all initiatives. However, in the country youth in general urban youth in particular have experienced the highest rate of unemployment. Due to rise in education attainment among youth and the limited economic opportunities for skilled labor, unemployment is widespread among educated young people. This research paper focus on examining how young people experience unemployment challenge- what it means being unemployed and what mechanisms they adapt to sustain their livelihood and achieve their aspirations. In doing so the study highlights unemployed young people's perceptions of the employability and causes of unemployment. Concepts and theories of youth, human capital development, unemployment, relative deprivation theory and youth and transition model were used in analyzing youth unemployment experiences.

The study was primarily based on qualitative data from interview and ethnographic observation. Secondary data drawn from secondary sources were also used to analyze the background of urban unemployment in Ethiopia. The study revealed that the way in which young people navigate school to work varied depending on different personal and socioeconomic factors. Youth experience unemployment differently based on their age, gender, marital status, and family background and education levels. Due to limited opportunities, relatively better educated youth has faced challenges of finding work in the formal sector and left with the option either employment in the informal sector or remain dependent on their family. Unemployed youth was not only experienced material deprivation but also affected by social exclusion, and emotional and psychological distresses.

Relevance to Development Studies

Youth unemployment is a common problem in many countries. It restrains the contribution of the larger segment of the population to the economy, which in turn has social and economic consequences for the country. In a poor economic context where access to education at all levels surpasses employment opportunities, examining the educated youth unemployment experience will have paramount importance to development studies' literatures. In this sense the study will contribute to enhance our understanding of what it means being unemployed for educated young people and how young people perceive work and employment and how they negotiate and renegotiate their position in a limited opportunity and changing economic, education and labor market conditions.

Key Words

Young people, unemployment, labor market, educated youth, university graduates, TVET, unemployed youth

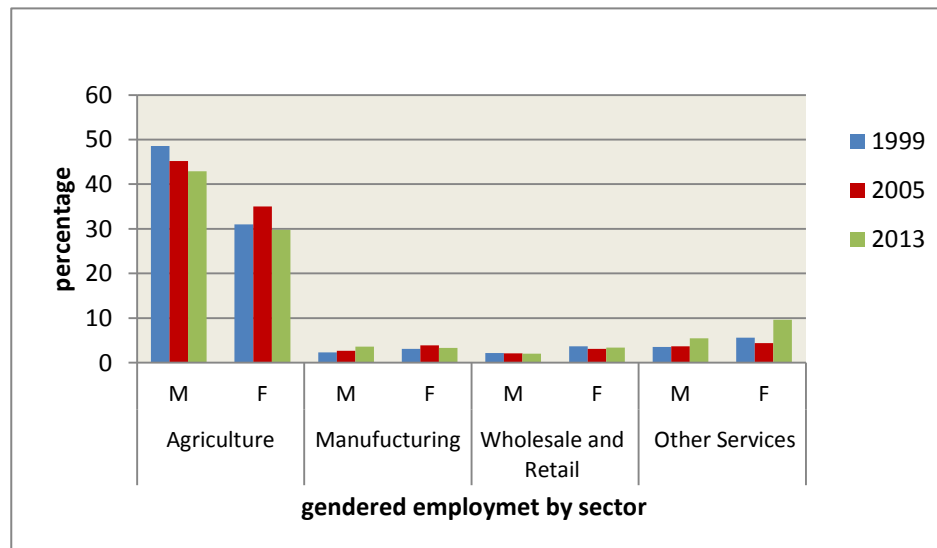
Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Like many other African countries in Ethiopia there are some indications of improvement in human development. Through initiatives like ‘education for all’, young people and their families have invested their scarce resources on school education (Chuta and Crivello 2012:1). Therefore, access to formal education has been improved. Despite of millions of young people and their families placed their hope on school education the promise to overcome poverty and lead to a better life through formal education are not being achieved for many of young people (Murray 2012:3). Therefore, in a poor economic situation like Ethiopia, where quality of education is low and employment creation is limited, increased access to education creates the problem of educated unemployment (Broussar and Tekeleselassie 2012:21).

With the two third of its population are below 25 years, in Ethiopia youth employment is one of the pressing issues that demands development policy concerns (Denu et al 2005:4). Though the economy of the country has been somehow growing it is unable to keep the pace with the growth of the population and increased education attainments. Therefore the employment creation has been slow in all employing sectors. This implies that the demand side is the most restraining factor for youth employment in the country.

Figure1.1 Percentage of employed population by sector



Source: Computed from CSA 2013 published data

In Ethiopian development plan youth employment policy has started to receive attention since five year development plans 2005-2010 called a 'Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP).' In this development plan addressing youth unemployment was much focused on education and training, particularly improving quality of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), providing skill training for unemployed youth, enhancing job creation through private sector participations, and Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE) development (moved 2006:197). In the currently underway five years (2011-2015) 'Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)' more broad based policy of youth development, such as empowering women and youth to ensure their social, economic and political participation than directly focusing on issue of unemployment (MoFED 2010:111).

In the two successive development plans the government has induced employment interventions for youth through integrating TVET to the need SME development, subsidizing the employment creation projects in integrated housing, construction and infrastructure development programs. However, despite these efforts in Ethiopia youth unemployment remain widespread, particularly urban youth unemployment rate is one of the highest in the world (Denu et al 2005:4). This study seeks to analyze urban youth unemployment experiences with special references to educated youth who at least completed secondary school education. The study will examine the extent to which education and work nexus is becoming challenging and how youth cope with the unemployment to achieve their livelihoods.

1.2 Indications of Research Problems

Contrarily to the young people's and their families' expectations and hopes placed on education that associated with upward social mobility and improvement of livelihoods, in reality, most youth in their post schooling life have to face unemployment challenges and remain jobless for an extended period of time (Camfield 2011:680, Sierneels 2007:1). In Ethiopia relatively well educated and fresh job seekers are largely affected by the incidence of unemployment with prolonged unemployment duration close to four years and even more years for those seeking a white collar job (Mains 2007, Serneels 2007) "While education is central to children's understandings of well-being and well-becoming, its ability to fulfill their aspirations is limited by declining opportunities for employment"(Camfield 2011:680). Consequently, in Ethiopia the share of unemployed educated of higher grades has persistently increased in the last two decades (Kibru 2012:14).

In Ethiopia youth policy focuses more on human development aspects that largely targets handing diploma/degree/ to everyone which of course has a loose connection to the world of works. Adams (2007:5) argued that to

realize “political and social stability and economic development” national youth policies and programs shouldn’t be limited to improve young people’s access to education; they should equally give emphases on enabling schools to prepare young people for the world of work. In the current Ethiopian human capital development more emphasis was given to the quantity than the quality. In addition to the expansion of government owned higher institutions with limited education facilities, unregulated and poorly inspected private colleges has exacerbated deteriorating quality of education. USAID (2012:6) reported that the quality of education in private higher institutions in Ethiopia has been affected by a shortage of qualified academic staff, unavailability of education facilities and infrastructure and ‘limited practical trainings’. This has created anxiety on the number of economically discouraged young people who would like to see their future through education.

To this end, the expectations and aspirations of educated youth are shaped by the past school-to-work transition trends, which promised government jobs for graduates. This imagined contract between the state and young people accompanied by the structured labor market might have huge impacts on the expectations and aspirations of young people which eventually influence their experiences of unemployment.

Despite Ethiopia is one of the least urbanized African countries, the employment opportunities in both formal and informal sectors (beyond agricultural sector) are concentrated in major urban areas. After some level of schooling in Ethiopia it is common for young people to move to urban areas for searching jobs. This makes unemployment in Ethiopia the urban phenomena. Being Addis Ababa the primate city located in the heart of the country where major cultural, economic and political institutions are situated, it attracts more labor forces from every corner of the country that raises competition for limited available jobs.

Though in the last fifteen years, unemployment rates for the general youth population and urban youth population has declined from 11.1% and 33% in 1999 to 6.8% and 20% in 2013 respectively, unemployment rates for youth with higher education has risen from 2% to 7.5% during the same period (CSA 2013:6). The relatively increasing of employment opportunity in the informal sector has masked the problems of the declining opportunities for young people to acquire productive decent work in the formal sector. Most youth in Ethiopia is either self-employed or employed in the informal sector with very low pays, in unsecured jobs, unprotected working conditions and nonproductive work that hardly support their living. This has led young people to complain not merely about the absence of employment in absolute term, it rather the difficulties of finding productive work that matches their expectations. This eventually has brought precariousness and underemployment difficulties that young people are currently facing.

1.3 Concepts and working Definition of Terms

1.3.1 Working Definition of Youth and Youth Concepts

Though the UN standard definition of the term ‘youth’ refers to people from aged 15-24 inclusive, in practice the operationalizing of the term among different societies is contested and it is highly subjected to cultural, social, institutional legal framework and political factors (O'Higgins 2001:10). For instance, in most European countries the base for youth lower age is ‘minimum school-leaving’ age, while the upper limit varies widely across countries. In developing countries where there is no minimum school-leaving age limit the base to define the term youth entirely depend on the cultural and institutional framework and highly contextual (ibid 2001:10).

However, literatures depict youth as the life phase to adulthood. For instance, UNESCO (2004:5) noted that despite the use of term youth varies in its implication and age boundaries from culture to culture, it is widely defined as a transitional concept between ‘childhood and adulthood’. It further explains that it is a life phase when people have to face and negotiate a complex interplay drives from emotional, social and economic changes in the process. Scholars like Cole (2005:892) argues that this globalized linear categorization of youth and youth culture don’t represent all youth. Because first youth culture can be mediated by socio-cultural and historical context of the society, second who are youth and what they do is conceptualized from the rich countries chronological age perspective, third for some people progression to adulthood may not be attainable.

I found it relevant to use in this study the term youth as defined in Ethiopian Youth Policy document representing the youth between age 15 and 29. Because, youth with high school to university levels of education falls in this age category. The term youth and young people have been used interchangeably throughout this paper.

1.3.2 Working Definition of Unemployment

The ILO definition of unemployment that comprises three conditions: being without work, currently available for work, and actively seeking for work has been criticized for its rigidity to accommodate peoples temporarily laid off or peoples discouraged of job prospects (Izzi 2013:104). Therefore, this study has used a more relaxed concept of unemployment that includes not only persons without work, currently available for work and actively seeking for jobs, but also those who wish to work but discouraged to actively seek for work.

1.4 Justification of the Study

In Ethiopia studies on youth unemployment drawn from large labor surveys are well captured. Most studies conducted so far on youth unemployment were much focused on macro analysis that generate incidences, durations and trend of unemployment and testing other related variables quantitatively. So far there has been few studies attempt to examine how young people negotiate unemployment and what it means being unemployed for young people. Furthermore, how youth unemployment represented itself in the current progressive changes of youth education attainments in limited employment opportunities was not captured. Studies reveal that in developing countries due to limited opportunities, youth life phase for some young people is so prolonged (Mains 2012:3) or even can be a destination of development (Cole 2005:892).

Examining youth, school to work transition experiences by the lens of unemployment would help us to understand not only how youth is constrained in institutionally structured growing up process, but also how youth subjectivities in the forms of resiliencies and agencies produced and reproduced in the process. In this line, the study seeks to investigate what mechanisms young people have adopted to combat the changes and how they perceive employment in these changes. Youth as cohort are not a homogenous group; variations in their age, gender, and personal and family background determine their experience of unemployment, and their other desires and opportunities of urban living (UNESCO, 2012). These were not adequately addressed in the context of Ethiopia. Therefore, this study will explore how individual experienced unemployment challenges and how they define employment and what it means being unemployed.

1.5 Objective of the Study and Research Questions

The main objective of this study is to examine relatively educated urban youth unemployment experiences. From youth lived experiences the study further explores youth agencies and competencies to negotiate unemployment challenges. The central research question that guides this study to achieve stated objectives is:

- ❖ How do young people in urban Ethiopia experience and deal with unemployment?

To be more specific the central research question can be broken down into the following sub-questions:

1. What it means to be unemployed from individual subjective perspective?
2. How unemployed youth perceive employment, employability and causes of unemployment?
3. What strategies unemployed youth adopted to cope with unemployment?

1.6 Structure of the Paper

Chapter one has provided general background of the study, statements of the problem justification for doing this research, objective of the research and research questions. Chapter two presents literatures in which relevant theories and concepts reviews. It explains how human capital theory, youth school to work transition model and unemployment concept are constrained in the current changing youth labor markets reality. Chapter three presents the strategies used in the study by explaining methodology, techniques and procedures followed in the study. Chapter four provides background of youth unemployment in the context of urban Ethiopia. Chapter five presents and discusses the finding of the study in relation to the theories and concepts reviewed in chapter two. Finally chapter six gives reflections and final concluding remarks of the study based on the results and discussions presented throughout the paper.

Chapter 2 Theories and Concepts

The theoretical and conceptual framework used in this study was the human capital theory, youth transition model, and employment and unemployment theories and concepts. This was done with the understanding that these theories and concepts explain how the lives of young people are constrained in the institutionally framed concepts of youth and youth unemployment and how economic, social and technological changes altering young people's growing up experiences.

2.1 Human Capital Theory and Practice

The perceived employability of individual can either be determined by the conditions of the labor market that offer different opportunities to the individual and employee's resource possession from the human capital theory perspectives. Of these, two alternatives of the employability determinants, the human capital theory deals with the individual resources option, particularly the individuals' efforts to invest in education and trainings (Berntson et al 2006:225). In their preparation to transition from school to work young people skill development takes place in school (general human capital development), in the apprenticeship of early work experience development, acquire training on specific work through specific human capital investment (Becker 1964 in Fleischhauer 2007:5, Adams 2007:1).

Becker (1993:7) argues that for individual's human capital development, training and education are the most important investment to be made, because the return to training investment can be envisaged in the form of higher income, effective deeds, improved health and acquiring better career positions. The human capital developed from work experiences and competency development, may contribute to higher earnings, better chance of promotions and acquiring better position (Judge et al 1995 in Berntson et al 2006:226). In his earlier work on investment in human capital analysis Becker found out that among other things, individuals' earnings positively related to the level of skills they possessed, and the probability of unemployment for individual is tend to be negatively correlated to the level of skills acquired (Becker 1962:10). Longer time education, engagement and subsequent increment in labor market participation could provide youth greater opportunities for upward social mobility and autonomy (Naafs 2012:50).

The perceived image of education as a strategy to move up the social ladder and the imagined linkage of extended years of schooling to white-collar jobs have encouraged parents to invest their resources in a formal education. In today's global south though education for those formerly excluded has been recognized as a means of self-improvement, the opportunities for those groups to benefit economically from this inclusion is getting slim (Jeffrey 2008: 739, Jeffrey 2009: 182). This is because, in many cases education has failed to realize the young people's employment expectations and desire for upward social mobility. However, in developing countries young people continue to place

their hope of prolonging their participation in schooling to find professional jobs despite many of them remain waiting for a longer period of time before they secure paid jobs (ibid 2009:182).

The return to training investment in developing countries is poor due to primarily the slow growth of the skilled labor demand in poor economy. Other factors such as poor administration, the level of training capacity, the ‘quantity and quality of training’, and the economic policies that do not favor incentives to firms and individuals to invest training have contributed to reduce the returns to training investment (Middleton et al 1993:1). UNESCO (2012:1) highlighted that the other major challenges currently affecting urban youth employment opportunities in developing countries is the less attention given to informal education and entrepreneurial skill development in urban settings.

2.2 Youth Transition in the Current Labor Market

The concept of transition was in the distinct focus of sociology between family research and youth studies with the normative assumption that portrays moving from dependence childhood to adulthood (Gilles 2000:222). The author explained that youth, school for labor market transition study dominates the research themes on youth education, employment, leisure and consumption.

Literatures on youth transition have shown that youth transition to adult is not something straight forward model and unproblematic in both developed and developing countries’ contexts. “Youth transitions to adulthood are subject to constraints of class, gender and ethnicity”(Holland and Thomson 2009 quoted in Azola 2012: 876). They continue to argue that no clear, distinct boundary can be made between adulthood and childhood. The distinction is rather fuzzy due to complex situations of the youth period in which growing up may or may not be related to the expected changes in transitions or at least may not be occurring simultaneously. Because acquiring these changes is largely influenced by individuals opportunities which in turn shaped by other social variations such as gender, class, sexuality and place differences (Valentine 2003:27).

Throughout many generations of youth life phase people strive to achieve education, entering the labor market, and ‘family formation’, assume social and citizenship responsibilities and lead independent lives (UN 2005: 2, UNSECO 2004:5). However, what the UN has stressed here was that the context in which young people make transitions into adulthood varies across generations. This is due to globalization effects that brought dynamic changes in the economy, technology, social cultural and political environment. Consequently the present generation young people are quite different from any other generations of the past (UN 2005:2). The linear transition model “doesn’t always fit the realities of changing economic, educational and labor market conditions... it is rather increasingly varied, complex and fluid” (Locke and Te Lintelo 2012:779). In a limited economic opportunity Punch (2002:124) argues that young people may not undergo transition from dependent to independent

life phase; they rather experience interdependent relationship with their families.

2.3 Unemployment Concept

The strict definition of unemployment doesn't capture all peoples that are not in the employment but want to take employment. Clark and Summers (1982:210) explained that statistical picture of the labor market and the unemployment definition implies high rates of labor force withdrawal, because labor statistics simply don't consider unemployed youth who have been laid off from actively searching jobs. This definition also downsizes the true picture of youth unemployment duration because of the increased number of discouraged youth excluded from the labor force. Therefore the authors concluded that the distinct line drawn between unemployment and labor force withdrawal doesn't reflect the reality young people are currently facing to enter the labor market

Belchamber and Schetagne (2013:1) argue that unemployment concept is problematic, particularly in the sense that house workers (those engaged in household activities) are neither counted in the labor force and nor in unemployed. The authors stated that "to label people keeping families afloat as 'economically inactive' is both wrong and offensive". Consequently, strict definition of unemployment doesn't fully capture the real picture unemployment in developing countries. In these countries the labor market for youth is characterized by irregular youth employment, working poor¹, underemployment and informal sector employment.

Therefore relaxed definition of unemployment (where actively seeking for job criterion is not mandatory for inclusion) can indicate the severity of unemployment. When relaxed definition is employed the unemployment rate of many countries will become twice its current level (ILO 2013:5). This is because the strict concept of unemployment excludes many peoples from the labor force and in some cases it considers precarious work as employment. Moreover, the underemployment incidence that has currently become a phenomenon in youth labor market has been overlooked in conventional unemployment concept. As Belchamber and Schetagne (2013:1) argue the report of labor statistics, which usually shows lower and stable unemployment in those countries where 80% of the populations are engaged in subsistence economy is 'misleading'. Because in reality, these people get little or no benefit from their engagements of the subsistence production. Therefore, to address this problem the 19th International Conference of Labor Statistician (ICLS) has revised the concept and definition of unemployment (ILO2013:10). This revised concept of unemployment broadens the labor force horizon and reflects the current precarious and underemployment reality encountered most youth in developing countries. For most youth who are working in the informal sector, as Donahoe and Tienda (1999:21) put "income prospects, if

¹ Working poor are working people whose incomes fall below a given poverty line.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_poor

not employment prospects, are bleak". This means that for these young people employment is insignificant as it fails to provide means of living.

2.4 Youth Unemployment Theory

Unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular has become the main concern in the economy, social and politics of both Northern and Southern world. Worldwide employment opportunities and other social goods for young people have been affected largely by the effects of globalization, the neoliberal economic and social reforms and labor market transformation (Jeffrey 2010:496). In developed countries, though structural unemployment is prevailing for the population at large the situation is more severe when it comes to youth unemployment as it has sharply risen in the last two decades both in absolute term and relative to adult (Atchoarena 2000:1). According to OECD (2012:1-6) report youth unemployment rate in G20 countries hits climax (20% in some countries) during 'recent global economic crisis' and the current economic recovery has not yet able to reverse the situations in many countries.

Unemployment has risen even in the developing countries which are perceived to have lower rates of unemployment. In these countries factors such as sustained population growth, 'social disintegration' slow growth of economic development and education system (the dilemma on the importance of general or vocational education) have contributed to the poor integration of youth to work environment (Atchoarena 2000:1, Oketch 2007: 221). In Africa sustained poverty has severely affected young people's aspiration of constructing adulthood identities (Locke and Te Lintelo 2012:777).

Youth unemployment, particularly educated youth unemployment is the result of the combination of the rise in parent investment on education, the inclusion of schooling of formerly excluded groups and the shortage of wages employment opportunity (Jeffrey 2009: 183). The rise in the surplus of experienced and qualified workers has intensified competition to enter the labor market. Furthermore the fact that the absence of suitable jobs that forced qualified young people to accept lower jobs in the 'occupational hierarchy' has brought about the 'filtering phenomenon' that contributed to replace poorly qualified workers in the process, which eventually aggravate the unemployment incidence among poorly qualified young people (Atchoarena 2000:3). Lack of working experiences of the majority of young people who strive to enter the labor market for the first time without developing 'employability skills' also matters (Thompson 2013:1). The apprenticeship programs in which young people will get acquaintances with the world of works through combining work with education are limited or missing. Clark and Summers (1982:199) stated that higher rates of youth unemployment can be explained in two ways: one is limited availability of jobs that makes job seekers remain unemployed for longer period of time and the other is the employment instability that moves young in and out of the labor market and treat them flow into unemployment. Most educated youth have experienced the former problem that calls for job creation policy for youth.

2.5 Theory of Relative Deprivation

The theory of relative deprivation explains how certain disposessions in a given 'social context' affect "individual behavior, attitude and wellbeing" (Bernburg et al 2009:1223). Individual experiences any form of dispossession including economic deprivation in a relative term compared to the surrounding social settings. Rad and Maleki (2013:679) elucidate the relative deprivation theory in relation to the Arab Spring uprising. They explain that the shared experiences of the mismatch between 'expected and achieved' that sparked the Arab Spring was relative deprivation, not absolute deprivation. In the prevalence of unemployment most people share experiences of deprivation in relative term. All people may not equally affected by the incidences.

Walker and Mann (1987:267) describe how unemployment causes relative deprivations that led to social protests. They argue that relative deprivation cannot only be explained from the failure of group shared attainments, it is equally important to examine how it causes stress and frustration to individuals in the group. Bernburg et al (2009:1223) argues that relative deprivation can lead to an uprising and social upheavals whenever contrasting 'social comparisons' are found between the groups or individuals.

2.6 Youth Unemployment Experiences Conceptual Framework

The concept of unemployment related to the realm of socio-economy and politics while unemployment experience takes the form of individual subjective involvements (Celik 2006:6). In this junction exploring how individual affected by the relationships between wider economy and political environment and unemployment requires assessment of individual experiences.

The challenges youth face in living with unemployment as Kieselbach and Traiser (2002:3) argue were mainly examined from monetary aspects. However, unemployment related social problems have called for a broader focus of non-monetary factors and subjective dimensions unemployed people encountered in unemployment. Unemployment caused personal glitches such as economic, social, and psychological and health problems are subjective account. Moreover, unemployed youth subjective experiences capture the intrinsic values of having paid job and personal feeling it causes when missing (Kieselbach, 2003:69). In India Jeffrey (2010b:5) notes that educated unemployed youth was engaged in 'waiting' that aims mainly for 'time passes'. In his discussion of this concept of 'waiting' Jeffrey emphasized the importance that scholars have begun to unpack the anxieties experiences of educated unemployed youth through ethnographic methods. These anxieties can be expressed in many ways, such as dependency, inability to take part in leisure, failure to achieve adulthood responsibilities, and erosion of self-confidence and motivation (Celik, 2006:6), difficulty in passing time (Mains 2012:3). Unemployed youth experience problem of marginalization, social

exclusion and difficulties in social adjustment and relationship (Guarcello et al 2006:9)

Unemployment experiences usually depend on various dimensions such as gender, age, ethnicities, races, economic status of family and rural urban location differences (Celik 2006:6). In developed countries Crotty et al (2008) in Jeffrey (2010a:500) highlight that the neoliberal economy has transferred the responsibility of social reproduction from the state to households. Family provides emotional and financial supports to their young ones (Gilles 2000:221).

In every country youth display higher unemployment rates than adult. However, in the poor economic context young people face challenges to integrate in the labor market. This is mainly due to the persistent population growth that accompanies slow economic progress (Atchoarena 2000: 2). In Ethiopia the current educated youth unemployment is mainly due to the neoliberal policy that has cut public sector employment opportunities, the increased access to education accompanied with limited job opportunities and the undesirable attitude of young people about certain available jobs (Mains 2007:660). Youth attitude towards certain job was shaped by the past school to work transition trend that promises government jobs for educated youth. Cole stated that “sometimes youth draw an old practice, but enacts them in new circumstances, thus changing their effects” (Cole 2007:79).

To this end the demographic nature of the country that comprises a larger share of the youth population increasingly imposed pressure on the limited available opportunities. Though access to education has been improved the quality of education has deteriorated and hence the value of education decreased, which in turn has created a huge gap between young people’s expectations and the realities they experience in their life trajectories (Mains 2007:664). Youth exposure to the world of work through apprenticeship program is limited in Ethiopia. Donahoe and Tienda (1999:26) explain that work experience is an important human capital that produces ‘returns’ throughout individual’s career development. The labor market policies and institutions have neglected the informal sectors and self-employed despite the majority of wage labors are employed in these sectors (Broussar and Tekelesclassie 2012:5).

All unemployed youth are not equally affected by unemployment situations. Therefore youth unemployment experiences differ by socioeconomic and structural factors such as age, gender, education level, family economic status, and place of residences. In addition to these socio-structural factors Azaola (2012: 877) argues that individual agency and personal traits may influence how individual experiences and negotiate vulnerability in the course of transition to work.

Chapter 3 Research Strategies

3. Research Methodology

The type of research method adopted for a given research problem could mainly depend on the kinds of ‘knowledge’ and ‘theories’ researchers aim to produce (George and Bennett 2004). Given the central research question of this study is to examine how young people in urban Ethiopia experience and deal with unemployment, a qualitative research approach was primarily used. To give the general picture of urban youth unemployment as background for the study quantitative data from secondary sources were widely used. Hence the approach used was ‘qualitative dominant mixed methods’. “Qualitative dominant mixed methods research is the type of mixed research in which one relies on a qualitative... While concurrently recognizing that the addition of quantitative data and approaches” (Johnson et al 2007:124). With qualitative method the explanation of a given situation, anxiety, feelings and opinions about the extent of the problems of unemployment were captured. While quantitative method assesses and highlights the macro picture of the unemployment and related challenges to empirically support the qualitative findings.

3.1 Sampling Techniques

In ‘small-scale in depth’ qualitative studies where generalizing of the finding to the whole population is not possible and hence the representativeness of the sample is not relevant and un assessable; the issue of ‘transferability²’ is more essential and therefore the researcher should still strategically select samples that best serve his research purpose (O’ Leary 2004:103). The population of the study was an unemployed youth living in Addis Ababa. Since the focus of the study was on educating unemployed youth, the sample frame from which the actual samples were drawn was an unemployed urban youth (15-29 ages) whose level of education ranges from general secondary school completion to university graduate (undergraduate). This study employed purposive sampling to select 15 informants representing variations in gender, levels of education, age composition and duration unemployment. Unemployed youth with at least one year duration of unemployment has been included. Based on these criteria, 5 high school completion, 5 college diploma graduates and 5 university graduates were selected. In the selection of the respondents the balances in age and gender composition were considered.

Due to the practical difficulties I have encountered during field work parallel to purposive sampling snowball sampling technique was also employed in this study. The snowball sampling technique also “known as chain referral sampling” technique that uses social networks of the already contacted

² “Transferability, which highlights that lessons learned might be applicable in alternative settings.... While not claiming representativeness, want their findings to be seen as more than idiographic (unique).... yet has its own intrinsic worth” (O’ Leary 2004:103)

participants to access other potential respondents whose participation is found to be important for the study (Mack et al 2005:6).

The striking thing I came across in this procedure was that the majority of the selected respondents were neither reachable (due to change of addresses) nor willing to participate in the interview. Only 4 of the selected respondents have shown their willingness to take part in the interview. To tackle these challenges I have taken two major actions. First, I went back to the Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs and selected 15 additional lists of respondents (including reserves) using the same procedure. Again, only 5 were shown up of which 2 of them mentioned that they have started working in the informal private business (one was assisting in the shop and the other was cleaning in hairdressing salon) though they did not consider this as employment. Since I found this somehow controversial, at least with a working definition of unemployment I decided not to include them in my interview. The second measure taken to address this challenge was that the decision I made to use the network of those successfully interviewed 7 respondents to access other potential respondents. In this way interviews with 8 respondents were easily managed. In total 8 males and 7 females were contacted for interview. The smallest and largest age observed in the sample was 17 and 29 respectively. Unemployment duration of the sample respondents ranges from 1 year to 3 years.

Table3 1 Main characteristics of the respondents

Code	S ex	Ag e	Educati on	Marital status	Famil y status	Place origin	Work experi ences	Unemploy ment duration
Respondent A	M	21	High school complete	Single	lower	Addis	yes	2
Respondent B	F	24	High school complete	Single	lower	Addis	yes	2
Respondent C	M	17	High school complete	Single	lower	Addis	no	1
Respondent D	F	19	High school complete	Single	lower	Addis	yes	1
Respondent E	F	20	High school complete	Single	middle	Addis	yes	1
Respondent F	M	25	Diploma	single	middle	Addis	no	2
Respondent G	F	24	Diploma	single	lower	region	no	3
Respondent H	M	29	Diploma	single	middle	region	no	2
Respondent I	M	20	Diploma	single	middle	Addis	yes	2

Respondent J	F	28	Diploma	Married	higher	Addis	yes	3
Respondent K	M	29	University	Married	middle	Addis	no	2
Respondent L	M	28	University	single	Lower	region	no	1
Respondent M	F	27	University	single	middle	Addis	no	3
Respondent N	F	28	University	single	middle	Addis	no	3
Respondent O	M	27	University	single	higher	region	no	1

Source: Own primary data collected

3.2 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

As O'Leary (2004:227) suggested identifying data location and accessibility is crucial in any research process. A week after my arrival in Ethiopia I have contacted the Addis Ababa City Bureau of *Labor and Social Affairs*. I have been provided some published secondary data and reports (produced in Amharic language) and long list of registered unemployed youth from which 15 were picked based on the above-mentioned sampling procedures.

Interview method, specifically semi-structured and in-depth interview with the informal setting administrated in one to one based was employed in this study. I preferred to use one to one based interview method because I believe that despite unemployment is common among youth it causes many psychological and social ills to individuals that cannot be easily shared in a group interview.

All interviews were conducted in the cafeteria where I had coffee and soft drinks with respondents at specific places in Addis Ababa called 'Arat Kilo', 'Legar' and 'Mexico'. These places were chosen for the purposes. First most unemployed youth has often come to these places to check for vacancies. Second, the place was an ideal for carrying out ethnographic observations as well. Interviews were conducted from the mid July to the last week of July including some days on which a few respondents were not showing up for an interview. In one day a maximum of 2 respondents were interviewed. It was conducted once with each respondent, over an average of 3 hours' time.

Besides the interview method, ethnographic approach was also employed to gather data on observable youth experiences, because "ethnographic methods can roughly be divided into interviewing informants and observing 'naturally' occurring social settings, conduct and events" (Kusenbach 2003:457). The informal conversation I had with young people sitting around above mentioned places and observations of natural settings and action of the people around were vital in making notes about unemployed people.

Transcription of interviews (in Amharic language) and field notes were mainly used in capturing data for this research. Unfortunately, only in a few (3 out of 15) incidences recording were possible. Most of the participants refused to be recorded on tape. Despite the respondents trusted the researcher and gave their consent for interview most insisted not be recorded. Failure to record responses did not have any significant impacts on acquiring experiences and opinions of the respondents. It has even been noticed that those interviewees who refused to be recorded were freely expressed their experiences and opinions in informal natural ways than those agreed to be recorded.

Secondary data used in the background information were primarily gathered from Central Statistic Authority published labor survey data. Additional secondary data and information were used from other online and published sources of the World Bank and ILO country reports, MoFED and Addis Ababa City Council, published data from the Ministry of education and

research papers, journals and books produced on youth unemployment in Ethiopia were consulted and referred.

In this research I believe that my personal status of being adult and particularly affiliated to university have helped me to get respondents' trust for openly sharing their personal experiences, opinions and emotional feelings. This is because my affiliation with the university was important to give respondents the impression that the interview was purely for academic purpose. In informal, personal communication respondents told that for one reason or another most youth are suspicious to give information on sensitive issues. For others as unemployment is disappointing experiences it is not easy to share. As adult finding space to talk to young female wasn't an easy, if I wouldn't have used the chain of male respondents. Unemployed female rarely comes to places ('Arat Kilo 'Legar' and Mixco') where many job seekers gathered to check on vacancies and partly to meet and pass time together. Interviews were conducted with female informants in the nearby cafeterias of individual's vicinity based on preset consents with female informants.

3.3 Method of Data Analysis

Analyzing qualitative data requires the interpretation of text, words, pictures, icons or observations and give implications to research question (Tyler-Powel and Renner 2003; O'Leary 2004). As the first step of data management and analysis, informed by existing literatures and research questions in mind, the findings were categorized into four broad thematic areas for analysis. These are youth perceptions on employment and unemployment related issues, subjective experiences as narrated by individual respondents, strategies used to cope with the unemployment and descriptive information on jobs searching mechanisms, working experiences and unemployment durations.

Interview transcripts collected in Amharic language were translated to English and recorded and coded under the theme category on a daily basis. Likewise, data captured on field notes from field observations and ethnography were checked and assimilated to the relevant theme. In the analysis, primary data and interpretations of the results, translated direct quote from the respondents were widely used. Efforts have been made to relate the interpretations, discussion and implications with empirical literatures and related theories. The secondary data collected from the CSA were computed and analyzed using simple disruptive statistics such as percentage graph and cross tabulations.

Chapter 4 Youth Unemployment in the Context of Urban Ethiopia

4.1 Youth School to Work Transition in Ethiopia Past and Present

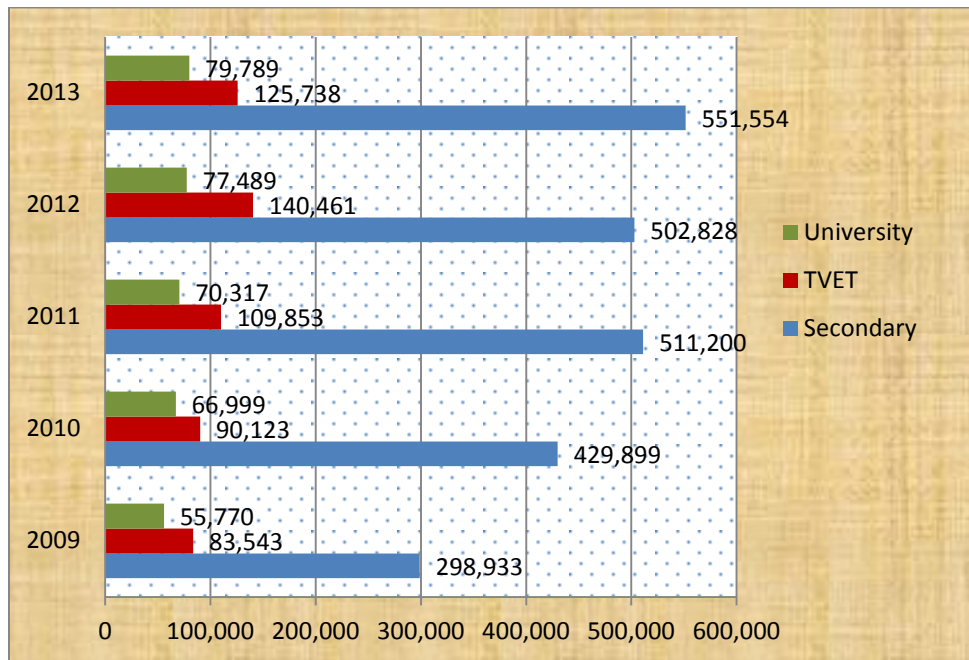
Prior to 1991 the centrally administrated Employment Exchange office was responsible for recruitment in the formal sector where the available vacancies of all the employers mainly government sectors were polled. First time job seekers, particularly college and university graduates were required to register with the Employment Exchange office to be benefited from public sector employment guarantee system. With the coming of the new government EPRDF to power the new labor law was reformulated in 1993 in which the employment guarantee system was abolished and market based decentralized recruitment and employment procedures were implemented. The rise in the number of educated youth has made labor market entry difficult due to increased competition among youth for limited available jobs. In developing countries as Adams (2007:5) explains with the implementation of 'Education for All initiative' youth education attainments have risen. This has brought changes in the labor market entry patterns in those countries.

In Ethiopia with the removal of centrally coordinated jobs seeker registration services, the benefit of getting employment information was wiped out (Denu et al 2005:5). Therefore the labor market information system has become poor and there is a weak labor organization system in the country which largely affects youth employment (MoLSA 2009 in Edukans Foundation 2012:17). Currently the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) is responsible for public employment services at the federal level and the regional Bureaus of Labor and Social Affairs (BoLSA) is mandated with the regional employment services. The Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) development office in urban areas and the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture (MoYSC) also play roles in the current urban youth employment services.

4.2 Indications of Educated Youth Unemployment Pressure in Ethiopia

With a higher proportion of youth comprising 28% of the total population in the demographic nature of Ethiopia (Broussar and Tekelesilassie 2012:9) and the inadequate employment growth to absorb the increased number of educated youth (Denu et al 2005:1). For instance Ministry of Education published statistical abstract data indicated that between 2009 and 2013 secondary school and university enrollment has grown with annual average rates of 9.5% and 15.5% respectively (MoE, 2013:5). Consequently, as indicated by the following figure the number of educated youth joining labor market has persistently increased.

Figure4 1 Graduated from institutions 2009-2013



Source: computed from Ministry of Education 2013 Annual Statistical Abstract

The work of Broussar and Tekelesilassie also supported this fact in stating that the percentage of youth with a higher education qualification rose from 4% in 1999 to 20% in 2011 (Broussar and Tekelesilassie 2012:20). The share of female higher education graduates in Ethiopia has still been lower than male graduates. For instance percentage of female graduates was 29.7% in 2009 and 28.7% in 2013 with the negative average annual rate of growth -0.9. This implies that the majority of youth females come to the world of work with less qualification.

Despite of the fact that the government promotes the idea of self-employment through skill based training; TVET enrollment has declined from 308,501 in 2009 to 237,877 in 2013 (MoE, 2013:5). The main reason for this to happen was that some of the public owned TVET institutions such as agricultural TVET colleges stopped their services and transferred to the nearby universities, and while others are even closed. The decline in the number of TVET enrollments inevitably will affect the realization of self-employment and job creations currently the government and its media promoting. Adams (2007:13) suggests that carrier oriented TVET program is essential to enhance employment opportunity of youth.

4.3 Youth unemployment nature, trend and experiences in urban Ethiopia

The fact that the share of youth unemployment often higher in the prime working age has forced many countries to give more attention to facilitate smooth school to work transition (Broussar and Tekelesilassie 2012:2). Most youth in urban Ethiopia work in the informal sectors where 50% of urban employment in recent years is coming from and where the majority of youth females are working (Kibru 2012:6). Though the informal sector employment can serve as a means of survival for many urban youths, the level of productivity, quality of work and generally decent work opportunities are low. In Ethiopia informal sectors and self-employment are the largest employers of youth despite they have received minimal policy attentions. Therefore youth has experienced not only the challenge of unemployment, but also problem of obtaining protected career (Broussar and Tekelesilassie 2012:5).

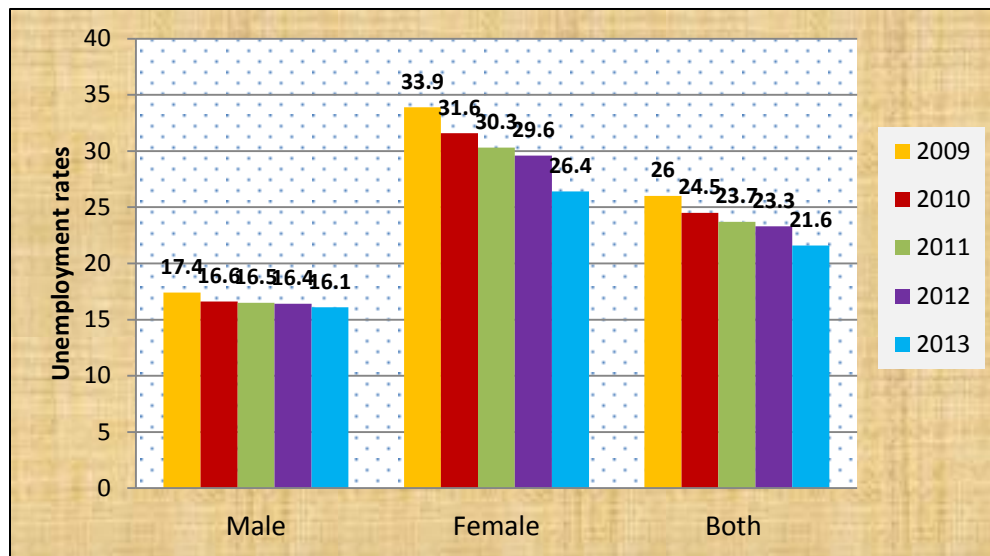
A study conducted on the nature youth urban unemployment in Ethiopia has confirmed that unemployment in urban Ethiopia is largely higher among relatively better trained youth. These are youth joined the labor market for the first-time with the ambition of acquiring jobs in the public sector and remained unemployed on average for four years or even more for those waiting for a white-collar job. However the incidence of unemployment and unemployment durations are higher among youth from family with worse off household welfare (Serneels 2007:170). Unemployment incidence among educated youth attributed to inherent education system orientation that shapes the aspiration and attitude of young people towards certain jobs. The increased number of educated youth in the 2000s has also intensified jobs entry competition in the labor market among youth. At the same time the reduction of public sectors as a result of structural adjustment imposition has shrunk the job pool and broke the direct linkage of education and employment (Camfield 2011:683). The author further noted that in Ethiopia unemployment is not an exclusively problem of educated youth, because being a youth with lower education attainments and female youth also enhance their chance of unemployment or else their likelihood of employment in informal sectors. For instance according this author, women comprises 70% of workers employed in informal sectors.

In his work on urban youth unemployment in Ethiopia Mains (2007:660) suggests that though there is a neoliberal capitalism implication for the young people's current employment difficulties, it is also important to examine various local experiences, cultural practices and values and social interaction to fully understand the cause of youth unemployment and their unemployment experiences.

Though in urban Ethiopia youth unemployment rate is higher, their labor force participation rate is lower than country's average. This is due to the rise in youth education participation in urban areas (Broussar and Tekelesilassie 2012:12). Youth unemployment rate in urban area was 21.6% in 2013. The rate was 26.4% for females and 16.1% for males in the same year. This means that youth unemployment rate was much higher than average country's

unemployment rate for the general population (4.5%), average national youth unemployment rate (6.8%) and urban average unemployment rate (16.5%). Therefore unemployment incidence affects generally urban population, particularly youth population in urban areas. Adams (2007:5) also noted that in developing countries, though overall unemployment is higher due to slow growth and job creations, generally youth and particularly females are the most affected ones.

Figure4 2 Youth unemployment rate in urban Ethiopia



Source: Adopted from CSA 2013

As indicated by above figure in the last five years there has been a general declining trend of urban youth unemployment rates. Though unemployment rate was still higher for urban females (21.6%) than for urban males (16.1%), during the last five year unemployment rate for females has been much declined by 7.5% compared to the male unemployment rate which has declined by only 1.3%. This implies that the gender gap employment situation for youth has been improved in urban areas. There are two important points to note why youth unemployment rates in urban Ethiopia have continually dropped over the past five years and while youth education enrollment rates are rising. First urban unemployment rates have declined for the general youth population, this may not apply for relatively educated urban youth whose unemployment rates actually started to rise particularly in the last three years. Second compares to the past, with the increasing education enrollment young people remain longer in the school and this might have caused an unemployment rate to drop.

4.4 Youth Population and Employment Statistics in Addis Ababa

The 3,048,631 total population of Addis Ababa was about 3.5% of the total Ethiopian population of 88 million and 22.42 percent of urban population of 14 million. Population size of female in Addis Ababa is higher than male population size. The sex ratio³ of the total population and youth population in the city is about 0.91:1 and 0.77:1 respectively. The unbalanced sex ratio in youth population may have its own implications on social provisioning such as employment (BoFED, 2012: 16).

Contrary to the country's general employment in which self-employment dominantly comprises about 92% of the total employment in the country; in Addis Ababa wage and salary paid employment has a far larger share of the employed population. The data also show that the informal sector employment contribution is found to be higher for women than for men in the city.

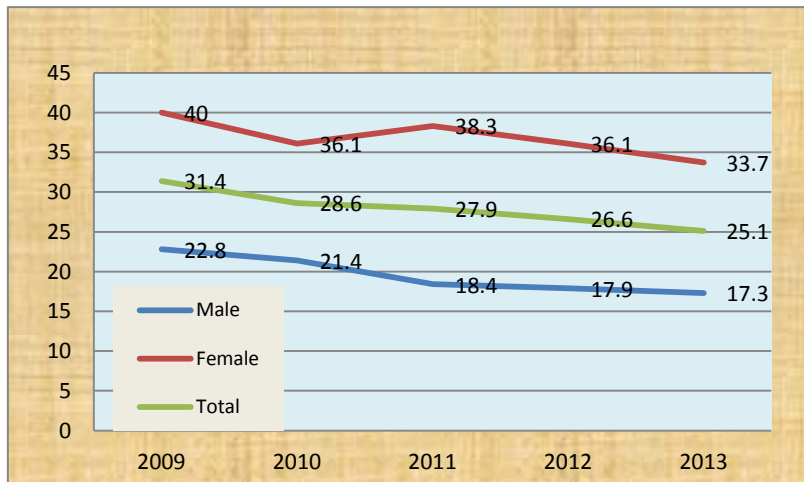
When we look at the economic participation of people in Addis Ababa, we can see that women have lower economic participation rates (53.3) than men (77.7). The lower economic activity rates of female implies that there is a large number of females who are outside of urban workforces due to either lack of adequate training and skills required in the labor market or other socio-cultural factors. In other words women comprises a larger share (65.6%) of the total economically non-active population living in Addis Ababa. However, it is important to note that, the exclusion of house work activities of the labor force might have contributed to evaluate women's economic participation.

4.5 General Unemployment versus Youth Unemployment Trend in Addis Ababa

Unemployment is the major social problem in urban Ethiopia. In Addis Ababa rural- urban migration exacerbated the situation (BoFED, 2012: 47). The national labor force survey data from 2013 shows that unemployment in Addis Ababa is (25.1) is much higher than average urban unemployment rates (16.5) of the country (CSA 2013:4). Generally speaking, as depicted by the following graph unemployment rates in the last five years in the city have been declined for both sexes. However, when we look at youth unemployment trends it was somehow declined between 2009 and 2011. But from 2011 onwards it has started slightly rising. The reason for the rise of youth unemployment rates can be the prevailing of excess graduates from colleges and universities. For instance the number of graduates that joined the labor market has risen from about 55,000 in 2009 to above 79,000 in 2013 (MoE 2013:14) with annual rates of growth of 9.4.

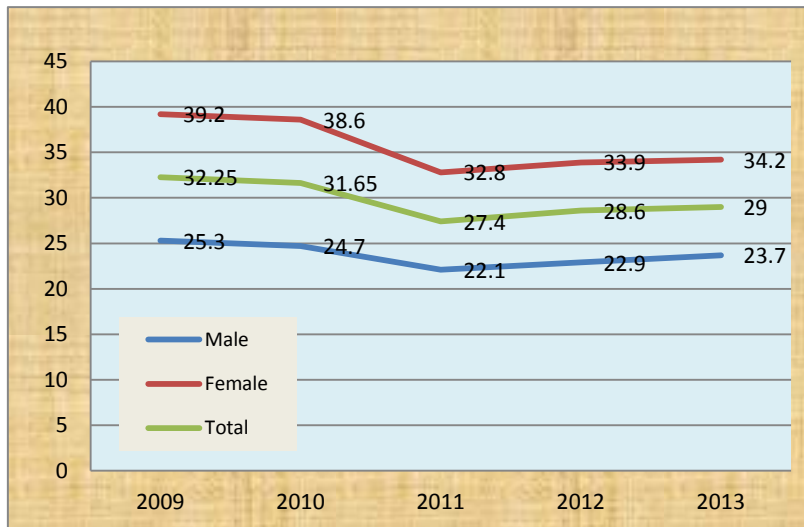
³ Sex ratio is computed by dividing the total male population to the total female population

Figure4.3 Trends of general unemployment in Addis



Source: Compiled from CSA 2010, 2011,2012 and Addis Ababa MoFED 2013 abstract

Figure4.4 Trends of youth unemployment in Addis



Source: Compiled from CSA 2010, 2011,2012 and Addis Ababa MoFED 2013 abstract

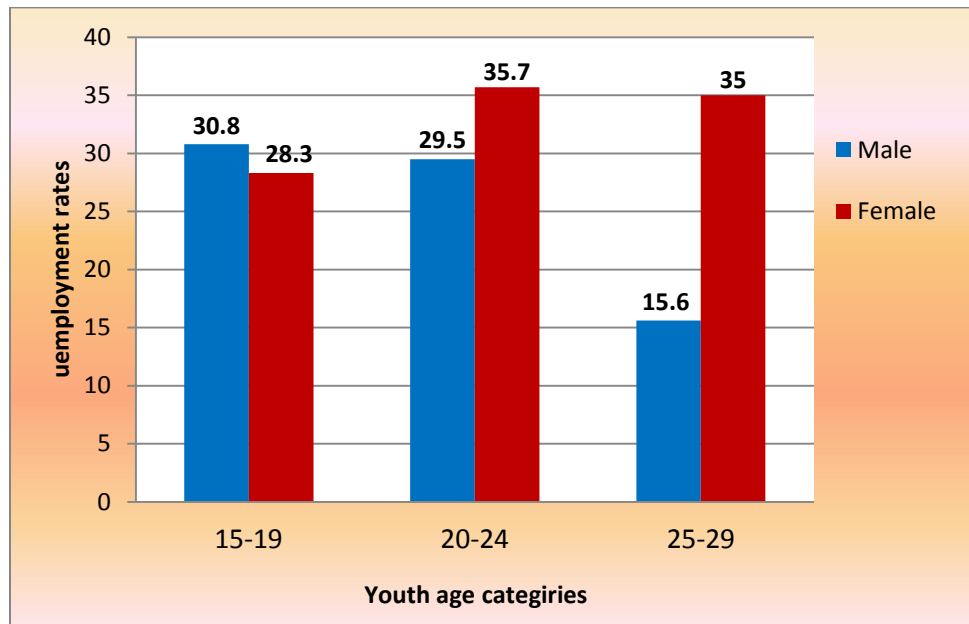
Generally in the last five years (2009 to 2013) as indicated in the figures above while the unemployment rate in the city has declined by 6.3%, the youth unemployment rate has dropped only by half (3.3%) of the general unemployment trend in Addis Ababa. Unemployment rates for females were much higher than males in the last five years.

4.6 Youth unemployment by gender and age in

Addis Ababa

Youth employment differs with age and gender. Youth unemployment for both sexes is fairly low in their under twenty ages. As expected most youth in this age category are busy attending their education. Generally, unemployment rates for females are higher than males in the last two youth age categories. In the under- twenty age category unemployment rate for male youth is slightly higher than for female. The possible explanation for this can be that male youth enters the labor force earlier than females who are engaged in house works that made them invisible in the labor force statistics. It is also worth to note that as youth age increases, the gap in unemployment rates between male and female rises.

Figure 4.5 Youth unemployment by age and gender in Addis



Source: computed from CSA 2012 survey data

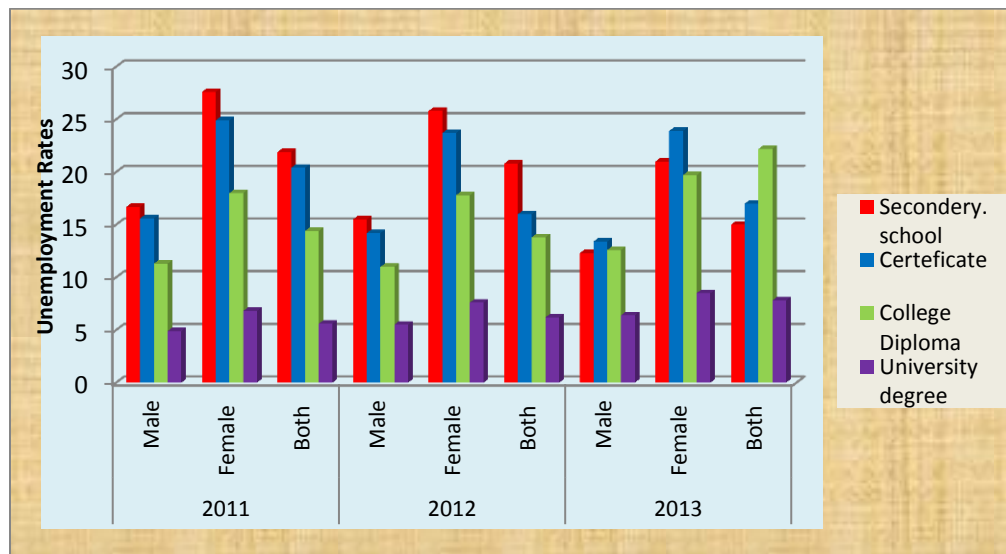
In the later youth age group of 25-29 unemployment rates for male was dropped by half while it was remained high (35%) for females. This implies that there are excess numbers of female jobseekers in the labor market who are ready to work. This high unemployment incidence of youth females might be due to lack of required skills or other socio- cultural factors such as job hunting behavior and the risk involved in the job search process. Broussar and Tekelesilassie (2012:24) reported that the unemployment rate for male youth falls with age, while no clear relationship between age and unemployment rate was not observed for females. They concluded that the negative relationship between age and unemployment rate for men related to their initial jobs searching process.

4.7 Youth Unemployment Trends by Education attainments in Addis Ababa

As shown in the figure below, the unemployment rate for youth with secondary education is the highest among all level of education attainments; however the trend clearly shows that over the last three years it has declined for both sexes. This is due to the growing of job opportunities, particularly labor intensive jobs in the formal and informal sectors. For youth with certificate level of education, unemployment rate is generally the second highest in the group followed by college diploma holders.

Unemployment rates for people with a college diploma and university degree have been rising in the last three years. As UN (2005:16) reported that current skilled labor supply surpass the available employment opportunities in many countries. Broussar and Tekelesilassie (2012:21) elucidated that in Ethiopia educated unemployment is the result of the imbalance growth between the labor market demands that require skilled labor and the rise of youth educational attainments. Besides educating youth has lesser time to be integrated with the labor market, compare to less educated ones who begin their transition to work at an earlier age and have had more exposure to labor market (ibid 2012:21). It is important to note that educated unemployment in Ethiopia is generally a new phenomenon; therefore it is not surprising to see that the unemployment rate is lower for relatively educated youth, despite it is rising.

Figure 4.6 Youth unemployment by education attainments



Source: computed from C.S.A, 2011,2012 and 2013 urban survey data

Chapter 5 Findings and Discussions

In this chapter I present and discuss the findings of the primary data collected during fieldwork from interviewing 15 respondents and ethnographic participant observations. These are individual' subjective experiences, youth perceptions on employability, employment preferences, the causes of unemployment, job searching mechanisms, unemployment coping mechanisms and their response to unemployment frustrations.

5.1 Youth Subjective Unemployment Experiences

Generally it has been observed that young people in Ethiopia are not interested to openly share their unemployment experiences. Different reasons can be mentioned for this. First in Ethiopian traditions people share their personal hitches only to their family members and close friends not to outsiders, second as there is a common perception to blame government for unemployment most youth don't want to be marked in sharing their blames on government. However, unemployed youth perceived that unemployment restrains them from social engagement, recognition in the family and community. They often mentioned that they don't afford to go out to the cafeteria, cinema, and theater with their friends. Therefore, they have felt that they are socially isolated. They believe that they don't equally participate in the families' and community affairs, and they are not important as long as they have nothing to contribute to their families and communities.

Unemployment also restricts their personal development that could be acquired through reading books, newspaper and internet access. For instance job seekers I met at 'Arat Kilo' reading vacancies in newspapers and Noticeboard told that, for most of them it is difficult to pay for reading a newspaper which costs 0.50 'Birr' per one copy not alone affording to buy the newspapers which most cost more than 4 'Birr'. Getting internet access for most of unemployed youth is also unaffordable. Therefore unemployed young people are financially, materially and socially deprived and psychologically hurt.

5.1.1 What it means being unemployed for youth?

In the recent ILO report under the title '*Global Employment Trend for Youth- a Generation at Risk*' it was stated that "It is not easy to be young in the labor market today" (ILO 2013a:1). I have asked unemployed youth how difficult it is living with unemployment and how they express their feeling about unemployment. Their emotional responses and feelings about unemployment are presented here. Depending on their level of expectations unemployed youth has expressed the difficulties of unemployment from economic, social and psychological point of views.

“...If you don't work you cannot have anything of your own, you always rely on your families' and friend who may look down on you because of your dependency on their shoulder, your families' and friends don't count on you; you feel that you are not important to anybody; hence your self-confidence of being man will be eroded...”(Respondent A 2014).

Kielbach and Traiser (2002:6) in their analysis of the relationship between unemployment and ill-health found out that unemployed youth suffer from *'feelings of vulnerability, inferiority, worthlessness and uselessness and depression'*. Moreover, they could also be socially *stigmatized* for being unemployed. Altogether, these affect their 'self-esteem' that leads to social exclusion.

Most unemployed youth covered in this study were coming from middle and low income families. In most Ethiopian families' culture there are a lot to expect economically from their young ones. Most families place their hope on educating their children not only for their children's future prosperity but also for their contribution to family's livelihood improvements.

“...My father has retired 2 years ago and my mother has engaged in street petty trading; it is supposed to be my responsibility to support my family in this difficult time but I couldn't. I feel sorry for this and remain helpless.....” (Respondent N 2014)

This indicates unemployed youth define the meaning being unemployed based on their social identity and the live situation they are in. It has been observed that relatively older unemployed youth in their late twenties felt stressed than younger unemployed youth. Because older unemployed youth believe that they are supposed to establish their adulthood responsibilities at this level. From interview with both males and females, males complained more about the difficulties of unemployment life than females. Paul and Moser (2009:264) found out that males were more distressed by unemployment than females. For urban young male job is the base to start adulthood responsibilities (getting married, owning a house and assuming families' responsibilities). Females might get married and leave their parents' home without securing wage employment. Generally it is quite possible for a man to marry an unemployed woman while the reverse is uncommon in most cases. Therefore unemployed males feel more stress in this sense due to perceived breadwinner's responsibilities. Paul and Moser (2009:266) explained that unemployment threatened male's 'masculine identity' therefore they are psychologically and mentally affected than females, besides unemployed males are severely stigmatized than unemployed females.

However, females also highlighted about the unemployment difficulties causing them confinement at home that lead to their isolation from the public sphere, demotivate girls' education. It was also observed that extended unemployment difficulties can be a trigger for young people's involvement in risky businesses for both sexes.

“...Day in and day out, no good things are coming for me, I feel that my future is getting dark. In this life I don't have a fear of taking risks; I am ready to take any risk than remaining unemployed here all the time...”(Respondent F 2014).

“...Sometimes being an idle all time can push you towards unnecessary things you don’t want to do in normal situation...” (Informal communication with unemployed male group)

For relatively younger youth unemployment difficulties explained in relation to the failure to fulfill their material needs such as dressing well, participating in outdoor activities with their friends, and pursuing a youth lifestyle. Naafs and White (2012:4) describe that youth as ‘being’ strive to attain their youth identity through engaging in youth culture and consumerism. An interesting finding about the young people unemployment experience was that they feel much better when they see many others also don’t have jobs.

“... I would like to meet and talk to unemployed people of my ages, therefore I usually go to ‘Arat Kilo’ spend sometimes there; when I see that there are many people out there are unemployed I feel much better knowing that many educated youths are unemployed...”(Respondent F 2014)

As unemployment is shared phenomena, it causes relative deprivation to individuals. Unemployed youth perceives own state of being in relation to the position of the group he belongs to and own expectation (Walker and Mann 1987:275). The failure to meet own and group expectation will create dissonance to individual’s comfort. In urban Ethiopia unemployment takes a form of normativity among young people, and therefore unemployed feels less ashamed of unemployment considering that many are unemployed (Mains 2012:4). However, it has been observed that living with unemployment is difficult for relatively educated youth. This could be due to unmet needs of their optimistic expectations to have better and professional jobs. Unemployment experiences of young people from less well-off families is even more frustrating as failure of young people’s ambitions to help their families and meet their expectations hurt when unemployed.

“...I was raised up by mother in the absence of my father, my mother sent me to private college where I received my college diploma in marketing in 2012; it is painful that I am still dependent on her meager income, I feel so sad that I couldn’t pay her back what she has offered me all this time...” (Respondent G 2014)

As unemployment duration extends unemployed young people feel more stress, and become hopeless. Their experiences have shown that the material and emotional supports they receive from their families, friends and relatives will get minimal as their unemployment duration prolonged and therefore they will become more isolated and frustrated and eventually ready to take any risks. Paul and Moser (2009:267) stated that as unemployment duration extended stress factors such as discouraging experiences in job seeking and financial pressure can bring a distress situation to unemployed. Therefore youth unemployment experience is mediated by their age, gender, marital status, education level and social position such as family status.

5.1.2 How unemployed youth passes their time?

It has been observed that in addition to financial and material constraints, unemployed young people face the difficulties in how to pass the time. The difficulty of passing time for unemployed youth depends on the economic status of their families and gender. Unemployed youth from poor families did not have more options in which they can engage to pass their free time. Because many places and options where youth can pass their free time such as watching cinema and theater, playing games, passing time in the cafeteria with their friends and using social media such as internet usually incur costs which is unaffordable for most of them. Consequently, they are more likely suffered from depression, loneliness and mental stresses. Therefore, as Paul and Moser (2009:266) put unemployment have stronger negative psychological and mental effects on people of lower social status.

A few of unemployed youth interviewed (three out of fifteen) have mentioned that they have engaged in a free service work in the municipality's potential employing sectors. According to the respondents, serving potentially employing organization without paying (free service) will help job seekers to create good relationships and develop experiences that can be counted whenever a vacant position is found in the respective organization. Hana diploma graduate in Secretarial Science and Information Communication Technology told that she gave six months free service in one of the Sub City's finance offices. She believes that with this experience she can compete better now.

Most interviewed unemployed females engage in unpaid families' routine domestic activities that usually keep them busy on a daily basis and they are not at least worried about how to pass time as they don't have excess time. Paul and Moser (2009:266) noted that unemployed females may engage in alternative roles that can substitute an employment to some extent.

5.2 Education and Youth Unemployment

In a country like Ethiopia where urban youth unemployment runs at 50% (see Mains 2012) (though the State labor force survey shows below 25%) young people have a lot to share about the predicaments they encountered while living with unemployment. From human capital theory perspective investment in formal education and training is an employee resources that determine one's employment (Berntson et al 2006:225) and that eventually realized in the form of holding better carrier positions and income (Becker (1993:7). Form in-depth interview with unemployed youth what has been brought into light, was that the expectations to achieve social mobility up the ladder through education were not realized for many.

“...Imagine that how much time and money my family spent for my unrewarding education of three years of college diploma and four years of a university degree...” (Respondent ‘S’ 2014).

The chance of employability of young people is believed to be increased with the education level; however from this response longer years of education may not necessarily lead to better employment opportunities. When I was waiting for one of my respondents with whom I had an appointment to for the interview, I met a group of young people (3 males) and had an informal talk with them. They all dressed well and look happy and talking to each other in a manner of funny expression in Amharic. I asked them what they were really doing there. They said *'all people you see here are university graduates looking for a job'*. I told them I was also graduated 14 years ago. They said *'it is not like the time you graduated; now it is more difficult, no hope now'*. They explained their situation in Amharic funny 'saying' commonly used by young people

"...Yetmarena yebela wodko aywodikim" 'those who educated and those who eat most never remained failed' does not work this time ..." (informal communication with unemployed youth group sitting in Arat Kilo 2014)

From this we can observe that young people with different education attainments look for paid work failed to see their hope through education. Reinforced by the existing structures and based on the efforts they put on their education, their expectations to acquire formal employment could differ. For instance, unemployment duration for high school graduates is relatively lesser than college and university graduates. This is may be due to their willingness to take available precarious works without waiting for a white collar job and the availability of the type of job opportunities in the informal sectors that demand young people with low level of education. Manpower Group (2012:7) found out that in developing countries the available employment opportunities for young people are in informal and under developed industrial sector. However, their employment situation could be less persistent and unreliable. Most respondents in this category have indicated that they were frequently in and out of the work. When I asked high school complete group why they were not able to secure reliable jobs? All put their blames on their low level of education.

"....In this country employers believe in 'paper'⁴ even if the job doesn't require that level of training they ask for at least a certificate or diploma paper, so you need to have one to get better job" (Respondent B, 2014)

Donahoe and Tienda (1999:2) stated that those young people who leave school earlier with no career orientation are ill-prepared for the labor market and therefore they usually receive lower wages and their job turnover is high. These young people with high school level of education face competition from others better educated youth. This was mainly because the prevailing unemployment among better educated youth has forced them to take lower job and less educated ones are replaced in the process.

⁴ 'paper' – people called certificate, diploma or degree 'paper' mainly when they want to discredited it.

Better educated youth on the other hand stayed longer waiting for better jobs in their qualifications. Consequently, there is a trend of high educational attainments producing longer unemployment duration at least in the short run. The limited availability of jobs that demand skilled labor can best describe the unemployment situation of the educated youth. Youth remain jobless for an extended period of time due to their inability to find suitable jobs (Clark and Summers 1982:199).

“...If I knew that my final destination is working in the cobblestone project, I wouldn’t have gone to university spending three years to study sociology; three months training and less was enough to have this type of jobs....” (Respondent L 2014)

Though education plays roles to transform ‘people’s lives’; Jeffrey et al (2008:5) argue that there is no guarantee that it certainly provides individual employment and future prosperity. They explained that in the current reality of many countries the meaning and value of education have appeared to be ‘problematic’ as people coming from the school should have to face tough competition and ‘social struggle’ over limited available opportunities. However, not all better educated young people equally stayed longer waiting for better jobs. For instance, interviewed young people from poor families have shown their interest to take any available job offers than waiting for better jobs for the main reason that they don’t afford to remain unemployed for longer period of time.

“... Since my graduation in June 2013 I started looking for a job, all my applications were not successful, I was not even called for interview in any organization I had applied. Now I have started to think of taking any jobs since my family situation will not allow me to sit back and wait for professional jobs any more...” (Respondent L 2014).

The freedom that education provides largely depend on the power and culture of the societies in question (Jeffrey et al 2008:3). In Ethiopia, young people who received certain levels of skill training hardly put the skill to use. This is mainly due to absence of employment where they can apply this skill and lack of startup capital to use the skill in self-employment. Therefore the human capital development approach alone doesn’t seem solution to the multifaceted youth problems, such as increased insecurity in the labor market, long term unemployment, lower wage earnings, and difficulty in finding decent work.

5.3 Normative Transition Effects on Youth Expectations

In the conversation I had with young people in ‘Arat Kilo’ they explained their anxiety of unemployment situation they are currently facing in relation to the time of my graduation nearly 15 years ago. These young people have grown up in the shared mentality that education will give a guarantee to formal employment.

"... In eighties, my father managed to secure jobs in the government sector office as assistant to human resource management with 12+1 certificate level of education which enabled him got married at his younger age, built houses and raised children... Now, after 5 years of university education in chemical engineering I am not able to find any job for survival... let alone thinking of having my own house and getting married..." (Respondent M 2014).

The above statement related to the intergenerational ways of thinking in which as Cole describes transferring certain practices along generations and apply them in new circumstances is always problematic (Cole 2007:79). The social-economic changes that have accompanied Ethiopia's move from state socialism to relatively market based mixed economy and increased access to education have made school to work transition difficult. The normative transition to adult has been compromised due to economic, social cultural and political changes. In the past it was easy to get a government job with even high school education. But now, despite economy has improved, privatization, increased access to education at all levels and the declining public sector employment 'has put to an end' employment guarantee for even university graduates (Denu et al 2005:5).

5.4 Youth Perceptions about Employability

Young people with different levels of education have different perceptions about their employability. Their perception about employability also differs by their gender. From a structured interview conducted with unemployed youth it was noted that male high school graduates perceive that they are unemployed primarily because of their low level of education attainments, lack of skills required in the labor market and lack of experiences. In the same categories young females perceive that besides the low level of education attainments and skills acquired, gender is an important limiting factor that hinders their employability

"... I think most available daily labor jobs are for males, for us if any, such as cleaning, domestic work, a waiter in the cafeteria that pay very low wage..." (Respondent B 2014)

The intermediary educated college graduate unemployed youth perceives that employability depends on the level of skill acquired, type of qualification obtained, the status of their families and their residence location. Besides for females of this category, gender is an important factor that determines youth employability. According to their perceptions in the first place most available TVET trainings are male oriented such as building and construction, metal work and wood works and mechanics. According to their view even the available female stereotype of TVET qualifications is less demanded in the labor market.

Contrary to the youth with high school level of education, youth with a higher education qualification perceive that it is not the level of education attainment that determines their employability rather it is the field of study (type of qualifications) acquired and experiences that determine the employability of graduates. The bottleneck for young graduates to enter labor

market is lack of experiences. For instance, during my fieldwork in Addis Ababa in specific locations where many vacancies are posted on public noticeboards in 'Arat kilo', 'Lagahar' and 'Mexico' I have observed that the majority of available professional vacant positions posted both on noticeboards and in newspapers require at least 1-2 years of experiences. Furthermore, university graduate unemployed youth perceive that employability is also determined by family situation such as family network, relatives, acquaintance with potential public and private sectors. Respondents explained this in two ways. First, most of the respondents believe that if a father or mother is working in the NGO or high position in the public sector there is high employment probability of their children. Second, if their family is economically better off it is believed that their young ones at least will easily start their own businesses.

For young female with higher education qualifications besides education competency, type of qualification obtained and work experience being a female is another limiting factor of their employability. They believe that they were not able to hunt jobs outside of Addis Ababa especially in remote areas where there is less competition for available job opportunities. In urban areas, though there is a gender affirmative action they have to pass through the tough competition..

5.5 Youth Perception about the Causes of Unemployment

To ascertain youth perception about the causes of unemployment I posed question '*what are the possible reasons do you think of the current youth unemployment?*' Eight different possible alternative reasons were listed and the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each factor in three scale levels. According to youth perception the main causes of youth unemployment are poor economy, youth population pressure- that is the number of youth job seekers exceeds the available jobs, failure of the state to create jobs for such growing number of youth, availability of fewer jobs in the market that unemployed person can take. Most interviewed youth well aware that Ethiopia is the poorest country. Their question was that "the country is a bite changing their situation is getting worse than the prior generation" (informal communication with young group).

Most youth also believes that, it is common for young people to look for the job in their qualification therefore they remain waiting for government jobs for sometimes before they take any available jobs. Majority of unemployed youth doesn't believe that the quality of education problem contribute to the current youth unemployment, though most agencies, including government blame the quality of education for the current youth unemployment. The government blame on quality of education related to its assumption of 'educated youth must move from 'job seeker' to 'job creator' mentality. It is important to note that the limited availability of job shouldn't be overlooked. As Atchoarena (2000:3) argues that the current youth unemployment is the

result of the unavailability of jobs for young people. Clark and Summers (1982:199) also stated that the two main causes of the current youth unemployment are problem of jobs available and employment instability. In relation to education, unemployed youth, particularly those with higher education qualifications complained about the irrelevance of some fields of studies offered in universities to labor market. Schooling is supposed to be responsive to the demand in the labor market.

“... Since my graduation in 2012 from the Jima University in applied physics, I have been checking many job vacancies almost on a daily basis, however, I have never come across any vacancy for applied physics...” (Respondent O 2014).

Lack of institutional linkage between training institutions and the labor market can be blamed for the difficulties educated youth facing to enter the labor market (Donahoe and Tienda 1999:5). This ‘unmet need’ for employment was the result of a mismatch between labor supply and demand, which 19th International Conference of Labor Statisticians ILO (2013b:9) called ‘labor underutilization’. Though the government, media claims that much has been done with the young people’s attitude towards available jobs, interview with relatively better educated youth has indicated that they are unemployed because they perceived that these jobs are not meant for them. According to these young people going to colleges and universities wouldn’t have been necessary to take menial jobs.

“... Of course I believe in education.... everybody must do at least secondary education, in my opinion university education is important as far as it gives you job otherwise I consider it as wasting time...” (Respondent N 2014)

This indicates that labor market uncertainty has eroded young people’s motivation for education as perceived upward social mobility through long years of education has failed to realize. However, it is important to note that some young people still combat with unemployment through pursuing their schooling as strategy to either improve their employability or wait for a job while upgrading their skills.

5.6 What Counts as Employment from Youth Perspective?

In this study it has been observed that young people call themselves unemployed even if they are engaged in some kind of waged work. Related to this MacDonald (2011:429) highlights how disadvantaged young people experiencing insecure, low level job underemployment situation but under researched so far. For instance Endale graduated in applied physics (respondent C) told that though he has not succeeded in securing a formal job he was aspiring for, yet he has engaged in giving home-based tutor services for school children from affluent families who paid him some money. Though he told that he has done this for two years he considered himself still unemployed. Others educated unemployed young people were also indicated that they have taken some menial jobs as they call it in Amharic “*tebarari sirawoch*” sometimes

they also call it '*tikakin sirawoch*' in the hotels (as night guard, store keeper, a waiter and cleaner) while they were looking for formal jobs. The case of two young people who were registered as unemployed and have shown up for the interview while they were working is also a good indication of what counts employment for youth. As ILO confirmed young people's pervasive employment in the informal sector is far from providing productive, decent work (ILO 2013a:1).

Most youth with high school level of education were working as casual laborers with very low paid, however, none of them have perceived that their engagement in these activities considered as employment. According to them employment means being able to obtain something that makes them able to lead independent lives, but the irregular precarious works they were engaged in couldn't provide them sufficient income for a living, therefore they remained dependent on their family. As Belchamber and Schetagne (2013:1) stated so far in ILO labor statistic "no criteria for determining what constitutes 'an income' for work to count as employment". They argue that we cannot say one is employed if his/her earning is inadequate for living. According them counting persons engaged in subsistence production as employed is problematic because they earn insignificant income. The revised ILO labor statistics also proposed that, carrying out activities such as part-time, informal, temporary, seasonal or casual employment shouldn't be considered as employment, they rather should be considered as 'employment seeking' activities (ILO 2013b:10).

5.7 Unemployed Youth Job Searching Experiences and Mechanisms

The principal theory that guides job search is indirectly based on "the notion that unemployed search is more effective than employed search"(Blau and Robins 1990: 638). They clarified that this assumption is based on the difference in the job search effectiveness, which can be explained in terms of methods used and efforts put in. Assessing youth job searching behavior is important to understand the experiences of unemployed youth. The rise of youth unemployment rates and the prolongation in their unemployment durations inevitably changes youth job searching behavior. For instance, UN reported that experiencing extended unemployment duration has made many young people give up job searching (UN 2005:16). In Sub Saharan African youth job search is constrained by location, cost of transportation and access to information and other labor market frictions that systematically exclude the poor (Franklin 2014:2). According the author young people from the poorest family who cannot afford to invest in job search and new migrants suffer most from longer unemployment duration and ended up with inferior job offers.

All of the interviewed young people were searching for jobs using different jobs searching mechanisms. However, most of the respondents were not registered as unemployed while others have registered as unemployed and received unemployment identity card. This identity card is useful to receive unemployment benefits mostly in the form of training and sometimes priority

in employment provisions from the municipality. According to respondents few government organizations sometimes target to employ fresh graduates with no employment experience. In those cases, unemployment identity card is important to apply for these posts, but in most cases employment in the majority of private and public employing organizations doesn't require an unemployment identity card for recruitment.

Job searching method is not homogenous among young people with different education levels. The most important job searching mechanisms for high school graduate youths were registering with private employment agencies, regularly visiting potential employing organizations such as construction sites and market places, and personal networks through friends and family. Koen et al (2010:128) calls this type of job searching strategy- 'haphazard job search strategy' that aimed to take any type of job regardless of the job quality.

College graduates with TVET diploma primarily seek a job through registration with city administration for self-employment facilitation. Other job searching methods this group used was registering with private employment agencies where most potential private and public employment firms will be accessed. Family and relatives network is also used for accessing particularly informal sector employers. The most commonly used jobs searching mechanisms for university graduates were regular visitors to public vacancy Noticeboards and reading job vacancy advertised on commonly known newspapers such as 'Addis Zemen', Ethiopian Herald, 'Reporter' and 'Monitor'. This job search strategy theoretically related to what Koen et al (2010:127) called 'focused strategy' that entails the selective employment goal based on qualifications and interests.

The current educated unemployment situation also brought private agencies to engage in availing employment information. Private employment agencies are organizations or individuals who are licensed to give employment services such as employment information and referring job seekers to potential employers. The private employment agencies are largely used by youth with lower levels of education (high school complete and college graduates) than university graduates. This can be due to their connections with informal and private sectors that largely known to employ low skilled and unskilled labor.

Contrary to the earlier finding of Serneels (2004:20) which indicated that in Ethiopia searching jobs through relatives, friends, and ethnic and religious associations' networks were not found to be important, however, according to the respondents' opinions on the current employment situations family network is found to be the best way to secure jobs. "In situations where employment is scarce young people often rely on family connections to access jobs" (Gillies 2000:221). Endale 27 graduated with a Bachelor degree in applied physics from Jima University has stated his experience in this regard as follows.

“...Though in the current labor market it is generally difficult to find job with this qualification, I know many of my friends who managed to secure jobs in public and private sectors through the influence of their family and relatives...” (Respondent O 2014)

Most unemployed youth believes that, family network is very important to acquire job, especially in the private and informal sectors. This works through the right connections and influences that family and relatives endowed based on their socio-cultural and economic positions in the society. Unemployed youth from well off background as Jeffrey (2008:744) argues have better “social connections and cultural confidence” than unemployed youth from poor background who usually lack “economic, social and cultural advantage”.

Job search strategies, also vary by gender. During data collection what surprised me was that in many places where large masses of unemployed young people gathered to read vacancies on public noticeboards and newspapers it was rare to see females there (See also Appedix4). The weak jobs searching behavior of female youth attributed to high unemployment rates among young females. As Bem (1981: 354) pointed out culturally reinforced gender-specific self-concepts and personality attributes, determines job search behavior of females. Besides unemployed young females prefer to work close to their families and they found it risk working in the remotest places. Therefore, they were more selective in hunting available jobs than males, which can also have implication for their employment. Another important observation in relation to this was that unemployed males are more mobile in searching jobs than females. For instance, it is very common to see male youth those come from regions to Addis Ababa seeking for jobs than females. Generally speaking, it has been found out that young people whose families are living in Addis Ababa are more reluctant to work outside of Addis Ababa compare to young people from regions. They are also more likely employed through their family and relative social networks than young people from rural background.

5.8 Youth Coping Mechanisms with Unemployment

It is obvious that unemployed young people use different mechanisms to achieve their livelihoods. Unemployment affects young people’s income, which in turn affects their established lifestyle and social relations, because wage earnings is not the base only to sustain established lifestyle and maintain social engagements, but it also promotes self-reliance and recognition which many young people value most (Celik 2006:158). In order to deal with the consequences of unemployment young people have used different mechanisms such as going back to school to improve their education levels and competencies, migration, deskilling, family assistances, state provisions, and delaying adulthood responsibilities such as marriages.

5.8.1 Family Supports during Unemployment

It has been observed that unemployed youth remains fully dependent on their family or close relatives. The notion of considering family as a residue of societies is still maintained in traditional societies (Celik, 2006:4). The family

provides emotional and material supports that can buffer the negative effects of unemployment (Paul and Moser 2009:127). From in-depth interview it has been confirmed that during unemployment some have engaged in family businesses, while others were remained idle waiting for wage employment.

“...While I am waiting for wage employment in my clinical nursing profession, I have engaged in fruits and vegetables trading with some money I got from my family on which I am currently relying on for my daily expenses...” (Respondent H 2014)

All respondents confirmed that family and close relatives are the sole providers of assistances to unemployed youth. In Ethiopia family may encourage young people to start work and have things of their own. The family continues to support their young ones as much as they can up until they are able to secure any means of survival. Families do this because there is no any other means such as social security or other unemployment benefits. In the family the older son or daughter who already had a job may share the burden of supporting the younger ones in their course of transition from school to work. This might even be extended to other relatives like uncle and aunt. Respondents who came from regions to look for job in Addis Ababa mentioned that they relied on their families and close relatives support.

“...If it is not because of my uncle’s support, I couldn’t think of coming to Addis Ababa to look for job; I live in his house, he also gives me some money I use for public transport...” (Respondent F 2014)

Depending on their family’s background as unemployment period extended young people will take different measures such as start their own business, take menial work, and migrate to urban areas and get into marriage (for females) and others remain dependent on their family.

5.8.2 Going Back to School

Most young people interviewed aspire to acquire higher education degrees at least in the long run. Though the prevailing of educated unemployment undermines the value of education, young people in Ethiopia continue to believe in long years of schooling. For instance, youth with high school education level perceive that they are unemployed because of their low level of education. Unemployed diploma TVET graduates also think that they will be employed if they have acquired university degree, in the same taken those first degree holders aspire to pursue either postgraduate degree or other parallel degree in different qualifications to improve their employability. Camfield (2011:686) stated that in urban Ethiopia, young people’s attitude towards the importance of more years of education developed since their tender age. The image of education as a way of acquiring high employment status and progressive lives is common among urban youth (Mains 2007:665). . To combat with unemployment young people want to engage in skill training that can yield better employment opportunities in the labor market. For instance Tesfaye 20, holding a college diploma in management said that.

“With 10+3 years diploma in human resource management from private college, I couldn’t find any jobs for almost 3 years and remained dependent on my family. While I am still looking for wage employment, I have engaged in nine months short term training in maintenance of electrical equipment and installation in which I am expecting to be self-employed.” (Respondent I 2014)

This indicates that return to school is particularly important to acquire skilled based training which may not necessarily take longer duration of years. But it can be one strategy to adjust one’s skill to labor market demands. Going back to school can be taken as a form of waiting while engaged in activities such as skill development. Jeffrey (2010b:4) in his study of Uttar Pradesh State of India identifies two forms of ‘waiting’ unemployed youth experienced: aimlessness waiting for just time passing and purposeful waiting aimed for skill development, youth culture incubation and political mobilization. Therefore the implication for return to school is the strategy to upgrade skills, diversify qualification, and more importantly the strategy to wait for opportunities while participating in activities that enhance their employability.

5. 8.3 Migration

Unemployment caused young people to migrate from rural areas to urban areas (internal migration) or from Ethiopia to other countries, mostly Arab to countries and South Africa (international migration). Besides group influence and individual agency, the lack of opportunities in their places is one of the push factors for youth migration decision (Azaola 2012:875). In Ethiopia, for most youth, migration is perceived as one of the strategies to achieve better employment opportunities particularly in terms of wage employment. All the interviewed young people, including those from relatively better off families believe that there are better employment opportunities and wages in foreign countries and therefore motivated to migrate. Most unemployed youth has confirmed that as a first procedure of migration they have registered with immigration office called ‘Department of Immigration and Nationality Affairs’ which is responsible for issuing passports.

Before 2013 many private agencies had involved in facilitating overseas employment mainly employment in Arab countries. Following the 2013 upheaval faced many Ethiopian immigrants in Saudi Arabia; private agencies were suspended and out migration to Arab countries have ceased for a while. ‘Department of Immigration and Nationality Affairs’ have currently started overseas employment procedure with the registration. Despite of the fact that limited opportunities in the country push young people to aspire for migration, in Ethiopia there is no easy way in the process of migration and there are risks involved. Chaltu 26 narrated her experience as follows.

“...After completing 10+1 certificate program in 2011 from private local college, I was not able to find jobs for more than one year. Then in 2012 I proposed to my family to go to Saudi Arabia. With the help of my family’s full financial support I had managed to travel to Saudi Arabia for two years contractual jobs as domestic workers. After I had one and half year difficult time there I was expelled from Saud Arabia without taking any of my belongings during the 2013 troubles happened to Ethiopian immigrants in Saudi Arabia. Despite of my efforts I am still standing there without making any progress in my life. After I came back to Addis Ababa I am staying with my relatives supporting them in domestic work...” (Respondent B 2014)

Chaltu further told that despite all these chaos happened to her in Saudi Arabia she has still plan to go to any Arab country as she perceived that there is no hope for her to live here in Ethiopia. The aspirations to attain the lives they value most, motivate young people to migrate despite all aware that migration involves risks (Azaola 2012:877).

5.8.4 Delaying adulthood’s responsibilities

“In Ethiopia, widespread urban unemployment has meant that the period in which young men exist as neither child, nor adult has been extended” (Mains 2012:3).

In an adverse economic context like Africa transition to adult is “characterized by delays, interruption and incompleteness” (Locke and TeLintelo 2012:783). Youth as a socially constructed category attached to the progress in the transformation from child and adult. But when these aspired progressions are not being achieved, the realization of perceived responsibilities related to the transition will be further delayed (Mains 2007:660). Unemployed youth in Ethiopia, particularly males delay their responsibilities. Tola 29 explained the situation in his word as follows.

“Since I don’t have any job I cannot think of marriage and having my own family though I know that I am old enough to have my own family, my own house and lead independent lives. But I couldn’t; I have to wait for better days to come...” (Respondent H 2014)

Unemployment constrained young people’s from achieving economic independence, personal development and family formation (Atchoarena 2000:14). As I have already mentioned unemployment may not necessarily causing delays female’s marriage. There is a possibility for unemployed young female to get into the marriage relation with wage employed or self-employed man and therefore they are not necessarily dependent on their family up until they secure employment. However, unemployment may have economic, social and psychological impacts on unemployed females.

“...After completing a college diploma in secretarial science in 2010, I was unemployed and remained at home helping my parents for 3 years. During that time I felt depressed and unhappy. Finally, I got married to a man working in a private college as clerk. Now I feel much better though I am not yet employed, but I know that I have to share responsibilities with my family as housewife and as the mother of my child. I am still looking for a job because if I am employed our family income will increase, I can go out and meet many

people and I also feel much better if I work in my profession than just being a housewife..”
(Respondent J 2014)

From the two responses it is possible to conclude that securing jobs for male is very important and compulsory to pursue adulthood responsibilities; for female wage employment is equally important too but failure to secure wage employment might not necessarily delay their adulthood responsibilities.

Generally during their unemployment period youth have relied on different sources of income primarily their parents and close relatives are the main source of their daily expenses. Some unemployed youth, particularly relatively less educated ones were engaged in any temporarily informal activities such as casual labor, working for neighbors and help out friends depending on their families' economic status. It is common to observe that in each sub-city young people gathered and waiting for someone who may want to give them casual works. They call these jobs '*zīgitegna sira*' meaning low job which can only be taken by the poor. Others were also participated in street vender to cover at least their personal daily expenses if not for living. UN (2005:16) stated that in the absence of employment opportunities in the formal sector young people are either self-employed or forced to take lower jobs in the informal sector often working with minimal wages under unfavorable working conditions. Few mentioned that they were engaged in their family business while waiting for wage employment. In another few cases there was some ad hoc assistance from employed friends. No unemployment benefits have been received from the state. Therefore unemployed youth, mostly relied on their families' income during their unemployment period. This is burden to family and will affect families' efforts out of poverty and in some cases may lead to conflict among family members on sharing limited resources.

Chapter 6 Concluding Remarks

In the limited employment creation economy the rise of education attainments has brought educated unemployment phenomenon in the country. The increased in the number of students' enrollments at all levels accompanied by policy induced weakened the quality of education has decreased the value of education. This has created the gap between young people's expectation of education and the reality they encounter. To this end, as UN (2005:16) puts "failure to coordinate education provision with labor market needs" has contributed to the excessive educated youth unemployment. The situation has largely affected new labor market entrant young peoples with optimistic aspirations. For some of these group expectations to lead better life through formal education are not being achieved and dependence on their family has rather been prolonged. Therefore youth aspiration of self-identification, recognition and becoming somebody through education has been threatened by the discrepancy between their expectations and the realities. This means that quantity oriented education provisioning has contributed little in improving the lives of the young people.

The absence of job availability that demands certain levels of skill is the main cause for relatively better educated youth unemployment that keeps an unemployed wait for a longer period of time to find a job. The solution to this problem lies in the progress of the economy that can create more jobs for youth. On the other hands less educated youth are affected by lack of productive employment as well as employment instability that force them move in and out of employment. The informal sector where the majority of young people is employed should be protected by the labor market policy provisions and institutions. This will minimize the precariousness and indecency problems currently facing young people in this sector.

Unemployment rates for people with a college diploma and university degree have been rising. This is because first the pace at which labor supply is growing surpasses the pace of employment creations that demands skilled labor. Second the irrelevance of certain trainings to the labor market demand has witnessed the poor linkage between training institutions and the labor market. To this end young people also face difficulties to find jobs due to lack of work experiences, because the apprenticeship program in which those in the school supposed to get exposure of the real work was not found to be effective and therefore the education system unlikely responsive to the labor market. The deterioration of the value of education has negative implications for the unfinished business of human capital development of the country.

This implies that youth development policy should give more emphasis on improving quality of education and enhancing the responsiveness of education institution to the labor market demands by strengthening the linkage between education institutions and the labor market

Male and female youth experience unemployment differently. Generally more females are unemployed than males in all youth age categories and they have longer unemployment duration than males. This could be due to lack of required skills and other socio-cultural factors that also related to their job searching behavior. Developing effective and decentralized employment services could fairly benefit both males and females.

In addition commonly perceived job searching mechanisms such as visiting vacancy advertising noticeboard and following public media (Radio, TV and News Papers), the importance of family, friends and relative networks is well appreciated mostly for accessing employments in the informal and private sectors. Therefore, in the current limited employment opportunities and tough competition to go through, the importance of social network, relatives and friends is prevailing. However, it is clear that the prevalence of family assistance in youth job search can have two implications. First as Jeffrey (2008:744) describes it largely benefits young people from family with a better social position that are culturally and socially connected. Contrary the system inevitably affects young people from deprived family backgrounds as they are in unfavorable economic and social position and hence in poor social networking. Second the prevalence of employment through family assistance can be an indication for the absence of the effective employment system that could provide fair employment services to all job seekers.

Unemployed youth experienced unemployment differently based on individual personal traits and variations in their age, gender, family background and place of residences. Young people from lower social position family, females, married and new arrivals to urban areas are most affected by unemployment incidence. Therefore, their resilience to unemployment depends on their material possession, gender, marital status and family background. This implies that individual's unemployment experience and deprivation are relative comparing to the reference group and individual expectations.

Unemployed youth survive unemployment mainly through material and emotional supports received from their families and close relatives. The income of the family and other resources are important here. In this the financial assistance young people receive from their families is crucial for their social and psychological well-being. However, this could affect the meager income of households which may exacerbate household poverty.

Depending on their ages, gender, unemployment duration and family background generally unemployed youth are materially and financially deprived, socially isolated, mentally stressed and depressed which may affect their health status. The situations will eventually lead individuals to take any form of risks to achieve their aspirations and sometimes may cause social instability. For young people being unemployed is not only about being deprived of means of income and livelihoods, it is rather being unhappy, isolated, unrecognized, unimportant and dependent. Therefore, young people link wage employment with acquiring social acceptance, recognitions, mental satisfaction, self-confidences, happiness and personal development.

From young people's subjective experiences the study has found out what counts employment. For young people employment is not about working or not working, but they value employment from the perspectives of the ability to make a living from the employment (income). Therefore, young people, particularly educated youth prefer remain waiting for productive employment than working in the informal sector where employment is insignificant for living.

Generally young people unemployment experiences and associated life trajectories predicaments in urban Ethiopia are the result of economically and institutionally induced and socio-culturally reinforced factors. The government initiated youth self-employment and entrepreneurship development program is limited in scope and ineffective to address youth unemployment problems.

To address the problem of urban youth unemployment in Ethiopia policies and strategies must focus on improving quality of education, promoting TVET program, enhancing the capacity of MSEs and improving the overall micro-economic development and multi-sector development program that can create employment for youth.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Semi-structured and in-depth interview guidelines

1. socio-economic personal data
 - age
 - sex
 - marital status
 - education level
 - education qualification
 - place of origin
 - perceived family status
2. Employment history
 - Work experiences
 - Unemployment duration
3. Assessment of youth perceptions on
 - 3.1 Employability

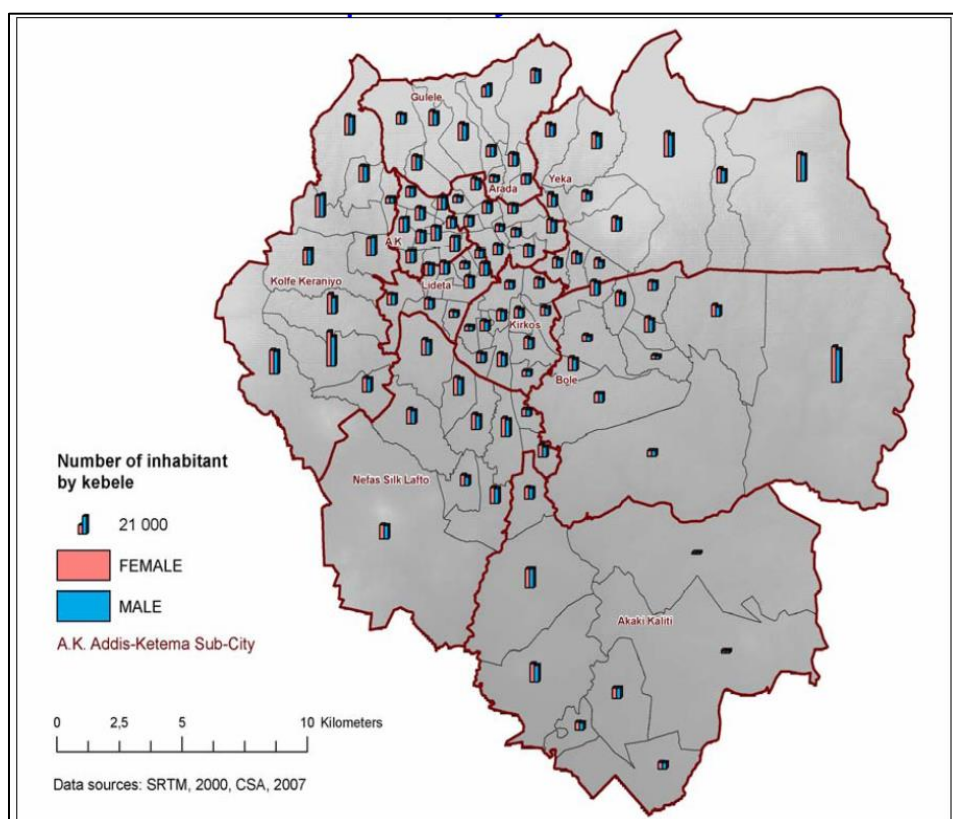
	Rank order
Formal	
Education level	
Skill acquired	
Gender	
Experiences	
Age	
Field of study	
Family situation	
location (rural/urban)	
Marital status	

3.2 Cause of Unemployment

Reasons for unemployment	No comments	Don't agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Quality of education problem				
Poor economy				
State failure				
Youth population pressure				
Unavailability of jobs				
Waiting for government job				
Failure of youth to acquire required skills				
Inability of youth to create own jobs				

4. Job Search Mechanism and Experiences
5. What type of job you are aspiring for and why?
6. What strategies used to cope with unemployment and for how long?
7. What it means being unemployed for you and how you explain it?
8. Overall personal unemployment experiences in depth interview
(Listening to respondent's experiences)

Appendix 2 Distribution of Population in Addis Ababa by sub-city



Source: Adopted from Addis Ababa City Government Finance and Economic Development Bureau

Appendix 3 Youth population and employment Statistics in Addis Ababa)

	Male	Female	Total
Population size in Addis Ababa	1,452,663	1,595,968	3,048,631
Youth population size in Addis Ababa (15-29 age)	511,138	659,189	1,170,327
Economic participation rates in Addis Ababa	70.7	53.3	61.2
Age dependency ratio of young people	32.2	29.2	30.6
Age dependency ratio of old people	6.8	6.8	6.8
Percentage of self-employed population of the total employed	14.9	6.7	10.5
Percentage of wage and salary paid employees of the total employed	63.9	71.2	67.0
Percentage of unpaid family workers of the total employed	1.7	3.4	2.4
Percentage of workers employed in the informal sector of the total employed	14.7	19.8	16.6
Percentage of student to the total non-active population	77.7%	57.3%	64.3%
Percentage of trained people (as% of total population above 10 years of age)	34.2%	20.0%	26.4%
Employed population /employment to urban population ratio/	667,973 (58.5%)	481,001 (35.3%)	1,148,974 (45.9%)
Unemployed population/ unemployment to urban population ratio/	139,334 (12.2%)	244,982 (18.0%)	384,317 (15.3%)
Employed youth /employment to youth population ratio/	266,078 (52.1%)	247,648 (37.6%)	513,723 (43.9%)
unemployed youth (unemployment to youth population ratio)	79,004 (15.5%)	126,904 (19.25%)	205,913 (17.6%)

Source computed CSA 2012 survey data and Addis Ababa Bureau of Finance and Economic Development

Appendix 4 Youth crowded for Job search at 'Arat Kilo', Addis Ababa



Source: Picture taken during fieldwork