Women’s Empowerment in Ethiopia: A Trend Analysis Based on Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (Edhs) 2005, 2011, And 2016 Data

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ABSTRACT

Gender equality and women’s empowerment are closely linked to sustainable development and a nation’s attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) is contingent upon the degree to which gender equality is ensured and women are empowered. The main purpose of this paper was to examine the trends of women’s empowerment in Ethiopia between 2005 and 2016. To this end, three key indicators of women’s empowerment from EDHS were analysed. The results of the analysis showed that: (1) change in women’s employment and earning was mixed; (2) women’s involvement in decisions that affect their lives and that of their family improved; (3) acceptance of wife beating among women and men declined moderately in rural and urban areas and in almost all regions of the country; and (4) the changes in these indicators tended to vary by place of residence (urban versus rural) and across the 11 regions of the country. It can be concluded that, overall, the changes observed in the three indicators of women’s empowerment between 2005 and 2016 were promising but too slow in the context of the SDGs underway. Therefore, integrated, concerted, but customized efforts need to be put in place to meet the SDGs underway by 2030.

Keywords: Gender, gender equality, women’s empowerment, women’s employment and earning, women’s involvement in decision-making, attitude towards wife beating.

INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality is a marked impediment to a nation’s overall development. The issue of gender and gender equality is one of the seventeen goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that set agenda for 2030. Goal 5 of the SDGs which reads as “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” (European Parliament, 2016, p. 16) is devoted to gender equality and women’s empowerment in its entirety. Gender and women empowerment is also implicated either explicitly or implicitly in the rest of the 16 SDGs and their targets. In other words, all of the 16 SDGs have gender dimensions in addition to goal 5 which is dedicated to gender equality and women’s empowerment. So gender is closely linked to the global agenda for 2030-SDGs. Therefore, a nation’s attainment of the SDGs is unquestionably dependent on the extent to which gender equity has been ensured and women’s are empowered. In a nutshell, achieving gender equality is a key to the attainment of the SDGs and women’s empowerment is a key tool to achieve gender equality. In spite of the centrality of gender equality and women’s empowerment to the attainment of SDGs by 2030, empirical data regarding the progress of countries towards meeting the SDGs in general and goal 5 in particular seem to lack especially in developing countries such as Ethiopia. This analysis set out to help fill gap in research into the issue by analysing some three selected indicators of women’s empowerment from the three waves of Ethiopia demographic and health survey (EDHS 2005, 2011, and 2016) abbreviated as EDHS after all.

Rationale and Hypotheses

In the last thirty or so years, several resolutions and policy frameworks pertinent to gender and women’s empowerment have been put in place at global, regional, and national levels. For example, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), United Nations conferences
on population and development, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and the Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment are few of these resolutions and frameworks. Our world is also rife with organizations of all sorts that work to ensure gender equality and empower women. Furthermore, there are several conventions on women’s rights that countries have entered.

As a result these, states are required and obliged to undertake political, policy, structural, legal and strategic reforms to improve women’s overall life conditions. To this end, most nations have been exerting unreserved efforts to attain the desired end results. There is no exception with Ethiopia and as one of the member states of the UN, Ethiopia has been endeavouring to achieve what has been desired by the global community including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and SDGs.

In the first place, Ethiopia is signatory to the International Conventions in place to protect women’s rights and ensure their equity and equality with their men counterpart. Secondly, in accordance with the international conventions endorsed, various policy frameworks and legal provisions have been adopted at national and regional levels. For example, the 1994 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE, 1994) devotes a chapter to women’s rights and equity. In particular, Article 35 of the Constitution criminalizes and bans harmful traditional practices such as wife beating, genital mutilation, rape, and abduction for example, that target women and entitles women to equal access to education and other public services, job and employment opportunity, and participation in political, economic, and socio-cultural practices. Also, the 2009 Revised Family Law accords special emphasis to the importance of women’s well-being in all spheres of life at household and society level. Thirdly, a number of political, policy, administrative, and structural measures have been taken at all levels of administrative structures including the establishment of the “Ministry of Women’s and Children’s Affairs (Mo WCA) at the federal level to ensure the protection of women’s rights, well-being and equity. Finally, different national programs have been developed and implemented by government agencies; local and international NGOs, and international organizations (such as World Bank, WHO, the UN and its branches for instance) have also been doing their best to empower women. Besides, a series of affirmative action and campaigns have been made to redress the social and economic disadvantages and discriminations that women in Ethiopia experienced in the past. Moreover, individual activists and civil societies have also been echoing what have been mentioned earlier towards the achievement of gender equity.

Generally speaking, a huge amount of resource is invested throughout the past two decades to ensure gender equity and empower women in Ethiopia. Therefore, as a return of this huge resource investment, it is logical to expect remarkable increment in women’s employment and earning, their involvement in decisions that affect their lives and reduction in the prevalence of harmful traditional practices against women such as wife beating, males’ domination and change in attitude on part of the women themselves and their counterpart men. It is against this backdrop that this analysis of women empowerment was undertaken using EDHS data sets of 2005, 2011, and 2016. It is hypothesized that, due to the huge investment made on women’s empowerment for the past two decades, there would be significant attitudinal change in women and men concerning wife beating across the three DHS surveys conducted in Ethiopia- DHS 2005, 2011, and 2016. That is, the proportion of the sample surveyed that endorsed the items that assessed attitude towards wife-beating should decrease significantly from DHS 2005 through DHS 2011 to DHS 2016 showing that the interventions to-date have worked. It is also anticipated that the gap in power imbalance between men and women should get lesser and lesser from EDHS 2005 through EDHS 2011 to EDHS 2016. Women’s employment and earning should get better in terms of size and diversity and their participation in decision-making at personal, household, and societal level should improve overtime meaningfully.

**The Present Analysis**

The present analysis aims to examine the trends of women’s empowerment using the Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) data of 2005, 2011, and 2016. Ethiopia Demographic and Health Surveys (EDHSS) have been conducted four times under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and implemented by the then Population
and Housing Census and now the Central Statistical Agency (CSA& OCR Marco, 2006; CSA & ICF, 2012; CSA & ICF, 2016). The primary objectives of the EDHSs conducted so far were to provide up-to-date information for policy makers, planners, researchers and programme managers, which would allow guidance in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of population and health programmes in the country (CSA & OCR Marco, 2006; CSA & ICF, 2012; CSA & ICF, 2016). The project was financially and technically supported by many organizations including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Dutch and Irish Governments, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); ORC Macro in Maryland, U.S.A., has been owed special acknowledgement from the CSA for technical assistances it provided in all aspects of the survey (CSA & OCR Marco, 2006).

Sample and Participants

Data for the present trend analysis came from EDHS 2005, EDHS 2011, and EDHS 2016. Even though EDHS was first conducted in 2000, the EDHS 2000 had not incorporated questions that assessed indicators of women’s empowerment. The EDHS 2005 was a nationally representative survey of 14,070 women of reproductive ages (15-49 years old) and 6,033 men aged 15-59 (CSA & OCR Marco, 2006). EDHS 2011 was part of the worldwide MEASURE DHS project (CSA & ICF, 2012) funded by USAID and implemented by the Central Statistics Agency (CSA). It collected data on a number of issues related to population, gender, and health from a nationally representative sample of women and men. The EDHS 2011 data came from randomly selected 16,515 women (15-49 years old) and 14,110 men (15-59 years old) selected from all regional states and city councils of the country (see CSA & ICF 2012 final report for details). Similarly, the EDHS 2016 data came from randomly selected 16,683 women (15-49 years old) and 12,688 men (15-59 years old) selected from all regional states and city administrations of the country (see CSA & ICF 2016 final report for details). Of the several of issues pertinent to gender on which the EDHSs generated data, the present analysis made use of the data on “women’s empowerment”.

Measures and Indices

Women’s empowerment has become one of the most important concerns of 21st concerns (Shettar, 2015). Women’s empowerment is defined as “women gaining more power and control over their own lives” (European Parliament, 2016, p. 10). Gender equality and women’s empowerment are inseparable. In fact, women’s empowerment can be regarded as an important process and tool to achieve gender equality. Gender equality and women’s empowerment may not be measured directly but indirectly through indicators and indices. In other words, it is difficult to measure gender equality and women’s empowerment. Hence, proxies such as decline in gender-based violence and acceptance of wife beating, rise in women’s involvement in decision-making at household and community levels and their employment are used as a measure of women’s empowerment. Asset ownership and help seeking tendency in the face of adversities can also indicate improvement in gender inequality and women’s empowerment. For this particular analysis, only few indices (manifestations) of women’s empowerment were considered. More specifically, employment and cash earning, decision-making, and attitude towards wife beating were taken as indices of women’s empowerment for this analysis. The data used here were extracted from EDHS 2005, EDHS 2011, and EDHS 2016 final reports. Readers interested in the methodological details of each EDHS are advised to refer to the respective original reports.

EDHSs used three questionnaires to generate the data required: Household, Women’s, and Men’s questionnaire. This analysis used data from both women’s and men’s questionnaire. Employment was operationalized in such a way that women were considered employed if they have done any work other than their housework in the 12 months before the survey (CSA & ICF, 2016).

Earning for employment was operationalized in such a way that respondents were asked if they were paid for their labour in cash or in kind and only those who received payment in cash only or in cash and in kind were considered to earn cash for their employment (CSA & ICF, 2016). Women’s participation in decision making was operationalized in such a way that women were considered to participate in household decisions if they were able to make decisions alone or jointly with their husband in all three of the following areas (CSA & ICF, 2016): (1) the woman’s own health care, (2) major household purchases, and (3) visits to the woman’s family or relatives. Attitude towards wife beating was measured in such a way that respondents
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(women and men) are asked if they agree that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under each of the following five circumstances (CSA & ICF, 2016): she burns the food, she argues with him, she goes out without telling him, she neglects the children, and she refuses to have sex with him. If respondents answered ‘yes’ in at least one circumstance, they were considered to have attitudes that justify wife beating.

Data Analysis

The main purpose of this paper was to show changes in the variables of interest between EDHS 2005 and EDHS 2016. To this end, trends in women’s employment and earning, women’s participation in decision-making that affects their lives and men’s attitude towards wife beating between 2005 and 2016 were examined using percentages and displayed in tables and figures which were then followed by verbal descriptions.

RESULTS

Employment and Cash Earnings as Indicators of Women’s Empowerment

One prominent area that reflects women’s empowerment is employment and cash earnings. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect increment of the number of women who were employed and decrement of the number of who were not employed 12 months prior to survey from 2005 through 2011 to 2016.

In other words, improvement among women in terms of employment and forms of earning across time is an indicator of improvements in gender inequality and women’s empowerment. With this assumption, comparisons of data from EDHS 2005, EDHS 2011, and EDHS 2016 on these indicators have been conducted. Results were summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Employment and forms of earnings of currently married women of reproductive age in 2005, 2011, and 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Women Interviewed (15-49 years old)</td>
<td>14,07</td>
<td>16,515</td>
<td>15,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Employed</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of earnings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of cash only earners</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of cash &amp; in-kind earners</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of in-kind only earners</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of not paid</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For EDHS series, participants were considered employed if they have done any work other than their housework in the 12 months before the survey. Table 1 above shows that the rate of employment of currently married 15-49 years old women noticeably increased from 31.5% in 2005 to 56.5% in 2011 and then slightly declined to 48% in 2016. The trend of cash earning as a form of employment rose from about 27% to about 36% between 2005 and 2011 and essentially remained constant at 35% between 2011 and 2016.

The percentage of women who used to earn in cash and in-kind increased significantly from about 3% to 26% between 2005 and 2011 and then considerably dropped to 7% in 2016.

The percentage of women who used to in-kind only showed slight decline from 10% to 8% between 2005 and 2011 (data is missing for 2016). The percentage of women who were not paid for any work they have done decreased remarkably between 2005 and 2011 from about 60% to about 30% but noticeably increased to 49% between 2011 and 2016.

Participation in Decision-Making as an Indicator of Women’s Empowerment

Women who are empowered are much more likely to autonomously make or at least participate in decisions that affect their lives than women who are not empowered. Given the interventions put in place over the last two decades in Ethiopia, women’s engagement in decision-makings that affect their lives and that of their family and society is expected to significantly improve.

By extracting data from EDHS 2005, 2011, and 2016 on this issue I tried to show how women’s involvement in decision-making changed overtime. Table 3 shows the trends of women’s participation in three main decisions that affect their lives in one way or the other between 2005 and 2016. Percentage of women who participated in decisions regarding a “woman’s own health care” changed from 66% to about 74% between 2005 and 2011 and it then slightly increased from about 74% to 81% between 2011 and 2016. Percentage of women who participated in “making major household purchases” has shown moderate rise (from 57% to about 66%) between 2005 and 2011.
But, it has shown a slightly better increase between 2011 and 2016 by changing from about 66% to 78%. Rate of women’s participation in decision regarding “paying visits to their family or relatives” slightly declined from about 85% to 80% between 2005 and 2011 and it then showed slight growth from about 80% to 84% between 2011 and 2016. The percentage of women participated in all of the three decisions (woman’s own health care, making major household purchases, and paying visits to their family or relatives) has shown slight increase between 2005 and 2011 and between 2011 and 2016 by changing from about 52% to about 56% and from about 56% to 71%, respectively. The rate of women’s non-participation in decision-making should have declined from 2005 to 2016 but the data show the opposite. The percentage of women who did participate in none of the three decisions increased from about 5% to about 12% between 2005 and 2011 and then remained at 10% between 2011 and 2016.

### Attitude towards Wife Beating

Wife beating is likely to be the manifestation of powerlessness among women and of powerfulness among men. It is associated with tolerance of gender-based violence and conflictual relationships. In other words, women who accept wife-beating are very much likely to tolerate gender-based violence and stay in conflictual intimate relationships. Likewise, men who accept wife-beating are much more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence. On the other hand, rejection of wife-beating is a manifestation of empowerment and is likely to lead to non-tolerance of gender-based violence among both women and men. A multitude of socio-economic and politico-legal interventions have been put in place to empower women and reduce gender inequality since 1991 in Ethiopia. Given such concerted interventions and with passage of time, it is reasonable to expect more empowerment among women and decline in acceptance of wife beating among women and men. With this logic, comparisons of data from EDHS 2000, EDHS 2005, EDHS 2011, and EDHS 2016 on attitude towards wife beating were performed. As a measure of attitude towards wife beating, women and men were asked whether a husband is justified in beating his wife under five circumstances: if the wife burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses sexual intercourse with him. The figure below displays proportion of women and men who agreed at least with one of the reasons (circumstances) for which a husband is justified from the four demographic and health surveys for women and men.

![Figure1. Proportion of women and men who accepted the justifiability of wife beating in 2000, 2005, 2011, and 2016](image-url)
As vividly visible from Figure 1 above, tolerance of wife beating declined significantly among both women and men. But, the decline was rather slower among women compared to men. Tolerance and/or acceptance of wife beating decreased fast from 76% to 51% between 2000 and 2005, decreased slightly from 51% to 45% between 2005 and 2011 and then steadily from 45% to 28% between 2011 and 2016 among men. Among women, it decreased marginally from 85% to 81% between 2000 and 2005; it dropped a little bit faster from 81% to 68% between 2005 and 2011 and then slightly from 68% to 63% between 2011 and 2016.

Attitude towards Wife Beating By Region and Residence

Data from the three surveys were compared to see how changes in attitude towards wife beating varied by place of residence (rural versus urban) and region (across the nine regional states and two city councils). Figure 2 shows changes in attitude towards wife beating among urban and rural women and men from 2005 through 2011 to 2016. As evident from the figure, the proportion of urban women who endorsed at least one of the five circumstances under which a husband is justified to beat his wife decreased significantly from 59% to 46% between 2005 and 2011 and slightly from 46% to 39% between 2011 and 2016.

Similarly, the proportion of rural women who endorsed at least one of the five circumstances under which a husband is justified to beat his wife decreased significantly from 86% to 76% between 2005 and 2011 and slightly from 76% to 70% between 2011 and 2016. The rate of the change is rather slower among urban men compared to rural men. The percentage of urban men who accepted the justifiability of at least one of the five circumstances under which a husband is justified to beat his wife decreased insignificantly from 28% to 25% between 2005 and 2011 and slightly from 25% to 15% between 2011 and 2016.

The proportion of rural men who agreed with the justifiability of at least one circumstance for which a husband is excused in beating his wife decreased marginally from 56% in 2005 to 51% in 2011 and it then declined meaningfully from 51% to 31% between 2011 and 2016. As with place of residence, the changes in attitude toward wife beating between 2005 and 2016 tended to vary by regions of residence. Figure 3 and 4 display patterns of the change in attitude towards wife beating among women and men by region, respectively. In all regions, except Dire Dawa, acceptance of wife beating declined overtime with slight variations. In Tigray, the proportion of women who agreed with at least one circumstance under which a husband is justified in beating his wife decreased significantly from about 73% in 2005 to about 67% in 2011 and then marginally to 65% in 2016. Likewise, in Afar it declined from about 80% in 2005 to about 73% in 2011 and then to about 69% in 2016. The decline was more meaningful in Amhara since it dropped from as high as 91% in 2005 to about 75% in 2011 and then to 65% in 2016. In Oromia, the percentage of women who agreed with at least one circumstance under which a husband is justified in beating his wife decreased significantly from about 81% in 2005 to 66% in 2011 and then rose marginally to about 69% in 2016. In Somali, the drop was
slight between 2005 and 2011 (from about 88% to 82%) but it was radical between 2011 and 2016 for it shrunk from about 82% to 43%, the drop being 39% between 2011 and 2016.

In Benishangul-Gumuz region, the drop was meaningful between 2005 and 2011 as it decreased from about 84% in 2005 to about 62% in 2011 but the rate of drop was rather slight between 2011 and 2016 being about 7%.

In South Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP) region, it dropped slowly from about 81% in 2005 to about 77% in 2011 and marginally significantly from about 77% to 66% between 2011 and 2016. The drop in Gambella was significant between 2005 and 2011 and slight between 2011 and 2016 at about 13% and 6%, respectively. In Harari regional state, the proportion of women who entitled a husband to beat his wife at least under one of the five specific reasons dropped moderately from 67% to about 58% between 2005 and 2011 and then drastically from about 58% in 2011 to about 39% in 2016. In Addis Ababa, the shrinkage was strong between 2005 and 2011 at about 18% but it remained stagnant at about 23% between 2011 and 2016. Finally, in Dire Dawa it remained almost unchanged between 2005 and 2011 and 2011 and 2016 at about 47%.

In Tigray regional state, the proportion of men who agreed with the justifiability of a husband in beating his wife by agreeing with at least one of the five conditions posed increased from about 35% in 2005 to 46% in 2011 and then declined to about 31% in 2016. Like in Tigray, in Somali, it significantly increased from 38% in 2005 to about 58% in 2011 and it then drastically decreased to about 14% in 2016.
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In Afar, it dropped significantly from about 61% in 2005 to about 43% in 2011 and then to about 16% in 2016. In Amhara regional state, the change was rather gradual. It dropped marginally from about 53% in 2005 to about 51% in 2011 and then to about 46% between 2011 and 2016. In Oromiya, the shrinkage was meaningful enough; it dropped from 56% to about 40% and from 40% to about 26% between 2005 and 2011 and between 2011 and 2016, respectively. The fall in percentage of men who accepted at least one of the circumstances under which a husband is justified to beat his wife in Benishangul-Gumuz was significant at about 14% between 2005 and 2011 and it was drastic at about 21% between 2011 and 2016.

In SNNP, the fall was insignificant between 2005 and 2011 but was so drastic by dropping by about 41%. In Gambella, it fell by about 15% between 2005 and 2011 but the fall was so small (3%) between 2011 and 2016. Harari saw marginal fall (about 3%) between 2005 and 2011 but it was significant (about 14%) between 2011 and 2016. The rates of decline in Addis Ababa were small at about 4% between 2005 and 2011 and 2011 and 2016, too. Finally, the percentage of men who supported at least one of the five specific conditions under which a husband is justified to beat his wife decreased by about 16% between 2005 and 2011 and by about 10% between 2011 and 2016 in Dire Dawa City.

**Discussion, Implications, Conclusion**

This analysis sought to examine the trends of women’s empowerment in Ethiopia over a decade. To this end, using the EDHS 2005, EDHS 2011, and EDHS 2016, it undertook the trend analyses of three key indices of women’s empowerment: employment and earning, decision-making, and attitude towards wife-beating. The results of this analysis show that: (1) change in women’s employment and earning was mixed; (2) women’s involvement in decisions that affect their lives and that of their family improved; and (3) acceptance of wife beating among women and men declined in rural and urban areas and in all regions of the country. Change in women’s empowerment in terms of employment and earning was positive and promising between 2005 and 2011 but it failed to sustain between 2011 and 2016.

For instance, the rate of women’s employment increased between 2005 and 2011 but it declined between 2011 and 2016 (see Table 1). Likewise, the rate of women’s non-employment (not paid for works they have done) decreased between 2005 and 2011 but it rose significantly between 2011 and 2016 (see Table 1). The change in women’s empowerment in terms of employment and earning registered so far seems satisfactory. However, as already noted, in the first place it lacked sustainability. The promising change observed between 2005 and 2011 was not repeated between 2011 and 2016. Secondly, the magnitude of the changes was very low.

As of 2016, only about four in ten women (48%) reported that they have been employed in the 12 months before the survey. In contrast, about four in ten women (49%) reported that they have not been paid for what they have been done in the 12 months before the survey. In other words, about one-half of women in Ethiopia do not earn any income either in cash or in kind for what they do. In summary, women’s empowerment in terms of employment and earning is very low. This implies that what have been done so far in raising women’s employment and earning is not adequate and a lot has to be done in the future. Women’s empowerment as measured by their involvement in decisions that affect their lives has shown noticeable growth overtime (Table 2).

In 2016, about eight in ten women said that they participated in decisions regarding ‘their own health care’, ‘major household purchases’, and ‘visit to family and relatives’; about seven in ten said that they had participated in all of the three decisions specified. One in ten women responded that they participated in none of the three decisions, however. In fact, this figure is not negligible and shows that a lot has to be done.

Attitude towards wife beating as measured by acceptance of wife beating among women and men was another index of women’s empowerment analysed in this paper. Overall, acceptance of wife beating has shown meaningful decline overtime (Figure 1). It decreased by 22% among women dropping from 85% to 63% between 2000 and 2016 and by 48% among men dropping from 76% in 2000 to 28% in 2016.

The decline was incredible among men; it was more than twice the decline among women. In 2016, while only about two in ten men accepted at least one of the five circumstances under which a husband is justified in beating his wife, the corresponding figure was as high as six among women. The decline in acceptance of
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wife beating among both women and men is affected by place residence-urban versus rural (Figure 2). The decline was more pronounced among rural men at 25% followed by among urban women at 20% between 2005 and 2016. The corresponding figures were 16% and 13% among rural women and urban men, respectively. In 2016, seven in ten rural women and four in ten urban women accepted at least one of the five conditions under which a husband is entitled to beat his wife. In contrast, three in ten rural men and one in ten urban men accepted at least one of the five conditions under which a husband is entitled to beat his wife.

Acceptance of wife beating and its decline overtime among both genders also varied as a function of region (Figures 3 & 4). In six (54.5%) of the eleven regional states (Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP, & Gambella) at least six in ten women accepted at least one of the five conditions under which a husband is entitled to beat his wife in 2016. The corresponding figure was as low as two in ten in Addis Ababa. The distribution also varied among men from as high as four in ten in Amhara to as low as one in ten in Addis Ababa.

The decline of the acceptance of wife beating among women has varied greatly by region. For instance, the proportion of women who accepted at least one of the five conditions under which a husband is entitled to beat his wife decreased by about 45% in SNNP followed by about 29% in Benishangul-Gumuz, 28% in Harari, and 27% in Amhara between 2005 and 2016. On the other hand, the decline was only about 1% in Dire Dawa. As with women, the proportion of men who accepted at least one of the five conditions under which a husband is entitled to beat his wife decreased by 45% in Afar followed by about 42% in SNNP between 2005 and 2016.

But, the change was only 4% in Tigray. Change in women’s empowerment in terms of employment over the period analysed appears not as it should have been. Rate of women’s employment increased between 2005 and 2011 but decreased between 2011 and 2016.

Similarly, the proportion of the women who were not paid decreased radically between 2005 and 2011 but rose again between 2011 and 2016. Overall, the change expected in this regard was not only slow but also inconsistent.

Generally, the status of women’s empowerment in terms of their participation in decision-making is good though the proportion of women who do not participation in any of the three decisions is still significant. Change in attitude towards wife beating is promising but it is slow given the interventions put in place and resources invested in this regard. Acceptance of wife beating is still high, especially among women and in rural areas. Regional variations in wife beating both among women and men are not negligible.

Based on the results of this analysis it is recommended that holistic and integrated women empowering interventions that involve the considerations of every aspects of gender equality and women’s empowerment should be applied so as to achieve the goal 5 of SDGs other national targets. Context plays a crucial role in gender inequality and women’s socio-cultural and economic disadvantages. It does so in the empowerment of women as well.

Therefore, interventions that work in one socio-cultural context may not work in the other. What works in urban areas may not work in rural areas. Hence, customized intervention strategies of women’s empowerment that fully consider the cultural, historical, social and economic realities of the locality should be designed and implemented in order to speed up the achievement of goal 5 of SDGs and other national targets and to fill the regional disparities observed. Finally, trend analysis of as many indicators of women’s empowerment as possible must be conducted to come up with a holistic picture of the status of women’s empowerment and gender equality in Ethiopia.

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