



# Grandparents Challenges, Experience and Coping Strategy in Raising Grandchildren: The Case of West Showa Zone in Ambo Town, Ethiopia

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**Abstract:** The aim of this research study was to examine challenges and its coping strategies that are experienced by grandparents in caring for their grandchildren. In order to investigate the research problem, a qualitative research method and snowball sampling design was applied with a total of 21 grandparents. Descriptive phenomenology was the approach employed for conducting this study. These research finding substantiated that there are many reasons why Grandparents find themselves in raising grandchildren. Some of the most common reasons are HIV/AIDS related death, mental illness, loss of job by their parents, a teen pregnancy, and other circumstances contribute to reasons children are being raised by grandparents. The result of the study also revealed that there are several challenges that encounter grandparents in raising grandchildren. More specifically, grandparents are found to experience social, economic, psycho-emotional challenges, such challenges made various obstructions for grandparents in raising their grandchildren. Findings from this study further indicated that even though grandparents are old enough and have health problems they have attempted to apply different mechanisms to cope their financial hardship to overcome the cost living condition to raise their grandchildren. generally, The results of the study show that the grandparents and their grandchildren have needs that call for greater attention to be given as the available services and service providers need to be attentive to their special needs and the need to expand the types and number of services provided for these grandparents and their grandchildren.

**Keywords:** Grandchildren, Challenges, Coping Strategies, Grandparents

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

The dramatically growing numbers of grandparents raising grandchildren has persisted to draw attention among researchers. They are instantly commenced to comprehend the intricate and multidimensional aspects that surrounding grandparents while caring for their grandchildren [9]. Globally, populations have been changing at a rapid rate, and it is necessary that any efforts designed to ameliorate the well-being of societies recognize and respond to these changes. One of such changes is an increasing numbers of children in many developing nations, with a significant and growing proportion of girls and boys left vulnerable by a loss of parental care. As many of the African countries, in the case of Ethiopia the increment of children living in

households headed by grandparents are connected with various reason, such as loss of their parents because of HIV/AIDS, increasing numbers of single parent families, high rate of divorce, teenage pregnancies, incarcerations of parents, substance abuse by parents, illness, disability or death of parents, parental abuse or neglect are the major causes for Ethiopian children who are forced to live in households headed by grandparents. Therefore, most of the Ethiopian grandparents are subject to the double protection bind of both needing care and protection in their older years and needing to support their grandchildren and ageing spouses as well [10].

In addition, the various problems that grandparents are exposed to, due to aging such as physical, psychological, financial, and socio-cultural, those old people face in this fast-changing world [16]. Each of these multifaceted life events is conventional to produce anxiety, pressure,

emotional, psychological and social hardships and which able to put in supplementary trouble in the lives of grandparents and their grandchildren as well [1, 14].

### **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

In many Ethiopian families, a considerable number of grandparents are primary caregivers to their grandchildren. although, thousands hundred of Ethiopian grandparents have taken total responsibility for their grandchildren, there is no policy on national framework focusing on grandparents support mechanisms. Clearly, in the case of Ethiopia, grandparents often are very influential in the lives of grandchildren. However, Ethiopian grandparents have played a key role in contributing to the social and economic fabric of the family beyond caring for their grandchildren, but their contributions are not yet taken in to consideration by the government and other NGOs in the country. For example, in related to their parental care giving role for their grandchildren, they never receive any support such as financial, legal, counselling service, material aids etc in an especial manner. Due to this, their ability to provide consistent support for their grandchildren has challenged through economic and other problems [13]. Therefore, they are often unable to achieve household security as a result of unreliable sources of income, instability in their livelihoods [10].

In the context of Ambo town, even if grandparents play a key role in contributing to the social and economic fabric of the family, many grandparents are denied from different opportunities and interests, there are equally critical challenges faced by their grandchildren. With this rationale, this research was conducted to identify the major challenges and coping strategies that are used by grandparents to resolve their challenges in rearing children at the study site in west showa zone of OromiaRegion of Ethiopia in Ambo town.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The primary objective of this study was to explore the child rearing practices grandparents are learning in upbringing children affected by incidentals of losing parents due to various factors and their coping strategy how to resolve the challenges.

## **2. Material and Methods**

### **2.1. Research Design**

With the aim of examining and describing the experiential dimensions of grand parenting, and explore the coping strategies grandparents employ to resolve challenges at ambo town as a unit of analysis. Qualitative approach allowed the researcher to access the personal experiences of the informants who frame, articulates and reveals life as experienced in a case structure [3, 7]. In this research, phenomenological inquiry aimed at capturing the lived experiences of grandparents as they engaged in the parenting of their grandchildren [2].

### **2.2. Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

For the purpose of this study, snowball sampling, which is a non-probability technique, was chosen by the researcher to select focus group discussants and interviewees. The researcher, therefore, selected available informants for a referral of other individuals, through snowball sampling technique. Since it may be difficult to obtain the informants (grandparents) in the research study area this sampling technique was utilized as a viable sampling method so as to gain rich data from individuals' participants in the study. The sample size consisted of a total of 16 grandmothers and 5 grandfathers who are involved in caring for their grandchildren in Ambo town.

#### **Inclusion Criteria**

Agree to participate in the study fall in the age limit of 55 to 80. Who had the experience of raising their grandchildren for more than two years

### **2.3. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

The researcher employed different data collection instruments in order to get relevant and sufficient data that were needed in the study.

The first method that the researcher highly employed was interview. It was the primary technique used by the researcher to gather data using semi-structured questions. In this research, face to face interview was used as a tool for data collection. On the basis of informants consent, audio recording and note taking was used in the study session.

The second technique which is Focus Group Discussion. Through focus group discussion of data gathering technique, the researcher planned to obtain relevant qualitative data, which encompasses the discussant attitudes, opinions and feelings.

The third technique, via this technique, The researcher also applied observation method along exerting all the above methods of data collection to analyze the environment, shelter, hygiene [6].

### **2.4. Methods of Data Analysis**

The researcher developed a work protocol as a guide or an instrument for collecting data which includes interviews and focus group discussion rather than rely on a single information source to analyze data. Then the researcher built the patterns of categories, and themes from the bottom-up, by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information. Followed by each interview, the researcher transcribed and translated the recorded data from Amaharic in to the English language. In this study phenomenological method of analysis for research advanced was applied. Accordingly, after collecting the necessary data, checking completeness and consistency, the results was fed into data obtained through different qualitative techniques (in-depth interview and focus group discussions) so as to triangulate and make rich description.

After transcribed the interview tapes, the researcher used data analysis steps proposed by Ary et al. (2006) and

Lichtman (2010). Based on this, the researcher utilized the following steps in transcribing data sourced from both techniques - interview and focus group discussion. In step 1: Initial coding - extracting some central idea from the participants. In Step 2: Revisiting the initial coding. In Step 3: Developing an initial list of central ideas or categories. In Step 4: Modifying one's initial list based on additional re-reading. In Step 5: Revisiting one's categories and subcategories. In Step 6: Progressing from categories to concepts or themes. From Steps 1 to 5 which consisted of a data analysis whereby the original data was transcribed and read more than once to extract a general idea from the participant responses. In step 6 there was a progression from categories to concepts or themes. Finally, the results of each focus group discussion and interview were included as per their suitability to each them for further analysis.

### 2.5. Ensuring Trustworthiness

Insuring rigor is the most important part of especially the process of analysis. And he forwards three major ways to do so. Accordingly, the researcher has checked and rechecked the accuracy of the data by looking through the accounts of the respondents and the consistency throughout each interview. And this was also facilitated by the effort made during the interview to check the researcher has fully understood what the participant meant at times when this was not clear. The researcher has also made the out most effort to making the analysis thorough and complete as much as possible by following through each and every step of the chosen analytic procedure which resulted in providing the readers with sufficient amount of details ensuring the respondent's accounts were fully represented.

## 3. Results of the Study

This research was undertaken within the context and boundaries of Ambo town, it is the capital of West Shoa Zone. According to the Ethiopian statistic agency in 2007, The total number of population residing in this town is 108,406 out of this total population, 54, 186 and 54, 220 are males and females respectively.

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the research findings. During the data analysis the following categories based on the comprehensive themes and their sub-themes were presented. Diverse aspects of challenges faced by Grandparents; Factors that determine grandparents to becoming parents, Experiences of grandparents in caring for their own children and their children's children in the parenting practices, and Coping strategies of grandparents to meet their challenges

### Demographic Characteristics Of Participants

In this research study 21 participants were purposively selected from three kebele in Ambo town, from which 16 were grandmothers and 5 were grandfathers. 10 grandmothers and 5 grandfathers were interviewed individually in their homes, whereas only 8 grandmothers were participated in the focus group discussion, two

grandmothers took part in both interview and focus group. All are aged over 55, the oldest grandparent is aged 80, who came from a mix of social and economic backgrounds and include both maternal and paternal grandparents. One of the grandmothers was twelve grade complete, the other four grandmothers were able to read and write and one grandmother was eighth grade, one grandmother was five grade and Eight out of Ten were unable to read and write. Three grandfathers were diploma holder, one of the grandfathers was ten grade and another one grandfather was five grade. One of the grandmothers was retired health assistant and one grandfather was a former worker of Air force military organization at Bishoftu and another two grandfathers were day laborers. one of the grandfather has been working in Ambo town education bureau and one grandfather was a retired civil worker. From a total of 14 grandmothers participants, eleven of whom were widowed with the income of their husband's pension, two were divorced, one couple grandparents.

### 3.1. Challenges Experienced by Grandparents in Raising Their Grandchildren

The finding revealed that there are a number of future concerns grandparents experience in raising their grandchildren. Most participants gave the impression to experience a range of challenges in various forms. These include the health conditions of their grandchildren, financial issues, unemployment, the death of their own children, worries about securing a future for their grandchildren through a 'good' education and their own coming death could be a reason to form serious anxiety and stress in their live.

Problems were included in all the descriptions of grandparents regarding the type of challenges that they had experienced and it was more or less the one that the grandparents talked about in length even though they described it taking place along with psychological or financial as well. Three of the grandmothers, stated that they are looking after at least one child with serious health problems. Tigist clarified her bad experience which is related with her granddaughter's severe health problem as looking after the child. She stated that while her granddaughter was at the age of seven years old, she had lost her mother and father within two years by death. When her granddaughter lost her parents, immediately she underwent through heartache, as a result of this, she was admitted in hospital for five months. While she was getting her health back, she has developed a psychological and emotional problem, despite the consequence, her right leg and right hand became paralyze. Tigist observed that "her granddaughter relationship with other has utterly changed and as she developed an aggressive behavior. This situation was painful and stressful for Tigist because she has no potential to restore her health. Finally, she confirmed that "her health problem has been influenced by this orphaned granddaughter health problem that exerted distress and painful feelings on her life.

Lelise came to view that i am raising a grandchild with his health difficulty. she said the baby was born with the problem

of imperforate anus which means a body part completely closed and lacking an opening at the lower end of the alimentary canal through which feces are released. Although, the surgery was made at black lion specialized hospital and the baby was healed from his imperforate anus difficulty, the surgical treatment left him with the problem of stool incontinent. Consequently, the baby cannot control his stool, even he is at the age of nine, and for that reason i kept from sending him to school. She said this is a painful challenge which negatively affect not only his life but also influence my own life. Likewise the above mentioned two grandmothers, Megertu pronounced that she worries for all time about one of her grandchildren health problem in related to spinal cord difficulty. She stated that I have no money to take her to better and specialized hospital due to this she am always in anxiety. Derartu clearly indicated that I have experienced a feeling of helplessness and anxiety which is compounded towards my life because of my extreme and unchangeable poverty that impede me to fulfill my four grandchildren's needs as a result seemed vulnerable to illnesses and depression. She thought that she was living with a discouraging and miserable way of living and stated the lesson as She often has the constant worry about money for the cost of raising children, as well as the costs of her grandchildren's particular needs.

Even though the grandparents talked about the health related problem more often, what they considered to be financial challenge was a wide range and included, in their own words, as follows: Almazre called her financial challenge with resentment feeling from her poorest living condition. She articulated that one's upon a time, there was nothing to eat at home, hence, my two grandchildren had gone hungry. She said, "I was forced to ask my neighbors to borrow some money" because at that time I had no money to purchase any food, but all of whom were reluctant to lend me their hand because they were doubtful whether I turn their money back since I am poor. Then she stated "I was compelled to feed my grandchildren malt which was prepared to make tella, which is a traditional Ethiopian alcoholic drinks. She kept in her mind, how much this event affected her emotion and talked and she will never forget this happening. Additionally, Almaz thought one painful event back to her mind that was happened on her life, she notified, in line with her recurring and repetitive living situation that obliged her one grandchild to leave away from the house and to reside on the street.

All participants agreed that they experienced stressful situations due to the supplementary responsibilities of caring for their grandchildren. Many of which are due to the complex life events such as financial problems and the sky rocketed living situation in the country that led them to live in the stressful ways. Most grandmothers pronounced that "economic stress as a result of recurring low income, absence or loss of one /both parents, and having poor relationships even with peers could be major sources for their stress in their lives.

The participants were involved in the study, stated that

financial problems were the top challenges to perform their parental role in caring for their grandchildren. The four grandmothers pronounced that their physical appearance and health conditions have completely changed as a result of hard work for the purpose of raising their own grandchildren. They said at first they were obliged to raise their children alone due to their husband's death. Latter, the burden has fallen at their shoulder to raise their child's child since the children mothers were unemployed and the children father were unknown.

The majority participants in the study demonstrated that the frequency rising of food price and additional costs of these children's particular needs in the country was another added factor to their stressful lives. Gadissie is 65 year old widowed grandmother; She is raising her seven grandchildren, all of whom are orphaned grandchildren from her two daughters who had died before three and four years ago due to HIV/AIDS. The only income to raise her 7 grandchildren is her husband's retirement fund of 500 Ethiopian birr (18 USA dollar) per month. but, it is hardly possible to allocate this meager money to cover these seven children's' needs such as food, cloth, school uniform and other payment for various costs which includes for idir (financial contribution for the purpose of social life), fuel wood, and electric and water consumptions. She said, I am thinking with regard to these seven children who were ill-fated as I compared their previous lavishness way of life style and their current awkward way of their living style. Then, she expressed her speak with heartbreaking feelings, the inability to bring my grandchildren's happiness back to their live that made my life discontented and depressed.

Six out of ten grandmothers in this study who shared the perception which was mentioned by Gadissie, even though they received their husband's pension 500 birr per month, the money which is not enough to cover their grandchildren and their own living cost. A number of participants in the study indicated that it was hard for them to look after their grandchildren in proper manner due to a variety of limited conditions mainly financial problem in order to fulfill their grandchildren' basic needs.

Gutema commenced to confirm his source of anxiety as follows. he said "I was the former worker in bureau of agriculture in Ambo town. but currently, he became retired and pensioned with 880 Ethiopian birr (32 US dollar)." He revealed that no matter how difficult it is to find a job at the age of 63, he is forced to work in different construction site as a day laborer so as to boost up his income since he is the only main source of income, because the pension money he receive is not sufficient to cover the costs of his household and the expenses of his two grandchildren as well. Gutema described himself as he is the only bread winner in the house, since his wife is unhealthful and his four children are unemployed who are incapable to share his financial burden. As a result, he became the only responsible agent to produce the income for his families. he told that "I love my grandchildren" due to this, I attempted to make their live joyful, therefore I will try my best to fulfill their needs and

keep their interest in so far as possible by working as day laborer. He said I am always in stress because of unsecured job. He said, I am thinking at all times, if I lose this job, what will be the providence of my families specially my two grandchildren. Therefore, the reason that impel me to worry is I don't have any reserved money even for one day to cover the expenses of the house if I am unable to find a job. He said that this insecure job is the main sources of anxiety for him. The experiences of the grandparents encountered challenges in its various forms.

Age related challenge is one of the most hardship for grandparents in caring for their grandchildren. Chaltu, Hana and Bontu described the reason why they were unable to resist their financial challenges, They pronounced that who are at the age of 75, 78 and eighteen respectively and became old enough to engage in different duties and maximize their earn in the household. They are Started to present how much their ageism have an effect on their livelihood. They revealed that even as they were looking after their own children, they are not strong enough to work and generate the income to cope the financial challenges what they came across in caring for their grandchildren.

### **3.2. Factors That Determine Grandparents to Becoming a Second Parents**

In this study the finding also unveiled that teenage pregnancies, parental unemployment, parental divorce, parental death by HIV/AIDS and other death related diseases, mental illness, parental abuse or neglect were the major causes for children who were forced to live in households headed by their grandparents. Of those interviewed, three of the grandmothers and one of the grandfathers are taking care for the children following the death of the children's mothers and fathers in related to HIV/AIDS infection. Meseret stated that she was forced to accept and looked after her son's children, as a result of her son's mental illness and their mother death due to car accident. Three grandmothers and two grandfathers identified that teenagers pregnancy and neglect concerns was a cause for their responsibility in caring for their grandchildren.

Debebe is one of the grandfathers who revealed that he was the former worker of air force military organization at Bishoftu but now a day he was a retired person. he stated that the responsibility of raising the children was went down on the shoulder of his wife, But his wife did not manage the children in proper manner, due to this their two daughters were exposed for a problem and became pregnant at the age of 16 and 18 at different time. owing to this, he said, I myself and my wife have persuaded in caring for our two daughter's children.

Four grandmothers and one grandfather asserted that they are becoming a second parents and looking after their grandchildren as a consequence of parental unemployment. Asegedech one of the grandmother explained that she was forced to look after her daughter's two children since their mother was unemployed and their father was unknown.

One grandfathers named Solomon launched to affirm a

factor that made him to look after his granddaughter was in lined with a result of divorce. He commenced to explain the reason for his second parent. He stated that after the marriage was broken up, his daughter started to live with him because her mother left her to him, and went to Arab country. Then, he became the only responsible agent to take care of his daughter. He said that While he was going to his work place, he was forced to leave his daughter alone at home, even if she was eleven years old. After four years later, when she became 15 years old and eight grade student, she had got health problem and he took her to hospital. the reports what he heard from the doctor was distressing and heart breaking news. the doctor told me she was pregnant at the age of 15 which was incredible but it was true. He called the past event in his mind with bitterness evoke how the situation was happened on his daughter's life at early time. The finding revealed that for many of the birth families, the reasons why they have been unable to continue looking after the children are complex and involve a combination of factors which include unemployment, teenagers' pregnancy, mental illness, and child neglect.

### **3.3. Coping Strategy Used by Grandparents in Caring for Their Grandchildren**

Some of the grandmothers confirmed that, they have obliged to engage in different hard works to raise their grandchildren. These hard duties incorporate like, preparing traditional alcoholic drinks like Tella and Areke, collect fuel wood from forest and sell it, being employed to prepare injera for others, washing clothes for their neighbors. They said that they need to assist and support their grandchildren by engaging in different an informal duties since they have low income to fulfill their grandchildren basic needs.

Berite revealed that "she has worked as a domestic worker to generate her income to cover the expenses of her own four children and two her grandchildren needs" which includes, washing clothes, cleaning the house, preparing food (making enjera and cooking Wote) are her informal duties worked at the house of two bachelors. She notified that even if they paid me inadequate money (400 birr) per month after a long time working. She said as she was forced to do such jobs because she doesn't have any option, since she is the only source to cover the costs of the household.

Another two grandfathers Solomon and Bekele from the interview demonstrated that they have worked as day laborers in order to generate the income for nurture their grandchildren beyond the families. Sara articulated that previously I was employed as a cashier in order to increase her income, but now, I can't work such kind of job because I became tired due to HIV/AIDS infection. Therefore, she said I Was forced to occasionally do house-work like ironing and washing clothes for my neighbors in order to raise my two grandchildren.

Three grandmothers have resorted to selling coffee, tea, bread, kolo, Tellaand Arekein order to care for their grandchildren. Gadissie asserted that even I have had monthly 500 birr from her husband's pension, at this time,

this small amount of birr is inadequate to cover my seven grandchildren's expenses and to allocate it for different fees, such as idir (money contribution for social issues), electric consumption, school fees, to purchase food, to pay for water consumptions. Therefore, I have resorted to selling coffee, tea, bread, kolo for the consumers so as to live alive with my orphan children and to cover the expenses of the house. Likewise Gadissie, Derartu, has engaged in such kind of income generate mechanism for the purpose of raising her four grandchildren. Megertu put forwarded her means of her earnings by making Tela and put up it for sale in order to cover her costs. Fantaye who quoted that she prepare Areke and sell it to her consumers to generate her income. She mentioned that I use such kind of job as an alternative means to earn my income in addition to my husband's pension so as to cover the expenditures of food, clothes, and school fees for my three grandchildren, and to make a payment for social affairs like Idir and other expenses.

The other participant, Obse mentioned that "I started to gather fuel-wood from the forest and sell it to the users in order to support the children with food and clothes. Obse said, gathering these firewood became the only means to earn my income because No jobs opportunities are available here for me since I am old enough. The research findings in this study divulged that most of the grandparents worked unusual careers to augment their income so as to raise their grandchildren. Additionally, the results in this research indicated that even if the grandparents are old enough and have health problems, who have attempted to apply different mechanisms to cope their financial hardship to overcome the cost living condition so as to raise their grandchildren.

### 3.4. Support Received

the researcher desired to know the support system that grandparents may or may not have received from the government, non-governmental and other organization sin a special manner in terms of financial, medical, psycho-emotional, and material support that are available to help them to cope their difficult situations.

Sahra told that I have my own health problem caused by HIV/AIDS, despite the consequences, I was not able to engage in hard works to earn income to cover the expenses of these two grandchildren. Then I was forced to ask the kebele official to provide me some financial support for two frequent years, but no official is voluntary to solve my financial challenges so far. Due to this, she said that "my health is badly affected by the burden of raising my two grandchildren without support. Other grandmothers Marta and Obse elucidated that even if kebele officials always registered and took our own and our grandchildren's photograph to help us, but we never received any support. They stated that although we asked some financial and material support from our kebele repetitively, we were not received any form of support. Majority of the participants who took part in the study agreed that they had no an adequate support systems except a few kind of medical support from the government with regard to their particular

parental role and unreserved contribution in raising the second generations.

Chaltu confirmed that her daughter was ill with unknown sick, then she took her daughter to Tsebel (religiously known as holy-water) with her daughter's two children without any assistance and support. She said that she was tried to find some financial support from Kebele administrators in Ambo town by explaining her problem But all of whom were reluctant to help. She explained her feeling with deep grief, due to her financial hardship, after three month latter her daughter passed away and left her two children for herself alone. Followed this incident, she was exposed and suffer more with psychological trauma.

Majority of the grandparents who were participated in the interview confirmed that, although they are not received any support from the government and other non-governmental organization, they received some kind of support in the form of money or some material aid from their neighbors in order to cope their challenges. The finding confirmed that the interpersonal characteristics, that is, the social support systems were available than the government support systems to these grandparents as caregivers.

From this research finding, some of the participants revealed that they could get material support from non-governmental organization. 5 grandmothers and two grandfathers who participated in the research confirmed that their grandchildren have received money for school uniforms per year, some material aid for educational purpose, and 200 birr (8 USA DOLLAR per month from different NGOs which ar found in Ambo town.

## 4. Discussion

The finding of this research identified that even though the grandparents endeavored to overcome the difficult situation, they encountered with many challenges to cope their ability in caring for their grandchildren. With respect to factors for grandparenting, the finding showed that parental death by HIV/AIDS, teenager pregnancies, parental divorce and parental unemployment are found to be some of the determinant ones.

More specifically, majority of the participants in this study came into view to experience a range of anxieties in a variety of forms which consists of unemployment, financial issues, the death of their own children, the health conditions of their grandchildren, worries about securing a future for their grandchildren through a 'good' education and their own coming death could be a reason to form serious anxiety in their live. This finding was supported by [15] who notified that as grandparents undertaking their care giving role, they came across with different psychological challenges such as stress, pressure, hardship, depression, and poor self-rated health.

The findings of this study also demonstrate that the financial responsibility associated with parenting presents significant stress for some grandparents on a fixed income [12]. Furthermore, this finding is supported by [4] who

substantiated that these life events or stressors are deemed to be as a source of several troubles, symptoms or maladjustment. For the majority participants, financial hardship is one of the critical sources for their stress and it also had an effect on their health conditions. Bronfenbrenner [6] clarified that the existing stressful lives of grandparents this situation may exacerbate poor health and impact on coping abilities. Furthermore, this finding is proved by [11] Some grandmothers were not only encountered with the stressful challenges of caring for the grandchildren, but also they brought to their mind with the painful past events of their personal history which might be related in rearing of their grandchildren and how it affected their psychology and emotion. each of these multifaceted life events is predictable to produce anxiety, pressure, emotional, psychological and social hardships and which able to put in supplementary trouble in the lives of grandparents and their grandchildren as well [5].

In this study, the research finding confirmed that the challenge facing grandparents, that of becoming parents again, usually involves a great deal of stress and this can impact negatively on their coping abilities [6].

In terms of Gender characteristics, the finding in this study bear out that grandmothers experience more undesirable life events than grandfathers who were participated in the study. All of these domestic tasks made an extra burden for those grandmothers, however, this is not the case for grandfathers who were took part in the study. The findings is supported by the study conducted by [17] that elderly women are among the most vulnerable and marginalized members of society. All participants who were took part in the study agreed that they had no any support systems from the government with regard to their particular parental role in raising the second generations. From the above discussion, it is evident that the grandparents are not required a significant amount of support such as psycho-emotional support, socio-economic support and social support in order to effectively realize their roles as caregivers. Demaray and Malecki [8] revealed that the role of social support systems in the life of the individual is important and acted as a buffer in helping individuals cope with undesirable life events.

## 5. Conclusion

This study involved 21 participants, 16 were grandmothers and 5 were grandfathers who were caregivers of their grandchildren. In this research study, the participants were selected from grandparents headed households in three kebele in Ambo town and where the researcher was employed. The study attempted to explore of challenges faced by grandparents, their experiences in raising their own children and children's children and their coping strategy while they encountered with different challenges in raising their grandchildren. The participants were individually and separately interviewed in their households using a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire.

The results and the findings of this study discovered that

most of the participants had experienced socio-economic challenges, psycho-emotional, physiological challenges due to financial related stressful life experiences. The participants seemed to be under a lot of stress, compounded by the fact that they were ageing and yet had a critical role to play in the lives of their grandchildren. Lack of government and others support in accessing financial aid by the participants was an added burden.

## 6. Implication for Social Work

Social work had been a profession with a long tradition of focusing on the disadvantaged population and working for social justice. The code of ethics of NASW (1999) sets the mission of social work profession as follows. To improve human well-being and assist to meet the essential human needs of all people, with meticulous consideration specified to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty, therefore, social work is concerned with regard to the issues as was stated above. This research finding has verified that grandparents who have been encountered with different challenges in caring for their grandchildren and who applied various coping mechanisms to surmount their difficulties. It is very imperative for social workers in positions to give assistance for those grandparents who have confronted with diverse problems and intervene in order to provide the best possible support for them. Thus, social workers and other concerned bodies in related positions of institutions including government, NGOs, and various level community based organizations should give serious attention to the issue of grand-parenting roles in rearing grandchildren.

As an implication for social work research, it is forwarded that supplementary research is needed to look into the needs of grandparents who have confronted with challenges in raising their grandchildren and to provide them better services. Furthermore, there should be also a need to provide an awareness for communities who are living in Ambo regarding the overall issues in related with grandparental roles with the intention of provide a clear picture for better indication of points of intervention to the problem that impede grandparents to carry out their parental role 7.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusions made, the following recommendations are forwarded for further intervention.

This research found multiple reasons for the involvement of grandparents in rearing their grandchildren. Parental death by HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, poverty, and parental divorce are among the few. To reduce the proliferation of the problem, West Showa Zonal administration should actively mobilize relevant individuals and organizations for further research and intervention aimed at awareness raising, counseling and guidance, empowering grandparents and grandchildren.

It is also found that grandparents are confronted with various challenges in rearing their grandchildren. To reduce the problem and help grandparents to be effective and efficient in rearing their grandchildren, zonal administration, community based organizations and NGOs should give due care and exert cooperative efforts. Greater attention be given to interventions aimed to decrease psychological distress and improve the financial resources and physical health of grandmothers raising grandchildren.

The zonal Administration should also work to mobilize all the stakeholders within and outside of Ambo town. In this regard, researchers from Ambo University in general and from social work department in particular should make active engagement to further investigate the issue both in its depth and breadth. For example, in collaboration with community groups and human service agencies, the Ambo Zone can support short-term respite services, counseling services, and other social, legal, and/or policy services.

State Governments and NGOs together with other concerned bodies should recognize grandparents raising their grandchildren as a special group requiring assistance.

Federal and regional governments and its appropriate agencies should examine, on a regular basis, how their emerging policy frameworks can have room for the experiences of grandparents raising their grandchildren and given such policy put into practice many issues of grandparenting including the health and well-being of both grandparents and grandchildren.

The governments and its concerned agencies should also develop organizations or community centers that can build capacity and empower grandparents to cope with challenges of re-parenting through programs that would improve grandparents' abilities to contribute to household income, provide psycho social care, parenting skills, child-care, nutrition, healthy ageing, bereavement, household budgeting and child rights.

Parenting payments should be made to the person caring for the child as the interests and needs of their grandchildren are paramount.

Further research and explicit policy directions be introduced on grandparents raising grandchildren in the country.

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