



2019 AWARD Fellow
Misale Kuru Jobira

Position	Lecturer
Institution	Jimma University
Country	Ethiopia
MSc	Postharvest Management, Jimma University, 2014
Mentor	Dr. Kebede Abegaz Ali, Assistant Professor, Hawassa University
Research Area	Assessment of postharvest loss of vegetables in local markets and effects on producers.



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Misale Kuru Jobira was born in a town close to Addis Ababa and breezed her way through secondary school before attending Samara University in a desert area of Ethiopia, graduating with a BSc in Horticulture in 2010. After that, she had a chance to work in a rural agricultural office for eight months, where she learned a lot from her expert colleagues. When the opportunity to pursue an MSc on scholarship arose, she went for it. “After I completed my master’s in Postharvest Management, I was hired by Jimma University as a lecturer,” she states, adding that she also keeps busy serving as a Sunday school children’s teacher.

Jobira, who was recently married, is focusing on postharvest loss assessment and loss reduction at the smallholder farmer level. “I encourage farmers to use appropriate handling, starting from the point of harvest, and appropriate storage to minimize losses,” she states. “Loss creates hunger.”

Although her main job is lecturing, she regularly visits smallholders on their farms. She hopes to increase her interaction with farmers while continuing her lecturing. “As a lecturer, my typical responsibilities include lecture planning, preparation, and research, but along with this work, I am engaged in two research projects as a principal investigator and researcher.”

One project she is involved in has her assessing the oil temperatures that local market vendors use to fry samosas and chips. She and her colleagues take samples of the oils and the fried products and investigate how long the oil is being used as well as the temperature of the oil. “We are being respectful and careful as we request

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Jobira is one of a growing number of women agricultural scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD works toward inclusive, agriculture-driven prosperity for the African continent by strengthening the production and dissemination of more gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation. We invest in scientists, research institutions, and agribusinesses to deliver sustainable, gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation.

The AWARD Fellowship is a career-development program that invests in top women agricultural scientists to ensure that confident, capable, and influential women are available to lead critical advances and innovations in the agricultural sector.

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samples,” asserts Jobira. “They tend to fry one batch of chips, then another product is put in three or four times,” she continues. “Oils are not changed—and that’s a problem. When oil gets to a certain temperature, it produces acrylamide, which is toxic to human health. In fact, acrylamide has been classified as a probable human carcinogen.”

Jobira hopes to change policy in Ethiopia. “There must be rules and regulations,” she stresses. “I plan to influence policy makers so they can then influence the vendors to adjust their way of doing things.”

Jobira is also involved in a community service program to teach farmers how to diversify what they are growing and consuming. “We’ve found that most farmers don’t eat what they sell,” she remarks. “But we are promoting the advantages of the nutrients in the food, encouraging them to diversify their daily consumption.” She and her students have also created some cost-effective technologies to help the farmers. “A field assignment that my students undertook resulted in the creation of a maize sheller,” she explains. “We demonstrated this at a farmer’s training center and now the farmers are using it.”

Jobira, whose hobby is clothing design, heard about the AWARD Fellowship from a friend, and was delighted to be selected. Her long-range goal is to be a university professor, and she plans to pursue a PhD soon. “I would also like to develop technologies that can increase the shelf life of produce, thereby minimizing postharvest losses.” She plans to do her best to influence her colleagues at Jimma University. “I work with several intelligent women, and I will share information with them and communicate what I have learned from the AWARD Fellowship,” she resolves.

She appreciates the training she has received thanks to the AWARD Fellowship and says having a mentor is a huge benefit. “I hope to attend some conferences to increase my scientific and interpersonal skills,” she says. “I am also enjoying the opportunities to meet other agricultural scientists and learn from them.”

Jobira is committed to her career, and to helping smallholder farmers. She is prepared to work hard to have her ideas and opinions taken seriously as she progresses.