

# **Addis Ababa University Graduate School of Social Work**

## **Dallocha Women Water Development Association in Managing Community Water Project: Is it Empowering?**

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<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>LISTS OF DIAGRAMS AND TABLES.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
BACKGROUND .....	1
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM .....	3
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	4
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	5
<i>The Study Target and Area</i> .....	5
<i>Instruments for Conducting the Study</i> .....	6
<i>The Process of data collection</i> .....	6
<i>Ethical Consideration</i> .....	7
<i>Data Analysis</i> .....	8
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	8
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	12
SCOPE AND ANTICIPATED LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	12
STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY .....	12
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>14</b>
RURAL WOMEN IN WATER MANAGEMENT .....	14
EMPOWERING APPROACH AS A ROUTE TO SUSTAINING COMMUNITY WATER PROJECT .....	16
RURAL WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING AT THE HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY LEVEL.....	18
ROLE AND STATUS OF RURAL WOMEN.....	20
<b>BACKGROUND OF DALLOCHA WOMEN WATER DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION.....</b>	<b>22</b>
DESCRIPTION OF DALLOCHA WEREDA .....	22
DALLOCHA WOMEN WATER DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (DWWDA) .....	23
<b>FINDINGS OF THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>28</b>
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY .....	28
BENEFITS OF DWWDA FOR ITS MEMBERS AND DALLOCHA COMMUNITY .....	31
<i>Accessing potable water service</i> .....	32
<i>Better Hygiene and sanitation</i> .....	33
<i>Increased Mutual Support among members</i> .....	33
<i>Increased Awareness, Leadership and Problem Solving Skills</i> .....	34
<b>DECISION-MAKING OF DWWDA MEMBERS IN THE HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY LEVEL .....</b>	<b>37</b>
HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING .....	37
DWWDA MEMBERS IN COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES .....	45
<b>ROLE AND STATUS OF DWWDA MEMBERS .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>CHALLENGES OF DWWDA IN MANAGING THE WATER PROJECT .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS TO SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION .....</b>	<b>56</b>
DISCUSSIONS .....	56
IMPLICATIONS TO SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION .....	59

<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	63
CONCLUSIONS .....	63
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	64
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	66
<b>ANNEX 1. INTERVIEW GUIDE/CHECKLIST</b> .....	71
<b>DECLARATION LETTER</b> .....	76

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

AAE	Action Aid -Ethiopia
PA	Peasant Association
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program
DWWDA	Dallocha Women Water Development Association
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
WSDP	Water Sector Development Program
MOWR	Ministry of Water Resource
IWSC	International Water and sanitation Center
DWAO	Dallocha Wereda Administration Office
SNNPSR	Southern Nation Nationalities Peoples State Region
DSA	Development Study Association
ENA	Ethiopian News Agency

## **Lists of Diagrams and Tables**

Diagram 1.	Expected Outcomes of Controlling Community Water Project in Women Empowerment at the Household and Community level .....	11
Diagram 2.	Organizational structure of DWWDA.....	26
Table 1.	Demographic and Social Characteristics of major study participants (DWWDA members) .....	30
Table 2.	Benefits of DWWDA .....	31
Table 3.	Pattern of Household Decision-making on Important Household Resources/issue prior to their Involvement in DWWDA.....	39
Table 4.	Pattern of Household Decision-making on Important Household Resources/issues after Members' Involvement in DWWDA.....	44
Table 5.	Role of DWWDA members at household and community level before and after their membership to DWWDA.....	49

## **Abstract**

*By taking Dallocha Women Water Development Association (DWWDA) as a subject, this study explores the involvement of rural women in managing community water project as an enabling factor to empowerment. The study is undertaken in Dallocha Wereda, 182 KMs south west of Addis Ababa, Silliti Zone of Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples State. Primary data has been collected by utilizing qualitative data generation techniques such as in-depth interviewing and focus group discussions. Field observations were also employed as a supplementary method. Related research studies, policies, journals, published and unpublished books and report papers have been reviewed and analyzed.*

*Findings indicate that managing the community water project has enabled DWWDA members in increasing their decision-making power at household and within community level relative to their prior experience to their membership. The study also highlights the contribution of DWWDA in challenging the beliefs and practices of patriarchal social relationships which expects men to hold decision-making power. Organizing women in association, increasing their awareness on various socio-cultural issues, building their management and leadership skill and availing important resources are found as enabling factors in the empowerment process. The study further indicates the need for comprehensive intervention towards achieving empowerment of DWWDA members and to transform the cultural and normative context of the larger community in which DWWDA members participate.*

## **Introduction**

### **Background**

Ethiopia is the second populous country in Africa (MOFED, 2002) and one of the poorest nations in the World (Abebaw Eshete, 2005; UNDP, 2004). The Human Development Report of the World (UNDP, 2004) categorized Ethiopia under low human development and is ranked 170th out of 177 countries in all development indicators. The poverty situation of the country compared to neighboring Sub Saharan countries is the lowest in all dimensions such as income, key social services and gender relations (Abebaw Eshete, 2005; UNDP, 2004). The Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) of the country also describes the situation as follows:

...The country has long standing history, diverse cultural heritage and reasonably good resource potential for development. Yet the majority of the population lives in absolute poverty... (MOFED, 2002, p. 2).

Rural Ethiopia, where agriculture (i.e. crop and animal production) is the major means of the economy constitutes more than 85% of the total population (CSA, 2004). Though poverty is wide spread in the country, it is more prevalent in rural parts compared to urban (CSA, 2004; MOFED, 2002; Desalegn Rameto, 1993; Yakob Metana, 1999). As available data indicates, rural areas of the country are highly affected by lack of basic social services such as education, health, water and sanitation, important improved agricultural inputs and credit facilities (Abebaw Eshete, 2005).

Despite the fact that poverty is rampant and majority of the population is affected, all people in Ethiopian communities are not equally impoverished. Mandella (2005) argues that in most developing societies poverty and gender are inextricable and women and girls are the

most affected. In agreement with this, the Ethiopian SDPRP identifies the gendered difference among core dimensions of poverty. In all dimensions, women are more vulnerable and deprived basics of economic and social services (MOFED, 2002). Despite the fact that all Ethiopian women are facing the challenges of social, cultural, economic and political deprivations, women living in rural areas bear the worst burden (Ali Hassen, 2005; Desalegn Rameto, 1993; Abebaw Eshete, 2005). In relation to this, the World Bank report (2001) and MOFED, 2002, p.122) asserts that women's low level of education which could provide them marketable knowledge and skill, poorer ability to generate income and poor command over productive resources contribute for their vulnerability and deprivation compared to men in the country. They are deprived of major social and economic services. The consequences of their deprivation do not only affect their well-being but encompasses the overall well being of their families and society at large (World Bank, 2001).

According to the World Human Development Report (UNDP, 2004) both in Gender-related Development Index and other Gender empowerment measures, Ethiopia again ranked far behind compared with other sub Saharan Countries. The SDPRP Annual Progress Report pointed out the current situation of women as follows:

...Access to land, credit, and other productive resources is difficult for women to attain.

They also experience multiple forms of other deprivations, such as longer working days, women specific ill health, and low levels of education relative to men.

Furthermore, violence and discrimination against women is still widespread in the country (MOFED, 2005, p. 50).

Women in Dallocha Wereda are the focus of this study. Like women in most rural part of the country, women in Dallocha Wereda experience multidimensional deprivation as a

result of poverty and socio-cultural beliefs and practices. Despite their active role in the production process, they are not allowed control over productive resources. This is mainly due to the fact that gender relationships are centered on the belief of patriarchal control. Male dominance prevails in the social, economic and political life of the community (AAE, 1999). According to the Gender Analysis Report of the Dallocha area, there exists culturally organized unfair gender relation between men and women exist. These are greatly manifested in the division of labor, decision-making, ownership and control of resources. As a result, at household and community level, Dallocha women had no significant role in decision-making process on key issues that affects their life directly or indirectly (AAE, 1998).

In a situation in which there are biased gender relations that create and reinforce the vulnerability and subordination of women, the empowerment approach is a recognized strategy to enhance the social and economic capacity of women. The Dallocha Women Water Development Association (DWWDA) was established in 1996 to empower women through enabling them to exercise their capability in managing a community water project. The initiation of the association was that of Actionaid-Ethiopia (AAE) an international non-governmental organization (INGO), through its Integrated Rural Development Program in the Wereda from 1989 - 2002 (AAE, 2002).

### **Statement of the problem**

In a patriarchal society, major gender relations are established on the ideology of male dominance, which in turn, deprives women from owning and controlling assets and resources. The overall beliefs and practices of Dallocha communities in the most basic social, cultural and economic spheres of life revolve around patriarchal relationship. Thus women are marginalized from participating in key decision-making positions. The low status of women,

which corresponds to their low decision making ability in the household and community level, signifies a low level of empowerment.

Prior to the Establishment of DWWDA, Dallocha women were viewed as inferior to men and it was hard to perceive women outside the traditional roles ascribed to them. Women were not allowed to participate in decision-making processes on family and community matters. Amid of the deep-rooted patriarchal control, i.e. male monopoly of decision-making at household and community level, DWWDA came in to existence to allow women to own and manage a huge community water project. DWWDA existed and demonstrated women's competence to own and manage the water project through continuous provision of water service to the community.

This study was initiated to explore and investigate DWWDA's contribution to the emancipation of DWWDA members from the existing patriarchal control that hindered them from participating in decision-making processes. The study is designed to address the following research questions:

- To what extent has DWWDA benefited its members socially and economically since their involvement?
- To what extent has the decision-making role of women who participated in DWWDA changed at household and community level due to their involvement in managing community water project?

### **Objectives of the study**

The study focuses on a specific Women Water Development Association in Dallocha Wereda. The study aims to explore the empowerment process of Dallocha Women as a result

of their involvement in managing community water project. More specifically, the study aims to:

- Identify the benefits of DWWDA to its members and Dallocha communities;
- Explore the role of DWWDA members in decision-making process at the household and community level;
- Assess the change in gender roles and status of members after their involvement in managing the community water project;
- Identify the challenges and their responses of DWWDA members in managing the water project; and
- Suggest workable recommendations with regard to women's empowerment.

### **Research Design and Methodology**

Research design is about planning how to link theoretical concepts and questions with the empirical world to meet the objectives of the study. This study is designed to employ an applied qualitative research focusing mainly on contextual and explanatory analysis through utilizing both primary and secondary data sources.

### **The Study Target and Area**

The study is conducted in Dalocha Wereda, Siliti Zone of Southern Nation Nationalities People's State Region (SNNPSR). The study target is the Dallocha Women Water Development Association (DWWDA), which was selected purposefully because

- The Dallocha community, where the Association is established is a highly patriarchal society in which women are placed in a lower status compared to men and burdened by domestic, productive and community activities and.

- Dallocha Women Water Development Association is the first women association intended to manage a community water project in the region of Ethiopia.

### **Instruments for Conducting the Study**

In collecting primary data, the study uses in-depth interview and focus group discussions. Moreover, observation was used to check the coherence of information obtained through the formal interviewing process. As secondary sources are relevant to this study, the study reviews both published and unpublished theoretical and empirical literature including books, research papers and various reports made by AAE and local Wereda Administration Office.

### **The Process of data collection**

The data was collected through two visits to Dallocha in February and April 2006.

The first exploration visit was made in February with the following objectives:

- a) To create contacts with the Coordination Office of DWWDA and local officials for the actual data gathering;
- b) To collect secondary sources of information about the study target and the area;
- c) To understand the situation of the association; and
- d) To conduct a Focus Group Discussion with members of the Association.

Two focus group discussions with Peasant Association (PA) level water committee and members of the executive board of DWWDA were held. The purpose of conducting FGD was mainly to draw important indicators to a develop checklist/interview guide for the main study. After the focus group discussion data was analyzed in February 2006, a detailed checklist/interview guide was developed. In-depth interviews were conducted in April 2006.

Twenty-four individuals including 20 from DWWDA members, which are the major study participants, and 4 from Local Government administration offices were interviewed.

During the fieldwork, an attempt was made to consider the individual differences of members of DWWDA. Informants from DWWDA were selected based on their role in DWWDA, socio-economic status, age, visibility/invisibility in the public domain and their distance from Dallocha town. Twenty DWWDA members and the Coordinator of DWWDA were interviewed. The interview sessions were held in their places of residence. The interview session with government officials were held in their office. These included 4 key informants who are the heads of Siliti Zone Women Affairs Office, Wereda level Women Affairs, Wereda Health Office and Wereda Education Office.

Moreover, observation at the household level and in water kiosks were made to understand how DWWDA members carry out their daily duties.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Ethical issues are also part of the research process. Before contacting the study participants, an official support letter from Addis Ababa University, Graduate School of Social Work was handed to the Coordination Office of DWWDA. After establishing a proper rapport, informed consent was used to let the participants know that they are participating in research that the nature of the research is voluntary, and that they have the right to withdraw at any time. Moreover, the purpose and the scope of the study were discussed with participants. Ethically, researchers are obliged to protect the identity of the participants (Ryen, 2004). To ensure the anonymity, the names of the participants are not disclosed in the final report of this study. Rather pseudonyms are used.

## **Data Analysis**

As Robinson; Tolley and Moneill (2002) assert qualitative analysis begins with the first stages of field activities and leads to refinements in the research questions as the study proceeds. The qualitative analysis in this study consisted of two techniques. First, following every interview, reading and re-reading of the interviews was done to make sure that all the information was included and to clarify and/or obtain additional information on ideas that seem ambiguous and contradictory. Second, the data were summarized to form major categories on the basis of the specific objectives of the study. The categories were:

1. Benefits of DWWDA for its members and the larger community;
2. The role of DWWDA members in household and community level decision-making process;
3. The role and status of DWWDA members after their involvement in the management of the water project; and
4. The challenges observed in managing the water project.

At this stage the data from the 20 respondents and 4 key informants were reduced into sets of relational statements, which were designed to explain the general sense of the study. Moreover, the study uses case stories to report participants' own explanation about the scenario.

## **Conceptual Framework**

Women's empowerment is a broad concept used by many writers to indicate different dimensions of the process. On UNDP's Gender and Empowerment Measure the concept the gender and empowerment is used to mean two things. First, economic participation and decision making measured by the percentage of female administrators and managers, and professional and technical employees. Second, gender and empowerment denotes political

participation and decision-making measured by the percentage of seats in parliament held by women (UNDP, 2004). The measures however focuses mainly on macro level analysis, do not apply to this research because it does not measure the empowerment level of women at micro level.

Alternatively, an African writer Longwe views women empowerment from the perspective of emancipating women from patriarchal ideologies preserved from time immemorial to the current period mainly to serve the interest of men. She defined Empowerment as "*a process by which women achieve increased control over public decision making*" (Longwe, 2002, p.6). She developed a five-level framework of women's empowerment, which progresses from welfare to access to concientisation to mobilization and results in control. According to this framework, the highest level of women empowerment occurs when women's ability in decision-making processes indicates their control of public decisions. Longwe's last level of empowerment (i.e. control) seems to correspond to the focus of this study. This study makes use of the assumption that women's control over a public (community project) is a route to their own empowerment.

Malhotra & Shuler (2003, p: 71-72) recommend the need to acknowledge three facts in the process of understanding women empowerment:

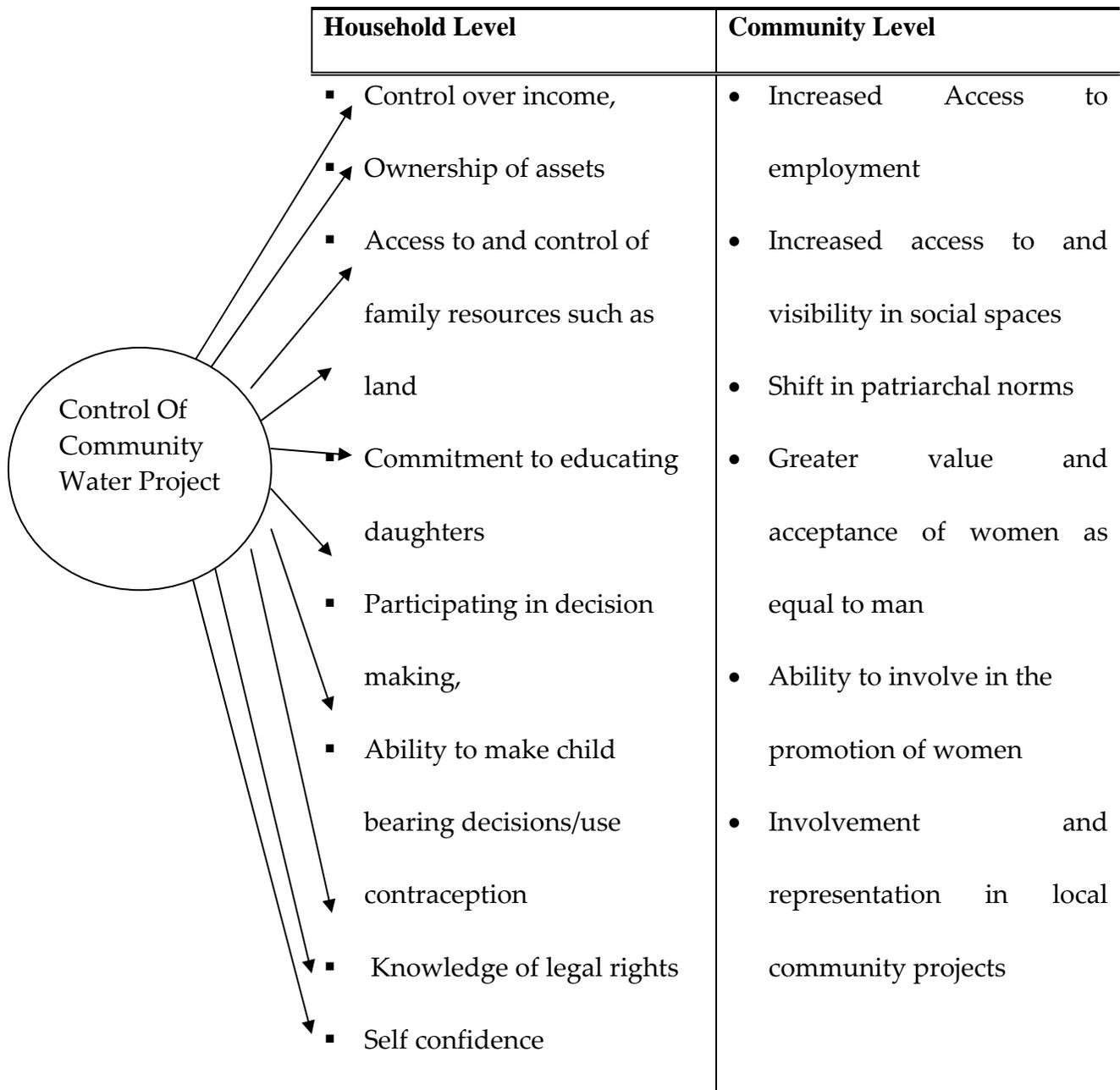
1. *Women are not just one group among various disempowered subsets of society, the poor, ethnic minorities and so on; they are a cross cutting category of individuals that overlaps with all these other groups.*
2. *Household interfamilial relations are a central locus of women's disempowerment in a way that is not true for other disadvantaged groups*

3. *Empowerment in general requires institutional transformation; women's empowerment requires systematic transformation not just of any institution, but specifically of those supporting patriarchal structures*

Women empowerment is a process that should address their oppression at the household and community, as well as broader arenas through five dimensions: economic, social and cultural, legal, political and psychological. While acknowledging the range of understanding related to women's empowerment, this research relies heavily on Longwe's, and Malhotra & Shuler understanding of women empowerment. Based on their theoretical conception to women empowerment, the following operational definition was developed. Women's empowerment refers to the *process by which women achieve increased recognition of status, control and decision-making ability over resources and assets in household and community level.*

To measure women's increased control over household and public decision-making, Malhotra & Shuler's framework of dimensions and indicators of women's empowerment is adapted. This framework is most relevant for assessing empowerment of members of Dallocha Women Water Development Association at the household and community level. By combining Longwe's final stage of empowerment as a point of reference, i.e. Control stage of community resources (in this case the water project), and Malhotra & Shuler's indicators to measure women empowerment, the following framework is adapted and developed.

**Diagram 1. Expected Outcomes of Controlling Community Water Project in Women Empowerment at the Household and Community level**



Adapted from Malhotra & Shuler (2003, p. 83)

## **Significance of the Study**

The Dallocha Women Water Development Association is the first of its kind in the Southern Nation Nationalities Peoples' Region State. This study is helpful in understanding, analyzing and documenting the role of DWWDA in the process of empowerment through enabling rural women to own and manage a community water project. Moreover, the research is significant as a means of suggesting recommendations for the better functioning of the Association. This study also tries to show if, women's social and technical potential is recognized and enhanced socially and technically through empowerment process and whether their decision-making ability at the household and community level can be enhanced.

## **Scope and anticipated limitations of the study**

The study explores the role of DWWDA mainly from empowerment perspective. The scope of the study assesses the importance of women's involvement in owning and managing a community water project in changing the status and the decision-making power of women. Emphasis was given to see how DWWDA contributed in increasing women's decision-making role at household and community level. The study did not examine the overall impact of DWWDA from service delivery perspective.

## **Structure of the Study**

The study is organized into six parts. The first part outlines the introduction, statement of the problem, the objectives, and methodology used in the processes of data generation, analysis of the findings, the significance, the scope and limitations of the study. The second part provides a literature review on rural women in water management, the empowerment approach as a route in sustaining community water project, rural women in decision making process at the household and community level, and role and status of rural

women. Describing Dallocha Wereda and the background of Dallocha Women Water Development Association (DWWDA), how it emerged and how it is functioning is included in part three. The findings and discussion of the study are incorporated in the fourth part. The fifth part provides discussions and implications to social work profession. The sixth part concludes the study and provides recommendation.

## Literature Review

### Rural Women in Water Management

Water is a valuable natural resource fundamental for life and it is believed that facilitates the overall socio-economic development of a nation (IWSC, 1998; MOFED, 2002). The unavailability and inaccessibility of potable water service greatly contributes to poor health and low productivity. The Central Statistics Authority Report (2004) explains lack of safe water as the major causes of waterborne diseases and death in most developing countries including Ethiopia. Apart from causing poor health and death, Kebede Wolde (2005) indicates the negative consequences of unavailability of safe water on society as "*Lack of safe water supply has other chain of negative consequences such as the workload on women and children in fetching mostly from very distant areas.*"

According the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) of Ethiopia, the population who accessed potable water is 83.1% and 29.5% for urban and rural areas respectively (MOFED, 2005). From the data, it is possible to conclude that most rural societies in Ethiopia suffer from lack of safe water services for domestic and production purpose. Dallocha Wereda communities are one of the rural communities in Ethiopia that suffered from lacking potable water for more than several years until 1998 (AAE, 1998; DWWDA 2004; DWAO, 2005). Even though all members of the society use water for drinking, sanitation and other purposes, women are the primary responsible to secure water for household consumption due to the gender-based division of labor that asserts fetching of water as women's duty (Shouter & Moriarty, 2003). Women spend much of their time in fetching water even from long distances. Supplying adequate and clean water by and large

helps to free up the labor of women and female children who are used to collect water to other production activities (MOFED, 2002).

The Water Sector Development Program (WSDP) of the country is designed to reduce the problem of women and children in fetching water (MOWR, 2002). Accessible and reliable water supply also provides better hygiene for all household members (IWSC, 1998). Since women are responsible for the provision and management of water at the household level, it is believed they will be efficient and effective in managing and controlling of water resources (IWSC, 1998; Zelalem Getachew, 2005). However, most community projects including water resource development interventions are controlled and managed by male members of the community who are given the decision-making power based on societal norms. Since patriarchal ideologies and practices govern the overall social relationship between men and women, decision-making of community projects are believed to be a man's job (Shouter & Moriarty, 2003). Most recently, attention is being given to the gender dimension of water resource development and management due to the impact of the water projects on women (IWSC, 1998). Recognizing the fact that gender difference exist in the demands and interest of sustaining water resources, most organizations involved in sustainable water resource development encourage women to participate in the decision-making process of a community water supply projects (Shouter & Moriarty; IWSC, 1998; Zelalem Getachew, 2005).

The Dallocha Women Development Association was established to give women the decision-making and control of water resources as a way of ensuring its sustainability (AAE, 1998). The process gives women the opportunity to gain management and leadership experience and skills. In addition to improving their leadership skills, when women are involved in decision-making process. *"The project can highly realize its prior objective*

*endeavors and its sustainability*"(Zelalem Getachew, 2005). The involvement of women in water project management builds their social capital and enables them to have important role in other community development activities. The Ministry of Water Resources Development of Ethiopia in its Water Sector Development Plan also identify women as key stakeholders that need to be involved in the overall process of water development (MOWRD, 2002).

### **Empowering Approach as a Route to Sustaining Community Water Project**

In the process of sustainable water resource project management, it is imperative to guarantee women's say in key decision-making processes (IWSC, 1998). An empowering approach is becoming a widely accepted tool in sustainable water resource development. The empowerment approach recognizes women's participation as active agents than passive recipients. The process also enables them to make important life choices that are previously denied to them (Kabeer, 2001).

Nonetheless, women's empowerment is viewed as a very complex and dynamic process. As Kapoor & Sandler (1995, p. 234) indicate, the existing major socio-cultural structures that promote patriarchal ideologies become major hindrances. Longwe (1991) also asserts, in most cases where patriarchal control is the rule of the game; women accept the norms and values as normal and do not have the ability to challenge the discriminatory practices. This argument of women empowerment suggests the need to transform key social norms and values that reinforce women subordination and deprivation. Accordingly, challenging the ideologies and practices that subordinate women requires appropriate and context-specific interventions and support. .

Sen (1999), Malhorta & Shuler (2003) argue the necessity of providing resources as enabling or adding force to the empowerment process. Resources can only be used to foster

empowerment but can not considered as an end. In agreement with the aforementioned writers, it is possible to argue that unless women are understand the discriminatory practices, articulate their needs, are able to identify and make use of resources and make important decisions pertaining to their own lives, resources alone cannot bring about empowerment. Longwe's (1995) concept of concientisation refers to these phenomena in which women are able to understand the causes of their problem related to lack of access and control to key resources and subordination. The empowerment process is also expected to enhance women negotiation capacity to challenge deeply rooted patriarchal thinking. Thus, the empowerment outcome will be visible at the household and at community level decision-making processes (Malhorta, Shuler and Boender, 2002; Malhotra & Shuler, 2003). In line with this, Rowlands (1995 quoted in IDS, 1997) and Kapoor & Sandler (1995) suggest that empowerment of women enable them to increase their self efficacy i.e. enabling them to perceive about themselves as able and entitled to have equal benefits like that of men in every sphere of life.

The empowerment approach also recognizes the need to organize women as a group. According to Longwe (2002), coming together in groups helps individual members to recognize and analysis their problems arising from existing social structures. Corresponding to this, Quisumbing& Meinzen-Dick (2001) assert that working through groups is a major mechanism for women to engage in development interventions and improve their status. Various writers agree on the importance of forming a group as a route to empowerment because groups strengthen women's capacity more than individual efforts (Kopper, 2001). Dominelli (2002, 111) asserts:

The group may be self informed as in the case of a number of people coming together to take action around a problem that may be personal to them and or may also be facilitated by experts..."

The Dallocha Women Water Development Association (DWWDA) brought 178 representative Dallocha women together to own and control a huge community water project. Empirical evidence also shows that DWWDA demonstrated the capacity of women in managing community water project and the importance of organizing rural women to act as a group on issue that affects their life.

### **Rural Women in Decision-making at the Household and Community level**

Household is a significant place where women are disempowered, their role and status are determined, and they are socialized to behave and act according to the gendered role and relations defined by the larger socio-cultural setting (Malhotra & Shuler, 2003). In agreement with this, Mandella (2005) argues that household is the lower level of social setting where biased gender relations can be observed and analyzed. Household decision-making involves a set of activities and issues related to production of goods and services, purchasing of goods and services including food, education, and medical services for all household members (Kabeer, 1994). Kabeer further indicates that the process of decision-making is a function of the existing gender differentials constructed by the larger society. She goes saying, "*Those who have better social position and are perceived to produce more appear to be decision makers*" (Kabeer, 1994, p. 109.) The fact that women's perceived contribution for the household is low, their role in key household decision-making is minimal. In line with this, Kishor (2005) indicates that the process of decision-making mainly depends on the ability to control important resources. As a result, women and girls have less decision-making power

than men and boys (Bruyn, 1995; Malhotra & Shuler). As a result, in most developing countries including Ethiopia, existing gender relations based on the patriarchal system gives the key decision-making role to men than women at household and community level (Mandella, 2005).

In analyzing Women's role in household decision-making Kabeer (1994) identifies women's perceived contribution in the household and their visibility in generating income as key determining factor of their decision making power. Here it can be argued that this is true particularly in most rural communities, where the practice of patrilocal residence and patrilineal inheritance system prevails. The system facilitates the exclusion of women from key household decision-making process. The idea of considering males as breadwinners and females as dependent also gives men more say in household decision-making process than women. Since women do not have equal say, their contribution in any community level activities and projects is also minimal. Bruyn (1995) asserts that women's participation and contribution in community level decision-making is not required since their role, as important producer of the household economy, is not accounted. As a result, much of their needs and interests are not addressed.

It is recognized fact that if development actors to enhance women's involvement in household decision-making and foster equality the same will enhance the well-being of their family and the larger society (Kishor). Quisumbing & Meinzen-Dick (2001) also claim that women's empowerment can be achieved when the society recognizes their role and involves them in key decision-making processes at household and community level. Zelalem Getachew (2005) recommends that development practitioners need to incorporate in their strategic plan to consciously involve women in any community activities particularly in water projects.

## **Role and Status of Rural Women**

Existing empirical research findings reveal that women play an important role in the broader life of society at large and in the life of the household in particular. Although there is no coded law in Ethiopia as to who should perform certain tasks, every culture has assigned various roles and responsibilities to male and female. In agreement with this, the World Bank (2001) asserts that it is the larger social norms and values that shape the roles and responsibilities of women and men. Ethiopian rural women, irrespective of their age invariably perform reproductive, productive and communal roles, which Moser (1993) termed "Triple role of women". Reproductive activities that are related to maintain and sustain the existence of the family such as bearing and rearing children, food preparation, cleaning of the house and clothes, fetching water and collecting fuel wood, shopping for daily consumption, caring for the sick and children. These tasks are predominantly considered as women and girls (Simeneh quoted in Yakob Metena, 1999). Wudnesh Hailu (2003, p. 18) describes the role of Ethiopian rural women's in productive activities as follows: -

Rural women involve not only in agriculture (crop and animal production) but also in generating additional incomes for their family. They engage in generating income by involving in production of small goods for sell such as baskets for carrying food items, mats and petty trading of agriculture productions

Despite their contribution as important productive force in Ethiopian economic setting, the society's perception towards their role is not as valuable as that of men (Getnet Kebede, 1996). Commonly, women's role is always reduced to their contribution to domestic activities. This is partly because of lack of recognition of women's role by themselves and the larger society. This is also reinforced by the fact that women themselves and the societies

perception about their role primarily as homemakers (Bruyn, 1995). Corresponding to the role performed at household and community level, the societal norms and values provide the framework in which both sexes to hold certain status and positions. The status of women as a function is directly related with their roles at household and community level (Bruyn, 1995). Yakob Metena (1999; p: 24). In most societies where women have less decision-making ability and ownership they are forced to hold lower social status and position.

Apart from policy frameworks that place Ethiopian women as equal citizen, the lack of comprehensive interventions that intends to empower women socially, culturally and economically also reinforces their subordinate position. The majority of Ethiopian women, like that of other developing countries, occupy disadvantaged position (Mulalem Tessema, 1998; Zewdie Jotte, 1998). In order to change the perceptions and responses of women's role and subordinate position of their own and the larger society, Bruyn (1995; p. 14) asserts that the norms and values that promote gender differences in role and status need to be changed at household and community level. Otherwise, the effort to enhance women's wellbeing remains unattained due to the norms and values that impede them from taking and sharing responsibilities and benefits equally with men in various aspects of life.

## **Background of Dallocha Women Water Development Association**

### **Description of Dallocha Wereda**

Dallocha Wereda is located in Siliti Zone of Southern Nation Nationalities People's State Region (SNNPSR). The people speak one of the Semitic languages called Silitigna. According to the Dallocha Wereda Administration recent report, the total population is 175,000 of which 51% are women (DWAO, 2005). Subsistence agriculture, largely comprising crop and livestock production, which entirely relies on rainfall, is the main economy of the Wereda (AAE, 1999).

Various empirical reports produced by Actionaid Ethiopia (AAE) and the Dallocha Wereda Administration Office (DWAO) confirms that poverty is rampant with complex features manifested in socio-cultural, economic and degradation of natural environment. As a result of this, most households experience food gap for 3-4 months a year (AAE, 1999, DWAO, 2006). A report made by DWAO (2006) also shows that around 24,000 households who are currently experiencing food shortage are incorporated in the safety net program that aims in decreasing direct food aid and to engaging them in development activities.

Previously, in the Wereda there was an international non-governmental organization called Actionaid Ethiopia (AAE) that had an Integrated Rural Development Program from 1989-2002. The Integrated Rural Development package was comprised of Food Security, Health, Education and Water Sector Development. The Organization worked in the area from 1989 - 2002 (AAE, 2002). After AAE's comprehensive intervention and Government's effort for more than a decade, there is significant change in the social services coverage (DSA, 1999 p: AAE, 1999). The 14 years Development Performance report of the Wereda shows that the current health, education and water coverage reached to 48%, 69% and 50.4% respectively

compared to the 1992 coverage which was 8%, 15% and 5% for health, education and water services respectively (DWAO, 2006).

### **Dallocha Women Water Development Association (DWWDA)**

The Dallocha Women Water Development Association (DWWDA) was established in 1996 and has officially become operational in 1998 (AAE, 2002, p: 5). AAE facilitated the establishment of Association. According to DWWDA bylaw, the major objective of the Association is to supply accessible and sustainable water services to Dallocha community through a cost recovery basis. Moreover, the association also intends to increase members' productivity by creating relevant projects that will be identified by members (DWWDA, 1996).

Prior to the development of the water project, the major water sources for domestic and livestock use was traditional ponds and the only river called "Dijo"<sup>1</sup> (DWWDA, 2004; AAE, 2004). These water sources were not only inaccessible to many PAs but also unclean. AAE (1999) indicated some of the residents of the Wereda had to travel for 4-6 hour to fetch water from 'Dijo' river, particularly in dry season when ponds get dry. As a result, Dallocha communities insisted AAE to develop water projects as their first priority.

After the communities demand for potable water development, though AAE committed its resource for the project in 1990s, there was a concern for the day-to-day management and ownership of the project after completion. While the project was progressing, different options were initiated by AAE and widely discussed within the community and with local government. The options included handing the project to government, establishing a community organization comprised men and women, and a women only association. Hence, the idea of establishing DWWDA came in to light.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Dijo' is the name of a river found in Dallocha Wereda

Actionaid had made decision to construct a water scheme; however management, ownership and sustainability of the project were issues that needed an answer before commencing the project (AAE, 2002, p. 10).

As a result of the serious concern on who should own and manage the project and how the project could be sustained, AAE took a firm position to empower women to own and manage the water project. The preference of women in the overall management of the water project resulted mainly from the fact that they are the bearer of the burden and provision of water for the household.

Women are more concerned for the proper functioning and sustainability of water project, and the belief that giving the chance to exercise decision making power would contribute to changing community's negatively biased attitude towards women AAE (2002, p.10).

Even though, AAE's inclination to bring women in water project ownership and management was valid and relevant to meet the needs of the community and ensure the sustainability of the water project, the idea was not appreciated by the whole community (DWWDA, 2004). Hence, advocating for the involvement of women in community project management was not an easy task (AAE, 2004). Resistance came not only from male segment of the general community but, includes influential people and local administrators, but also from Dallocha women themselves. Initially, they did not welcome the idea because their own perception about themselves and the belief of the larger society which undermines their potential and skills.

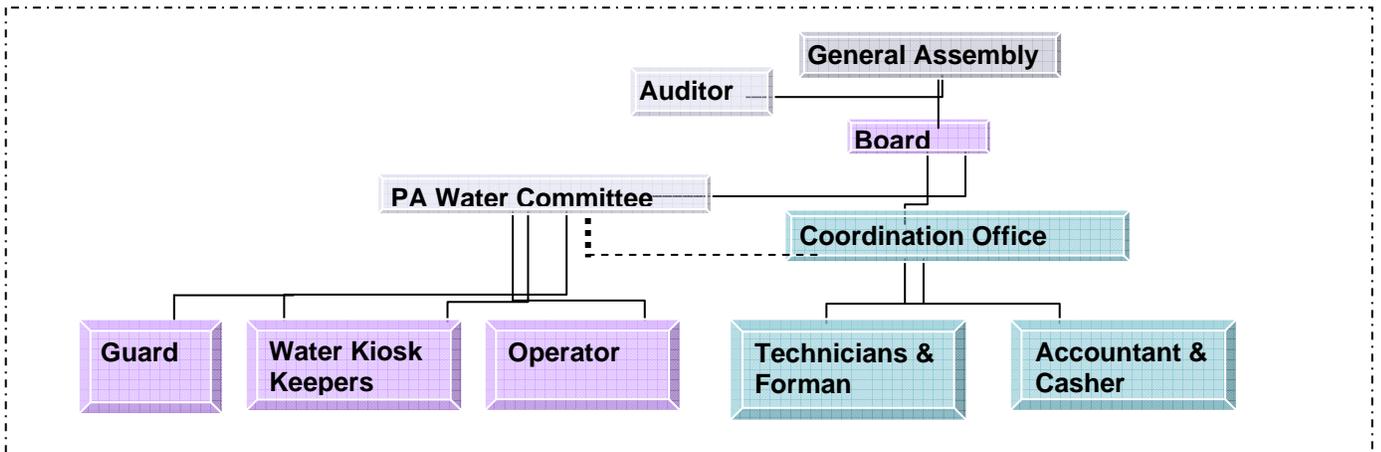
At the beginning, and after its establishment, some community members, both men and women, were doubtful that women would be able to handle such a complex project (AAE, 2004, p11).

Despite the resistance, AAE pressed the process through dialogue by taking firm position until community members accepted and reached to a consensus on bringing women in the ownership and management of the water project. Convincing women took a significant period of time. A literacy program was designed to enable members of the Association learn to read and write. Moreover, continuous training on community project management, gender issues and leadership skills were provided to members selected from 16 peasant associations (AAE, 2002; AAE, 2004; DWWDA, 2004).

In institutionalizing the association, AAE played a vital role that range from establishing a coordination office by covering every expense and to the development of relevant documents. Accordingly, AAE assigned one of its woman staff members, who were familiar to the socio-cultural setting of the area to work as coordinator. Moreover, AAE facilitated the development of bylaws that enable the Association to register legally, and other policies and procedures in the area of Human Resource and Financial Management in consultation with DWWDA members. The association is legally registered with SNNPRS Justice Bureau and received an official Certification in May 1998. Regarding its organizational structure, the Association consists of 178 women selected from 16 peasant associations (PAs) and Dallocha town. The General assembly is the supreme governing body of the association (DWWDA, 1996). Next to the General assembly, there is an Executive board consisting 16 women represented from each PA water committee. The Executive Board is responsible to direct the day-to-day project management. The coordination office supports

the management of the association technically, and liaisons with key stakeholders. Moreover, Water-kiosk-keepers are assigned from members and are responsible in selling the water services for the community (DWWDA, 2004).

**Diagram 2. Organizational structure of DWWDA**



(Source AAE, 2002 p: 10)

Other human resources such as, generator operators, technicians, accountant and cashier are recruited from the labor market because the members lack key educational and technical capacity to carryout the activities. Currently, DWWDA is managing a very complex water project both technically and administratively. The operating expenses of the scheme are covered by the income generated from the sales of the water (DWWDA, 1996). According to AAE (2004) there are two sources for the water supply, i.e. spring water and deep boreholes at six different places where the spring system cannot reach. The spring source is the biggest, which embodies a reservoir system include two reservoirs each with a capacity of containing 300m<sup>3</sup> water and five small pressure break reservoirs with each 50m<sup>3</sup> water holding capacity linked to a 70kms pipeline network. In general the water system (both the spring and the boreholes) has 8 pumps, 8 generators, 14 reservoirs with different capacities

and 34 water distribution kiosks. The water system has 40 water kiosks that supply pure water to more than 80,000 people in the Wereda (DWWDA, 2004; AAE, 2004).

## **Findings of the Study**

This chapter is devoted to report findings of the exploratory study along with the discussion and analysis. The finding of the study discusses in detail DWWDA members' own view on the benefits of the association to their individual and community life. It also presents how the involvement of DWWDA members in managing the community water project contributed in the decision-making processes at the household and community level. The changes in role and status, if any, after their involvement in managing the community water project and the challenges of the association in undertaking its intended objectives is also incorporated to the discussion part.

### **Brief Description of Participants of the Study**

Participants of the study range between the ages of 31 to 45. Except one divorcee and one widow, the rest of the study participants are married and live with their husbands. Respondents have an average of 7.5 children. All of them are married to their current husbands through arranged marriage by parents, which was a common practice up until recently. With regard to their educational background, only one member of the executive board has gone up to grade 10. Four members are dropouts from Grade 7, 5, 4 and 3. The remaining study participants are only able to read and write.

As to the reason for their low level of education, informants explained that education was not accessible and most of them had to travel for more than two hours to reach the nearest primary school. High school was also non-existent in the entire Wereda at the time. Those who pursue high school were forced to travel to very distant places. This was a challenge for parents to cover house rent and living costs. The financial limitation of parents coupled with the vulnerability of girls for sexual abuse while traveling such distances was another factor for

being school dropouts. The larger societal attitude towards female children, which expects them to get married as early as the age of 13 years or so also deterred the study participants to quit their education.

The study participants were asked about their role in the household economy. In addition to agricultural activities, which is major means of livelihood of the entire community, majority of respondents are actively engaged in petty trading as supplementary activity to the household income. There is also one Traditional Trained Birth Attendant who collects money from service users and three Water Kiosk keepers employed by DWWDA. In spite of the amount of money generated through off-farm activities, they use the income to purchase household consumption goods and services than long-term asset building. As a result, their households do not realize their income contribution as equally important as that of their husbands. However, some study participants indicate their significant contribution in supplementing the household income.

Regarding their responsibility in DWWDA, four women are working as executive board members; 3 as Water Kiosk Keepers and the rest study participants are working as PA level water committee. The interview process with DWWDA Coordinator also revealed that all members are playing various roles such as monitoring the water kiosk keepers, observing functionality of the water service system, as social committee and chairing the committee at PA and Coordination Office levels.

**Table 1. Demographic and Social Characteristics of major study participants (DWWDA members) (n=20)**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<b>Age</b>	
26 - 30	5
31 - 35	6
36 - 40	4
41 - 45	5
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married	18
Divorced	1
Separated	1
<b>Number of Children</b>	
5-6	10
7-8	10
<b>Education background</b>	
Read and Write	13
1-4	3
5-8	3
9-10	1
<b>Role in DWWDA</b>	
PA level committee member	13
Executive Board Member	4
Water Kiosk Keeper	3

**Benefits of DWWDA for its members and Dallocha community**

The establishment of DWWDA particularly benefited its members and Dallocha community through availing potable water services. More specifically, members get the benefits in increasing their knowledge on personal hygiene and sanitation, enhancing mutual support mechanism for themselves, facilitating awareness of women's right, and gaining leadership skills and knowledge and in increasing household income for those recruited as water kiosk keepers. The following table summarizes the responses of study participants when asked about DWWDA's benefit.

**Table 2. Benefits of DWWDA (n=24)**

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Number of study participant</b>
▪ Provided potable water service	24
▪ Benefited us to keep personal hygiene and sanitation	18
▪ Helped us to understand mutual support	20
▪ Increased our feeling of sisterhood	20
▪ Helped us to know about women rights	19
▪ Enabled us to have leadership skill and knowledge	7 (all executive board
▪ We are benefited from DWWDA to solve problems.	members and water kiosk
	keepers)
▪ Enabled us to earn monthly honorarium	3 (water kiosk keepers)

## **Accessing potable water service**

Accessing potable water service is DWWDA's first and foremost benefit for its members and the Dallocha community. All study participants value the existence of DWWDA for its great contribution in managing and supply of potable water. Key informant from local Wereda Officials also indicated that DWWDA helped the larger community through providing pure tap water service in sustainable manner, which makes the benefit enormous.

As explained by the local Wereda official, unlike the previous water service which was only 14% coverage, the water project managed by DWWDA provides the water service for more than 80,000 people in 16 Peasant Associations (PA). According to recent data from the Wereda Administration Office (2005), the water service coverage reached to 50.4%. Currently, like most urban centers of the country, Dallocha communities are using pure tap water service. Apart from consumption, most members of DWWDA use the water service to produce vegetables and fruits in their backyard. Kedija puts accessing potable water as number one benefit. She said:

Previously, I did not have any means to use clean tap water. Since my place of residence is very far from Dallocha town, I had to travel for more than three hours to reach Dijo River and fetch 10 liters of water in my back particularly during seasons when all village ponds dry up. Fetching water was tiresome and of course the water was not clean. But now, thanks to AAE, I have DWWDA. The association provides potable water next to my door. As a woman I know how I am relieved from labors task of fetching water from distant areas. I think it is a huge benefit.

## **Better Hygiene and sanitation**

Accessible potable water supply provides better hygiene and sanitation for members of the community. This study confirms that accessing pure potable water at their village enable the whole community in general and members of DWWDA in particular to experience better hygiene and sanitation. The head of the Wereda Health Office indicates that, waterborne diseases decreased significantly in the Wereda since the establishment of tap water service. According to the Wereda Health Office current statistics, waterborne diseases ranked to the fifth place. He goes saying that:

Five years before, waterborne diseases were the first health problem followed by malaria. Since the community had no alternative than ponds and river water sources for drinking purposes, it was a big challenge for the community and health service providers. But now, thanks to AAE and DWWDA, Dallocha community is using clean water and observed significant changes in decreasing waterborne diseases.

Fatuma also described her increased practice of hygiene and sanitation due to the existence of potable water service near to her village as follows:

Previously, taking care of personal hygiene (cleaning and washing clothes) was unthinkable. Since fetching water is very labors, household members were conscious to use water only for food preparation and drinking. Whenever we want to take bath and wash clothes we had to go to the river. But now, fetching water is not a problem. I do not worry to use water for keeping kids clean or to wash clothes....

## **Increased Mutual Support among members**

The fact that the women are organized in groups has helped to develop mutual support mechanisms. Beyond their ownership and management status of the project, being organized

as a women Association increased the women's sense of solidarity, which in turn has enabled them to gain comfort, share information on various social issues, and support each other in times of happiness and sorrow. Every PA-level Water Committee has established a mutual support committee responsible to collect extra money from members that can be used for supporting each other. Samira explained the situation as follows:

Some years ago, I lost my mother. That incident was critical to my family and me. I was very sad and grieved a lot. In that critical moment, it was DWWDA members who were taking care of every matter related to food preparation and taking care of my guests. My neighbors were surprised about the belongingness and sisterhood of DWWDA members during this difficult time to me. Moreover, members contributed some money, which was vital in covering some of my expenses.

### **Increased Awareness, Leadership and Problem Solving Skills**

The capacity building activities facilitated by AAE at the commencement of the Association and after its establishment helped members to increase their awareness of women rights. Informants from local Wereda officials also appreciated the effort of AAE in establishing a pioneer women association in the Wereda to engage in such community affairs. All study participants confirmed that the trainings were relevant and helped them to understand, articulate their problems, prioritize their needs and solve problems. Above all, capacity building training on gender issues helped them to understand the communities' perception and attitude towards women from a gender perspective.

DWWDA members are consciously working not to fail. For them, failure of managing the water project conforms to the larger societal perception that belittles their ability. As a result of their understanding of bias of the society, they are committed to demonstrate

women's capacity in the process of problem solving, managing, and leading of the water project. Zaida puts the role of DWWDA in enhancing her capacity as follows:

Before I joined the association, my role was limited only in domestic responsibilities and in a woman *Iddir*<sup>2</sup>. I never had a vision of leading a big project like DWWDA, let alone my husband and the rest of my family. I didn't recognize my existence as something of worth in the production process. I was just a woman, dependent on household resources. I was afraid of even talking in front of my husband. But now, after I joined DWWDA I am in a position of discussing various issues concerning the project and capable of expressing my idea in big public gatherings surrounded by many men.

Study participants also indicate that the literacy program launched at the commencement of DWWDA by AAE enabled members to read, write and record the water kiosk activities. Currently, members are capable of analyzing the correlation between education and better social and economic status of women. The awareness-raising packages enabled members to change their prior perception about themselves as unable of dealing with small issues. Their involvement in managing the water project enabled them to consider themselves as project leaders. Shukrite described the process as follows:

At first when I was participating in women group meetings, I was doubtful as to women's ability in managing community projects. Whenever Actionaid's development workers gather us to discuss about the idea of bringing women in the leadership of the water project, I used to say Hey women, do we really have the capacity to manage this huge project? But thanks to AAE staff and some of my friends, I am able to read and

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<sup>2</sup> Social institution organized by the communities for support in death of members and their families.

write, took various trainings to feel assertive and now I am working as water kiosk keeper. I record the daily water sale and report to the Coordination Office weekly.

In addition to accessing potable water service by enhancing members' awareness and capacity to manage the water project, 40 women are recruited to work as water kiosk keepers and earn a monthly honorarium. Although the number of DWWDA members who get employment opportunities with the association is small compared to the total members, it shows that DWWDA is contributing in creating jobs for women.

## **Decision-Making of DWWDA Members in the Household and Community Level**

### **Household Decision-making**

Household decision-making is the ability to control the use of available household resources such as financial and material assets. It is an indicator of gender equality and a level of empowerment in which both sexes can practice the decision-making right in the process. The Dallocha community, households are not organized as a nuclear family. According to AAE (1998, p. 11) households are formed on the basis of patrilocal residence in which members of the male line of the family establish a compound and live together. Moreover, household resources such as land and cattle are transferred through the male line, which excludes female from property ownership and decision-making. Thus, the practice of patrilineal inheritance system prevails among the Dallocha community. The belief and practices of inheritance process through male line excludes women from taking part in household decision-making process from their family since they are going away to another family system, i.e., to husband's place. Even after marriage, women are considered as an outsider since they are brought into husband's place. As a result of this perception and practice, women have little say and do not fully practice their decision-making right in key household resources. Moreover, Dallocha community practices polygyny in which a man based on his economic status, marries more than one wife. This cultural practice also contributes in limiting women's power to participate in decision-making process.

### **DWWDA Members' in Household Decision-making Process Prior to their Membership to DWWDA**

The study attempts to explore the rationale that prevents Dallocha women in involving household decision making equally with their male counterparts. Consequently, study

participants attribute the reason to the existing highly institutionalized patriarchal belief and practices manifested in the social value attached to men's work which gives them to have control over important household resources. Moreover, women are socialized to respect and abide by the norms and values of the society, which excluded them from property ownership and exercising decision-making rights.

The decision-making pattern at household level was based on the norms and values of the larger social setting that places men to make important decisions at household due to their perceived role as the major producers, their position as head of family and breadwinners.

Prior to their involvement in DWWDA, most study participants made decisions only on purchasing daily consumption goods, selling dairy products and poultry products. They had more autonomy in making decisions to participate in traditional women mutual support groups such as spiritual/ritual ceremonies, informal saving, and food preparation in occasions of mourning. However, making decisions on other key household issues/resources such as purchasing bigger assets, borrowing money from informal and formal institutions, land renting, storing and selling grains, selling small and big livestock, children's education and children's marriage were exclusively assumed to be men's domain.

Saniya described the pattern of decision-making process at household level prior to her involvement in DWWDA:

Before I joined DWWDA, my husband takes produced grains and livestock to the market without my consent. I have no role in determining what amount of grains for sale and for household consumption. Moreover, I had no idea how much money he generates from selling and it was on his mercy even to get some money to purchase some items of consumption goods. My husband did every thing that requires

decisions. He rather discusses what to do with his parents than me. That was how I was living. That is how things were based on the norms and values of the community...

**Table 3. Pattern of Household Decision-making on Important Household**

**Resources/issues prior to their Involvement in DWWDA**

<b>Women make decision alone</b>	<b>Women make decisions jointly with their husband</b>	<b>Husband make the decision</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Purchasing daily consumption goods (such as oil, kerosene, salt, and sugar, vegetables... Butter)</li> <li>-Selling poultry products</li> <li>-Selling of diary products</li> <li>-Attending social ceremonies (iddir, rituals, iqqub..)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchasing clothe for household members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Purchasing big assets (small animals, cattle, land...)</li> <li>-Education of boys and daughters</li> <li>-Marriage of children</li> <li>-Marriage of husband (polygyni)</li> <li>-Using birth control</li> <li>-Storing food crops</li> <li>-Storing cash crops</li> <li>-Selling of grains</li> <li>-Selling of small livestock sheep and goats</li> <li>-Selling of big livestock (cow, ox)</li> <li>-Renting or selling land</li> <li>-Borrowing money (formal, informal)</li> </ul>

**DWWDA Members' in Household Decision-making Process after their Membership to DWWDA**

Although the study did not assess major transformation in the pattern of household decision-making, informants indicated that their involvement in managing DWWDA helped them to expand their decision-making role concerning household resources and issues.

Increased decision-making power is observed in household expenditure and assets, children's education, and use of contraceptives.

First current government policy particularly in recognizing women's right in land ownership has created favorable condition for women to have better say in ownership of household assets/resources. Members' of DWWDA are able to decide jointly with their husbands on household resources such as storing and or selling grain for consumption and selling or buying of livestock in which they previously had little say. However, there is still long way to go in exercising and ensuring their household decision-making rights. Nonetheless, study participants and informants at local Wereda offices assert that the shift in relative decision-making power at the household level is the highest achievement compared to their past experience prior to their membership in DWWDA.

Asma reflects on how the norms and expectations of the larger society affected her involvement in decision-making process and her strength in challenging traditional societal perceptions:

I am socialized in an environment where males are the ones who should decide. I am expected to obey the norms and values of my community and live accordingly. I should behave and act to fulfill the social. I had no choice than obeying what my parents decided before I get married and my husband afterwards. However, after I joined DWWDA and became a member of the Executive Board, I learned that I have a right to be involved in every household issue and to express my opinion. Unlike the previous period, I am in a position to say 'no' whenever my husband intends to sell important assets/resources without my consent. Whenever he wanted to do something by his own, I politely argue with him to convince him by pointing out what is best for

the family. Although his peers tease at him by saying submissive to his wife he realizes that my comments and suggestions are valid. Currently, he has confidence in my suggestions. Since the last two years, I can say I have better experience in household decision-making processes than ever before.

In addition to an increased role in household decision-making processes, participants also indicate that they have gained more decision-making power concerning contraceptive use. Although AAE had worked in the area on family planning, the women were not in a position to use contraceptives without the knowledge of their husbands. Their involvement in DWWDA helped them to understand the dynamic relationship of large family size and poverty. As a result, they support each other in sharing the information and distributing contraceptives among themselves and other women who are not even members to their association.

Currently most members of DWWDA are working as peer community health educators in their village. During the interview process with head of Dallocha Wereda Health Office, it was learned that, in addition to their own personal use DWWDA members promote use of contraceptives even for non-DWWDA members. Zulfa indicates the process of her achievement in the use of contraceptive as follows:

Before I joined DWWDA, I had no opportunity to get information about family planning and use of contraceptives. I was also afraid of using it after I get some information from the chairperson of our PA Water Committee who had prior information about it. Since our community members value larger family size as an asset, I gave birth of eight children. Moreover, I was afraid that my husband could abandon me if I am not giving birth to more children. But, after I involved in

reproductive health trainings organized by AAE, I was able to share the issue with members boldly. In addition, I learned that some DWWDA members were using contraceptive without the knowledge of their husbands. As a result of my exposure and important information learned, I decided and started using contraceptives. Thank Allah otherwise I could have more than eight children...

DWWDA members' also show strong desire and commitment in sending their own daughters to education. Their involvement in the literacy program enabled them to take a firm position in educating their daughters. Most study participants realized that their status remained unchanged due to lack of education. For them education is one means to become economically independent. For this reason, their role in making decisions pertaining daughters' education is increased. Informant from the Wereda Education Office indicated that unlike previous time, number of girls attending primary and high school in the Wereda is increasing. In addition to the recent strategic direction of the government in increasing the number of primary schools for easy access and opening of a high school in the Wereda, the participation of DWWDA members in decision-making processes has brought significant change in their daughters' education. Study participants asserted that they do not want to compromise their daughters' education to confirm norms of the society that promotes girls marriage at the age of 13-14. Aziza explained how she values daughter education more than anything:

As a member of DWWDA, I attended the literacy program and learned how to read and write. Since then I decided to give every support to my daughters so that they can pursue their education than getting into early marriage as I did. Due to the negotiation capacity I developed through attending the various capacity building trainings, I

convinced my husband in sending our daughters to school. As a result, my elder daughter reached to grade 10. I am always at her side and advise her to give much of her time for study so that she can have her own job in one of the government offices.

Generally, members of DWWDA demonstrated their understanding of women's right to ownership and the importance of women's involvement in household decision-making. Here it can be said that managing community project enhances the empowerment level of DWWDA members in household decision-making processes. Although total transformation on the pattern of household decision-making is yet to come, members of DWWDA achieved important decision-making power on household resources, contraceptive use and motivated in educating girls. According to them their involvement in managing the water project made historical difference in their life and being owners and managers of the water project by itself is the biggest achievement.

**Table 4. Pattern of Household Decision-making on Important Household Resources/issues after Members' Involvement in DWWDA**

<b>Women make decision alone</b>	<b>Women make decisions jointly with their husband</b>	<b>Husband make the decision alone</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Purchasing daily consumption goods (such as oil, kerosene, salt, and sugar, vegetables... Butter)</li> <li>-Selling poultry products</li> <li>-Selling of diary products</li> <li>-Attending social ceremonies (iddir, rituals, iqqub..)</li> <li>-Using birth control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Purchasing cloth for household members</li> <li>-Storing food crops</li> <li>-Storing cash crops</li> <li>-Selling of grains</li> <li>-Selling of small livestock (i.e. sheep and goats)</li> <li>-Education of boys and daughters</li> <li>-Marriage of children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Purchasing big assets (small animals, cattle, land...)</li> <li>-Marriage of husband (polygyni)</li> <li>-Selling of big livestock (cow, ox)</li> <li>-Renting or selling land</li> <li>-Borrowing money (formal, informal)</li> </ul>

## **DWWDA Members in Community Decision-making Processes**

To understand their empowerment level from community dimension, the role of DWWDA members in community decision-making processes is assessed. For the Dallocha community, women's ownership and management of community resources was unimaginable prior to the existence of DWWDA. The study found out that it was impossible to recognize women participation in development activities outside their traditional role ascribed to them by the society.

Prior to DWWDA, women were not interested to take part in community meetings. Even though they attended because of the demand of external actors such as government offices and AAE, they usually took the corner of every meeting place and were only listeners of what men discussed. This was partly explained by the influence of the societal perception that supports men to make decisions on any community matters and women's conformity to the social norms without challenging the practice. Most women did not participate in controlling community development projects. However they did participate in women specific community mutual support groups. Rawda notes women's inferior position in community decision-making processes:

Before the establishment of DWWDA, I was a member of grain mill project, which was a woman specific project established by AAE. In the project, although women were organized as group and supposed to make important decisions, it was not successful like DWWDA. We were also doubtful in our ability as women to make decisions. Moreover, lack of skill in operating the grain mill machine was also one barrier for us to accept our inferior position.... Women were only listens what AAE staff and men committee members say and decide. I did not even have the courage to generate ideas.

After involvement of DWWDA in managing the water project, members have significant contribution in community level decision-making process. During the interview process, the enthusiasm and confidence of members in expressing their views was observed. According to participants the community dialogue process, which had been facilitated by AAE during the commencement of DWWDA, has brought significant change related to the societal perception towards women. Members of DWWDA exhibited a strong capacity in managing and controlling community resource for about seven years without major problems.

The dedication of DWWDA members shows women's strong concern and their leadership skills for a sustainable water supply. This does not mean that they are managing the project without challenges. However, whenever there was reported problem from PA Water Committees, the Executive Board in collaboration with the Coordination Office makes timely decisions in fixing those problems. Their demonstrated capacity in leading the water project has brought legitimacy to the Association and its members as able and competent members of the community. For this reason, local administrators at the PA and Wereda levels involve DWWDA members in consultation process on various social and economic issues. Regarding their representation in other community decision making processes, members of DWWDA indicated that some of them have occupied PA and Wereda level advisory councils, which is the highest level of citizens' representation in community level decision-making processes. Sumkte indicated her position in community level decision-making processes as follows:

...I am working as a member of the Executive Board. I am very proud of being a member of DWWDA. I have taken various training which AAE has provided. As a result, I am able to have relevant ideas pertaining development issues in general and

women issues in particular. I am not afraid talking in front of the public. I sometimes regret of my educational background, i.e. school dropout status...but what could I do ...although I am not educated; I am able to have courage to raise relevant issues in many public gatherings even in meetings where Zonal Level Government Officials are present. As a result, I am nominated to be member of the Wereda Advisory Council. I am working with many men and do not feel afraid as I did before joining DWWDA... Some study participants are working as members of PA level advisory committee with Keble officials.

In general, the study revealed that some of DWWDA members work with PA officials and as a member of Wereda level advisory committee. Their social visibility has increased as a result of their membership to DWWDA. Moreover, it is observed that local government officials recognized DWWDA members as capable of doing development activities. The achievement of DWWDA in managing the water project particularly after AAE's phase out has challenged the stereotypical thinking of the community, their family members, influential members and local officials who had major doubted on their capacity in leading the project. Informants from local government offices also indicate that DWWDA members are strong and aware of various development issues in addition to water service provision and uses DWWDA members in various committees established to undertake certain tasks. Informant from Wereda Health and Education Office said:

Whenever, the offices want to establish health and education committees at PA level, we demand the representation of DWWDA members' since they are empowered to express women's view and need related to health and education services....

## **Role and Status of DWWDA Members**

There are a peculiar roles and responsibilities for men and women in every society based on the specific socio-cultural settings. The gender analysis conducted by AAE (1998) shows that Dallocha women perform triple roles in reproductive, productive and social role. This study also assessed how participation in controlling the water project affected the role and status.

Members of DWWDA perceive their household activities as trivial. However, they are proud of their role related to managing DWWDA at PA and Executive Board level. DWWDA members perform important activities, which is identified as triple roles by Moser (1991) i.e. productive, reproductive and community activities. Regarding productive activities, although farming is generally considered as men's job in the community, DWWDA members are involved in every process of farming activities except in ploughing. DWWDA members also perform off-farm activities such as petty trading activities in local and surrounding markets. Moreover, forty members of DWWDA are recruited as water kiosk keepers by the Association to work and earn some amount of monthly salary. The fact that the educational background of most of DWWDA members is only reading and writing, none of them are able to join the formal work force, which is considered as one indicator of economic empowerment.

According to DWWDA members, all activities related to preparation of food, house and cloth cleaning, rearing children and taking care of the sick and the elderly, are the responsibilities of women and children. However, after the establishment of the water kiosks in their village, members of DWWDA indicated that there is significant change in attracting men to involve in fetching water for household consumption by using donkeys and manually operated carts. Regarding the change in the role of women, the study indicated that there is no

significant role change particularly in domestic activities observed over the past five years except men's involvement in water fetching which had been considered as women task.

**Table 5. Role of DWWDA members at household and community level before and after their membership to DWWDA (n=24)**

Household Level		Community level	
Before	After	Before	After
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Taking care of children (feeding, bathing, ..)</li> <li>▪ Food preparation</li> <li>▪ Cleaning (house, cloth..)</li> <li>▪ Fetching water</li> <li>▪ Collecting fuel wood (for household consumption)</li> <li>▪ Petty trading (milk products, cereals, vegetable...)</li> <li>• Caring for elders and the sick</li> <li>• Shopping of consumer items i.e. kerosene, salt, sugar</li> <li>• Assisting husband in all the cycle of farming ( weeding, harvesting time, transportation..)</li> </ul>	<p>No significant change in gender roles performed by DWWDA members except men's involvement in fetching water</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participating in mutual support group</li> <li>▪ Participating in Women Iddir</li> <li>▪ Participating in women specific ritual ceremonies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Started attending public gathering</li> <li>▪ Participating in PA and Wereda Advisory councils</li> <li>▪ Participating in various PA and Wereda level development committees</li> </ul>

As indicated in the literature review part of this paper, the 'Siliti' community where DWWDA exist is highly patriarchal society in which male dominance is manifested in placing men and women in different social positions. The study also explored study participants status at household and community level before and after their involvement in the association. Prior to their involvement in the association, the women accepted women's secondary position as natural and normal. Informants attribute their adherence to the subordination position to the socialization process in which they were taught to behave and act since their childhood. Accepting the lower social position has a lot to do with their lack of education and economic dependence. The fact that most members were married even without schooling, the economic situation of the larger community which largely depends on traditional farming system could not enabled them to get employment opportunity. Their economic dependence on their husband's family assets/resources coupled with their perceived roles as housewife responsible only reproductive activities contributed to their poor social status. As a result, members did not enjoy equal position with men at household and with in the community.

However, after their involvement in DWWDA, members of DWWDA show relative rise in consciousness about the existing inappropriate perception of women themselves and the larger society that promotes women's subordination in household and community level. Informants assert that they have better information and understanding about women's equal rights, which corresponds to changing their social position and equal decision-making ability in the household and community level. But, it may take long time to alter the overall societal beliefs and practices that undermine women's equal positions. The Coordinator of DWWDA explained the situation this way:

DWWDA members are operating in the existing larger social system that still undermine the equal rights of women in social, cultural and economic sphere of life. Although DWWDA as first women's association played vital role in challenging the existing wider perception about women, transforming the existing patriarchal relationship however requires comprehensive effort by all development actors working in the area....

Informants from local government offices also indicated that DWWDA's existence by itself is a big achievement for Dallocha women who were denied of exercising their equal social positions for centuries. According to officials, women were socialized to occupy the secondary position. Key informant from Zone Women Affairs Office, said:

As a member of 'Silti' community, I know how women are expected to behave and act based on the norms and values of the community that promotes male dominance. I can be a witness for the productive contribution of DWWDA members for the household and the communities' economy. But their role in production is not recognized and appreciated. Rather they are considered as dependent and consumer of what their men have. They are denied of their equal position in social, cultural and economic sphere. Women are considered as naturally assigned to domestic responsibilities. But DWWDA members disproved the deeply rooted perception of the society about women's position and ability. They are committed and my office uses them as role model for non-DWWDA members in the Zone...

As the findings of the study indicated, the existence and experience of DWWDA members in managing community project enabled them to develop confidence on women's capacity. The association is being seen as a model for other parts of Silti Zone in which

women's associations are not strong. The fact that Dallocha communities value patriarchal control in social, cultural, economic and political sphere of life, DWWDA's effort alone is not sufficient to transform it. This indicates that it is impractical to measure the empowerment of level of DWWDA members from the perspective of changing patriarchal norms.

### **Challenges of DWWDA in Managing the Water Project**

As a women association, involved in sustainable community water development and provision, DWWDA is the pioneer in the Region. It has maintained its legitimacy in providing the intended service to the community for more than five years. DWWDA also made significant contribution in the process of women's understanding of equal right related to decision-making process and transforming women's decision-making position relatively at household and largely in community level, which are key indicators to women empowerment. However, informants indicated some challenges that require strategic interventions to make the Association efficient and effective, including fostering members' empowerment in the social, psychological, economic and political sphere in particular.

The fact that members are proud of being part in DWWDA and perceived themselves as owners and managing body of the project, they feel that DWWDA did bring much to change their economic status except those who are recruited as water kiosk keepers and monthly meager honorarium. As a result, most members of DWWDA indicate lack of individual economic access as major challenge. Informants explain that DWWDA has sufficient income resources accumulated through selling water to the community. The finding of this study also confirms that DWWDA didn't do much in empower its members economically, though it is clearly stipulated in its bylaws. The following case demonstrates member's concern related to economic empowerment:

I am working as one member of the Executive Board for the last many years. I am very proud of my membership to DWWDA and my role as a member of the Executive Board. I am proud because I have better say in my village and at Wereda level. But, I didn't get any opportunity to enhance my economic status which some times challenge my commitment. Of course 178, women own DWWDA's assets and we are the leader. We are also able to provide important service to the community. Although I have better say and get respect from the public, I am still poor...

The issue of economic empowerment is also a concern for most DWWDA members working at all level. During the focus group discussion, it is learned that members of DWWDA indicated their desire to be involve in income generating activities in addition to their responsibility in managing the community water project. The interview with the Coordinator of the Association also reveals that DWWDA is not yet able to empower its members economically. As she explains:

After AAE phase out from the Wereda, DWWDA focused its energy to maintain the water provision for the community. We are committed to demonstrate the project is not a failure case because of it women leadership. At the time we developed strong confidence in managing the project and try to engage in members' economic empowerment, the water system failed from its source and cost DWWDA more money to change the machine. Some time over the last years after we gained confidence in managing the project there was a discussion among members to engage in economic empowerment. However, we encountered a failure in one of the generator, which had to be maintained and cost a lot to the Association. Again after we maintained the

failed generator and started our activity as normal, people from local Wereda administration came to take all the cash resources and the whole project from the Association by presenting different reasons. DWWDA spent some time in resolving the dispute with local Wereda Officials. DWWDA won the case through its member's strength and commitment by appealing at Regional Women Affair Office and Regional Bureau of Water. Currently, I am discussing with DWWDA executive board members, Wereda Women Affair office and agriculture office to get technical support in involving DWWDA members in any economic activities that can help them to enhance their household income....

According to the Coordinator, although DWWDA is generating income from selling water service to the community, it is not meant to use for other projects. Rather, DWWDA members had reached to consensus to reserve the money for maintenance of the water system. The fact that the water system is high tech, DWWDA is not certain on when and what type of damage they will face and how much the damage costs. As a result, currently DWWDA is not in a position to use its income to enhance the living situation of its members by creating other projects that can benefit individually.

Members also identify lack of appropriate skills and knowledge to operate the generators and work in maintaining the water system as another important challenge. For members, if they get skill training to operate those machines used by the water project, they will use this skill as a means of living. Moreover, it will give more confidence for them as owners and managers of the water project, who have the know how in operating the water system when it fails. As one informant indicates:

I think I can operate the generator if I am given appropriate skill training. As I am observing when our technicians maintain the water line, I question why women cannot do that....

Moreover, members of DWWDA are highly concerned about the increasing fuel price without equivalent rise to the water charge. Based on previous experience in raising the water charge, is a big challenge in convincing the community.

## **Discussions and Implications to Social Work Profession**

### **Discussions**

Members of DWWDA exhibited leadership ability in managing the community water project in a sustainable manner since 1998. As a result of their involvement in owning and managing the water project, there observed significant change in their personal perception about themselves as capable of participating in leading projects that have direct and indirect influences in their own life. Members of DWWDA are confident of their Association that enabled them to show their capacity to the public beyond their domestic responsibility, which had been perceived and recognized as their natural space to occupy. Although the findings of the study confirm relative psychological empowerment of members of DWWDA as a group, during the interview process it is observed that there are significant individual variations. Accordingly, members of the Executive Board who are involved in high-level management exhibit notable confidence than those working as water kiosk keepers or members of PA level Water Committee. This is mainly explained by the involvement of the executive board members in various community meetings and workshops organize by different local Wereda level offices and DWWDA.

The ability and endurance of members of DWWDA in managing the water project contributes in challenging the stereotypical beliefs and practices of all development actors that confirm and operate without considering the power dynamics between men and women. DWWDA's competence to function well without major challenges for about seven years disproves the larger social perception, which presumes men as superior who deserve holding key decision-making power in household and community level. The fact that DWWDA members are part and parcel of the larger socio-cultural settings of Dallocha community, it

doesn't mean that they are totally emancipated from the existing gender biased beliefs and practices.

However, members of DWWDA showed better involvement in household and community level decision-making processes, which has been unthinkable some years back in the community. With regard to household decision-making process, findings of this study confirm that members of DWWDA are in a better empowerment process in having equal say with their husbands on daughters' education and using contraceptives. Moreover, the finding indicates that members have started negotiating and express their views in household income expenditure for consumption and asset building.

In addition to household decision-making, members of DWWDA have greater role in community level decision-making processes. As a result of their strength, and demonstrated capability in managing the community water project, DWWDA obtained notable recognition from local Wereda officials. Some members of DWWDA are represented in key community level decision-making spaces particularly in PA and Wereda level Advisory Councils. This indicates that the process enabled DWWDA members to increase their visibility in social spaces, which is the major indicator to social empowerment.

DWWDA members are able to expand their control on important group asset/resources, which have been remote to women's control. The existing resources are gained from AAE during the commencement of the water project and generated from selling of water services to communities. During the interview process with Zone and Wereda officials, it is observed that DWWDA have better status compared with other local associations. This is mainly because of their ownership of physical and financial resources/assets.

However, the group ownership of resources has brought no significant advantage to members' individual economic empowerment. As explained in the literature review, economic empowerment is believed to facilitate the emancipation process from the existing patriarchal norms and values. The bylaw of DWWDA clearly indicates to use the income generated through selling of water to other development projects that can benefit members directly or indirectly after prioritizing the amount of income source needed to maintaining the water system (DWWDA, 1996).

DWWDA's cash resources available at the moment are not being used to benefit members by designing different projects as envisaged originally to enhance their skills and support income generating abilities to its members. Here, caution needs to be made in redirecting present cash resource of the Association for the purposes mentioned above. Such decision should be based on sound business planning, which is beyond the scope this paper. Not only running such high-tech project does require a resource base for its day-to-day operations of the system (maintenance, salaries, fuel, etc.), but also preparations for future major replacements to some of the project equipment such as generators, pumps, pipes, major repair to reservoirs, etc.

The central point is that DWWDA can still play key role in promoting women specific projects through its minimal share and members' contribution linked to other development initiatives undertaken by government and non-governmental organizations in the Wereda and elsewhere. DWWDA also made no considerable effort to equip members with relevant maintenance and generator operating skills. As the finding indicates, lack of important machine operating skills hinder members of DWWDA from being recruited as technicians in

the association. DWWDA's gaps in the process of economic empowerment seek strategic intervention to enhance the living situation of its members.

The findings of the study also indicate that members are aware of their social, economic and political rights as equal partners to their male counterparts at household and with in the community. During the interview process it is learned that DWWDA's demonstrated ability challenges the existing social beliefs and practices that undermine women position. However, the existing deeply rooted socio-cultural beliefs and practices that promote male dominance still become an impediment to transforming the existing social relationships that reinforces the subordinate position of women in role and status. Here, it is important to consider the impact of the larger socio-cultural environment on the empowerment process, which limits DWWDA member's potential only to manage the water project.

### **Implications to Social Work Profession**

The result of this study provides unique experience of rural women in managing community project as a route to their empowerment. The experience of DWWDA for about seven years exhibits real possibility of challenging patriarchal beliefs and practices in which women were not allowed to come in to leadership position of community matters. Currently, DWWDA manages resources such as huge water system, which includes cash resources collected by selling water to the community, generators, pumps, pipes, reservoirs, and water selling point kiosks. Beyond managing and controlling the water service provision in a sustainable manner, the process has enabled members of the Association to develop their personal confidence, increase their social visibility in involving other community

interventions and increased their decision-making power in key household issues and resources relative to their prior status.

DWWDA's institutional strength provides greater legitimacy for its members. The capacity building processes facilitated by AAE at the commencement of the association is the major factor contributed in enhancing members' awareness about the belief and practices of their community, which has greater impact on their life directly or indirectly. However, members of DWWDA are not in a position to control the socio-cultural and economic circumstances fully. This calls the necessity of intervention focusing on the interactive process of individuals with their socio-cultural and economic environment. The social work profession envisages the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of individuals, groups and communities, through promoting social welfare policies and practices both at micro and macro level. Thus, it is vital to look in to the policy and practice situation of the country in which DWWDA is operating and its implication for the emerging profession.

In Ethiopia, women constitute half of the total population and have significant contribution in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the country. In spite of their contribution, Ethiopian rural women are not in a position to attain economic resources and social positions equally, relative to their men counterparts (MOFED, 2005). To reduce women's vulnerability and discrimination, the country showed its commitment through establishing institutional frameworks and policy documents. Accordingly, the Ethiopian women policy, issued in 1993 aims at ensuring gender sensitive interventions to change the unequal position of women in the country. To this effect, various Efforts are being made and the government has institutionalized the social, economic and political rights

of women by creating appropriate structures in government offices and institutions (WAO, 1998).

The recent Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (MOFED, 2002) also included gender as a cross cutting issue across all sectors and identified key gender indicators to ensure women's equal participation in the socio-economic development and accessing key resources of the country. In addition to the policy environment, various governmental and non-governmental organizations are making tremendous effort to alter the vulnerability and subordination of women in every sphere of life. The effort of AAE in establishing Dallocha Women Water Development Association is worth mentioning.

Here, it can be asserted that had it not been the firm position of AAE in persuading influential people (the elderly) and local administrators that women can lead a project if they are capacitated to have important leadership skills and knowledge, Dallocha community could not allowed DWWDA to come in to existence. However, as the qualitative findings of this particular study indicates, the practice of organizing women group and working with them has yet to recognize importance of targeting the larger social, cultural and economic environment in which women are living.

As indicated in the theoretical framework of this study, women's empowerment requires the change in patriarchal norms in which women subordination and marginalization is created and reinforced. Enhancing the overall wellbeing of women requires addressing the root causes that hinder women from enjoying equal status and welfare relative to men. In the process, both men and women should be included.

Thus, the social work profession can contribute in the process of effective women empowerment in a number of ways. First and foremost, it can contribute in contextual

knowledge formation through promoting action research. Through knowledge formation process, the profession can contribute in developing relevant women empowerment indicators from Ethiopian context. This will help policy makers and practitioners to understand the socio-cultural environment, exploit the existing coping mechanisms of the community, which has helped in maintaining the social cohesion. Second, the profession can help those who are currently working with women to have important tools and techniques to the practical application and implementation of existing policies. Moreover, in working with women individually or in-group setting practitioners will benefit from the profession in understanding women problem with in the context of the larger environment (Compton, Galaway & Cournoyer 2005). Social work practice widely uses the empowering approach that promotes the interactive nature of individuals and environment by focusing on the strength of the client system (Compton, Galaway & Cournoyer, 2005, p. 39; Kettunen, Poskiparta & Liimatainen 2001).

As a result, practitioners will benefit from the profession in enabling the women group in developing skills and knowledge for making changes on their own life and their community. Moreover, the social work profession contributes in the process of linking them to important resources that are available in their environment and in the process of advocating on behalf of them. In order to fill the gaps of DWWDA in the empowerment process of its members, the coordination office can make use of Social Work professionals as important means to ensure the wellbeing of its members holistically.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

The finding of this study leads to make two broad conclusions regarding the importance of involving in managing community project in the empowerment process of DWWDA members.

First, the study makes strong case on the contribution of DWWDA beyond water service delivery in increasing its members' decision-making power relative to their prior experience as subject than active participant at the household and in community level. In focusing the household decision-making process, members of DWWDA increased their decision making power in daughters' education & using contraceptives. Members also have started negotiating and express their views in household income expenditure for consumption. However, there still exist important variations in the nature and extent of resources that women have control. Thus, women have yet to involve on decision-making processes in purchasing and selling bigger assets such as ox, cow and renting land.

Although their visibility in social spaces increased in representing in other community matters, they still occupy the secondary position relative to men. This is mainly explained on the existing socio-cultural structure that builds and shapes the identity and status of women. However, the existence and achievement of DWWDA demonstrated the possibility of challenging the beliefs and practices of the community, which provides decision-making power to men. Here, it is important to assert that women's demonstrated achievement and capacity in managing community project alone cannot transform the patriarchal beliefs and practices easily. This requires additional important interventions designed to address the

cultural and normative context of Dallocha community in which DWWDA members are part and parcel.

Second, the findings of this study demonstrated the importance of coordinated and comprehensive interventions towards achieving the overall women empowerment. Organizing women in Association, increasing awareness on various socio-cultural beliefs and practices which perpetuate women subordination, women, building the management and leadership skill and availing important resources could be step forward but are not sufficient alone. Here it is imperative to mention the need to include the capacity of members of DWWDA with relevant technical skills and knowledge to operate machines and maintain the water system as vital step. Moreover, working towards their economic empowerment is vital which have direct implication to sustainable development.

### **Recommendations**

Following the above analysis that DWWDA needs to consider, the following recommendations are forwarded.

- Involve in a comprehensive sensitization program for Dallocha women and men to address and transform the broader patriarchal beliefs and practices of the community through involving both men and women irrespective of their age and status;
- Engage in expanding its members skills and knowledge in water system maintenance and machine operation to get access to employment opportunity in their association;
- Design relevant programs based on the need and capacity of members and link them with important resources that are available in their environment in order to enhance their economic empowerment;

- Create effective networking with local and regional governmental and non-governmental organizations to facilitate effective empowerment process;
- Engage in community dialogue to create better understanding of women equal rights and in transforming patriarchal norms.

Finally, further participatory action research should be carried out to further investigate the sustainability of the association in water service delivery processes and its impact on the overall community living situation.

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## **Annex 1. Interview guide/Checklist**

This checklist/ interview guide is prepared to gather qualitative data from DWWDA members with the objective of assessing the contribution of involving rural women in community water management to the empowerment process with particular reference to Dallocha Women Water Development Association (DWWDA).

### **I. For members of DWWDA**

#### **1. Background Information**

- Name
  
- Age
  
- Marital Status
  
- Educational background
  
- Family size
  
- Occupation if different to farming
  
- Role in the association

#### **3. Role of members at household and community level**

- What was your major role before joining DWWDA?
  - At household and community level
  
- Is there any role change after becoming member of DWWDA?
  - At household level
  - At community level
  
- When compared your role before and after joining DWWDA, what is your perception about it?

#### **4. Status Related**

- Your status at household and community level prior to joining DWWDA

- If there are improvements on self-perception (self confidence, decision making ability.) and community attitude (respect, social position) towards members to DWWDA, what are the reasons?

**5. Household resource ownership and Decision-making**

- Ownership status to resources prior and after being member to the association
- Do you personally use any land or property (for farming/livestock/trading e.t.c
- Who is traditionally allowed to inherit land/property or other assets and why?
- When decisions are made regarding the following aspects of household life, who is normally takes the decision?
- Matters that you personally most involve in decision-making?

Household resources  
Before DWWDA

After  
M W

DWWDA  
M W

- To what degree do you feel you can make your own personal decisions regarding these issues?
- How do you rank your decision making level by using the following matrix at household level

Resources	Who make decisions			
	Make decision by my own	Make decisions jointly with my husband	Husband make decisions	Never make decision by myself

- Then how do you assess your decision-making power?
- How do you assess your decision-making power/do you think you have equal say in decision making like your husband or male child?

#### 6. Decision making at Community level

- Issues that requires your decision making right in the community (list)
- Do you participate in any community activities designed by other NGOs/government?
- Who makes the main decisions about public services in your community?
- Can you give one community activity which you have involved in decision making process, how do you describe the process
- Issues that affect your decision making power (Individual, family and community level)

#### 7. Challenges of DWWDA and recommendation

- Gaps of DWWDA particularly in empowering women
- What do you suggest to DWWDA to enhance the well-being of its member

## **II. Interview guide/Check list for local officials**

### **1. Personal Background**

- Name
- Position
- Years of experience in the position

### **2. Benefits of DWWDA to its members and the larger community**

- What benefits does DWWDA has to its members and the larger community
- Role of Dallocha women prior to the existence of DWWDA
- Status of Dallocha women before the establishment of DWWDA
- Is there any change in the gender relation of Dallocha community after the establishment of DWWDA
- Involvement of women in decision making process of household matters
- Involvement of women in community activities prior to DWWDA's existence
- Do women have equal participation level in community development interventions after the establishment of DWWDA
- Do the community recognizes women's participation in community decision making process as important as men
- Do Dallocha women decide in any household matters by themselves
- Have you encountered when women participate in decision making at community development interventions
- Is there any evidence that shows the empowerment of Dallocha women

- How do you rank the achievement of DWWDA comparing with other local community based institution
- Gaps of DWWDA
- What was your General thought about DWWDA?
- How do you rank the existence of DWWDA in empowering Dallocha women
- What suggestions do you have for DWWDA to enhance the well-being of its member socially, economically and culturally

**Declaration Letter**

I, Meseret Kassahun, confirm by my signature that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have duly acknowledged.

Name of Student: Meseret Kassahun

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Advisor: Alice K.Johnson Butterfield

Signature\_\_\_\_\_