



**COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**CENTER FOR GENDER STUDIES**

**Ethiopian First Lady's Contribution to Women Empowerment**

**BY**

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

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**APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS:**

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## **Abstract**

*This study explored the First Lady's contribution to the advancement of women in Ethiopia. A purposive sampling technique and qualitative research design were used as a major study tools to identify respondents and share their perspective and experience. the former Ethiopian First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye was key informant and the other participants from the FDRE justice legal system research institute, the House of Representative (from women and children affairs standing committee), OAFLA, the OFL of FDRE and selected and participated. Semi-structured interview was used as data collection instrument and the study was supported through secondary and primary data sources. Thematic analyses using triangulation was used to refine data. The findings indicate that Ethiopian First Ladies' role has not recorded and no more influential as the history of the previous Ethiopian Empresses (they had crowned that make them to have authorized position in a country) because of legitimacy gap. In Ethiopia, the name of the 'First Lady' has derived from the Western countries since 1995 while Regina Abelt (wife of the former President Dr. Negasso Gedida) referred as the first Ethiopian First Lady. There is no legal background to be 'First Lady' and it has given through a common sense. The boundaries of the First Lady cannot be known and her duty and responsibility has not defined officially. However, the role of First Lady is created by her and contributes her unique position to improve women and children's capacity but her contribution has not been known at the broader public realm. In 2013, the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia the office of the First Lady has established during the reign of the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye. All programs that undertaking by of the office has its significant to the Ethiopian women's empowerment and address the national gender issues. the major challenges of the First Lady are due to undefined role, stakeholders are not comfortable to work together due to unclear jobs descriptions (Undefined role); she does not have a government supported budget to recruit a technical advisor and professional experts (Scarcity of resources); because of her educational and personal experience she struggles to choose government's prioritized initiatives (Personal Attributes); and first Lady's agenda can be criticized or demeaned by political opponents – thus obstructing her ability to effectively influence change (Public and political environment). Nevertheless, the First Lady's role can bring a tectonic shift in women's empowerment and gender issues if its scope can be expanded and persisted especially if it is supported through an official legal provision with full autonomy.*

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>AU</b>	Africa Union
<b>AUC</b>	Africa Union commission
<b>BLP</b>	Better Life for Rural Women Program
<b>CCP</b>	Corruption Crimes Proclamation
<b>EWFINNL3</b>	Ethiopian World Federation, Incorporated NegusaNegust Local3
<b>FCSP</b>	Federal Civil Servants Proclamation
<b>FDRE</b>	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
<b>FSP</b>	Family Support Program
<b>GFLA</b>	Global First Ladies Alliance
<b>HE</b>	Her Excellency
<b>HoR</b>	House of Representatives
<b>JLSRI</b>	Justice Legal System Research Institute
<b>FMoFED</b>	Federal Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
<b>FMoH</b>	Federal Ministry of Health
<b>OAFIA</b>	Organization of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS
<b>OFL of FDRE</b>	Office of First Lady of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNAIDS</b>	United Nations of AIDS
<b>USA</b>	United States of America



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## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In Ethiopian history, the word of 'Majesty' was the symbol of royal title that has been referred to a king or Queen. A name of Queen has had a supreme power. As (Biseswar I., 2011) cited Pankhrust, Markakis, and Bahru on her dissertation paper "Dynastic marriage was a historical practice in the country among the rulers, kings and emperors of medieval Ethiopia where marriages were arranged among different religious or fighting groups to build solidarity, ease tensions, create alliances among warring nations, define levels of cooperation among states". It implies, dynastic marriage was a system to find a win-win solution through marriage. The wife of royal family could share a power with her royal title of 'Queen' which has created alliances among the other side. It means, the name of 'Queen' had recognized by societies and entitled with a power for the wife of a king, then she had a supreme power to advise her husband to sustain and keep a monarchical system from generation to generation (by appoint her son to be a king) such as Queen Eleni, Seble wengel, Mintewab, Empress Taytu. They were contributed their special position to their country as well as the state of subjects. They have passed their legacy to the advancement of Ethiopian women. People has followed them as their leaders equivalent to their king (Tayitu is the best example).

After the annihilated of Monarchical system and substituted by military system (socialism ideology), the wife of Ethiopian leader had not any title (Queen or First Lady) for the couple of decades. For instance, the wife of Colonel Mengistu Haylemariam, Mrs. Wubanch Bishaw has not referred as the First Lady. During the transition period (which was the end of presidential system and the current ruling party become to the power), Ethiopia had not its First Lady or Queen for two and half years (the transitional charter was created the post of the president and prime minister of Ethiopia, Mr. Meles Zenawi and Mr. Tamirat Layne were respectively). From 1995 until 2001 the German citizenship, Regina Abelt became the First Lady of Ethiopia by virtue of her marriage to the then President Dr. Negasso Gedida. She is the first President's wife who has referred as the First Lady in Ethiopian parliamentary system. The title of the First Lady

has been practiced more and publicly known since the former First Lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin while her husband former Prime Minister Mr. Meles Zenawi has changed his power from president to FDRE prime minister that was vested by the FDRE constitution (it was adopted on 8 December 1994 and promulgated on 22 August 1995) to be the highest chief executive of the state.

Ethiopia has declared the national and international legal systems to improve the emancipation of women's right. To secure women's right through legal system, the constitution of Ethiopia has provided the "Right to Equality"; "Women's Right"; and "All international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of law of the land" on the article of 25, 35 and 9 sub article 4 respectively. Hence, Ethiopia has established women's machinery and practicing national and international measures to enhancing gender equality and narrowing the gender gap at all levels and at all political, economic and social spheres. However, the Ethiopian First Ladies' role not glorified as the history of Ethiopian Queens. First Ladyship is vital to support the national policies and strategies as well as the women's employment and gender equality in Ethiopia.

This study has explored the First Ladies' contribution to the advancement of women and gender equality in Ethiopia. The scope of this study has focused on the Ethiopian First Lady's contribution and her platform to perform her initiatives to the empowerment of Ethiopian women. The major purpose of the study is to reveal the First Lady's contribution to the advancement of women and gender equality in Ethiopia.

The study has emphasized to show the challenges of Ethiopian First Lady and its measurement to utilize her power properly for the improvement of national gender gap especially for the marginalized groups. It also focuses on the office of the First Lady which is trying to address the problems of women and children in Ethiopia.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the history of Ethiopia, multiple dynasties has passed. Each empire had had its history about its ruling systems, its people, and its kingdom. The Ethiopian history starts from the legendary female ruler, Queen Sheba since 3000 years ago. From the empire of Queen Sheba up to the end of monarchial system who was the king of Ethiopia, Emperor Haylesilassie in 1974, several women have administered their country both appointed as a Queen (behind their husband and son). In the Ethiopian history, women had power at different times in the country such as Meskel Kebra (zaguye dynasty), Queen Eleni (Solomon dynasty), Seblewengel, Del Wenbera, Mentwab, and Empress Tayu Betul were the successor and had the supreme power in the Ethiopian history. Their role has been transformed from traditional (domestic) role faraway even if women's right wasn't advocated in globally. Additionally, they were acted as politicians, Diplomats, Advisors, Militant leaders, and etc. (Rita Pankhurst, 2017).

Ethiopian queens were always influential and popular, accepted, and trustful by their people. Their role had officially announced while they publicly crowned. Then, they became to the throne behind their husbands. For instance, Rita P. stated that "A strong-minded woman, Taytu remained a close advisor to her husband through his reign. She provided a counter-balance to Minilik who, she considered was too trusting of the various foreigners intriguing at his court, and too eager to accept the innovations they wished to introduce"(Rita Pankhurst, 2017). This quote implies that, Taytu's power that has become by the title of "Queen" and it was deemed as an advisor of her husband's kingdom. Rita Punkrust also added that during the Wuchale treaty which was held in 1890, there was a dispute between Italy and Ethiopia as she explained that "on the basis of the Italian text, Italy claimed to have established a protectorate over all Ethiopia. At this point Taytu intervened, saying; 'we also have our dignity to preserve. But this shall never be'". Taytu as a Queen, she had power to decide on the political issues (to keep her kingdom's interest) as an administrator.

Since the end of monarchial system, the administration of Derg reign which has formed military government with socialist ideologies has been led by Colonel Mengistu Haylemariam who was the husband of Wubanch Bishaw. As a country leader's wife, Wubanch Bishaw hadn't a title of the First Ladyship. Since the establishment of FDRE the word of "First Lady" was employed as the name of Prime Minister's wife. After the current ruling party formed, four women were

referred as First Lady who is the wives of the Prime Minister (former First Lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin, former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye and the current First Lady Mrs. Zinash Tayachew) and the only Woman who was the wife of the President Dr. Negasso (Regina Abelt).

Despite the long history of the country where wives of leaders (kings and system to acknowledge and recognize their role; keep their career; authorize their position as residents) have played important roles in the national scene, however, since the First Ladyship announced in Ethiopia, Ethiopian First Ladies has not recorded history as the previous Ethiopian Queens and no more influential as the previous period. Even though, there is no legal background to be “First Lady” in Ethiopia. Consequently, it is difficult to identify how Ethiopia (in parliamentary system) has using the name of ‘First Lady’ for the spouse of Prime Minister and why it is shifted from the spouse of President to the spouse of Prime Minister (e.g. Regina Abelt, the wife of President Dr. Negasso). The name of ‘First Lady’ has not given by law. Ethiopian First Lady’s duty and responsibility is not clear and announced officially. According to Robert Watson (2000) classified the First Ladies performance into eleven fundamental duties: wife and mother; public figure and celebrity; nation’s social hostess; symbol of the state woman; palace manager and preservationist; campaigner; social advocate and champion of social causes; Prime Minister/Presidential spokesperson; prime minister/presidential and political party booster; diplomat; political and prime minister/presidential partner. These duties are undertaken by the First Ladies based on their performance. These has its significant contribution for the state development generally and society particularly but the Ethiopian First Ladies contribution has not recognized publicly. In Ethiopia, Literatures on the area of Ethiopian First Ladies’s contribution to women’s empowerment is limited. There is only the case study ‘the role without rule book’ that has published by the G.W. Bush institute (2017). It has tried to assess the role of the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye. It is focused and concerned to compare and contrast the history and experiences of the different First Ladies from 12 countries and selected five Continents. It is concerned on the impact of global First Ladies

The role of First Lady is created by her and she contributes her unique position to improve the capacity of women and children such as women empowerment, education and health. Nevertheless, the First Lady’s contribution has not been glorified and properly known on the

public. About the duties of First Ladies (WILLIAMS V. L., 2009) said that “Duties are essential not only because they are symbols of the First Lady, but also because they directly reflect upon the Prime Minister, and in turn, the nation.” On the contrary, For instance, according to Amina Mama (1995), First Ladies (women whose authority is derived from being married to powerful men) are sometimes femocrat while they operate fundraising from the national and international donors to their activities within the name of poor women and children. Their hidden power is make them to be femocrat or their role might be exposed to be corrupted persons. Sometimes, they also play the role to perpetuate their husbands’ reign through the network of women’s agency (they uses the women’s foundation for political purposes).

The role of the First Lady should have assessed and evaluated from the gender perspectives to promote her contribution for the people. Hence, this study has examined not only what Ethiopian First Lady does but also how she does or plays her role. It contributes to fulfill the gap of unstudied area about Ethiopian First Ladies. It also has showed the legitimacy gap on the role of First Lady and her attributes. It has revealed her activities and contribution regarding to Ethiopian women advancement and social affairs. The study also assessed the challenges of the First Lady and her office that has contributing to the advancement of women and what looks like the role of First Lady in Ethiopia. Finally, the study has put the intended measurement for her challenges.

### **1.3. General Objectives**

- To reveal the First Lady’s contribution to the advancement of women in Ethiopia.

#### **1.3.1 Specific Objectives reveal**

- To examine the role of First Lady through a gender lens.
- To understand the activities that the First Lady engages to enhance the capacity of Ethiopian women.
- To assess the challenges faced in executing the First Lady’s activities.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study has its significance to develop, promote, acknowledge, and advocate the contribution of First Lady in various initiatives such as the national gender gap and enhance the overall levels of women's leadership.

the study areas on the role of the First Lady has limited literatures. Some literatures has published for the fulfillment of dissertations paper in USA (First Ladies as a diplomat, First Ladies and Mass Media and the role of First Lady in politics). The American researchers have pointed on the history of the American First Ladies. In Africa, on the role of the First Lady: Femocracy or Democracy has studied by the Nigerian feminist Amina Mama. Her argument has focused on the Nigerian First Ladies particularly and on African First Ladies generally. However in Ethiopia, there is lack of literature book about the status of Ethiopian First Lady except the case study (role without rule). The researcher believed that it is important to show the forgotten research area for the other researchers; it is a unique perspective and able to add an inquire for Feminist studies and it helps as benchmark for feminist researchers, women's based rights advocates, and social science students.

In addition, this study attempts to inspire further researches on the subject of the role of the First Lady to the support of national policy and strategies as well as the advantages of socially marginalized groups.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

More specifically, this research intends to answer the following major research questions:

- What are the activities that the First Lady engages to enhance the capacity of Ethiopian women?
- What are the challenges faced in executing the First Lady's activities?
- Does office of the First Lady / the activities undertaken to promote gender equality?

## **1.6 Limitation of the study**

This study has its limitation due to lack of previous studied materials on the area of the research title, shortage of time and lack of budget. The other limitation is the former First Lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin's perspective has not included. She was requested to inquire her poses. Unfortunately, she did not volunteer to be interviewed.

## **1.7 Overview of Chapters**

This study has five chapters. The first chapter is introduction which has background of the study; statements of the problem, general and specific objectives; research questions; significance of the study and limitation of the study.

The other part of this study is review of relevant literature. It includes the origin of the title "First Lady"; theoretical framework; literature on the institution of First Lady which is review the global and African First Ladies forum. Under the global First Ladies' forum, the experience of USA has reviewed to show the role of American first ladies from western countries. From African experience, the experience of Nigeria and Ghana was stated which is related to this study's topic. Additionally, about former First Ladies of Ethiopia (Mrs. Azeb Mesfin and Mrs. Roman Tesfaye); the paradigm of Ethiopian noble women and their acceptance by people also has its significance for this literature reviews chapter. The third chapter is research design and methodology. It shows the part of study design, data sources, sample size and sampling technique, data collection method and data analysis. This chapter is structured in order to respond the research questions; its objectives and what seems the process of the research life cycle.

The fourth one is data presentation and discussion. It has two parts which shows both the findings and the discussion part. On the data presentation part, the characteristics of the respondents; the role of First Lady through a gender lens.; the First Lady's contribution for women's empowerment; the First Lady's office activities and its challenges; Ethiopian legal framework on the status of the first lady; and the role of the First Lady on gender equality are

included. On the part of the discussion, the finding of the study has discussed under the sub topics of the role of the First Lady and her responsibility; the First Lady's contribution for women's empowerment; the First Lady's office activities and its challenges; Ethiopian legal framework on the status of the first lady; and the role of the First Lady on gender equality. The final chapter is finalized through the conclusion and recommendations.

## **Chapter Two: Review of Relevant Literature**

### **2.1. The Origin of the Title “First Lady”**

The term First Lady was derived and announced from America’s media and it was first used in print in the March 31, 1860, issue of Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper in reference to Harriet Lane (1857-1861), the White House hostess for her bachelor uncle, President James Buchanan. But the title was not used in a speech until the arrival of Lucy Hayes (1877-1881), the first college graduate in that role and the first to join a president on an extensive national whistle-stop tour. She was referred to as First Lady by one Rev. Stuart Robertson, who was introducing her husband, Rutherford B. Hayes. The title has been in regular use since the young, attractive and wildly popular Frances Folsom Cleveland (1886-1889, 1893-1897) married Grover Cleveland in a White House wedding.

Increasing public interest in a First Lady’s activities reflected the mid-19th-century shift from the hostess and ceremonial duties to a more overtly political role. In the weeks before her husband’s inauguration, Mary Lincoln (1861-1865) was the subject of extensive newspaper analysis that addressed gossip about her. Correspondents covered her throughout the Civil War, and she received more press attention than all her successors combined. The coverage included everything from her work as a Union Army nurse to her self-defense against charges that she sympathized with the Confederacy to her inspection of new lifeguard methods at a beach to her review of Union troops. But the press did not cover Mrs. Lincoln’s abolitionist activities.

Only later did the First Ladies become publicly identified with large social issues. The Women’s Christian Temperance Union put pressure on the Bookish Lucretia Garfield Garfield (March September 1881), for example, and even on the invalid Ida McKinley (1897-1901) to support its movement against alcohol.

## 2.2. Theoretical Framework

Feminism is an ideology which seeks to have the principle that women should have political, economic, and social rights equal to those of men and reveal the systematic discrimination. It shows women's human and constitutional rights to be practice in the appropriated way. Feminist ideology persists that institution should recognize the claims of women for right (political, social and economic) equal to those possessed by male. It also advocates for equal rights for men and women in all spheres of life. "Feminist ideology means agitation for women's economic, social, legal, political, and educational rights which will lead to their empowerment vis-à-vis development"(Fatile et al., 2012). This study has looked the experience of Ethiopian First Lady's on the advancement of women in Ethiopia.

In the political arena, throughout the world, women face challenges to equal participation in political decision making processes. From feminist point of view, women may have a power at political level but they are scrutinized through systematically or deliberately. To understand the First Lady's life experience, this research has assessed the challenges, best practices, and First Lady's activities with compare and contrast from feminist/gender perspectives.

Therefore, Feminist Epistemology has employed to understand the status of the First Lady, and her responsibility and contribution to the enhancing of marginalized groups in Ethiopia. This framework has its efficacy to insight private and public dichotomy of the First lady. It also crux to understand the government's principle for the view of state First Lady's political aspects and her space to involve the state's priorities area (social, political and economic sphere). Additionally, feminist epistemology helps for this study to inquire how the First Lady's contribution can help the Ethiopian women and vulnerable groups such as children and what are the bottleneck that facing her while she undertake/d her initiatives within the patriarchal system as a woman and the bureaucratic of political system as a leader. It is also the best theoretical framework as Elisabete (2012) illustrated that "the central concept of feminist epistemology is that of a situated knower, and hence of situated knowledge: knowledge that reflects the particular perspectives of the subject" (Anderson E., 2015). In addition, Kumar (2013) cited Sharlene

Nagy's idea that "research conducted within a feminist framework is attentive to issues of difference, the questioning of social power, resistance to scientific oppression, and a commitment to political activist and social justice." And he also summarized his idea by Hesse Biber and Yaisers' pointed and said that "Mostly feminists conduct research for women. Whether it is by seeking knowledge from and about women in order to record their valuable life experiences, or to change women's lives through social policy, a feminist methodology aims at creating knowledge that is beneficial to women and other minorities. In this vein many feminists are social activists seeking to use their research to better the social position of women" (Kumar, 2013).

In the 1994 FDRE's constitution, Article 72(1) stated that "the highest executive powers of the Federal Government are vested in the Prime Minister and in the Council of Ministers". It shows that a Prime minister is personified symbol of a country and holds the executive administrative and governmental representation generally. A Prime Minister also, a chief diplomat who represents national interest in international issues. As a spouse of a Prime Minister, First Lady has also a great role to served diplomatic roles, either by accompanying the Prime Minister during official state visits, welcoming foreign summits, or by being the Prime Ministerial envoy or ambassador (Watson et al. 2009). It means, First Ladyship has shared some of the Prime Minister's role which has played in partially. Unfortunately, in the constitution of FDRE, there is no clear guideline for the role of First Lady. It is impossible to find the word of "First Lady" in the constitution. Sometimes, the successful role of First Lady has long been controversial due to the absence of constitutional clear guidelines. Most of all expects her to be with traditional role (domestic role, hostess and etc.) and criticized her when she becomes to public figures. Because, as she is not elected (JeeYun, 2014).

This study has conducted through the feminist epistemology to be aware of the Ethiopian First Lady's contributions and her perspectives. Data that has gathered on the Ethiopian First Lady's experiences as a woman and spouse of the country's prime minister with the knowledge of her contribution for the Ethiopian women. According to Elisabet, (2012) cited (Bergin, 2002); and (Lugones,1987) that "Feminist epistemologists question models of testimony as a transparent and unidirectional transmission of objective information, highlighting instead testimony's dialogic,

strategic, and empathetic features, as well as the importance and difficulty of cultivating epistemologically fruitful relations of mutual trust across differences in power” (Anderson E.,2015). Through primary and secondary data collection methods (including documents review), the researcher has constructed the knowledge of First Lady’s role and her platform and the major challenges of Ethiopian first Ladies with the paying attention for the gathering documents through the comprehensive questions about the role of First Lady, legitimacy gap, challenges and active initiatives of First Lady’s and her office contributions to address the marginalized group across Ethiopia. Hence, the feminist epistemology has its significance for the researcher to get the comprehensive knowledge of subject while data analysis process has conducted. Consequently, the study is carried out based on this theoretical view for the purpose of data collection, analysis and interpretation from the feminist perspectives.

During the analysis of this study, the Ethiopian First Lad’s contribution to women empowerment has theorized and interpreted her contribution in relation to the issues of the Ethiopian women and how can she understand their problems to improve their situations by analyzed the practical status/ roles of the First Lady through the feminist epistemology theory.

## **2.3. Literatures on the institution of First Lady**

### **2.3.1. Global First Ladies’ Forum**

Contemporary, First Ladies are empowering themselves through cooperation together in global and continental ‘First Ladies’ forum’. It is useful for the First Ladies personal perspective to be looked panorama (that can help them to look at out of their palace). For instance, if a First Lady plays traditional role such as hostess or spouse hood’s role, she might be show herself to contribute for the state or she will be spouse power lady. Globally, there are some organizations and partnerships working together with First Ladies around the world which has its group to develop a set of standards and best practices for women in the first ladies position. The George W.Bush institute is one of the pioneer organization which is setting its head office in USA. It developed and launched the Global First Ladies Initiatives to operate its mission that ‘supports

First Ladies, individually and collectively, in their efforts to advance positive change in their communities and around the world' (GFL, 2017). For instance, in 2009, Global First Ladies Alliance was founded by Core Neumann when she worked with research and policy organization in the RAND Corporation and when she was a PHD student. Neumann arguing that, many First Ladies in different parts of the world are expected by the government and society to be "public, polite and perfect advocates." She said that "I'd never thought about First Ladies before in my life, but I thought, if they're going to come all the way from Africa, we need to have more than a gala event". These kinds of forum or seminar's area can empower the First Lady's personal attributes and help to build her capacity or leadership style which is important for her contributes to the development of her countries such as being policy advocator, gender activist and advises to her husband. Core added that "We needed to hold a real, substantive conference, where we could allow first ladies to speak for themselves. I had an instinct that First Ladies were not being treated right that they were held to double standard" (women@forbes, 2017).

As Neumann, in Ethiopia also most people have not clear information about the First Lady's role. Her contributions are not yet known and glorified. Ethiopian First Ladies as a woman, they could understand simply about Ethiopian women because of women's lens due to their hidden power and they can provide vital positive change to improve on the issues of women's health, education, gender equality and equity, leadership and decision-making.

Therefore, to perpetuate these kinds of national prioritized issues by the First lady, the First Ladies' platform and national forum (members of association who could be participated and work together with the former First Ladies) also needed to improve the new comer First spouse's personal attribution, leadership skills and their technical assistances or staffs. For instance, GFLA with its vision believes that 'First Ladies are influential leaders'. Its mission, to support first ladies, individually and collectively (through consultation, create handbook for first ladies and train their senior advisors), in their efforts to advance positive change in their communities and around the world. It also advises the First Ladies on the capacity building in their offices, executive management, how to build a platform and leadership. It works with the former First Ladies of USA and UK such as First Ladies Laura Bush, Rosalynn Carter, Hillary Clinton, Michelle Obama, Sarah Brown and Cherie Blair to share their experiences.

African First Ladies also have their forum which have been established from 2002 and now it is 15 years old and called Organization of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS (OAFIA). It was founded in a meeting facilitated by UNAIDS with 37 African First Ladies in Geneva, Switzerland. Its objective is to be a united for Africa's most susceptible citizens -women and children living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. OAFIA is operating to achieve its vision of "An Africa free from HIV/AIDS, maternal and child mortality where women and children are empowered to enjoy equal opportunities".

OAFIA is working its jobs both by itself and through collaborated with AU to undertake AU's program which has focused on the young people, women and children. During its 15 anniversary year's published magazine, H.R Moussa Faki Mahamat (chairperson of the Africa Union Commission) has spent his message and acknowledged OAFIA's previous performance that involved in the area of maternal and children health through collaboration with AUC. He said that:

*"The AU and OAFIA have been collaborating to ensure AIDS and others related to maternal, neonatal, and child health in Africa remains high at the forefront of regional and global arenas"*  
OAFIA (2017).

He also appreciated OAFIA's 2017 theme 'Adolescents and youth-friendly health services'. He underlined the challenge of adolescent girls' health and access to services that are affected by HIV and how to prevent new HIV infections. He said that,

*"We applaud OAFIA for making their 2017 theme evolve around adolescents and their access to youth friendly services, since this is critical to harnessing the demographic dividend."*

First Lady of the republic of Malawi president of OAFIA (2015 to 2017) H.E. Dr. Gertrude Mutharika also pointed out her message on its magazine. As her speech, the African First Ladies

role is vital to advocate women's and child's health care and access to services in their country. She stated out that:

*“Guided by the OAFLA strategic plan 2014-2018, OAFLA members have not ceased to voice the health concerns of women and children. In the diverse project that African First Ladies run in their respective countries, they attend to these needs. They use regional and global forums to advocate for women and children to be improved access to health care.”*

She also said that OAFLA members are committed to advocate harnessing the demographic dividend of Africa such as adolescents and youth-friendly health services.

African First Ladies are diligently contributed their role to achieve their organization's (OAFLA) mission ('First Ladies of Africa for effective policies and strategies towards the elimination of HIV/AIDS, reduction of maternal and child mortality and the empowerment of women and children, through strategic partnerships in the spirit of solidarity'). They have designed strategic plan 2014 to 2018 which has five goals. The goals are:

1. Contribute to the national effort in preventing, managing and eliminating HIV/AIDS
2. Contribute to the national effort in reducing maternal, neonatal and child mortality
3. Contribute to the national effort in reducing cervical cancer
4. Enhance organizational visibility, organizational learning and stakeholders' commitment
5. Ensure program and financial sustainability (OAFLA, 2017).

The above brief review shows that the African First Ladies are contributing their personal experiences and unique position to support the states development policies and strategies generally and on the health of women and children in particularly.

## **2.3.2. The role of First Ladies from Western Countries**

### **2.3.2.1. United States of America**

In United States of America, during the first American president George Washington, his wife Martha Washington (1789-1797), by simply continuing to share the home life with her husband when he became the American president and she found herself as referenced as Lady Washington by published magazines (Carl Sferrazza Anthony, 2008). Carl explained that the primary role of president's wives has continued as the hostess in her home to the next half century. She added the point that "their role as a hostess was not only for private guests, but also for the general public at open-house receptions." For most of the next half-century, the primary role of a president's wife was to be the hostess in her home 'the White House' not only for private guests, but also for the general public at open-house receptions. Dolley Madison (1809-1817) was the first public figure to enjoy her role in public and became the standard against which later First Ladies were judged. Known as "Lady Madison," recalling the title bestowed on Martha Washington (Carl Sferrazza Anthony, 2008).

Articles from First Ladies Library blog stated about the American First Ladies' role and it illustrated about some of American First ladies that Dolley Madison, for example, helped an orphanage that cared only for young girls and became a frequent visitor to a local private school that only taught young girls. Harriet Lane took an interest in the art and the needs of Native-American Indians. Mary Lincoln became an advocate for an organization that provided support for housing, employment and education of freed African-American slaves. Helen "Nellie" Taft inspected the unhealthy workplace conditions of those who worked for the federal government and used her influence to get a health and safety law passed. Florence Harding strongly supported many organizations that practiced and taught humane treatment of animals. Eleanor Roosevelt took on the needs of many different segments of American society: the unemployed, World War I veterans, West Virginia coal miners, women, African-Americans, refugees of World War II. She not only did this through charity efforts as other First Ladies did but expanded it to include many political actions, some involving federal laws or funding. By doing this she helped to enlarge the public role to become more political. First Ladies since Jackie Kennedy have all focused on specific causes - many of them have involved some form of federal

government involvement or lobbying for legal change: Jackie Kennedy and historic preservation, Lady Bird Johnson and environmental protection, Pat Nixon and voluntarism, Betty Ford and expanded equal rights for women, Rosalynn Carter and care for the mentally ill, Nancy Reagan and drug prevention among young people, Barbara Bush and the problems of illiteracy, Hillary Clinton and health care and adoption, Laura Bush and education and libraries.

A First Lady gets no salary, but her living space, travel and personal protection is provided by the government. As the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 ruled, a presidential spouse cannot accept gifts that are valued over a certain amount; all gifts and their values must be declared and are considered property of the U.S. government. In the case of gifts given by friends or close associates, she is given the opportunity to purchase the items by paying the government the estimated value.

In the annual budget for its operational funding that the executive branch requests Congress to appropriate, there is now a clause that justifies federal funding to salary the staff of a spouse of a president to allow them to "help the president to carry out the duties of the presidency." Edith Roosevelt was the first Lady to have a federally-salaried social secretary. Lou Hoover paid from her own funds to hire more secretaries. Eleanor Roosevelt was the first to have a personal secretary as well as a social secretary. Jackie Kennedy hired the first press secretary, Pat Nixon the first appointments secretary, Betty Ford the first speechwriter, Rosalynn Carter the first Chief of Staff and Nancy Reagan the first Special Projects Director. The First Lady's staff is located in the East Wing of the White House.

The East Wing was built during World War II to provide necessary office space for the military assigned to function in the mansion and serve the president. Since military personnel also served as social aides at White House social events, it became logical during the Eisenhower years to have all of the social staff as well as the correspondence, scheduling and other personnel working for a First Lady to all be located in one place where military personnel were also located and since then, the East Wing has housed the First Lady's staff. Rosalynn Carter and Laura Bush maintained working offices there with their staffs while Jackie Kennedy, Lady Bird Johnson, Pat Nixon, Betty Ford, Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush all worked from offices in the family

quarters. According to Hastedt and Ekisterowics (2000), the evolution of the First Ladies role and their office had started since Mrs. Roosevelt in 1942 and the office of USA's First Lady Office had been transferred from their bed room to the East Wing. Hillary Clinton maintained additional office in the West Wing, in light of her substantial involvement in many policy-related issues that the president's staff worked on (Paul Vallely, 2008). Her role had been integrated through her East Wing and Right Wing offices (East Wing have located near the vice President and the Right Wing located at the President Office). Hastedt and Ekisterowics (2000) had described that "She also had an additional office in the Old Executive Office Building, just down the hall from other offices in the president's West Wing office. And it was important to the integration of the two offices on public policy issues." The other experience of USA is spouse of the states' (regional) leader are entitled as the First Lady of the state.

### **2.3.2.2 The Legal status of the First Ladies of USA**

Hastedt and Ekisterowics (2000), America has the legitimacy that provision about the status of the First Ladies. These are: the postal revenue and federal salary act (1967); the anti-deficiency act (1884); and the white house personnel authorization act (1978)

#### **Postal Revenue and Federal Salary Act (1967)**

Section 221 of this act is the federal anti-nepotism law. It declares that a "public official may not appoint, employ, advance, or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement, in or to a civilian position in the agency in which he is serving or over which he exercises jurisdiction or control any individual who is a relative of the public official." Individuals appointed in violation of this law are not entitled to payment for their services. This law apparently prohibits the first lady from serving in any executive branch position, given her husband's supervisory status as chief executive.

#### **The Anti-Deficiency Act (1884)**

The anti-deficiency act was passed to control agency employment practices and thus to safeguard the congressional power of the purse. The anti-deficiency act was amended on several occasions and ultimately banned all voluntary service to the government, unless given to save a life under emergency conditions.

### **The White House Personnel Authorization Act (1978)**

Passed during the Carter presidency, this law authorizes the White House staff. Section 105(e) authorizes the appointment of staff to aid the president's "spouse" in providing support to the president. An unmarried president may "designate" a family member to serve in this role and thus to receive the resources.

### **2.3.3. African Experience**

The African First Ladies has utilizing the first ladyship position. African First Ladies are the powerful females in the new political phenomenon on global scene. Since world open its space for the spouse of the powerful state's leaders, their wives had chance to participate on the international summits. For instance, the 1992 World Summit for the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, hosted in Geneva at the initiative of six First Ladies, three of whom - Maryam Babangida, Elizabeth Diouf and Suzanne Mubarak - were African (Jibrin Ibrahim, undated). As spouse of leader, they had play great role in the international politics in the first time. They have created new trends for other First Spouses how to attract international attention.

This study has chose two African countries (Ghana and Nigeria) that has used to review of the status of African First Ladies and their experiences. The experience of Ghana and Nigeria has showed the characteristics of the First Ladies to compare and contrast their platforms and contribution both as femocracy and democracy First Spouses' behavior. Hence, these countries are mentioned and selected to review its practices.

#### **2.3.3.1. The Ghanaian Experience**

By the wife of the former Ghanaian President, Jarry Rawlings- Nana Agyeman- Rawlings was established the office of the First Lady to provide a political opportunity for Ghanaian women. According to Jiblin Ibrahim's article, she played a vital role from formulating to implementing policies that is relating to women and she was a successful actor to make a comfortable space for her power and autonomy in the country's politics. Jiblin Ibrahim (undated) explained that "The significance of Nana Rawlings was that she heralded the phenomenon of the First Lady who demanded an important role for women in society. She was able to appropriate current and pressing concerns in the international development community about the necessity of focusing on rural and poor women. She virtually re-invented rural women as a constituency that all public officials in Ghana are now obliged to pretend to acknowledge. She also demonstrated that there was considerable money and influence to be gained in making claims to represent the women's movement."

On the conclusion of Jiblin article, it finalized the performance of Nana Rawlings' organization. Jiblin said that "the institutions Nana Rawlings created and it did not lead to any significant or embedded institutionalization of the role of women in politics. Immediately her husband left power, she became marginal to Ghanaian politics. Nevertheless, the transformation of gender relations is a long-term project, and the importance of Nana Rawlings has been that she has put women on the public agenda."

Currently, Rebecca Naa Okaikor Akufo-Ado is the First Lady of the republic of Ghana. As her former the First Ladies in Ghana, she is contributing her role on the impact of women and children on infant malaria prevention, elimination of mother to child HIV transmission, improving the well-being of Ghanaian women and children and against all cancers and champions intervention to support childhood cancer survivors and their families. She also committed to ensure that Africa is free from HIV/AIDS, maternal and child mortality OAFLA (2017). First Lady Mrs. Akufo-Ado's instrument to achieve her initiatives that are illustrated above, she has established The Rebecca Foundation; she is a founding member and Chairperson of the charity organization Infant Malaria Prevention Foundation; she is the premier ambassador of Ghana for HIV Advocacy and she is a patron of cancer Voices, a coalition of Non-Governmental Organization. As the OAFLA's 6<sup>th</sup> edition magazine, it recognized her as gender equality advocator in Ghana. The magazine stated that on her profile "Mrs. Akufo-Ado is a strong advocate for gender equity and the empowerment of women and adolescent girls".

### **2.3.3.2. The Nigerian Experience**

On the article of 'the First Lady syndrome and the marginalization of women from power: opportunities or compromise for gender equality' which was written by Jiblin Ibrahim (not date) in Abuja, it read as "The public profile of elite women changed dramatically with the coming into power of First Lady Chief-Dr-Mrs Maryam Babangida, wife of General Babangida. Mrs Babangida had first assumed prominence in 1983, when her husband became Chief of Army Staff. On this basis, she became the President of the Nigerian Army Officers Wives Association and began seeing herself as a leader. When her husband became President, she opened an office

for herself within the Presidency. She was the first wife of a Nigerian head of state to use her spousal position as a basis for playing a prominent role in the nation's public life” (Jibrin Ibrahim, undated).

The first outreach of Mrs Babangida was launched the Better Life for Rural Women Program(BLP) in 1987 to address the rural women’s problems and improving the rural women life style. As Jiblin quoted (Mama, 1997: 92), the establishment of 10 000 co-operatives, 1 793 cottage industries, 2 397 farms, 470 women's centers and 233 health centers were created towards improving a lot of rural women by BLP. To strength and widespread BLP’s capacity Jiblin explained that “The wives of all senior state officials were systematically incorporated into this organization. Military governors' wives in the various states became chairpersons of the state branches of the BLP, with the wives of local government chairpersons acting likewise. Considerable state resources were channeled to the BLP, both officially and unofficially.”

There is a lot of argument that was raised about the Mrs. Maryam as she is a creator of femocracy however during the end of her program in 1992, as the author of Feminism or Femocracy, Amina Mama’s explanation “A world press conference was called to laud the success of the BLP, commemorative stamps were issued and a specially commissioned film entitled 'Legacy' was screened to the same end. A medley of full page media advertisements once again congratulated the First Lady on her achievements” Amina Mama (1995). Her legacy also used as precedence for Mariam Abacha, became the First Lady and occupied her office in 1993. During the period of First Lady Mrs. Mariam Abacha, The BLP was dissolved and a "new" similar organization, the Family Support Program (FSP) was established in its place (Jibrin Ibrahim, undated).

According to OAFLA’s 6<sup>th</sup> edition magazine, the profile of the current First Lady of the republic of Nigeria, Madam Ayisha Muhammadu Buhari has portrayed as a woman’s and child’s rights advocator. It wrote about her that “she founded Future Assured an initiative to continue her advocacy work for the health and well-being of women and children through community mobilization and health promotion” OAFLA (2017).

### **2.3.3.3. The Ethiopian Experience**

#### **2.3.3.3.1. The Period of Empresses and Their Acceptance by People**

History tells about the past; refer to the current issues; and forecast about the future. In Ethiopian history, there are both legendary and evidence based history which could understand the past that was important to show the existing track and predict the future because, without the past history, never will be the future. Hence, the prominent Ethiopian women leaders' story was started since 3,000 years ago by Queen Shaba. Her story has become together with the history of Ethiopian 3000 years old. The legendary of Queen Sheba as a ruler, she was a diplomat. She was not only powerful but also the first leader of a country and a strategic transformational designer for her powerful political system legacy (Pankhurst R., 2009). For example, Solomon dynasty has continued to King Hayleselasia. In 9<sup>th</sup> century, Queen Aster or Yodit (Gudit) was the queen of the "pagan" state of Damot and mentioned her story in several articles as she was a war leader and had defeated Axumite kingdom. Rita Pankhurst said that "The dreaded Queen Gudit, alleged destroyer of Aksum, may well have commanded armies larger than Taytu's and Masqal Kebra, wife of King Lalibela" Rita Pankhurst (2009). However many sources described her as a notorious and cruel woman; Queen Aster (Yodit/ Gudit) was a notable and strong leader woman who has ruled her territory for forty years (940-980 AD). Her story will have a power to Ethiopian women if they consider her as a noblewoman regards to leadership and politics arena.

In the reign of King Zerayaqob (1434-1468), King Zerayaqob was needed to make the relationship with the southern Muslim tributary King Mohammad Garad of Hadya who had with king zerayaqob's Muslim enemies. To administer in the south of the region and fight with the Muslim ruler of Adal by the Garad of Hadya, matrimonial arrangements were needed for king Zerayaqob. In 1445, king Zerayaqob has married the Garad of Hadya's daughter princess ZanZela. After her matrimony, princess ZenZela was baptized, changed her religion to Orthodox Christian and named her to be 'Elleni'. Rita Pankhurst said that "Eleni was, by all accounts, exceptionally gifted. Elleni became well-vested in Christian theology. She wrote two religious works, one on the Laws of God, and the other on the Holy Trinity and Purity of St.Marry. She also sponsored the translation of Greek and Arabic religious texts into Geez" (Rita Pankhurst, 2009)

Queen Elleni's role was incremented from religious wisdom to political sphere. After the death of her husband, she continued to exert an influence behind the throne to foresee the hasty young monarch; kept her faith and condescended to the political influence during the period of political conflict. She played a great role during the reign of her husband's youngest son, Na'od (1494-1508) and behaves of the Libne Denigle (1508-1540) to guide him and his administration until he came of age (Minale Adugna, 2001).

Queen Elleni had foreseen how the difficult situations might face her territories by the Ottoman Turk expansion in the Middle East and along the Red sea. In 1509, she wrote to king Emmanuel of Portugal to initiate for a Christian friendship generally and for military alliance interest against Muslim enemy (Egypt and other Muslims) specifically.

Queen Elleni's diplomacy and leadership style was remarkable. She also brought the empowered ladies to keep her legacy and continued for their faith. During her period, she worked together with Seble wengel the wife of, Lebne Dingle and his mother, Mogasa. Alvares (Portugal's commander) said and reported that 'the questions came not only from the Emperor, but also from the three Queens.' Elleni is present, described as 'Mother of the Prester' [Ləbnä Dəngəl], together with the other two Queens. Beckingham and Huntingford (1961: 327, 330, quoted in Rita Pankhrust, 2009). It means for her diligence achievement her people has acknowledged and rewarded her with the name of 'Mother of the Queens'.

After Queen Elleni's death, Queen Seble Wengel has taken the Elleni's legacy in reliable way for her faith and she began to undertake responsible for her sons' reign and empower them to throne. As Queen Elleni, Seble Wengel has played a big role with Portuguese Christian militant missionaries and led them with her military to the battle behalf of her husband Lebne Dengil to fight with the lowland Adal militant Muslim group led by Imam Ahmed/Gragh who was fully supported by Turkish which was determine launched 'Jihad'. In 1539, her older son killed and her youngest son 'Minas' was captured and taken to prison by one of Ahmad's commander. In September, 1940 Libne Dingle was defeated by Ahmed/Gragh at the battle on Shimbra kure currently called 'Mojo'. Then, the second youngest son of sable wengel, Gelawdeos was

assumed to the throne at the very young age. In 1542, Ahmed had built his militant by badly warrior with huge guns that was supported from Turksh. During that time, he had requested to exchange Minas who was the Emperor's young brother and captured in 1539 by his commander. In 1543, Ahmed/Gragh was defeated and killed at the battle of Weyna dega in Begemdire and his wife Del Wembera escaped but his son Mohamed was captured and taken in to prison. Remarkable exchange of prisoners then took place. The part played by Del Wambara will be described later. Seble Wengel was a driving force in the negotiations that led to the exchange of her son Minas, for Del Wambara's son, plus a ransom of 1,000 ounces of gold. Esteves Pereira (1888:41-3 quoted by Rita Punkhrust, 2009). Then, the exchanging was successful. After a period of consolidation Gelawdewos reigned over a more peaceful kingdom. There was no Muslim attempt to attack the Christians again for seventeen years (Hunting ford, 1989: 135). However, in an effort to conquer Harar, Gelawdewos invaded Adäl territory and, in 1559, was killed in battle. Minas, who had been living with his mother, came to the throne. He shared her conservative religious outlook, but was of a more severe disposition. During his four-year reign Säblä Wängel continued to be influential in court and religious affairs (Adugna & Rita Punkhrust, 2009).

The last achievement of Seble Wengel was exert her son ( Sartsedengle (1563-1597) to come to the throne at the age of thirteen. The Portuguese writers acknowledged in their writings Seble Wongel's "steadfast courage in adversity, her kindness and attention to the wounded and to her shrinking from the carnage" (Pankhurst 1996, 28, quoted Adugna Minale (2001).

According to Rita (2209) a contemporary of Seble Wengel, Bati Del Wembera has played high role behalf of her husband Ahmed/Gragh. She was the daughter of the famous Imam, Mahfuz. Ibn Muhammad, governor of Zayla. By Arabs' espionage, he was forced to declare the jihad against Christianity kingdom and supported him through military activities. In 1518, Mahfuz was fought with Libne dengil but he defeated and killed. As several articles said that, the marriage of Bati Del Wambara had a plan to revenge her father's blood through her strong and young husband Ahmad Ibn.Ibrahim al-Gazi (1506-43) (Ahmed/Gragh). At the time of Ahmed/Gragh 's Jihad campaign, Del Wembera was decided to accompany her husband and like Sable Wengel, she was a major actress to her husband soldiers (treat and picked up wounded soldiers and lead

the campaigns behalf of her husband). Her role as a diplomat, she kept Libne Dingle's son (Minas) and treat and protest her husband's commander to kill him until she exchanged her son Mohamed from the hand of Seble Wengel . Both Seble Wengel and Del Wembera was the best 16<sup>th</sup> century diplomat.

Since 1769 to 1855 during Zemene Mesafint (the Era of the Princess), the royal women's role was highly exercised on the military affairs and the position of guardianship. They were not only on the political participation but also they were powerful and influential. Adugna M. on his study 'women and welfare in Ethiopia', quoted Chris Prouty's (1979) statement who has studied the case of eight women. His quotation was "with spirited personalities who exercised power and influence".

Itege Mentiwab, the wife of Emperor Bakaffa (1721-1730) who has dominated the politics of Ethiopia during the reign of her son (Iyasu II) and grandson (Iyoas) since 1730 to 1769. She also crowned her head by herself in the time of assume her grandson and controversial with Wubit who was the mother of Iyoas (Minale Adugna, 2001).

In the time of 1830 to 1853, Itege Menen was one of the influential who was the earlier Ras Alula's wife, the mother of Ras Ali II and later the wife Emperor Yohannes III. As Adugna pointed out "Menen was known to have led her own contingent to battles. She fought with the Egyptians in the north-western border regions." In 1850, she was fought with Kasa Haylu who challenged her authority. To penetrate Kasa Haylu's ambition, she decided to hold him with matrimonial arrangement and she offering him her granddaughter, Tewabech as his wife. But things were not changed as her expectation. Kasa Haylu was continued to achieve his ambition and Itege Menen's granddaughter was also bore her husband and encouraged rebellions to against the royal court or her grandmother because Itege Menen was disappointed her husband (Minale Adugna, 2001).

At the other side, the rulers of Yeju and Wello, Werkitu and Mestewat were unforgettable women who were influential and have a power. For instance, Werkitu has made the successful

operation to escape Minilik II from the ‘Wehini Amba’ which was Tewodros II’s Prison and in 1867; Mestewat has supported Minilik II (the king of Shewa) with military service at the battle of Embabo (Minale Adugna, 2001).

“Taytu Bitul had a restless heart and an iron-will” (Raymond J. 2011). It shows she was an exceptional thinker with a strong part of mind. Her decision was as decision maker as a military commander; brilliant military strategist; and advisor for her husband king Minilik II. Which of her some achievements are: As an authentic national leader: she was one of the major actresses to declare war against Italy at the battle of Adwa by treating up the Wuchale treaty (article XVII) as pointed out in several articles, she told Antoneli, “I am a woman and I do not love war, but rather than accepting this [Article XVII] I prefer war”. As a professional persuader, she manipulated her husband with exemplified Yohannes IV’s responsibility. She said to king Minilik II that “King John never wanted to cede an inch of territory, he fought against the Italian (and)...the Egyptians for this [principle]: he died for this, and you after such an example, wish to sell your country? Who will [want to] write your history?” (Raymond J. 2011). As military strategist: she advised Ras Mekonen to cut off the water sprint which was supply to Italy’s army at Endeyesus Hill on the eastern part of Mekele to disgorge the enemies. By her remarkable plan, the Italian army had been highly suffered and lost its performance to offence. As an intelligence officer: she had received and analyzed information collected by her militant groups spy and enabled and spread the information to Menilik II to attack the Italians (Raymond J., 2011, Adugna M., 1995 and Pankhrust R., 2009).

Empress Taytu also the best and first Queen who was the activist of women’s rights. She was considered as predecessor of women’s question. Some of her effort was: she has provided counseling service for women and listen their private problems to share their problems and council and guide them; she has advocated for girl’s primary education and influenced her husband to create a space or systems for girls’ education; she has promoted to the elimination of arranged marriage; she was coming up with the idea of compensation for divorced women (Biseswar I., 2011).

Empress Menen the wife of Emperor Haylesilase, also had achieved a great role through her power and influence. As Empress Taytu's ambition, she has manipulated her husband to establish the girls' school and in 1930 founded new girls' school in the name of "the Itegue Menen School for girls". In October 1935 Empress Menen established the first Ethiopian women's welfare association. During the Ethio-Italy war, she has organized Ethiopian women to render and first aid for wounded on the battlefield. In 1935, Empress Menen had been played her role as a diplomat and advocator, in England.

In 1942 after the concurred Italian, Itegue Menen was restructured the Itegue Menen school for girl which had devastated by fascist Italians. In the same year of November, she visited the Ethiopian women association. Also in 1942 she inaugurated the Handicraft school (it covered such as carpet weaving, dyeing, fine, silver work, garment making, hand and machine knitting combined with common courses and moral instructions) with around 400 students of both sexes. In addition to these, she opened 'Sewasew/siwaswe Birhan School' which also catered for children who were blind and who could not read or write (Pankhrest R., 2009).

In 1948 at the beginning of Ethiopian New Year, she took the initiatives of Emperor Haylesilase I which was 'the people that Ethiopians should wear cultural dress so that the coming generations would follow this as an example. In that Ethiopian New Year, she acted to wear Cultural dress as an Ethiopian culture ambassador (Rita Pankhrest, 2009). In April 1950 Empress Menen inaugurated behalf of Emperor Haylesilase I Bridge which was the first one in Ethiopia that was built across the Abay /Nile River.

The secret of these remarkable noble women acceptance by their people, they were crowned by their husbands or Emperors and like Empress Mintewab were crowned herself. So most of them has acted as the alongside of the kings. Rita Pankhrest concluded and told us "Ethiopians accepted the notion that women, whether they bore children or not, could be strong, independent decision makers, accepted and respected as leaders." Hence, the coronation of Empresses was officially announced for their people and took their title to be 'Itegue'. Itegue means the queen of queens. So, their title of 'Itegue' has user to the recognition of their status and acknowledge their role. The 'crown' of the queen has guaranteed for the status of the queens. It led them to be the

successful and the formidable queen. People has accepted and followed them as the leaders of the state next to the king.

#### **2.4. Legitimacy Gap on the Status of the First Lady**

Unofficial authorized job description is the first and most challenge of the First Lady. Her roles are defined by custom rather than law. “While this flexibility may present an opportunity for women to mold the role to fit their personalities and interests, it also poses a unique set of challenges- namely that in order to be successful; First Ladies must actively craft and defend their leadership platform” the Bush Institute (2013). She must be running her role and have lawful or officially authorized as others public officials to have responsibility and accountability in order to acknowledge or effectively being successful on her job, and ensure her independent role with all kinds of resources. For instance, in Japan, Mrs. Akie Abe reflected in a 2016 interview:

*“It means nothing to be the prime minister’s wife—she is just the wife of a prime minister...She is not a member of the Imperial family, so she doesn’t have any official duties. She gets no budget from the government, nor is she afforded any protection from police”* (the Bush Institute, 2013).

In Namibia, there is no legal background to establish formal structured office for the First Lady. But the First Ladyship position is historically formal. Due to legitimacy gap, the organizational profile (back history) has not recorded, there will no knowledge transfer from the staff members of the precedent to the new first lady’s staff members. It depends on the previous and the new first ladies’ negotiation. On the case study of role without rule book, the Namibian First Lady Mrs. Geingos said that:

*“Normally, when you assume the office of the First Lady, there is nothing. There’s nobody and there’s nothing because the previous staff have left with the former first lady and you normally don’t even find a computer with any information...There will always be challenges around the role and function [of first ladies], and first ladies need to almost determine their role for themselves. You’ll always get conflicting advice and guidance—security will tell you one thing,*

*protocol will tell you another thing, the minister will tell you a different thing. And sometimes your husband will not necessarily be supportive of a specific activity or there may be political considerations that make it very sensitive. The First Lady really needs to first decide, within herself, what is it that she really wants to do—because you're never going to get one version”* (the Bush Institute, 2013).

“Lacking a job description, a constitutional designation, or salary, the First Lady is a position that is at once difficult to define with precision, and yet inspires a relatively uniform image of domesticity”(Williams V., 2009) it will anticipate the states of First Lady’s position to be legitimized or theorized that can consider her constitutional and human rights as well as strength her advocacy to Ethiopian women empowerment . “In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the feminist movement in the United States has had a direct effect on the opportunities provided to and accepted by the First Ladies. Their role has broken free of gender-based constraints to offer greater opportunities for political influence. The larger incorporation of modern First Ladies in the Executive Branch has been vital to their opportunities to be politically active and powerful effective leaders”(Kumar, Nimsiha B., 2013).

## **2.5. The Former Ethiopian First Ladies**

### **2.5.1. The Former First Lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin**

Former First Lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin is the founder and patron of Ethiopia’s National Initiative for Mental Health. She was the vice-president of Organization of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA). In 2009, she was appointed CEO of the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray by its head Abadi Zemu. She was elected in 2005 to the House of Peoples Representatives representing her home woreda of Wolqayt. She has served as the chair of its Social Affairs Standing Committee.

During the reign of the former First Lady Azeb Mesfin, have strongly advocated equal rights and opportunities for women in Ethiopia. HIV transmission, early marriage, lack of legal rights for women, unfair public policies, job opportunity and other issues, various organizations continue to work with the government including the Ethiopian Women’s Lawyers Association (EWLA),

Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations, the Ethiopia Media Women's Association (MWA), the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Women in Self Employment (WISE), the Ethiopian Medical Women's Association (EMWA), the Women's Association of Tigray (WAT), the Kembatti Mentti Gezzima-tope (KMG), the Ethiopian Nurse Midwives Association (ENA) and others. The Ethiopian leadership has made significant advances to protect women's rights in recent years. It has its first Minister of Women's Affairs and has overhauled legislation on rape, female genital mutilation, and other offences. Unfortunately, women's questions have not addressed. The purpose of government based women's organizations was deliberately established to perform the mission of ruling party's political agenda from top-down structure (for example, Women's forum) rather than Ethiopian women's emancipation (Biseswar I., 2011).

### **2.5.2. Former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye**

In order to be Prime Minister of the Ethiopia, there are various requirements that must be met as constituted in Ethiopian Constitution, 1994. In contrast, there are no constitutional guidelines and official requirements of a First Lady. In the constitution of FDRE (1994), Article 35/8 has stated out that "Women shall have a right to equality in employment, promotion, pay, and the transfer of pension entitlements". However, First Lady's previous career has not deemed to keep her career after she has taken the title of a First lady and she is highly informal worker without any paid (as a person, her constitutional rights are violated); nothing allowed any financial and technical supportive for her office or staff. For instance, struggle a non-communicable and communicable disease among children and women such as economic opportunities, nutrition, Cervical and Breast Cancer Prevention. For instance, as the Bush research center article has stated that "Mrs. Roman has focused her attention on building economic opportunities for Ethiopian women, addressing nutrition and education for youth, and promoting the global health initiative, Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon that combats cervical and breast cancer, the leading causes of cancer deaths among women in sub-Saharan Africa" (The Bush Institute, 2013). This kind of

initiatives has paid attention by the First Lady to address the women's and children's problem at country level with custom based job description.

As the report of the G. Bush Institute case study, on 'The Influence and Leadership of Global First Ladies' report pointed out as it has interviewed with former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye. She said that:

*“One of the challenging things is that I have to support my husband, the Prime Minister. I have to accompany him in his state visits and to some of the important events... [That is the reality for] every First Lady... When our husbands need us we accompany them, we receive guests, [and] when we have to be there for any [number of] reasons, we are withdrawn from our [priority issues]”*

The First Ladies are facing with the triple roles and they act as the hostess, palace manager, partner of their husbands and advocators. When they play their gender role, they cannot active on their prioritized initiatives. Reversibly, when they execute their office's activity, they may absent from their husband's accompany and they criticize by the media. Based on her speech, the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye had acted as the hostess, partner of their husbands and advocators (more discussion on chapter four).

## Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

### 3.1. Study Design

This study has been employed with qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research explores attitudes, behavior and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups. It attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants. As it is attitudes, behavior and experiences which are important, fewer people take part in the research, but the contact with these people tends to last a lot longer (Dawson C., 2002). The intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction. It is largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the object of study (Locke et al., 1987). Researchers increasingly use a theoretical lens or perspective in qualitative research, which provides an overall orienting lens for the area of gender, class, and race (or other issues of marginalized groups). This lens becomes a transformative perspective that shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

This study have been subscribed the poses of epistemology feminist perspectives/ view as problematic women's diverse situations and the institutions that frame those situations. Research topics may include policy issues related to realizing social justice for women in specific contexts or knowledge about oppressive situations for women (Olesen, 2000). Queer theory also poses that the research using this approach does not objectify individuals, is concerned with cultural and political means, and conveys the voices and experiences of individuals who have been suppressed (Gamson, 2000). The qualitative feminist research methodologies can help to inquire the depth information from the respondents about the study. According to Amina Mama (2011), qualitative feminist research methodology speaks to contexts that have not been previously researched, and where social realities have not been meaningfully theorized from any perspective, least of all feminist perspectives rather than quantifying the figures. The study area

about Ethiopian First Lady has not been studied and their roles and contributions not yet evaluated. It should be theorized and analyzed the trends of the Ethiopian First ladies' responsibility on their first ladyship position from the feminist points of view. Amina Mama added that feminist principles can inform the pursuit of feminist research, working to guide the choice and design of questions, the choice and application of methods, and the interpretation and analysis of findings.

Therefore, Feminist researchers thus bring feminist theorizations, concepts and methods to bear on the work of demystifying existing gendered systems of domination, and developing critical understandings and analyses of all aspects of women's lives and gender relations, women's movements and their strategies.

### **3.2. Data Sources**

This research utilized both primary and secondary data sources to understand the better role of first lady and her contribution to the empowerment of women and the national gender issues as well. Primary source involves the study of a subject through first hand observation and investigation (Dawson C., 2002). Through primary data source, the study has reached the respondents to access the first hand information. It also utilized data from secondary data source, such as Books, journals, and internet based sources (websites and international libraries like Global First Ladies' online library).

Feminist research approaches can be developed through a politics of critical engagement with activism, using scholarly resources (feminist theoretical tools, modes of analysis, historical experience, etc.) that reach beyond the immediacies of a given local gender relations and struggles to enable reflection and deepen understanding by secondary data sources. It involves on the collection of information from studies that other researchers have made of a subject (Amina Mama, 2011). The two easiest and most accessible places to find this information are libraries and the internet.

### **3.3. Sample size and Sampling Technique**

#### **3.3.1. Sample Size**

Sample size has addressed six respondents from the FDRE office of First Lady, OAFLA, House of Representatives (the members of women and children affairs standing committee), and Ethiopian Justice and Legal research institute. The targeted respondents from OFL of FDRE, House of Representative OAFLA and JLRI (they are senior legal researchers) are selected based on their works and professional backgrounds that has related with the study area. To meet first hand information, the key informant former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye has interviewed.

#### **Sampling Technique**

The nature of this study targets some area that attempted to represent specific samples of population. Because of this, the technique used in this study to select participants is non-probability sampling technique (purposive sampling). It means the population elements are selected on the basis of their availability or because of the researcher's personal judgment that they are representative. According to Professor Samy Tayie explanation, “A purposive sample is chosen with the knowledge that it is not representative of the general population; rather it attempts to represent a specific portion of the population” (Tayie S., 2005).

#### **3.4. Data Collection Method**

This study is conducted by semi structured qualitative interview method which was selected in terms of its significance to achieve optimum use of time; interview guides serve the useful purpose of exploring many respondents more systematically and comprehensively as well as to keep the desired line of action (Jamshed S., 2014). It has also a benefit for the researcher to use semi-structured interviews because questions can be prepared ahead of time. This allows the interviewer to be prepared and appear competent during the interview. Semi-structured interviews also allow informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms.

Dawson C. (2002) suggests about the semi-structured interviewing he noticed that “the semi-structured interviewing is perhaps the most common type of interview used in qualitative social research. In this type of interview, the researcher wants to know specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews. To do this, the same questions need to be asked in each interview. However, the researcher also wants the interview to remain flexible so that other important information can still arise.”

While both designed and conducted the semi-structured interview, it is divided into three characteristics that are related with the specific objectives of this study. The first character is the role of First Lady through a gender lens. The second character shows about the activities that the First Lady engages to enhance the capacity of Ethiopian women. The last part is the challenges faced in executing the First Lady’s activities. The data collection system was supported by qualitative audio visual instruments such as tape recorder and memo notes.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

The data analysis was organized thematically. A list of major ideas that surface was chronicled (Merriam, S. B., 1998). Taped interviews and the memo notes are transcribed verbatim. Memos are regularly reviewed. To ensure the quality result, qualitative reliability was concerned. It means, the quality of a study in each paradigm has judged by its own pattern’s terms (Golafshani, N., 2003). Three techniques to ensure reliability are employed in this study (while quality concept in qualitative study has the purpose of generating understanding/stenbacka, 2001). First, the researcher has provided a detailed account of the focus of the study, the researcher’s role, the informant’s position and basis for selection, and the context from which data should be gathered (LeCompte & Goetz, 1984). Second, triangulation analysis are used, which strengthens reliability as well as internal validity (Merriam, 1988). Finally, data collection and analysis strategies are reported in detail in order to provide a clear and accurate picture of the methods used in this study. Then the data has categorized under the major thematic areas and analyzed in accordance and addressed the objectives and research questions of the study.

## Chapter Four : Data Presentation and Discussion

### 4.1 Data Presentation

Under this chapter, the research findings are presented by putting together the perspectives of research participants. Based on a feminist methodology, this study has deduced and pointed out the key informant's (Former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye) perspective which has been concerned to respond the major and sub purposes of this research. It has also assessed other respondents' perspective that has the relevant profession and currently working on the studied area to inquire more information. It is structured under four major thematic areas which are related to the research questions and its specific objectives. The first section of this chapter describes the background of respondents. The other three sections address the major themes that emerged from semi-structured interview responses .These are: a) to understand the role of First Lady and her responsibility; b) to assess the First Lady's office activities and its challenges; and c) to examine the first lady's role through a gender lens.

#### 4.1.1 Background of the participants

For this research, six respondents have participated. Five respondents are females and the other one is male. The participants are selected from the FDRE justice legal system research institute, the House of Representative (from women and children affairs standing committee), OAFLA and the OFL of FDRE.

The wife of former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, the widow former First Lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin was among key informants. She was offered the chance to be interviewed, also through questionnaire data, but she did not volunteer to be interviewed. Her answer was short and precise *"I am not voluntary for neither responded nor asked"* in Amharic, 'lemeteyekim hone lememeles fekadegna aydelehum.' Hence, the perspective of former first lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin has not included. The other key informant was the Former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye. After a long time process to meet her; the researcher could have got and interviewed her in person. The interview was constructed in depth interview that also supported with taped and memo note.

#### **4.1.2 The Role of Ethiopian First Lady and Her Responsibility**

The position of First ladyship has no legal background to be first lady/spouse in Ethiopia. The First Lady's position is created when her husband comes to power or becomes a state leader. However, her position is conditional, there is a custom-based structured office called FDRE office of the First Lady which was established as a department under the prime minister office in July 2013. As stated out on the annual report of OFL of FDRE's brochure, the office of First Lady was established the first time in Ethiopian history by the period of former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye. The purpose of the office is to achieve its mission (championing, networking and advocating for an inclusive social and economic development with particular focus on women and children. Social welfare and the economic empowerment of women are the core issues that drive the deliberation of the office).

The former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye has responded about the establishment of OFL of FDRE She said that:

*“Before I joined the position of the First Lady, there was not legally established office. However, the former first lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin has used the position of first ladyship and she has established unofficial structure on her personal office to address her initiatives. While I had come to the position, I had been interested to play my role and sacrificed my full time. After my preparation period, I thought that, how could I work through legal background? Then, I appealed my question for the prime minister (who had been on the position and my husband). What he did that... he formed the taskforce (the members had been organized from Prime Minister Office and Ministry of Finance and Economics) that can study the issue and find the good practices and experiences of other countries’.*

*Then, the task force has come with two alternatives. The first one, prepare proclamation that should be ratified by the House of Representative. The second option was, without proclamation, the platform could be established by the permit of the Prime Minister. These options are evaluated from different angles. The first option was a good idea but it needs time and require long process to have*

*approved by the parliament. Because of this, I had chosen the second one. The reason was I should have started my job with no time. And the taskforce also agreed to continue in that way. After the consensus, the guideline of the platform has prepared which can led us how to structured the office, how to operates its budget, recruits human and fulfill other resources. Finally, the Prime Minister has approved the guideline and established the office.”*

#### **4.1.2.1 The First Lady’s contribution to women’s empowerment**

After the established OFL of EFDRE that had been structured and administered by the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye, she had formulated to implementing the project on the five prioritized areas. Those are:

- I. Women’s economic empowerment
- II. Nutrition
- III. Improving quality education
- IV. Cancer prevention
- V. Control and ending HIV/AIDS

##### **I. Women’s Economic Empowerment**

‘Women’s economic empowerment’ is the primacy project among the other First Lady’s proceeding initiatives. In order to achieve this project the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye had designed the flagship project in the field of women economic empowerment which is ‘Connecting 1500 Women and Young Girls to the Export Market’. Its purpose is to improving livelihood of young and vulnerable women through capacity building such as technical and entrepreneurial skills in the production of marketable handmade goods which can enhancing the export market systems. This flagship project is targeting on the leather, traditional hand spinning, weaving, knitting, gemstone, embroidery, crochet works, jewelry and basketry (brochure of OFL of EFDRE, undated). To address rural women, the OFL of FDRE is expanding its scope of women’s economic empowerment program within the purpose of product maximization on the

sector of coffee which is based on green coffee and value addition for the export market, both processing and production of honey and dairy processing to enhance the rural women's livelihoods. (brochure of OFL of EFDRE, undated).

The main roles of First Lady within the framework of the women's empowerment program are:

- Contributing to the creation of enabling environment conducive to the rise, expansion and success of women owned businesses
- Creating synergy among actors on women's economic empowerment in Ethiopia towards coordinated and integrated policies, strategies and programs.
- Facilitating opportunities for women entrepreneurs to develop skills resources and opportunities for optimizing their benefits.
- Facilitating local and international market links for women entrepreneurs operating in small and medium enterprises.
- Supporting initiatives targeting women economic empowerment and fostering international and local partnerships to maximize the gains of Ethiopian women's entrepreneurs.

As the former First Lady Mrs. Roman explanation, her major role had been intention on women's empowerment. She believes that if women empower through economy, they can develop their independent life; their decision making; and they also improve their assertiveness that can help them to evasive from dependency. Her direct word was:

*"I had prioritized to work on women's economic empowerment. Why I had to choose that, so many organizations has asked and influenced me to work on gender based violence and curve on social problems. That was good to support women's direct problems but I did not need to path in that way. Because I believed that if I work on women's issues, I had to start from the source of the problem to take action for the future solution. And to prevent or solve the women's problems, the only measurement will be taken in to account the women's economic empowerment. Because of that, I preferred and chose this program to provide empowered women through economy. If women are economically empowered, they can develop and expand their negotiation capacity skill; they*

*can afford to send their children to school; they can pay to get health service and ensured their reproductive health rights; and also their human equality rights will be ensured. In contrary, if they are not economically empowered, they couldn't have a capacity skill to negotiate and they could be dependent of their house hold leaders or husbands and etc. So, I took this issue as the fundamental women's problems in Ethiopia. To address this problem, I formulated and performed the pilot projects through the cooperation of governments, non governments and other organizations.*

*Now, this project can be a model for other institutions that might be interested to work on this kind of project. I believed that, this kind of project can be address women's problems directly and provide successful achievement in automatically. Thence, I preceded and paid my attention on this initiative."*

## **II. Nutrition**

Ethiopia suffers from high rates of malnutrition that affect the population's mortality rates and productivity. It is estimated that Ethiopia loses 16.5 percent of its GDP because of the effects of childhood hunger. To address this issue, the First Lady was appointed the "Nutrition Ambassador of Ethiopia" by the Federal Ministry of Health, and is the champion of national initiative which seeks to strengthen nutrition education opportunities for women. To contributed and performed her role, her primacy second initiative has been formulated the project of 'Nutrition' that designed to the purpose of supporting national nutrition program.

The annual published brochure of FDRE office of First Lady on the title of 'committed to the welling of women and children' has printed out the performance of First Lady's activities. As it stated out, "stunting is a major public health problem that affects nearly 38% of Ethiopian children and causes lifelong cognitive, health and productivity impediments. Sixteen present of all repetitions in primary school are associated with stunting." To address this problem, the FDRE office of First Lady (through former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye) has integrated nutrition as one of critical strategic priority areas to advocacy work. The First Lady's nutrition program has been focused to supporting the implementation of national nutrition program as well

as “The Seqota Declaration” which Ethiopia is declared to end child under-nutrition in Ethiopia by 2030.

The First Lady’s key activities on the nutrition agenda was on:

- Liaising with federal and regional government bodies to draw more attention, commitment and resource to the nutrition agenda.
- Networking of nutrition actors to coordinate efforts toward the implementation of the national nutrition program.
- Increasing public awareness on the critical importance of nutrition particularly during the first 1000 days of life and the irreversible impact of stunting after a child is two years old.
- Providing practical examples and demonstrations that enable families adopt improved nutrition practices by using resources and food items that are easily available and affordable.

#### **a. Flagship Project: Moringa Value Chain Development**

The “Project for the Development of Moringa Value Chain (MVC) in Rural Community in Ethiopia (The MVC project located in Arbaminch Zuria Woreda-Gamo Gofa Zone)” is an initiative of First Lady Roman Tesfaye Which ties nutrition with income generation schemes for rural women. Through training of local community in the appropriate production, preparation and processing method of the indigenous Moringa plant as well as introduction of processing technologies the MVC project aims at improving the nutritional status and the income of rural communities. During the pilot phase the project will serve more than 3,000 Moringa growers in the vicinity of the project site as well as the direct beneficiaries that will be trained on the post-harvest handling, quality and safety assurance of Moringa processing. Most of the project beneficiaries are mothers and young women (brochure of OFL of EFDRE, undated).

### **III. Cancer prevention and control**

More than 72% of cancer deaths occur in low and middle income countries. In Ethiopia, approximately 64,000 new cancer cases and 44,000 deaths occur annually. Cervical and Breast cancer constitute the significant majority of these cases. With only one specialized cancer

treatment center in the country, reaching for people and their families affected by the disease is a daunting challenge. In response to the urgent need of making early cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment facilities and services available for all citizens. The former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye took the commitment of the advocating for the national action and increasing public awareness to end preventable sufferings and deaths from cancer in Ethiopia (brochure of OFL of EFDRE, undated). The respondent from OAFILA has explained that

*“In-terms of their position, they can knock somebody’s door and ‘if they say that, ‘we need to help you!’ nobody can’t resist to accepting their request. Then the major aims of the roles of the First Ladies are supporting their state’s policy; they cannot invent a special different things or hidden things. For instance, currently in Ethiopia, cancer is the big issue. It had been forgotten and women are affected by cancer. However, the former First Lady Mrs. Roman raised the issue as an agenda to work on cancer prevention and control. Then she has established a streaming committee with MoH which was directed by Roman. Now, the committee is providing good result on cancer prevention as well as on the fund mobilization to solve the problems of medical devise/equipment to the purpose of the medical devises distribution from across the regions to zones (provinces) level.”*

The respondents also from the OFL of FDRE described about the role of first lady that how to advocate to give paid attention for women’s health issues. He said that

*“For instance, because of her special position, the First Lady usually moves to regions and MoH to work liaising and advocate in the area of health.”*

The intervention of First Lady matched with the determination and commitment of MoH, as well as national and regional actors resulted in positive policy measure and concrete results within a short time.

- A national cancer committee is established in 2014 as coordinated body of multi-stakeholder effort to end cancer in Ethiopia. The First lady co-chairs the committee together with the MoH

- A national cancer control plan is launched to shape and guide the work of state and non-state actors towards bringing visible and lasting results.
- Building of six specialized cancer treatment centers in referral teaching hospital is underway in Addis Ababa and five regional cities across the country.
- The First Lady in partnership with the MoH championed the initiative to decentralize cervical cancer screening and management to every woreda (district) across the country. Currently over 143 health facilities are providing screening and treatment for cervical cancer. 1,500 additional cryotherapy machines are operating to expand the service.  
*“There are a lot of women health issues and we addressing not only cancer but also on several women’s health issues as additional”* former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye.

The American Cancer Society has honored former First Lady Mrs. Roman for her ‘outstanding’ contribution in the fight against cancer. The awarding institution announced that the former first Lady contributed a lot in preventing non-communicable diseases with particularly immense role against cancer disease. Ambassador Cowal, Senior Vice president, Global Health, at the American Cancer Society said that “I’m convinced with the outstanding leadership of the First Lady that we have witnessed her great contribution towards eliminating and preventing cancer disease around the country.” With the slogan of “Determined to stop all preventable sufferings and death caused by cancer” OFL of FDRE has worked on breast and cervical cancer prevention and treatment and it has addressed more than 100,000 women to be pre-test of cervical cancer (OFL of FDRE, 2018).

### **III. Quality Education**

‘Integrating the nutrition agenda for ensuring quality education’ is one of the quotation of the OFL of FDRE to address the problem of school children which have been unforeseen for a long period of time as a bottleneck for Ethiopian education quality from the starting point of primary level especially in public schools. Through school feeding project, OFL of FDRE is devoutly working to improve quality education in Addis Ababa city Administration. Respondent from OFL of FDRE has described about the school feeding project. He said that:

*“One of the Former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye’s activities was improving quality education. Her initiatives have started from the problems of quality*

*education. It is right, among the problems of quality education are such as the performance of teachers, lack of teaching aid or materials, etc. but there was found a hidden problem (which was studied before the former First Lady Mrs. Roman become to her position and she was participated on the research). That hidden problem was identified that 'because of their poor families' background, over 20,000 children have been gone to school without their school meal'. This issue was a big agenda. When the children went to school, they swoon in the class suddenly, dropout, absentee, failure (to pass from class to class), declined their academic performance and etc. Then, it was raised as a big agenda to cause of quality education's problem. So, when the former First Lady Roman Tesfaye became to her position and thought to work on the prevention and avoid the problem of social affairs, she prioritized and could come with this school feeding issue. Then, she has started the school feeding program on public primary schools through liaising with education and women and children affairs bureaus of Addis Ababa city administration."*

School Feeding Project is the flagship project of former first lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye towards quality education. The project is being implemented in 208 public primary schools of Addis Ababa in collaboration with bureaus of Education and Women's and Children Affairs of Addis Ababa City Administration. The project addresses nutritional needs of children from poor families who are unable to have their daily meals and struggling to continue education. By mobilizing local and international partners the project currently provides breakfast and lunch for over 22,000 children at public schools in order to prevent school dropouts, grade repetitions and poor academic performance. The project also created jobs for 1000 unemployed women who prepare the meals and feed the children in the school premises. "Ye Enat Weg Bego Adiragot Mahiber" is an independent charitable organization. It is established to mobilize resources and manage the implementation of the project in collaboration with committees for school feeding program that consist of parents and teachers. Former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye is the guardian of 'Ye Enat Weg charitable association' it is one of the right hands of OFL of FDRE to operate and implement the first lady's initiative (school feeding project) (brochure of OFL of EFDRE, undated). While a respondent from the OFL of FDRE strengths this idea, he said that:

*“It has established by the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye and she has exploited her energy to stand with its legs to being as a big organization. It invests 50 million birr per annual for school feeding project and it has feeding over 22,000 children at school in daily during their lunch and breakfast meals time.”* A respondent from the OFL of FDRE

#### **IV. HIV/AIDS prevention and control**

Consistent to the Framework of Action set by the OAFLA as well as the high commitment to end the epidemic in Ethiopia, the former First Lady has planned and implemented concrete HIV/AIDS prevention and control efforts targeting two regions (Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz) where the Epidemic has relatively high prevalence. Active community engagement to prevent, control and end HIV/AIDS is central to the initiative led by the First Lady. The interventions paved the way for strengthening and streamlining the regional and local programs and efforts towards a more strategic approach to compact the epidemic (brochure of OFL of EFDRE, undated).

Ethiopia has reformed its political system and hosted a new Prime Minister Abiy Ahimed (PHD). Now, the current First Lady is Mrs. Zinash Tayachew. During the transition period of the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye and the current First Lady Mrs. Zinash, Mrs. Roman has justified her jobs performance for the current First Lady and she promised to help her. Mrs. Zinash has also told to continue her legacy as much as possible and explained her views as she needs Mrs. Roman’s supports. In May, 21/2018, Mrs. Zinash has announced the new priority areas of her office. Her prioritized areas are child malnutrition, early marriage, abduction, rape and female genital mutilation.

The current First Lady pledged to work with full commitment in alleviating hurdles that children are facing in education and providing access for all school-aged children. She also envisages contributing to quality education by identifying the challenges of the sector. Working towards providing legal support for girls who are sexually abused due to mental health disorder and helping homeless children and elderly people through providing proper health care are also the other areas in which the First Lady wants to engage (ENA, 2018).

### 4.1.3 Ethiopian Legal Framework on the Status of the First Lady

The status of the First Lady is not clearly stated under Ethiopian law. Her position is de-facto. And her office has not power to generate resources from government. It also involves only the selected program areas such as social affairs. It is difficult to say FDRE office of First lady is independently operates its activities because it is neither fully government office nor foundation. To strengthen this idea, the respondent from FDRE office of the First Lady described that:

*“By any means, first ladyship is not a career to be First Lady. It is conditional because the position of First Lady is not merit, she doesn’t come to the position by herself just by her spouse’s power. However, OFL of FDRE is established by the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye. During the establishment, we have assessed the other countries’ experience and found that most countries had not path in the same way when they established their office of First Lady. Some countries have established their foundation to run the First Lady’s initiatives and the other one has their office within the government structure. Then what we decided that, the office of the First Lady should be established within the prime minister office as a department. Hence, it has established and that was a proper decision to set up the structure of the office of the First Lady. Nonetheless, it meant not that it has its budget allocation from the government. Just it recognized as an official established office. It mobilizes its resources from donors through fundraising agreements, and recruitments of the experts also depend on the supporting partners (UN agencies) in collaboration to embark its projects on the ‘selected social affairs’. In terms of the fundraised budget, the office of First Lady has its finance account and responsible for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED)”* (A respondent from the OFL of FDRE).

From the above quotation, Ethiopian legal framework has not endorsed First Lady’s role/position except the guideline of OFL of EFDRE. The Former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye described about this. She said that:

*“There is no any legal frame work as I told you except the guideline. Actually, a person who comes to the palace through election has the mandate and obligation to make the legitimated status of the First Lady that can be prepared to give services.”*

The interviewee from *JLSR* who is a senior legal researcher is answered for the question of what do you say about Ethiopian legal framework which is related about the First Lady position/role? Her direct word was that:

*“We don’t have any legal framework about this. That is an impact, I think it is come from the long consequence of political system which was our country’s political progress was from monarchy to military system and then also now came with like kinds of military that was come to do their mission rather than establishes workable formal things. I consider that (be wuha endemewesed new yemikotirew) as we taken by flood. Just the prime minister is monopolized all power through the constitution and he has the high power but the other body like the president and others have a bit. So, I don’t think so that Ethiopian legal framework had had a chance to the provision of First Lady’s position/role. For instance, even there is no any point on the constitution how the step of transition period looks like the process to nominate other person when the prime minister was suddenly resigned. That was happened recently (during the resignation of the former Prime Minister Haylemariam Desalegn). Even this issue is not included in the constitution. Such kinds of that the position of the First Lady is missed. I believe that, it will be fine if we study on the gap of the constitution.”*

The respondent also suggests that to recognize the first lady’s role, as well as her position, institutional structure should be clearly constituted. Her word was:

*“Without clear structure, how we can recognize her (First Lady)? While she come to public and want to address some issues, we couldn’t accept her without any legal ground except an informal respect. So, why we recognize her signed order to do something? But, to acknowledge the first lady’s contribution and utilize her position,*

*her structural organization and boundary should be clearly stated out in the Ethiopian legitimate system and declared for people” (Respondent from JLSRI senior legal researcher No.1).*

While this study digs for further information, it has got the big question about the position of first lady in Ethiopia that follows the parliamentary government. As parliamentary system, Ethiopia has its president and prime minister. It creates a question that how the name of ‘First Lady’ is entitled solely on prime minister’s spouse than the president’s spouse? It also the best example as Ethiopian legal framework has not any provision for the position of ‘First Lady’ that considered it whether for the spouse of prime minister or president. The respondent from JLSRI who is a senior legal researcher said that:

*“From my point of view, the highest power is provided for prime minister as our parliamentary system. It might be one of the reasons that the position of the First Lady is vested for prime minister’s spouse. But, if you asked me as a legal expert, I don’t know. It is analogy and I do not think so there is a law about whose spouse (the prime ministers or president) shall to take the position of first lady” (Respondent from JLSRI senior legal researcher No.2).*

This study has addressed the key informant from the House of Representatives that have the power of legislation in all matters. The powers and functions of the House of Peoples’ Representatives as ratified in FDRE constitution article 55 sub article 1, “the House of peoples’ Representatives shall have the power of legislation in all matters assigned by this constitution to Federal jurisdiction.” To understand more about the provision of Ethiopia legal framework for First Lady’s role/position, a key informant was selected purposely from women and children standing committee. The interviewee said that the position of First Lady is situational. It depends on her husband’s terms of reign. Because of this, her position is not legally authorized but she has a hidden power to be influential that can contribute the government’s policy or prioritized agenda. In addition, she explained, first ladies have their regional and global forums to attend together for the purpose of their job harmonization and provide a measurement for their national agenda. It is vital for government as well as regional and global agendas. Her word was:

*“As the trend of the status of the First Lady, I think there is no legal background as this context (that has paid attention for her role or about her civil servant). The main point is that hindrance for first lady to be a civil servant. Her position becomes through her husband and ends when her husband’s reign ended. For instance, the former first lady Roman Tesfaye has relocated from her position while Prime Minister Haylemariam Desalegn resigned. So, it will be difficult to the coming prime minister if you make her to be civil servant”*(respondent from HoR women and children standing committee).

While the respondents asked about the advantages of legally authorized first lady’s position/role, their perspectives were different. A respondent from OFL of FDRE has his argument. He says that, if First Lady’s position/role is legally authorized, the disadvantage will be more rather than advantage. He added that, no matter how much Ethiopian law is silenced, it has not its provision to be obstruction for her role. His speech was:

*“The First Lady’s office has opened within the prime minister office as a department. So by our opinion, it already recognized. But it doesn’t mean, it should be implements the big project by itself and its experts. Its main job is lobbying to show the direction and advocate its prioritized issues. Now our First Lady’s role can be divided in to five major things.*

- 1. Contributing for the ongoing government’s works to run the job actively*
- 2. Facilitating. Example, empowerment of women and solve the women’s problems through her unique position*
- 3. Coordinating for the operation of different stakeholders’ agenda at the ministerial and high managerial level*
- 4. Pressure or advocating if there is a gap at the policy level and bring to the high level table’s discussion as an agenda. Then influence to include in their action plan*
- 5. Through her unique position, she could set her platform and passed her role as a legacy for the future new comer first lady. So, the law is silent but it has not legal prohibition to ban to do her activities. Therefore, it is difficult to set a law for the purpose of first lady’s position/role. For*

*instance, different first ladies have different background. Sometimes, some first ladies might be foreigners, we don't know the future. Educational background and family background (...) they may come with children. If policy makers think at that level, I am not sure how it can be able to balance. As I told you, it is difficult to put the rule book and if it will be legalized we are interfering in family life. Because, we are putting the criteria to recruit the future new comers first lady. On the other hand, if you put the institutionalized role for the first lady, it will be duplicated. Because, government has its sector based institutions. But the role of the first lady advocating and involving on the prioritized issues that should be provide outcome within a short period of time.”*

The respondents above and their explanations align with the side of government body and personal attributes of the First Lady. For instance, in Ethiopian history, during the monarchy system there was unwritten law which has been substituted by the crown and entitled by the name of ‘Empresses’ for the queens of Ethiopia. Due to this crowned and entitled name, they were highly influential and acceptable by their people. In fact, they did not have any modern degree of education and they were not deemed to have the knowledge of politics. But by their special position, they did their mission behind the throne or sometimes they were directly involved. They were also foreign policy diplomat, militant leaders, and high decision makers. For instance, Queen Eleni with king Emmanuel of Portugal to initiate for a Christian friendship generally and for military alliance interest against Muslim enemy. And Itegue Tayitu with major actresses to declare war against Italy at the battle of Adwa by treating up the Wuchale treaty (article XVII). These are the best example how the legally authorized first lady’s role is important. If they have authorized position, their responsibility will be cleared for the people. Then, people recognize, acknowledge, accept and follow their role . Therefore, personal attribute is doesn’t matter.

The argument was carried out with the respondent who is from HoR when she was asked about the advantage and disadvantage of legally authorized first lady’s role. She said that:

*“(...) I don't believe that it will have adverse impact if she has legally authorized position. May be I could show as a gap if she has it, there may occur a conflict of*

*interest with the new comer first lady. That might be difficult also for the next coming prime minister if her authority doesn't have its boundary. Except this, it has more positive side and more significance. The role of the First Lady can add its value not only at the national but also on the global level. It can respond for their criticizers who asking that such as 'who are they? Why they interfere to policy, government issues, and so on.'*

The respondent from JLSRI depicted her idea of the advantage and disadvantages of the legally authorized first lady's position/role by saying:

*"It has its benefit if there is a law. For instance, her resource gap will cover by government budget and she can implement her activities independently. By the way, I have heard from my friend who is working on NGO. She told me that 'a first lady is ordered us to realize fund'. So, first ladies are influential and they can get fund by any means. Generally, legitimization has its benefit but we have to consider that if her position/role is legalized, it might be obstacle to play her role due to the afraid of accountability."* Respondent from JLSRI senior legal researcher No.2

This study has raised the major arguments that how Ethiopian law govern the position/role of first lady and officially recognized the Prime Minister's spouse to be First Lady rather than the President's Spouse in the parliamentary system. The name of 'First Lady for the prime minister's spouse has come through common sense rather than legal background like the dominium encroachment. The second one if the parliament system allows the title of First Lady for prime minister's spouse, the role/position of first lady as well as the structure of her office would be clearly stated out under Ethiopian law and its frameworks such as by proclamation. Thirdly, the FDRE constitution article 12 sub article 1 (conduct and accountability of government: The conduct of affairs of government shall be transparent). So, to ensure transparency, the position/role of first lady and her office's job descriptions should be promulgated by the proclamation. For instance, if OFL of FDRE considered as an official government office, Federal Civil Servants Proclamation No. 515/2007 and Corruption Crimes Proclamation No. 881/2015 has cited the definitions of public office. Both proclamations are portrayed the definitions of 'Government Institution/Public Offices respectively as the following quotations.

*“Any federal government office established as an autonomous entity by a proclamation or regulations and fully and partially financed by government budget; included in the list of government institutions to be drawn up by the Council of Ministers.” FCSP (2007)*

*“Public office” means any office which undertakes federal or regional government activities and gets its budgets fully or partly from government.” CCP (2015)*

These proclamations are the part of Ethiopian legal framework. The OFI of FDRE has officially established in July 2013 within the prime minister office. And office of Prime Minister has its mandate to make its structures. But this study is arguing that if the office of Prime Minister officially established its department (office of first lady) why the office of First Lady has not its budget from government and it recognized by the federal civil servants and corruption crimes proclamations to be independent or autonomous entity? Its legal authority is somehow passed silently. Additionally, the legally definition of ‘Civil Servant/Public Servant’ is also described on the Corruption Crimes Proclamation No. 881/2015 as below stated out:

*“Public servant” means any person who is employed, appointed or elected to work either temporarily or permanently in a public office or public enterprise and includes member of a management board and the definition of “Public enterprise” means any federal or regional public enterprise or share company which is fully or partly owned by government” CCP (2015).*

Based on the Corruption Crimes Proclamation No. 881/2015, the establishment of the office of the First Lady cannot fulfill the minimum criteria to be public office and public enterprise because the employees of the OFL are not public servants. They are not hired by the rules and regulations of FCSP like workers who are recruited in public offices and public enterprises. Hence, Ethiopian legal framework has not only endorsed First Lady’s role/position but also it does not mention about the prohibited activities that can be untouchable by the First Lady.

Some literatures such as Amina Mama author of the “State Feminism and Democratization in Nigeria” arguing about the spouses of state leaders as they are corrupted and the Trojan horse of their husband’s that can play their roles to sustain their spouses’ reign. Amina Mama criticizes

them as they are the mother of fomocray rather than democracy. It means, they are not mentioned about the women's subordination but they are rent seeker, they are celebrity with the name of the poor women and subvert women's issues.

The absence of legal background on the role of First Lady is one of the reasons for her role to be inexplicit and blurred for the people. Additionally, it is easily exposed to create femocracist First Lady. This study is both arguing and agreeing with the ideas of Amina Mama's that was stated out on her book feminism or femocracy. It was pointed that "In a number of states, individual women have capitalized on the internationally favorable climate and their positions as wives of Heads of State to assume powerful new roles, often arrogating to themselves the right to represent and lead women. The First Lady phenomenon, as it has been dubbed, has reached new levels of prominence, begging a number of questions regarding the democratic character of this form of gender politics, and its likely impact on ordinary African women" (Amina Mama 1995). According to on the quote above by Amina, in Ethiopia the former first lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye has performed important initiatives which are vital to support government's policy or national development and on the women and children affairs through either begging or influencing the donors. Without legally authorized role, the first lady's role is exposed to femocracy. For instance, all former Mrs. Roman Tesfaye's role was depended with the partners/donors to fundraising. She never had allocated budget for her office from the government. Her fundraising process has lack of transparency. It had not ever been publicized. Mrs. Roman suggested;

*"The legitimized first-ladyship is necessary. In order to reach to the people especially for vulnerable groups, the position should have authorized through legal background. It uses to be transparent and being accountable. The jobs that have been done by the First Lady should be announced for people. If the First Lady's role will be disseminated by mass-media, people can know what she does; what her roles are; and even the budget that is fundraised from the donors must be clearly known. Then, the First Lady's position and role will be recognized. When her role is known, she will be accountable for her jobs. Otherwise, the First Ladies might be entering to unnecessary issues and its consequence could be danger for the state. People should have support and follow up their activities*

*that can make shaped the First Lady who might be divert her responsibility to the unnecessary subjects. Considering the spouses of the regional state leaders as a region's First Lady also necessary. It helps to be acknowledged and recognized the position/role of the First Lady by the people.”*

Based on the above former First Lady Mrs. Roman's point, the roles of the First Lady should be clearly stated out, evaluated and officially realized her job performance to the people. The major reason to born femocracy is not the First Lady's personal attributes. It is born by the legitimacy gap. If the position/role of first lady is legally authorized, the leaders' spouses could be manipulated their responsibilities in accountable and transparency manner. Then, they will be addressed the women's problem as some extent rather than to be subverted. This study assumed that, the role of First lady and her responsibility should have governed by the FDRE constitution which is stated under article 12 (conduct and accountability). However, the job of the First Lady must be recognized as affairs of government through the proclamation that should have ratified and the recognized by of House of Representatives.

To summarize this sub title (based on the researcher's assumption), the following sixteen points are mentioned which are implies the advantage of constituted the First Spouse's position. The legitimized position of First Spouse has multidimensional advantages. These are:

1. First lady/spouse's constitutional and human rights are respected, free from politician scrutiny.
2. Due to officially recognized role, first lady/spouse's boundary will be accepted by the people and she can be influential person at national, regional and global level.
3. Establishes institutional structure from top-down to community. For instance, the platform of first lady/spouse expands its branch through regional leader's spouses to address the overall communities.
4. Ensure payment/salary of first lady/spouse and her office employees. Therefore, the challenges of first/spouse like all human and capital resources are solved by government budget allocation.
5. Create accountability and responsibility

6. Decrease gender inequality and human rights (it should be started from the palace)
7. Free from systematic discrimination and androcentric trap.
8. Address the major of Ethiopian women's questions and has its autonomous for women's movement as well as independent women's organizations
9. Useful to empower women's political participation from bottom-up to top managerial level.
10. Found the former first lady's association
11. Keep the former first ladies' legacy and archive institutional memories.
12. Promote gender equality and equity.
13. Remain femocracy, enhance the role of First Spouses power rather than first spouse hood and improve transparency services.
14. Increase the acceptance of people through independence of first spouse's legal authority. (based on the researcher's assumption)

#### **4.1.4 The First Lady's Office Activities and Its Challenge**

The office of First Lady has some factors that could be an obstacle to operate the First Lady's initiatives. Some of them are: undefined First Lady's jobs description; Scarcity of resources; gender stereotype; personal attributes; and public and political environment.

**Undefined role:** The Office of the First Lady of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (OFL of FDRE) has employing its project through the collaboration of different stakeholders (government organizations, NGOs, and other institutions). The skeptical of its stakeholders is one of a major impediment of the offices. Sometimes, its stakeholders are not comfortable to work together due to unclear jobs descriptions of OFL of FDRE. Mrs. Roman Tesfaye said that about her challenges that created due to the legitimacy gap on her position as well as the office. She said that:

*“Yes! There were challenges. For instance, my job had been employed as a flagship that could be support the national transformation plan. During the formulation of our initiative to start work together with stakeholders, some government institutions were doubted me. They would not trust us. They would think that as our job might be overtaking their business or might be hide their effort because of my performance. They were also put me as a threat from the point of unwanted influences that would be created from fearful. However, through a process while we work together, they understood our mission that was we were approached them to work together on their gaps and support them as a catalyst for their achievement rather than interfered. At the end, I understood that, they were interested to meet me when they need my support to perform their jobs aggressively.”*

OFL of FDRE has recorded the important performance. However, it has not cleared job descriptions to address the whole Ethiopian women and regions. To able to address the whole part of Ethiopian regions, it should have supported with Ethiopian law to be acceptable and trusted by the people. To ensure accountability and transparency, the responsibility of the OFL of FDRE should be defined. Because of this, people will have access to know the First Lady’s contribution and minimize the action of femocracy.

**Gender Stereotype:** She has double role; both as household breadwinner and as a leader that is expected from her state of subjects. The role of the household as a house wife or mother and accompany her husband (Prime Minister) in his state visit; receive gusts as First Lady are the primacy challenges of the First Lady that make her to be withdrawn from her prioritized role. The expectation of people also another challenge that First Lady’s role is expected to play her gender roles in the home rather than social affairs. This gender stereotyped views has its impact for other stakeholders to permit work together with her due to political threat (they doubt her if she may has a mission from the Prime Minister). It shows two things, the triple gender roles has not abolished yet at the palace and Ethiopian First Ladies could not exclude themselves from the burden of gender roles. Second, if gender stereotype has not obliterated yet at the palace, the ordinary Ethiopian women are more suffers by triple gender roles (Nathali G.& Friz K., 2017) .

**Scarcity of resources:** Her role is dependent on her volunteerism. She needs a technical advisor to create her jobs. Thus, she does not have a government supported budget to recruit a technical advisor and professional experts. The shortage of resources and triple gender roles are the major challenges of First Lady. According to the authors of 'Role without rule book', (Nathali G.& Friz K., 2017) stated out the direct word of former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye (when she was on her position). Roman was spoken about her major challenges. She said that:

*“The most critical challenge I face in executing my role is acquiring and retaining adequate numbers of professional staff. My office, as the first [official] Office of the First Lady in the history of the country, has been in existence for only three years, which makes it relatively new and still in the process of defining, clarifying, and expanding its role. We need to establish standard systems and procedures to increase the efficiency and outreach of the office ... There is a significant resource need not only to sustain and strengthen the ongoing initiatives, but also to expand our scope of work to more areas that require intervention. Access to technical and financial resources are very important and among our key challenges.”*

It indicates that, she had not an independence right to play her role and her office was also doubtful to operate its programs liberally from external influences. In addition, a respondent from OAFLA explained that:

*“During the periods of the AU summit and the UN general assembly, OAFLA organizes the African First Ladies’ general assembly twice per year. The OAFLA’s general assembly is deliberately organized at that time because most of African First Ladies come together with their husbands. It is difficult to call them for OAFLA general assembly by its schedule. Because, they can’t attend by themselves, they don’t have financial budget for their travel and other cost expenses that could be covered by their government. So, the only option to call the OAFLA’s general assembly, we should have wait the periods of the AU summit and the UN general assembly. All African First Ladies has the shortage of financial resources. Their program has not supported by the government budget. But there is a national office*

*that we call it 'in country office of First Lady'. The shape of its structure is different from country to country. Some countries have their foundation like Ruanda; some countries like Ethiopia have structured within the prime minister office; some others also have established within the government structure. The other one is just there is for operatives to access First Lady's attention through the/a focal person (the focal person may be one, two four). It is just to you let know as there is a different reality at a different country"*

Both material and human resources are the primacy constraints of the office of the First Lady. The office has a limitation of budget to its operation. All its projects are depended on the donors' fund. Its employees are recruits and hires as a technical assistance (TA) from the donor organization and their salaries also from the donors. Because the office has not government supported budget to hire its professional experts. The former First Lady Mrs. Roman explained that while the office needs any resources, she had an obligation to beg the donors for the purpose of fund. Even the office has not its own transport service from the state. To solve its problem, it has to request the cooperation of the palace's logistics department.

The new structural and organizational strategic changes should have needed to provide the fundamental measurement for the challenges of the office. Otherwise, the office of the First lady cannot achieve its vision and goal. Government has to understand the significant contribution of the office and should have utilized properly its capacity to the achievement of its policies and strategies by avoid the problems of the office.

**Personal Attributes:** Because of her educational and personal experience she struggles to choose government's prioritized initiatives. She also faces media's criticism (either the media supports her participation while her role is admired them and facing hot criticism if they are not comfort with her role) because of no job descriptions and specifications. Personal attribute is determined to be democrat or femocracy. For instance, the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye has found and is the guardian of 'Ye Enat Weg' charity association for the purpose of support her school feeding program. It is highly linked with the OFL of FDRE as the right wing of the office of first lady. "Ye Enat Weg" an independent charitable organization is established to mobilize resources and manage the implementation of the project in collaboration with the committees for school feeding program that consist of parents and teachers" (brochure of OFL of

EFDRE, undated). And it depends on the former personal attributes to continue with the current first lady Mrs. Zinash Tayachew. To argue with the Amina's idea, all first ladies could not be a femocracy. Without any legal authority, it is depending on the first lady's personality. Also, the office of First Lady has duty to implement the interests of the First Lady. The performance of the office also depends on her personal leadership capacity. While the activities of the office has an access to the mass media that relates to its achievements and failures, she faces with the agendas of the media (either the media supports her participation while her role is admired them and facing hot criticism if they are not comfort with her role).

**Public and political environment:** Undefined boundaries/scope of actions is her bottlenecks to participate in the area of women's empowerment that can enhance the participation of women in politics. The limits of a First Lady's influence as a leader are inevitably. First ladies may also find their legitimacy as leaders constrained by the political atmosphere that surrounds their husbands. A first Lady's agenda can be criticized or demeaned by political opponents – thus obstructing her ability to effectively influence change. (Nathali G.& Friz K., 2017) through their article 'role without rulebook' has mentioned about Mrs. Kateryna Yushchenko, former First Lady of Ukraine, it described how her husband's political opponents blocked her from implementing social reforms and projects. As Mrs. Kateryna Yushchenko's told and wrote her words:

*“My husband's political opponents tried to stall some of our initiatives, or criticized them in media...The entrenched bureaucracy resisted some of the reforms we tried to effect in health, education, and the arts...We were not able to finish our biggest project, the construction of a state-of-the-art children's hospital, because of huge bureaucratic barriers, inactivity among people in my husband's administration, and interference [by] political opponents.”* (Nathali G.& Friz K., 2017)

The undefined role exposes them to untrustworthy in public. Their contribution will be hidden in the case of people's frustration to accept or recognize the First Lady's role. The influences of the political opponents and the state's top executive cadres also enforce the First Lady's and her office's contribution to relocate or stop its activities if they uncomfortable on her/office's activities and it interpreted negatively from the politics point of view or out of her/office's boundaries.

### 4.1.5 The First Lady's Role on Gender Equality

From gender perspective, the name of the position indicated 'gender blindness'. The word of 'First Lady' is noted for only females. It stereotyped females are not allowed to be a state leader or always state leaders are males and females are employed for the position of 'First Lady'. The position also creates other questions reversibly. For instance, if males come to the position, they called 'First Gentleman'. It also another gendered status.

Globally, the world politics has ignored the world's high influential political leader's spouse from its political tournament fields. It closed its eyes to show the backbone of world political leader spouses' effort that has passing their foot print for global, regional in general and national in particularly. The world politics has decided for First Ladies to participate its politics to play with their barefoot. It allows them to get the power from their spouses without any legitimacy. Most of world's country leaders are perpetuate patriarchal system through systematic discrimination and practicing patriarchal hegemony but they loudly shouting for gender equality. They are trying to be rational about their spouses' acknowledgement through paper tiger but not volunteer to give a legal authority for their spouses (Valley P., 2008).

In the case of legitimacy gap, practically, First Ladies all over the world can divided in two to categories in terms of their roles. The first one is '**First Ladies as spouse hood and First Ladies as spouse power**'. **First Ladies as spouse hood** can refer to palace managers, hostess, and operators. For instance, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, widow of the former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, regularly accompanied her husband on domestic and international travel. The George W. Bush Institute on its 'role without rulebook' publishes quoted the interview of Rani Singh, reporter and author of *Sonia Gandhi*, it put that "This cultural diplomacy they did, all these whirlwind tours of countries actually raised India's prestige on the international scene, so it was reasonably well-received... she was seen as an asset." In the United States, George Washington who was the country's first president's spouse Mrs. Martha Washington has set her unique position of America's First Lady. Her every action would influence her successors. Her role was host weekly receptions for local constituents, members of Congress, and foreign dignitaries.

‘Every Friday evening at the presidential mansion, guests would meet Mrs. Washington, enjoy food, and engage in conversation’ (W. Bush Institute, 2017).

**First Spouse as spouse power** can refer to social activists, policy advocates, campaigners, advisors and partners sometimes they are an icon of the nation. In contemporary, first ladies as spouse power, by themselves have been breaking the gender stereotypes and involving on their countries’ social, economic and political spheres. For example, in May 2003 Argentina has installed Nestor Kirchner and Christina Fernandez de Kirchner was become a first lady. She was major an actor in her husband’s presidency campaign. During her first ladyship period, she served as itinerant ambassador for her husband’s government. In 10 December 2007, she was the second female president of Argentina and the first one to be elected to the office. In 2011 she determined to re-election and successfully elected once again. In the United Kingdom, Mrs. Clementine Churchill carved out a platform of considerable influence. Her active involvement in political affairs as a first lady was a continuation of her involvement in Sir Winston Churchill’s career throughout their marriage. She considered herself a counterpart and advisor to her husband – not dissimilar to a chief of staff (W. Bush Institute, 2017). The issues of Hillary Rodham Clinton chose to stress were those which have long been a staple of American domestic politics: healthcare, children, education, and the position of women in society. She saw them as key to America and to the world’s future as well: “In the new global economy, individual countries and regions would find it difficult to make economic or social progress if a disproportionate percentage of their female population remains poor, uneducated, unhealthy, and disenfranchised.”

According to Paul Valley article, it stated out first lady as an icon of the nation during the Barack Obama successful election. Paul was articulated that “the first African-American First Lady, Michelle Obama will represent all of the people of the United States, both at home and abroad. The First Lady is a living symbol, a representative of the United States and as such, they tend to walk a middle ground. One can think of them almost like a "mother of the nation" (Paul Vallely, 2008).

First Ladies who can categorize under the spouse power, they provision on either femocracy or gender activist (sometimes feminist/feminism). Both femocracist/femocracy First Ladies and Feminist/Gender activist have their foundation or official office within the Prime Minister/President office or operation's center. However, they are different by their characteristics. The Femocracy/Femocracist First Ladies are highly acceptable by their spouses; public figures; conservatives; traditional ruler; demolish their former first lady's legacy; corrupted in the name of women's, marginalized groups, and social affairs; and establish their machineries to sustain their spouses' reign for political purpose rather than gender issues or women's questions in systematically. On the other way, the characteristics of Feminist/Feminism or gender activist First Ladies are advocate for the women's movement and questions; establish their machineries for the purpose of women's questions and social affairs; found the former First Ladies associations and keep to sustain the former's First Lady's legacy; advocate to improve the women's participation on the area of political, economic and social arenas; and promote feminism.

After the end of monarchial system, Mrs. Wubanch Bishaw was the first person who was the spouse of the President. Her title was not 'First Lady'. However, her role can be characterized as first spouse hood. The former First Lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin was the first one who has entitled with the position of first ladyship. Her role was glorified by self- business person and she was exercised First Spouse Power with femocracy. Among the former two Ethiopian First Ladies' role, the role of former First Lady Mrs. Roman has met the quality of the modern first lady (First Spouse Power). She has worked to decrease the gender disparity in the sector of economy through women's economic empowerment program. Her contribution was vital to support the national gender policy. During her interview, she was asked that 'during your first ladyship position, do you believe that, as you have performed your responsibility to provide national gender equality?' she said that:

*"Sure! Because, my primacy issue was 'women's economic empowerment' that is the major measurement to cop the disparity of women's economic participation and reduce women's poverty. I believe that, women's economic empowerment is the best option to provide gender equality in Ethiopia. Women who are*

*economically empowered never give up to struggle for their rights as well as their all round questions. So, we have worked to show best practice for other organizations that are involving on the area of women's issue to promote gender based projects. I have advocated and influenced during the formulation policies in order to be gender sensitive (I remembered that I was participated on up to three policy formulations). ”*

Even though, the first lady role is ad-interim up to the end of her position, the former first lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye has worked on the core measurements of global gender gap index such as Economic participation and opportunity, Educational Attainment, and Health and survival except Political empowerment. The de-facto rule is prohibiting First Lady's interest to raise a major women's question such as women's political empowerment. For instance, among the former first lady's initiatives the women's political empowerment has not yet addressed. Ethiopia is ranked 115<sup>th</sup> out of 144 countries by global gender gap report in 2017. According to the report, Ethiopia placed 50<sup>th</sup> under the categorization of political empowerment (women in parliament 17<sup>th</sup> with female and male ratio 38.8/61.2, women in ministerial positions, 109<sup>th</sup> with female and male ratio 10/90) (World Economic Forum, 2017). Hence, the office of first lady had not involved to address the major gender issues in Ethiopia such as gender based violence. However, the current First Lady Mrs. Zinash announced her prioritized area will be on the gender issues such as gender based violence.

The agenda of gender equality needs more attention in Ethiopia. Hence, If concerned bodies are properly utilizes the position of First Lady, it can be used as one of the instrument to promote gender equality in Ethiopia. The role of First Lady has significance to address gender issues. The office of First Lady's all programs are important to address the national gender gaps. The current First Lady Mrs. Zinash also added new initiatives (abduction, early marriage, child malnutrition and female genital mutilation) that could be measure the gender based violence in directly.

## 4.2 Discussion

This part has discussed the current findings with relate to the previous different literatures that had been carried out in the area of this study.

The finding depicted that the status of first ladyship has begun from the palace as a wife of state leader. Her role can be categorized as spouse hood (hostess of the palace, gender celebrity and housewife) and as spouse power (policy advocator, leader's teammate or advisor and influential leader). Their responsibility is determined by their personal attributes. They can choose what they want to do as their personal interests. The position is unique and it has hidden power to influence others. This influential or hidden power comes either using their husbands' power or due to the fear of others that wont faced with the threats of their husbands (Anthony S., 2008; Baik Y., 2014; Borreil I., 2011; Fritz G., 2017; and Kumar N., 2013)..

In Ethiopia, the title of 'First Lady' has identified since 1995 until 2001 by the German citizenship, Regina Abelt became the First Lady of Ethiopia by virtue of her marriage to the then President Dr. Negasso Gedida. She is the first President's wife who has referred as the First Lady in Ethiopian parliamentary system. The title of the First Lady has been practiced more and publicly well-known since the former First Lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin the role of the First Lady has showed since the former First Lady Mrs. Azeb Mesfin. She contributed her position to struggle HIV/AIDS and mental health.

Through custom based structure the office of the First Lady has established during the reign of former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye to the purpose of contribute her position to the empowerment of the marginalized social group such as women and children on the social affairs area. She has provided good performances on the women's economic empowerment, quality education, nutrition, cancer prevention and HIV/AIDs (Fritz G., 2017).

The period of Former First Lady Mrs. Roman's movement has practiced the feminist standpoint epistemology theory. The central concept of feminist epistemology is that of a situated knower, and hence of situated knowledge: knowledge that reflects the particular perspectives of the subject. Among the feminist standpoint theory, Standpoint epistemology and Marxist feminist theories are included. The former first Lady Mrs. Roman has involved women's economic

empowerment. Her methodology has followed consciousness rising through capacity building to generate their income and relocate from economic dependency. She applied to provide technical and awareness raising training to build their capacity skills that related to economic empowerment. As conscientization is a continuous process (individuals find themselves surrounded by different and changing time frames, localities and situations), it can be called a praxis (a continuous process of reflection and action) (Antrobus, 2004). It helps women to consider how people may understand the same object (the persons who are economically empowered) in different ways that reflect the distinct relations in which they stand to it.

As described on the data presentation, Mrs. Roman believed that to abolish women's subordination which makes them to be dependent with their parents or husbands, the fundamental measurement should be worked on women's economic empowerment. When women could be economically fit, they stand for their rights and struggle for other oppressed females. She also suggested that if the women can participate on the national economic systems, they can change the country's economic growth as well their community and families. Then, they will have an easy opportunity to get the political power and being a top executive leader in the country. Marxist feminist standpoint theory argues that the source of women's oppression is their economic dependence on a husband (Judith Lorber, undated). Hence, Mrs. Roman's reflection was women's economic empowerment that supported through capacity building is vital to ensure women's autonomy and manipulate the women's problem as well. Her perspective is relevant with the concept of consciousness rising and development. It is the transformation of the "self", the mind and thinking process. It is directly linked to situating oneself at the centre of a broader setting. It is thus "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Ramos, cited in Freire, 1972).

Ethiopian legal framework has not its provision for the title of 'First Lady' as well as her role. Notwithstanding, in Ethiopian parliamentary system, the president of the state and the prime minister has their separated power through FDRE constitution but it has not implied which leader's spouse should be take the title of 'First Lady/spouse'. Hence, the finding of this study has identified that the Ethiopian legal framework has not admitted for the status of the First Lady

and does not postulated her responsibility in public. It could not give a clue how the position of 'First ladyship can employed in the parliamentary system (Robert W., 2000).

Ethiopian legal framework should have considered the regional president's spouses to bring to the throne (on the region's first ladyship position). Then, the offices of the central First Lady can work effectively with the collaboration of the regional partner offices. It has also two major significances. First, national government can utilizes the position of the first ladies to achieve its prioritized agendas as a flagship. Second, the regional president's spouses can exercise their leadership role and can be close to at the bottom of the community level. Because of this, citizens (people) could be understood the role of the First Ladies and their contribution to the development of women across Ethiopia as well as the country's growth. Their responsibility will be known, accountability and transparency also ensured. If the First Ladies' role is being accountable and transparency, they will be acceptable publicly and people also support their programs to be achievable (Robert W., 2000 and Rowley J., 20017).

Additionally, the legally authorized position/role of first lady has its benefit to develop measurements for any challenges; create spouse power and remain spouse hood; change from femocracist to feminist/ democratic perspectives; provide women on the sphere of all political positions and address their problem independently. Additionally, Institutionalized Memories; Sustained former First Ladies/ Gentleman Legacy and established Former First Ladies/ Gentleman forum could be continued for future coming first lady's platform to utilize the unique first lady's position (Mama A. 1995; Robert W. & Eksterowics, 2003; and Fritz G., 2017). The advantage of legitimized position of the First Lady is also keeps the practice of the Ethiopian constitution which is stated on the FDRE constitution's article 12 to employ the government's conduct and accountability of the government. Hence, the boundary of the First Lady's position/role should be transparent and has to be accountable. It is not only for a matter of her job descriptions and specifications or hypocrisy but also responsibility for the people to be elegant or reduce the kinds of femocracy action.

The position/role of First Lady is not independent from scrutiny or undertakes her activities by herself as she wants. Because, her resource is depends on fundraising. She is not supported by the government because of the absence of rule and regulation. In other word, her role is not recognized under Ethiopian law. She cannot confront politicians to be free from criticize or her role being politicized (Fritz G., 2017). According to the feminist epistemology, the role without constituted rule (First Ladies) can be exposed systematically by dominant knowledge. For instance, this kinds of practices on disadvantage women by excluding them from inquiry; denying them epistemic authority; denigrating their “feminine” cognitive styles and modes of knowledge; producing theories of women that represent them as inferior, deviant, or significant only in the ways they serve male interests; producing theories of social phenomena that render women's activities and interests, or gendered power relations; and producing knowledge that reinforces gender and other social hierarchies (Elizabeth Anderson, 2015). There are a lot of challenges that faces the First Lady in terms of socio-economic, cultural and political aspects. The following points are the major challenges of the First Lady. Based on the findings of this study, undefined status of the First Lady is the major source of the challenges of the OFL of FDRE as well as the First Lady. The impediments of the OFL of FDRE have an impact on its activities. These impediments are: gender stereotype, shortage of resources, personal attributes and political and public environments (Nathali .& Friz G., 2017); Anthony S., 2008; Borreil I., 2011) .

Therefore, challenge has its negative impacts on the contribution of the first lady to the development of socially marginalized group as well as the improvements of national development plan. To minimize those challenges, Ethiopian law should have pay attention to the first lady’s position/role as well as her boundaries. Then her role could have significance to women’s participation in all spheres as well as their primacy questions from bottom up to top level which means addressing both rural and urban women’s interests.

Through the gender perspective, the word ‘First Lady’ is not gender neutral. It has a gender stereotype and perpetuates patriarchal hegemony and the subordination of women. First Lady implies that women are always nurturing to be prime minister’s wife or spouse. In contradictory, the word of first gentleman was never born and takes the first ladyship’s thrones. This means that women cannot be a prime minister and men also cannot be a first gentleman. To make the words

more gender neutral than First Lady and Gentleman, 'First spouse' is the best word to counteract gender stereotypes and the relations of gender role (Anderson S., 2015; Anthony S., 2008; Borreil I., 2011).

This study suggests that, the role of the First Lady should be evaluated to address the national gender equality. The national gender issues must be started inclusive from the palace. The spouse of state leader should be an icon for the people. Her contribution has to begin from her personal issues. For example, the Ethiopian First Lady has not authorized right access to defined responsibility. She has to influence and struggle for her right to narrow the legitimacy gap. When she secured her legitimate first, she will be influential and now her boundaries to struggle for women's rights. The position of First Lady is unpaid job. In Ethiopia, wage inequality between males and females in different organizations (as studies shows) has been not remained (Valley P., 2008; Olufemi J. et al, 2012; Mama A., 2011 and Nathali .& Friz G., 2017). To ensure the national gender based wage's inequality, the gap should be abolished from the unpaid salary of the First Lady. If the First Lady has salary, the gender stereotype on gender job segregation will minimizes at some extent. For instance, former First Lady Mrs. Roman said that women's economic empowerment program is a key measurement that can helps them to ensure their independence from their parents or husbands. However, through gender lens she has been dependent with her spouse/Prime Minister due to her unpaid job (it refers that, gender equality has not ensured at the palace). For instance, if the First Lady has not salary, that means she is not government employee and her responsibility could not accountable. If she is corrupted in the name of her position (that means she can be femocracy First Lady), there is no legal background to accuse her in the case of corruption (Mama A., 1995). Thus, the contribution of First Lady to promote gender equality is determined by her personal attributes. The jobs of the First Lady are created by herself. Her contribution is volunteerism. Whatever she is volunteer or public employee, concerned body should have recognized her contributions. For instance, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahimed has acknowledged the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye officially for her reign's contributions. It is a good beginning. But, if the acknowledgement of the First Lady will be publicized, her role also has to transparent. In order to transparent, it should have legitimized to evaluate her performances and recognize her contributions for the public. Because of this, people clearly understand her jobs and her role also supported by the people.

Then, when she advocate to address the gender issue, people can accept her without any skeptical and she can achieve her performance successfully (Robert W. & Eksterowiz, 2003).

Former First Lady Mrs. Roman has passed a good legacy for the current First Lady. She worked to address gender equality in Ethiopia. She transferred her employees and undertaking initiatives for the First Lady Mrs. Zinash Tayachew to sustain her projects. The peaceful power transition has created opportunity to transfer knowledge and other best practices for the new coming First Lady. Currently, First Lady Mrs. Zinash has added her initiatives on gender based violence, abduction, early marriage, and female genital mutilation which are harmonized with the former First Lady's programs such as nutrition. It is designed to address the critical gender issues in Ethiopia. According to World Economic Forum (2017), Ethiopia is ranked 115<sup>th</sup> out of 144 countries by global gender gap report in 2017. The national gender gap might be improved due to her interested area has being on gender issues and concerned bodies might be cooperated her by working together.

By any circumstance, all programs that undertaking by the OFL of FDRE has its significance to reduce the discrepancy of gender based problems as a national. The programs can address the national gender issues. For instance, women's empowerment is vital to concentrate on the gender gap and also it is basic to eliminate gender inequality at all economic, social and political arenas. The other one is cancer prevention and control. Breast and cervical cancer are the prominent cases of cancer in Ethiopia and most women are suffering by these deadly diseases currently. The contribution of the First Lady can bring a tectonic shift in gender issues. When its scope can be expanded and persisted especially if it is supported with legitimating, it will be a good women's machinery to promote gender equality in Ethiopia.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

In Ethiopian History, there have been passed the several dynasties in different era. The leader of dynasties spouses were Queens. However, there were a lot of queens by the reign of a single leader due to either the leader's polygamy or the spouses of the leader of each province. Nevertheless, in the national level there was a king of king who was considered as a state leader. As the king responsiveness, he would have crowned his spouse who could be a Queen of the state. After his spouse were crowned, she would be called 'Itegue/Empress'. Itegue/Empress means, the queens of queen. After their coronation, they had played historical and important roles in their span of reigns for their state. Their contribution has passed its positive impact for the current Ethiopia from different angles. However, Ethiopia cannot fully exerted its best practice to access the state leader's spouse/first lady's position (who is come/come/ing to the throne currently.) due to undefined status of First Lady.

After the destroyed of monarchial system, the political ideology has changed from the monarchial to presidential system. The spouse of the Colenel Mengistu Haylemaryam, Mrs. Wubanch Bishaw was passed her reign neither the title of 'Queen' nor the 'First Lady'. The word of 'First Lady' has derived from the western and Regina Abelt, wife of the former President of Ethiopia (Dr. Negasso Gedida) was referred as First Lady in the first time in Ethiopian history. However, the status of first ladyship has well-known during the former Mrs. Azeb Mesfin. She has involved in politics and social affairs (prevent the epidemic of HIV/AIDS and Mental Health).

The former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye has opened a new chapter in Ethiopia. She has established the first custom based office of first lady in Ethiopian history is called Office of the First Lady of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (OFL of FDRE). Her platform has transferred to the current First Lady Mrs. Zinash Tayahew. She has contributed her capacity both in professional as her husband's partner and using her first ladyship position as an advocate on social affairs in general and to the advancement of women's empowerment in particular. She was

a president of Organization of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA). As the president of OAFLA, she has contributed through her professional career and unique first ladyship's position support African states effective policies and strategies towards ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat, reducing maternal and child mortality and empowering women and children.

The platform of former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye is used as a benchmark for the current and future new coming first spouses. The transition of her position for the current First Lady Mrs. Zinash Tayachew was a peaceful. It helps to transfer full OFL of FDRE's staff as it is for the current First Lady and she can sustain the former's legacy without any confusion. This kind of power transition is useful to achieve the vision of the office. Furthermore, it has more advantage for the sustainability of the projects of the OFL of FDRE.

The interventions areas of the OFL of FDRE are the best area to ensure the socially marginalized groups especially women and children. It should have expand its scopes and strengthen its capacity to address the national women's problems. Due to undefined status of First Lady, the OFL of FDRE has facing with the challenges when executing its projects. These challenges are gender stereotypes, shortages of resources, the First Ladies' personal attributes and public and political environments. The impediments of the office are the primacy results of the undefined status of First Lady. Ethiopian First Lady has not any legal background for the position of the first ladyship. It is neither proclaimed nor prohibited the first lady's position/role. It allows the first lady role to be a de-facto. It influences the operations of the OFL of FDRE in generally and the contributions of the First Lady in particularly.

The OFL of FDRE also established silently. It is neither government office nor foundation. It is custom based established as a department with in the office of the Prime Minister. But it doesn't have any budget allocation from government. It has also not noticed under federal civil servant proclamation. As government structure, it cannot full fill the FDRE constitution's article 12 sub article 2 (conduct and accountability of government: Any public official or an elected representative is accountable for any failure in official duties.). For instance, the federal civil servant proclamation has not included the office of the First Lady as the public office. Ethiopian First Ladies are not considered as public officials and elected representative to be accountability and transparency.

Hence, the boundary of the First Lady's position/role has not transparent. Her responsibility will be designed by herself. Her role is volunteerism and she is not a public employee. There is no legal background neither to admire her contribution that is important to the advancement of women's empowerment as well as to support the national policies and strategies nor to accountable if may she involve on the femocracy characters such as corrupted first spouse. On the other side, undefined status of the First Lady is expose her constitutional (constitution of FDRE the rights of women/ article 36) and human rights. It also exacerbates the challenges of the first lady to: the persistence of gender stereotype; femocracy; scrutinize by politician; media or public criticism; and etc.

Through gender perspectives, this study has suggested that the role of the First Lady is one of the women's machinery to measure the women's problems and provide the increments of gender equality in Ethiopia. However, the national women's organization and other women's machineries should have harmonized their agendas to work together. Strengthen the capacity of OFL of FDRE both in material and human capitals are necessary to fill its gaps and solve its challenges and constraints. Considering the status of the First lady from the gender lens is vital to abolish gender stereotypes across Ethiopia. It should have ensured through the proclamation which is approved by the House of Representatives. Then, the responsibility of the First Lady will be cleared and her contribution will be improved to address women's empowerment and gender equality in Ethiopia. Generally, the OFL of FDRE should have improved its structural and organizational strategic changes based on legal background. The advantages of organizational change can help to achieve its vision. For instance, minimizes political scrutinize; establishes institutional structure from top-down to community; promote gender equality and equity; remain femocracy, enhances the role of First Spouse power rather than First Spouse hood; and improve transparency services. It also increases the acceptance of people through independence of first spouse's legal authority; address the major Ethiopian women's questions to empower women's political, social and economic participation from bottom-up to top managerial levels.

## 5.2. Recommendations

Based on the major findings and discussion, the following six points are recommended through the assumption of the researcher.

1. The status of the First Lady and her responsibility should have accountable and transparent.
2. The ratified proclamation which is approved by the House of Representatives should have given to the status of the First Lady to recognition and acknowledge her contribution that is necessary to promote gender equality and the Ethiopian women's empowerment.
3. Advocators and policy makers should be in harness with concerned bodies to show the forgotten First Lady's special position and pay attention for her contribution to the national development in general and socially marginalized groups particularly.
4. The word both 'First Lady and First Gentleman' are gendered. Hence, to make it to gender neutral the word of 'First Spouse' is the best alternative.
5. Participate and recognize the regional leaders' spouses and the FDRE president's spouse to be act as the First Ladies' of their region and First Lady of the head of the state respectively. Then, their harmonization has its benefit to address the major government's prioritized issues and marginalized groups such as women and children at all over the country (regions, province and districts) that could be initiated by OFL of FDRE.
6. Further research needs to be done on the issue of the Ethiopian First Lady's contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality in Ethiopia and on the other relevant issues.

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## Appendixes

### **Appendix A: Checklist and Interview Guide for the former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye**

1. You were the first Ethiopian First lady who are established the office of First Lady in Ethiopia. Would you please tell me, how did you establish your platform? What were your challenges when you established it?
2. Do you believe that, the office of the first lady has performed its responsibility to provide gender equality in Ethiopia?
3. Behind their husbands the First Ladies' leadership role is vital for to be successful state leaders. That means, First Ladies are on the leadership position beyond the throne. Do you agree with the statement? If you agree, how do you identify yourself based on the statement?
4. During your first ladyship reign, you have accomplished your responsibility to support the government's policy and strategy such as: cancer prevention, nutrition, and women's economic empowerment, school feeding and etc. Do you believe that you have accomplished all your prioritized initiatives? Had you been supported by government's budget?
5. What was your mechanism to provide gender equality in Ethiopia?
6. What were your major challenges while you have executed your activities?
7. Does the status of the First Lady have legal background? If your answer is no. if the status of the First Lady is legitimized, is there any positive and negative impact?
8. To ensure women's empowerment in all spheres especially at the political level, what will be your advice for the future new comer Ethiopian First Ladies?
9. Do you agree that, the role of the First Lady should be publicized? If yes, how?

### **Appendix B: Checklist and Interview Guide for JSLRI and HoR**

1. In Ethiopia law if we say first lady for Prime Minister's spouse, what is the equivalent term for the President's spouse?
2. From Ethiopian Law context, is there a legal base that provides the job descriptions for first lady?

3. Is there a proper duty or job description allocated for the first lady in Ethiopian legal system?
4. Due to the title of first ladyship, does the Ethiopian legal system notice a special power for the first lady?
5. What will be the positive and negative aspect if the prominent of first lady's position/role has its rulebook?

### **Appendix C: Checklist and Interview Guide for OFL of FDRE**

1. How the OFL of FDRE was established? Do you think that First Lady has formal platform?
2. Does the office of first lady governed by the federal civil servants' proclamation, Employer and employee law?
3. How do you define the responsibilities of the First Lady and her contribution to the the advancement of marginalized groups in Ethiopia? Is there an official first lady's job description and specification?
4. What are the major roles of the first lady?
5. Which one is the best identify word to express the first lady's attribute?
  - policy advocator,
  - social activist,
  - hostess
  - president/prime minister's advisor
6. Do you think that the office of first lady has significance to provide gender equality?
7. How to define the position/role of first lady in Ethiopian law? What will be the advantages and disadvantages if our first lady has legal authority on her role?
8. What are the major challenges that the office of first lady facing?

### **Appendix D: Checklist and Interview Guide for OAFLA**

1. How/ why was OAFLA established in Ethiopia?
2. What are the OAFLA's goals, vision and mission?
3. How it can address the African First Ladies' programs or projects?
4. Does African First Ladies have their platform?

5. What are the major challenges that African first ladies are facing?
6. Is there an official first lady's job description and specification in Africa?
7. The current president of OAFILA was former first lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye which was elected since 2017 to 2019. But she has relocated now. Who will be the next president of OAFILA?

**Photo with the Former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye**

